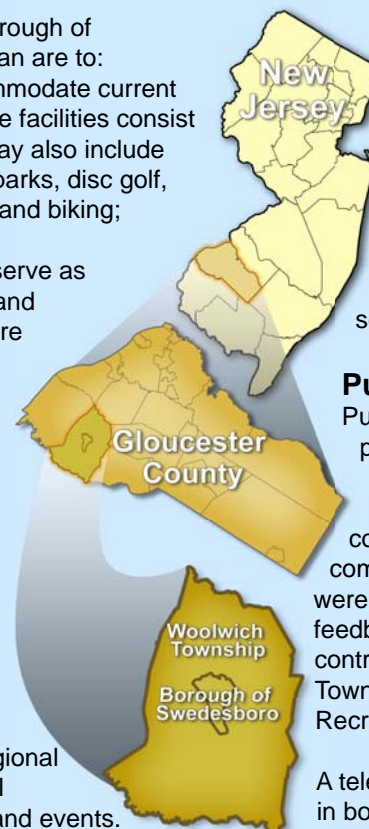


Woolwich Township has seen rapid population growth over the last decade and planning projections predict that the population could double over the next 25 years. Woolwich Township has commissioned this Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan to more accurately and effectively plan for parks, open space, trails and other recreational facilities in Woolwich Township and in the Borough of Swedesboro. The Borough is surrounded by Woolwich Township and most recreational facilities and parks are shared by residents of both municipalities. This plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for the community for the next 10 to 20 years to plan for park and open space acquisition, park facility development and trail and greenway development, including water trails.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Purpose and Goals

The goals of the Woolwich Township and Borough of Swedesboro Open Space and Recreation plan are to:

- Plan active recreational facilities to accommodate current and anticipated future needs. These active facilities consist primarily of sports fields and courts but may also include other specialized facilities such as skate parks, disc golf, swimming, and trails for walking, running and biking;
- Plan for the acquisition and protection of environmentally sensitive lands that can serve as passive recreational facilities for walking and hiking while they protect habitat and ensure ground water quality in the area.
- Plan for and identify routes and locations for a system of interconnected trails and greenways that will provide multi-modal transportation opportunities to residents while also providing safe facilities for exercise and the enjoyment of the outdoors. These trail routes will include both on-road trails and off-road trails that also offer connections to existing or planned trails in adjoining municipalities.
- Identify opportunities to enhance local tourism, ecotourism, and marketing of downtown Swedesboro and Woolwich regional center through park, open space, and trail development and recreational programs and events.



Woolwich Township has an area of 21.2 square miles with 0.32 square miles (1.5%) of the Township's area being comprised of water. The Township is governed by a five member Township Committee who are elected to three-year staggered terms of office. The Mayor is appointed to an annual term by the members of the Township Committee. The Borough of Swedesboro has a total area of 0.76 square miles. The Borough government consists of one mayor and six council members. The mayor serves a four year term while council members serve staggered three year terms.

Public Participation

Public participation is a vital part of the planning process. The project was guided by Open Space and Recreation Plan committee. The committee provided valuable insight and direction to the consultant for development of the plan. Six (6) committee meetings and three (3) public meetings were held throughout the planning process. The feedback received at these meetings was an important contribution to the development of the Woolwich Township / Borough of Swedesboro Open Space and Recreation Plan.

A telephone survey of 200 randomly chosen households in both Woolwich Township and the Borough of Swedesboro was conducted in June 2014 and a 22 question online citizen survey was open to the public from June, 2014 to December, 2014. The online survey received 460 responses. These surveys were used as another means of obtaining information from the community about the park and open space use within the Township and Borough.

Municipal Background

Woolwich Township and the Borough of Swedesboro are located in Gloucester County, New Jersey, approximately 25 miles southeast of downtown Philadelphia and approximately 20 miles from Camden, NJ.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Woolwich Township

In 2004, the State Transfer of Development Rights Act was signed into law, and Woolwich Township became one of a handful of municipalities to develop a TDR program. Today, the results of that planning are being realized through a township-wide plan that is based on the TDR concept.

TDR is a growth management tool. It is not designed to limit the amount of growth that can occur locally. Instead, it gives municipalities greater control over how and where growth occurs.

One of the principal benefits of TDR is the ability to preserve large contiguous areas of farmland and open space and to do so without imposing land costs on the taxpayers. The municipality determines where it wants to direct growth and where it wants to preserve land. Developers then purchase development rights from property owners in the designated preservation areas—called “sending zones” - and transfer them into the targeted growth areas—called “receiving zones.”

For more information and to view the Woolwich Township TDR plan please visit <http://www.woolwichtwp.org/>



Development and Acquisition Priorities

It is expected that the total acquisition and development as proposed in this plan will take 20 to 25 years. Development will need to be implemented in phases based on multiple factors including available funding, willing partnerships, municipal priorities, actual community growth, recreation trends, and property acquisitions. The Township and Borough will need to periodically update this plan based on evolving recreational needs including participation rates of various sports leagues.

Development Priorities – 0-10 years

- Establish primary trail and sidewalk connections from existing residential neighborhoods to existing parks
- Construct of new active recreation fields at Locke Avenue/High Hill Park
- Construct new active recreation fields at LaPalomoto Family Park as needed
- Redevelop Swedesboro Auction Park to serve local residents
- Develop off road trail network from Locke Avenue to Palladino Field
- Establish a water trail along Raccoon Creek
- Conduct a thorough analysis of potential bicycle routes in the Township. Establish bicycle routes with “share the road” signage and striping and bicycle lanes where existing conditions allow. Main corridors such as High Hill Road, Township Line Road, Auburn Road, and Kings Highway should take priority if possible to improve connections from residential areas to existing parks.
- Develop and distribute a map of existing parks, open space, and trails accessible to residents. Update regularly as needed.
- Establish a water trail along Oldmans Creek

Development Priorities – 10-15 years

- Complete development at Palladino Field, LaPalomoto Park and Locke Ave/High Hill Park if needed.
- Consider acquisitions and bridge enhancements to establish a gateway to Swedesboro and Woolwich center at Locke Avenue bridge.
- Convert appropriate “share the road bicycle” routes to bicycle lanes through roadway reconstruction or widening where needed.
- Establish other on road bicycle routes throughout the Township where roadway reconstruction or widening is needed, including on road connections needed to link the future TDR regional center and other future development.
- Establish other off road trails as needed to link TDR regional center and other future development.
- Continue expansion of park system through acquisitions along Raccoon Creek, Oldmans Creek and in southern portion of Woolwich Township and redevelopment of Nike missile base.

Development Priorities – 15-25+ years

- Establish recreational trails near preserved farms to market agritourism in the area
- Establish second active recreation hub on Township Line Road as needed
- Continue development of off road and on road connections as needed to link future development
- Continue expansion of park and open space system through acquisition and new park development

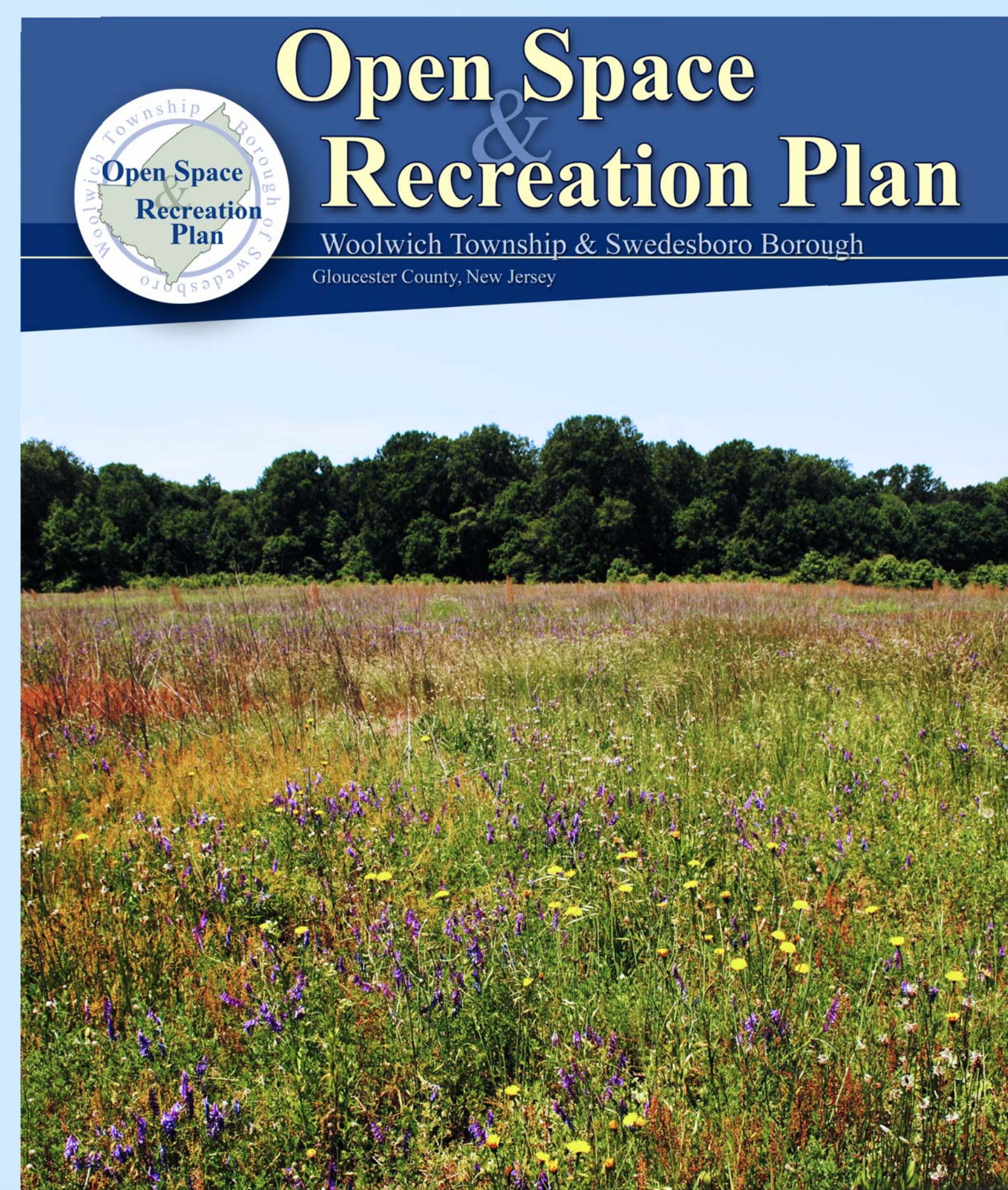
Potential Funding Sources

Over the next two decades, Woolwich Township and the Borough of Swedesboro will need to be proactive in obtaining funds for design and construction of the improvements proposed in this study. The Township and Borough will need to continually seek project partners and review opportunities for funding. There are multiple funding sources that provide grants for park, trail, and open space development and acquisition like those identified in this plan. Several examples of such sources are listed below.

- Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails Program
- Transportation Alternatives (TAP)
- New Jersey State Aid Program
- NJDEP Green Acres Program
- Safe Routes To School (SRTS)
- Gloucester County Open Space Preservation Program
- Woolwich Township
- Borough of Swedesboro

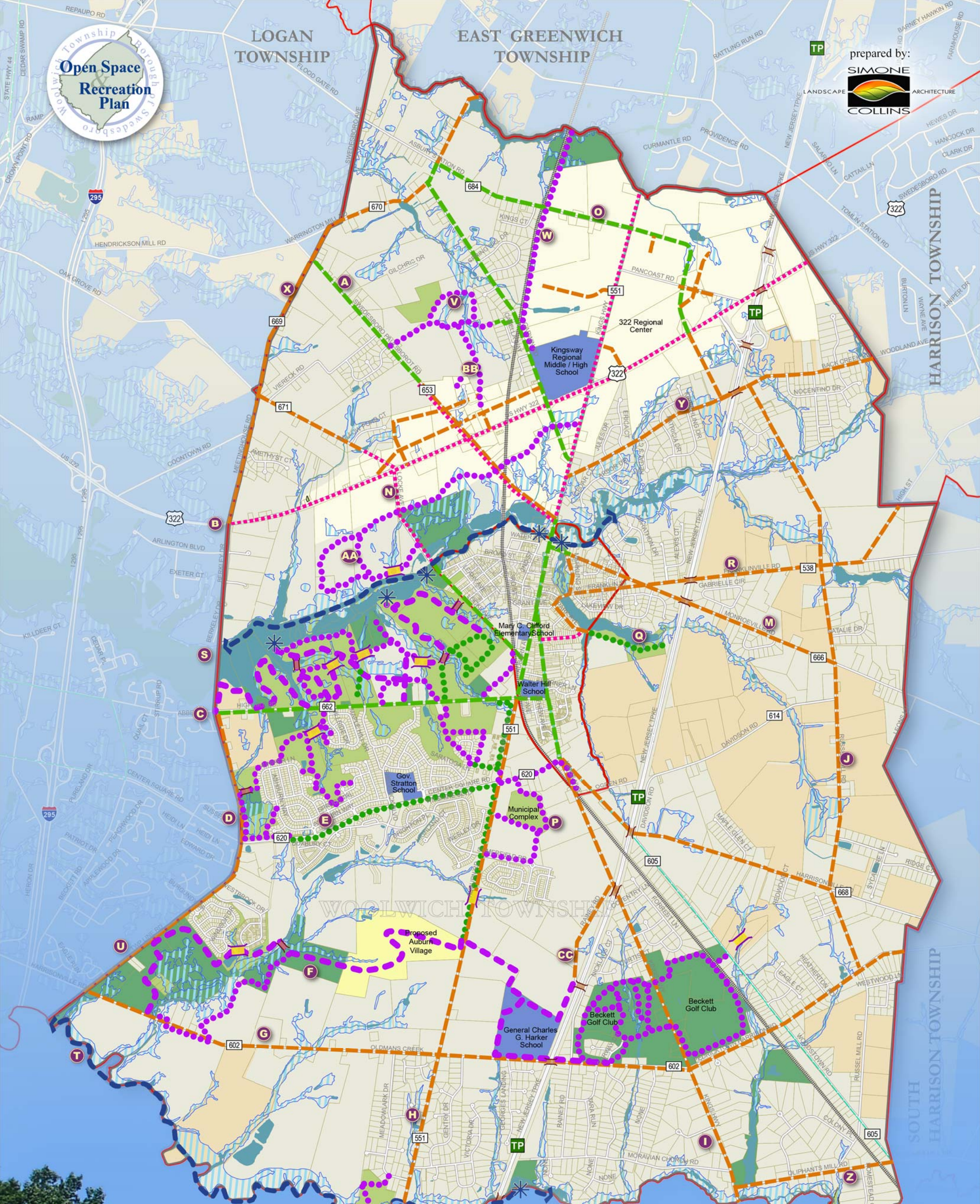


Route 322 Regional Center concept plan, Feb. 2014, Kernan Consulting Engineers



Open Space & Recreation Plan

Woolwich Township & Swedesboro Borough
Gloucester County, New Jersey



prepared by:
SIMONE
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
COLLINS

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 322 TDR Receiving Area | Permanently Preserved Farm | Road | Proposed Water Trail | Boat Access |
| State Property | Municipal Park & Open Space | Proposed Road | Multi Use Trail | Proposed Bridge |
| Wetland | Auburn Village TDR | Parcel | Walking Trail | Existing Bridge |
| Railroad | School | Stream | On Road Trail | Trail Name |
| | Water | Municipal Boundary | On Road Trail with Sidewalk | |
| | Other Parcels of Interest | Project Area | Multi-Use Trail / Sidewalk | |
| | | Existing Trail | | |



Trail Plan

The Township and Borough lack trail infrastructure for both recreation and non-motorized transportation connections to parks, open space, schools, and other important destinations. Pedestrian sidewalks are also lacking throughout much of Woolwich further limiting the ability for safe pedestrian to walk safely through the community. As development increases this need will only be exacerbated.

The trail plan proposes to create links between residential areas, recreational destinations, and future centers of development. The trail and bicycle links will also establish a non-motorized connected network to parks and open space, and to destinations and trails in adjacent municipalities, and will create additional recreational opportunities. Trail alignments were selected based on factors such as network connectivity, opportunities for future ecotourism, and committee and public input. This plan proposes a total trail system of approximately 71.7 miles.

Woolwich Township and the Borough of Swedesboro are bordered by 7 municipalities. The trail plan makes direct connections to all of these municipalities except Greenwich Township which only borders Woolwich in a small area in the northern corner of the Township.

The trail plan links to multiple regional trails including existing and proposed on road and off road routes identified by the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association and Gloucester County. The planned Delaware Estuary Route lies to the north of Woolwich and Swedesboro in Logan Township. This trail would continue east into Greenwich Township and beyond to National Park. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) Circuit lies just across the Delaware River in Pennsylvania and to the north in Camden, NJ. The Circuit is a network of existing and planned trails that, when completed, will total approximately 750 miles of bicycle and pedestrian trails in the greater Philadelphia Area.

Parks and Open Space

This plan identifies properties that are of current interest to the Township and Borough for use as parks and/or open space. These properties total approximately 950 acres and may be considered for acquisition by the Township if they become available. This is not a final list of properties to consider for acquisition. It is expected that over the next two decades some properties may be removed from the parcel of interest list and new properties may be added. In total, the plan proposes approximately 1,655 acres of park and open space land. This includes 640 acres currently owned by the municipalities, 191 acres owned by the State, and 824 acres considered for acquisition. The 1,655 acres is approximately 11.7% of the total area of Woolwich and Swedesboro.

Concept plans were completed for several potential parks that were identified as priority sites. The diagrams recommend possible uses appropriate for each site. Some of the proposed uses include active recreation fields, tennis, roller hockey, a BMX and skate park, dog parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, an amphitheater, a swim club, swimming ponds, fishing areas, boat docks, a community center, and recreational trails. Specific uses and arrangements will need to be more closely examined and planned by the municipalities based on need, funding, and detailed site plans in the design and engineering phase of facility development. Concept diagrams were completed for the following areas:

- High Hill Road vicinity including Locke Avenue/High Hill Park, LaPalomto Family Park, Palladino Field and the NJDEP Wildlife Management Area
- Weatherby open space
- Woolwich Township municipal complex
- Indian Branch Creek vicinity
- Proposed Auburn Village vicinity
- Beckett Golf Club