

# OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

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BOROUGH OF FLORHAM PARK MASTER PLAN

BOROUGH OF FLORHAM PARK  
MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**JANUARY 11, 2023**  
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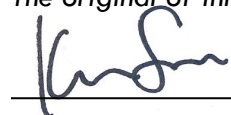
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florham Park is a 7.6 square mile municipality, incorporated in 1899. The Borough is a small, suburban community located in southeastern Morris County, approximately 30 miles west of New York City, and bordered by Madison Borough and Chatham Borough to the south; by Hanover and East Hanover Townships to the north; by Morris Township to the west; and by the Passaic River to the east, where it borders Essex County communities Livingston and Millburn Townships. First settled by the English sometime between 1680 and 1700, the community was long recognized as a prime farming area. In 1817, bisection by the Newark and Morris Turnpike (State Highway #510) brought an influx of residents and businesses, including the making of whiskey and bricks, as well as the broom industry which gave Florham Park its nickname of “Broomtown”. Today, Florham Park is a bustling suburban municipality with an active community of both residents and businesses, and prides itself as “A Community of Volunteers”, where many civic and social organizations help create the friendly atmosphere that Florham Park is known for. While more suburban in nature, the Borough prides itself on maintaining its sense of community and historic roots while providing access and connectivity to jobs, recreation, and entertainment in the surrounding area.

Over time, the Borough has experienced different forms of growth and changes to the makeup of the population that have implications to both the current and future needs for open space, parks, and recreation in Florham Park. The quality of a community’s open space, parks, and recreation system is viewed as one of the indicators of the overall quality of life. A recent study titled, *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation* by John L. Crompton for the Trust for Public Land, included a section on the impact of parks and open space on property taxes. This study

indicated that property values were higher for properties near quality parks and open spaces than for similar properties located elsewhere.

In a state as dense as New Jersey, open space and recreation facilities are vital for our quality of life and public health. These amenities should be incorporated into the planning of a municipality as part of the overall infrastructure to best serve local residents and other users. In addition to active and passive recreation potential, open space can serve a number of conservation-related functions, including serving as a buffer for a waterbody, handling stormwater runoff and providing habitat for wildlife.

The Borough has balanced open space as a component and priority of its land use goals. The 2001 Plan was prepared by the Morris Land Conservancy and the Florham Park Environmental Commission, and largely focused on the environmentally sensitive natural resources and historic cultural resources. This Plan included a thorough and comprehensive inventory of these resources and it made specific recommendations to protect the water quality in the Borough, protect the Borough’s cultural heritage, create a greenway system connecting residents to natural areas, and to expand the existing park system and recreational opportunities. Overall, the 2001 Plan was a foundation for specific attention to open space goals, and provided specific implementation strategies that have since been executed by the Borough, as well as through its partnerships with the County and other organizations. The 2011 Plan was prepared by the Land Conservancy of New Jersey (formerly the Morris Land Conservancy until 2008) and the Florham Park Environmental Commission, and sought to provide an update to the 2001 Plan by reviewing the goals and objectives of that plan, documenting the use of local and outside

funding for land conservation, and offering a vision for continued conservation and stewardship in the Borough. Recognizing the previous Plans focused on identifying natural resources and developing open space for active recreation, this 2022 Plan focuses on reassessing the needs of the population in a comprehensive plan that will help to determine the needs of the community over the next 10 years.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan has been prepared as an update to previously adopted 2001 and 2011 plans and builds from the information presented in both of those plans. In order to effectively capture the existing and changing conditions of the Borough, this Plan differs from past ones in that it provides a detailed analysis of demographic, population, and development trends that may impact the future need for additional open space.

This Plan includes an inventory of the existing parks facilities and open space in the Borough, and creates a classification system to identify the purpose of the park and its features and facilities. The Plan utilizes this inventory to make recommendations about future open space challenges, opportunities, and goals. Additionally, this Plan seeks to preliminarily investigate the potential for better connectivity between parks and open space within the Borough. The Borough's Open Space Plan concludes with an analysis of the status of open space within the Borough, recommendations for future improvements, and an Action Plan that describes the next steps in the implementation of the Plan. One of the first recommendations is to adopt this Plan as an element of the Borough's Master Plan.

# INTRODUCTION

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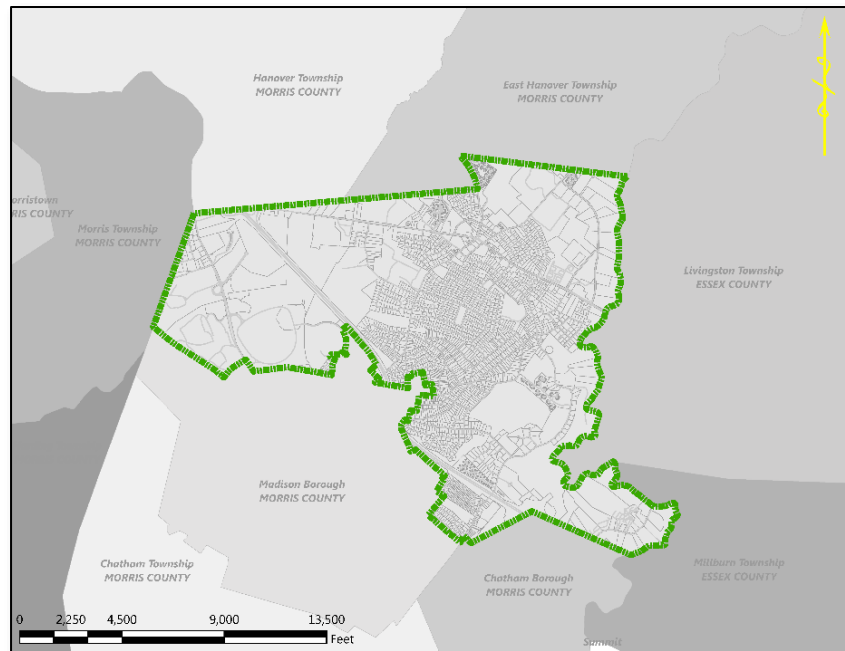
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- I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOROUGH
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- IV. EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION
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- VI. KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

# I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOROUGH

The Borough of Florham Park is a suburban municipality located in southeastern Morris County, in the northeastern portion of the State of New Jersey. The Borough has a total area of approximately 7.6 square miles and a population of 12,585 according to the 2020 Decennial Census – representing a population density of approximately 1,683 people per square mile.

Florham Park's history helps define its contemporary character, and remnants of its origins are still seen today. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area stretching from Madison to Morris attracted wealthy bankers and industrialists who built seasonal homes and sprawling country retreats away from the cities. Among those millionaire families who came to the Morris County countryside were the



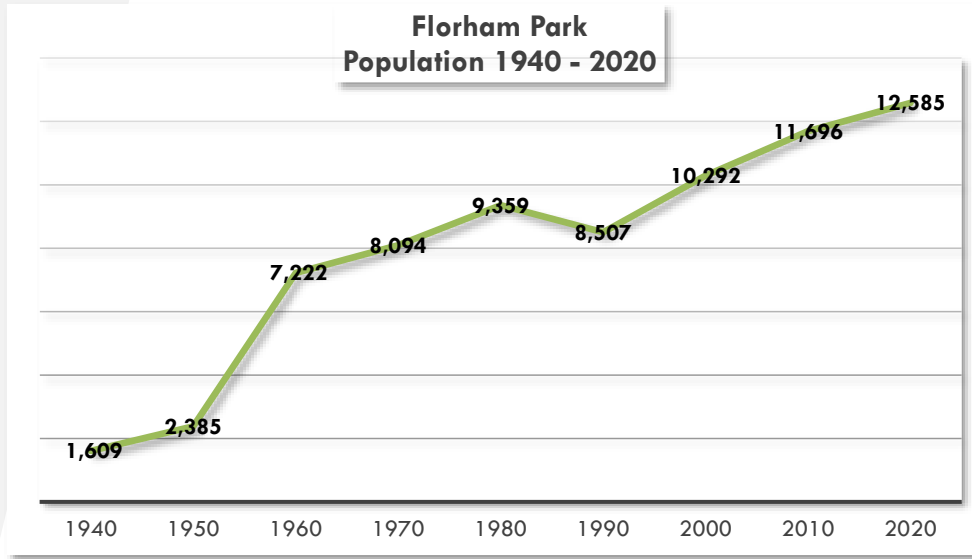
Twomblys - Hamilton McKown Twombly and Florence Adele Vanderbilt Twombly, granddaughter of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. The Twomblys settled on a 900-acre farm in 1890, building a country mansion that was one of America's finest Gilded Age homes, and naming it "Florham" as a combination of their names. Influential Dr. Leslie Ward, one of the founders of the Prudential Insurance Company, settled nearby on 1,000 acres of land, naming the estate "Brooklake Park" for the lake on the property. Concerned about high taxes, the Twomblys and Dr. Ward petitioned the state to create a new borough. "Florham Park" was officially established in March of 1899, when it broke off from neighboring Chatham Township.

During the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Florham Park remained a mainly rural town. After World War II, Florham Park evolved into a bedroom community, aided by rail service into Newark and New York City. By 1956, thoughtful planning and zoning for industrial areas began to attract major corporations such as Automatic Switch, Strahman Valve, and Esso (Exxon) Research and Engineering. Other well-known companies to the Borough's corporate identity. Today, The Green at Florham Park corporate center on Park Avenue contains BASF's headquarters and the training facility for the New York Jets.

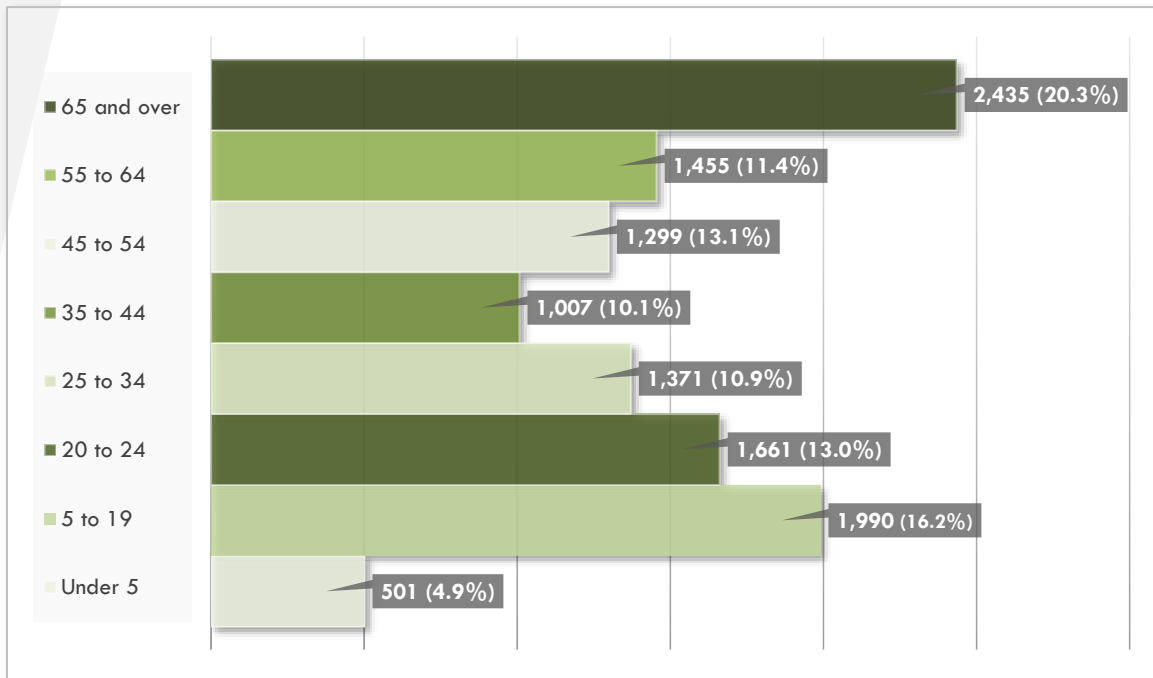
As represented on the chart, the Borough's population has been increasing since 1940. The Borough's proximity to a renowned network of higher education and research institutions and major employers has led to significant impacts on the population growth over time. The Borough began to experience rapid growth starting in 1950 when the population, according to the U.S. Census, was 2,385. The population increased to 7,222 by 1960 and continued to grow steadily until 1980, when it reached 9,359. Growth in Florham Park dropped off as recorded in the 1990 Census when



the population dipped to 8,507, but has steadily increased to 12,585 as recorded in the 2020 Census.



The composition of these residents has also changed, as the Borough has seen growth in populations over age 65 and a decrease in residents under age 18. As of the 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, approximately 35% of the population was aged between 25 to 54, with an additional 34% of the population under the age of 25. Additionally, the 65 and over population has seen a steady increase over time with over 20% as of the 2020 ACS Estimates.



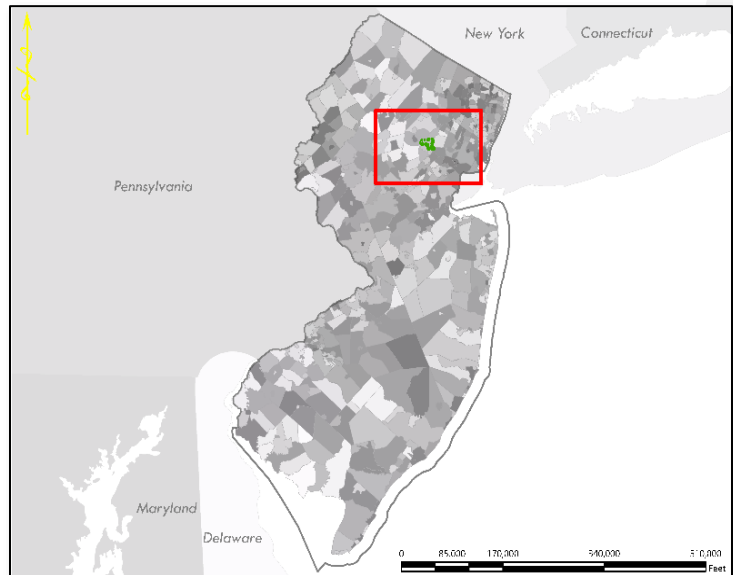
Additionally, the Borough adopted its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”) of the Master Plan, which outlines housing development to be constructed in fulfillment of the Borough’s share of the statewide, court-mandated Third Round affordable housing obligation. The HEFSP outlines the

construction of approximately 1,438 additional housing units, including 363 affordable units, through the year 2025. As a result, it is anticipated that the Borough will experience changes to the total population and demographic makeup in the next 5 years. Changes to the makeup of the population have implications to both the current and future needs for open space, parks, and recreation in Florham Park. Recognizing that the needs of the population should be reassessed, the Borough has determined that a comprehensive process should be completed to evaluate the past work of the Borough, as well as the future of open space and recreation in the community.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

The Borough of Florham Park is located in the New York Metropolitan Area, the most populous Metropolitan Statistical Area (“MSA”) in the United States. This region is geographically vast, demographically diverse, and has a wealth of resources - including major transportation routes, a well-educated population, entertainment hubs, and a number of regional attractions. As of the 2020 ACS 5-year estimates produced by the US Census, this MSA has a population of over 20 million people and 7 million households.

Morris County, in particular, is home to the Morris County Park Commission’s 20,197 acres of parkland, which includes 38 facilities – historic sites, golf courses, outdoor educational and recreational facilities, arboreta, conservation areas, 244.3 miles of trails, and a sports and ice skating arena. The Morris County Park Commission has a 9-person volunteer Park Commission, serving 5-year terms selected by the Board of Chosen



Freeholders. Each Commissioner serves on several committees to oversee the Park System’s activities. Additionally, Morris County has an Open Space Preservation Program. The open space program provides grants to municipalities and non-profits to preserve land or water areas for recreation or conservation purposes, including but not limited to parkland, natural areas, greenways, ecologically sensitive areas, and lands providing passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Under the municipal/qualified charitable conservancy category of Morris County’s Preservation Trust Fund, a 15-member committee annually reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on applications submitted by any of the 39 municipalities in the county as well as eligible land conservancies.

## III. THE NEED FOR AN UPDATED PLAN

Over time, the Borough has experienced different forms of growth and changes to the makeup of its population that have implications to both the current and future needs for open space, parks, and recreation in Florham Park. Recognizing the previous Plans focused on acquiring and

developing open space for usable active recreation and preserving additional land, this Plan focuses on reassessing the needs of the population in a comprehensive overview to determine the needs of the community over the next 10 years. Growth of the Borough's population is anticipated through the construction of additional housing mandated by State affordable housing regulations for the period from 2015-2025.

For many residents, parks and other open spaces provide their primary access to the natural environment, and for all residents, parks and other open spaces provide a variety of natural and active outdoor recreational opportunities. In a changing environment, parks and other open spaces are an important land use component that help to promote the health and wellness of the community. Additionally, open spaces and parks offer areas for more tree plantings and vegetation which reduce impervious coverage, provide shade, reduce heat island effects, and let light and air into the densely built environment.

Florham Park prides itself on maintaining its sense of community and historic roots, and utilizes Borough parks for annual community events, local organizations, and other community gatherings. Protecting and expanding open space in Florham Park is critical in planning for a sustainable community.

This master planning effort, which will help determine the future of open spaces, parks, and recreation in Florham Park, is important because open spaces and parks provide a number of benefits and services to the community. Additionally, local agencies have the responsibility to manage open spaces and parkland in an efficient manner that is consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the community. This Open Space and Recreation Plan Element is intended to assist and direct the management of these lands and facilities.

## IV. EXISTING OPEN SPACES, PARKS, AND RECREATION

Parks and recreation services are currently provided primarily by the Florham Park Recreation Department, which provides maintenance and programming for seasonal and year-round activities for Borough parks. Florham Park has a Recreation Committee which provides guidance on parks and recreation policies and makes recommendations for annual goals and activities. The Borough has received \$2,300,000 in funds from the Green Acres Planning Incentive Program and \$5,492,500 in Morris County grant awards through the Morris County Preservation Trust Fund for land conservation in the municipality. Since the inception of the open space program, the Borough has completed 6 projects with Morris County grant awards which has protected 13.28 acres of land in the Borough – 11.44 acres at Fish Brook Park (Block 3201, Lots 1 and 22.01); and 1.84 acres at Stobaeus Park (Block 2009, Lots 5, 15, 16, and 19). Land has been preserved to protect residents from flooding events, to conserve the Borough's sensitive natural resources, and to expand and create recreational resources. Fish Brook Park is a former farm that provides the citizens of the Borough a beautiful space for resource-based ("passive") recreation, as well as valuable habitat for native plants and wildlife. Stobaeus Park was expanded in 2011 with 4 parcels and it functions as an important active recreation resource for the Borough, including a frequently used baseball diamond. Since the 2011 Plan, the Stobaeus Park parcels have been formally added to the

Borough's ROSI. Additionally, the Borough has undertaken and completed the construction of "Volunteer's Park" since the completion of the previous plan.

The Borough has 2 large Community Parks, 2 Neighborhood Parks, and 3 Mini/Pocket Parks. In addition to the Community, Neighborhood, and Mini Parks, Florham Park has a substantial amount of "passive" open space. Passive open space and preserved land helps shape the natural character of the Borough. The Borough of Florham Park contains 396.4 acres of permanently protected open space. This includes land owned by the state (65.75 acres), county (64.03 acres), Borough (266.6 acres), and non-profit organizations (35.6 acres), making up 8.3% of its 4,778 acres (7 square miles). The newly constructed Volunteer's Park does not yet appear on the ROSI, and represents additional parkland, although not yet formally preserved.

While the Borough operates many of the public open space facilities, there are additional athletic fields and playgrounds at Public School locations at 2 locations that can be reserved by permit when schools are not in session. The Briarwood and Brooklake Elementary Schools have 1 baseball/softball field, and the Ridgedale Middle School has 1 baseball field and 1 softball field. Additionally, Morris County Park Commission owns and operates a specialized recreation facility, known as the Pinch Brook Golf Course, located in Florham Park. West Essex Park, owned and operated by Essex County, is located adjacent to the Borough directly to the east beyond the Passaic River. Private organizations, such as the Center Court Tennis Facility, Brooklake Country Club, and others also provide recreational facilities within the Borough.

The Borough has long recognized the importance of trees and other natural resources as important cultural, ecological, scenic and economic resources. The Borough has a Community Forestry Management Plan in place that is intended to meet the objectives of preserving, protecting, enhancing and maintaining trees and providing opportunities for the continued use of forest resources which are compatible with the maintenance of the environment.

The greenways identified within the Borough of Florham Park are Passaic Meadows Greenway, Black Meadows Greenway, and Emmett Park Greenway. There are four blueways: Passaic River, Spring Garden Lake, Pinch Brook, and Black Cat Ditch. In addition, the Environmental Commission has identified the forested land cover in the Borough as important for conservation and has included these areas on its Greenway Map. The Borough is home to a portion of the Traction Line Trail, and since the previous Open Space Element, the Environmental Commission completed a footpath, bridge and added benches around Spring Garden Lake.

On March 16, 2010, the Borough of Florham Park Council adopted Resolution No. 10-40, which authorized the Director of Community Services to register for the Sustainable Jersey Program to pursue local initiatives and actions that will lead to Sustainable Jersey Municipal Certification. The Borough has not since achieved Certification through the program. The Borough should continue to explore qualifying sustainability activities for certification, such as the establishment of bicycle routes to provide alternative modes of transportation for residents.

## V. PLANNING PROCESS

As the purpose of this plan is to address the needs of the community, a primary focus of the master planning process was to identify those needs. This Plan accounts for the following steps, which were

utilized to determine the needs of Florham Park residents for open space, parks, and recreation facilities and programs.

1. Demographic Analysis
2. Consistency with the Master Plan and Review of Previous Plans and Studies
3. Existing Open Spaces, Parks, Facilities, and Programs Analysis
4. Visions, Goals, and Objectives
5. Short-Term and Long-Term Recommendations
6. Action Plan

## VI. KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. Review of Past Goals

The 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update reviewed the goals and objectives of the Borough's open space program, from those identified in the 2001 Plan, and reiterated that the following goals remained valid:

- Protect the water quality and quantity in the Borough
- Preserve the Borough's cultural heritage
- Create a greenway system connecting residents of the Borough to natural areas.
- Expand the existing park system and recreation opportunities in the Borough.

### B. Additional Goals of this Plan Update

- Inventory existing open space and developed parkland sites and recreation programs within the Borough, and categorize their historic functions and service to the community.
- Understand the impact of additional residential housing on the open space system and analyze level of service of open space and developed parkland per the population size.
- Create an Action Plan to help guide future Open Space activities and priorities.
- Determine additional and creative opportunities for parkland development, improvements, and open space acquisition in the Borough.
- Recommend initiatives to include accommodations for general public activities and support features at open spaces and parks.
- Promote sponsor opportunities for funding and partnering, especially with available County and State resources.
- Understand facility options for balancing changing program participation.

- Promote best management practices for facility maintenance, especially newer facilities.

This 2019 Plan Update acknowledges those goals as valid and seeks to expand upon them. This Element establishes goals, strategies, and actions to protect natural resources, encourage the acquisition or development of open space within the Borough, and to create a healthy and sustainable economy and society. It is important to note that a Master Plan and its elements cannot include requirements or mandatory actions; instead, it provides support for municipal officials and decision makers to make policy, regulatory, programmatic, and investment decisions that are consistent with, or intended to effectuate, the Borough's Master Plan elements. Additionally, the goals of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* are not the responsibility of any one committee. The Borough of Florham Park's Environmental Commission, Recreation Committee, Planning Board, and Borough Council are each responsible for the implementation of this Plan and its actions. The Action Program included at the rear of this report should be updated every year or every other year, and progress reported to the governing body.

The overarching intent of this Element of the Master Plan is to ensure that planning and development in Florham Park allows future generations enjoy the same or more opportunities in terms of access to open space and the local ecology, vibrant community life, and environmental health.

Natural resources vary from place to place. In more rural areas, natural resources can include fossil fuels and farm lands. In a suburban environment like Florham Park, natural resources can include water, trees, designated parks and open space areas, trails and pedestrian/bicycle connections. Natural resources such as open space, clean water, and fresh air help provide residents of any community with a high quality of life. In a growing suburban environment such as Florham Park, protecting and cultivating natural resources is vital for balancing modern development and access to nature and open space. Open space in the Borough is often considered in terms of parkland and its suitability for active recreation. However, future open space will be required to play a more significant role in the future as these areas will be called upon to achieve multiple objectives related to environmental and sustainability issues.

Many of the quality of life characteristics within the Borough revolve around its water quality, air quality, open spaces, and everyday lifestyle choices of its residents. The Borough is focused on preserving its history, neighborhoods, and character, while growing and evolving sustainably. Communities can encourage building and development that works with the land that minimizes negative environmental impacts. Using and optimizing natural resources in the suburban setting is key to improving the livability and quality of life in Florham Park.

Open spaces and parks provide opportunities for active recreation and improve public health. They encourage more bicyclists and pedestrians, decreasing reliance on automobiles. In turn, this reduces the negative impacts that car emissions have on air quality. Having these resources in the community allows residents to readily access such amenities, rather than having to travel to other areas, typically by automobile, for recreation. Open spaces and parks offer areas for more tree plantings and vegetation which reduce impervious coverage, provide shade, reduce heat island effects, and let light and air into the densely built environment. Protecting and expanding Florham Park's open spaces is critical in planning for a sustainable community.

## KEY FINDINGS

397

Approximate Acres of Preserved Land and Open Space in Florham Park

Number of Parks and Recreation Facilities

57

\$7M+

Total Grant Funding Received for Open Space Acquisitions and Projects Since 2001

# PLANNING PROCESS

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## CONTENT

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

II. CONSISTENCY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

III. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES & PLANS

IV. REVIEW OF OTHER PLANS



# I. IMPORTANCE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) governs all land use planning activities in the State. As such, the MLUL details the authority of the local Planning Board, the power to zone and the requirement to adopt a master plan land use element, housing element and recycling plan element in order to implement a zoning ordinance. Section 40:55D-28.a. of the MLUL notes the master plan is intended to “guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare,” and section 40:55D-28.b. continues that a master plan shall comprise “a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based.”

The MLUL allows for the adoption of a recreation plan element which must show a “comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation.” A conservation plan element must provide “for the preservation, conservation and utilization of natural resources, including, to the extent appropriate, energy, open space, water supply, forests, soil, marshes, wetlands, harbors, rivers and other resources, and which systematically analyzes the impact of each other component and element of the master plan on the present and future preservation, conservation and utilization of those resources.” In addition, this Plan sets forth the recommended steps required to preserve and maintain the limited supply of public space.

## II. CONSISTENCY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

### 1. Borough of Florham Park Master Plan, 2000

The Borough of Florham Park adopted its Master Plan in 2000. It outlined several goals and objectives relevant to open space planning and preservation:

- To conserve and protect soil, water, air quality, open space, environmentally sensitive lands, including wetlands and flood hazard areas within the Borough. Consider noise levels in land use decisions in order to minimize undue noise impacts on existing and future residents. (page 28)
- Ensure the provision of municipal services to meet the present and future demands of the Borough, to serve all portions of the Borough. (page 29)
- Monitor the recreational needs of the community, maintain existing facilities, and provide for a wide choice of leisure activities for all age and interest groups. Provide the opportunity for convenient recreational facilities for all portions of the Borough. (page 29)

The Master Plan references the draft of the Borough’s 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan that describes the Borough’s plans for open space preservation:

*The Land Use Plan includes lands that are intended for open space in the form of lands utilized for recreation and/or conservation. The Borough’s Environmental Commission has analyzed open space within the Borough in order to identify and prioritize lands that should be preserved. Those are identified here in this plan. Additionally, some of the lands designated in this plan are not owned by the Borough or the County, but are*

*in private ownership. The Brooklake Country Club is within this designation, because it is the intent of this plan that the Club remains in recreational use. The East Orange Water Company property along the Passaic River is also within this category, because it is intended that it remain open space and undeveloped. There are also some lands located in the Flood Hazard Zone which are also suspected of having significant areas of wetlands, along the Passaic River, which are included in this land use designation. These properties are currently zoned C-1, and will remain in that zoning district. Given the current environmental regulations concerning development within flood plains and wetlands, there is little likelihood that they will be developed. (page 37)*

## **2. Borough of Florham Park Master Plan Reexamination & Master Plan Update, 2005**

The Borough of Florham Park completed its Master Plan Reexamination and Master Plan Update in September of 2005. Typically, Master Plans are updated every six years as recommended in the Municipal Land Use Law in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89. The 2005 Master Plan Update reviewed the goals and objectives of the 2000 Master Plan (referenced above) and discussed the recommendations of the 2000 Master Plan as they stood in 2005. Relating to open space, the 2000 Master Plan had discussed the status of the three largest properties in the Borough as potential for conservation (consistent with the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan). These were the Exxon property north of Route 24, the Fish property along Brooklake Road, and the undeveloped Board of Education property also along Brooklake Road. The 2005 Master Plan states:

*The Land Use Plan map showed at least portions of these properties as recreation/conservation. The intent was for them to remain as open space, although there were no additional recommendations other than that included...for the northern portion of the Exxon Tract. (pages 4-5)*

As the 2005 Master Plan discussed changes in assumptions, policies and objectives in the intervening five years between planning documents, it reviews environmental features, changes in land use, and population age and structure. It states:

*Preserving environmentally sensitive features within the community is even more important with increasing development pressures. Compatibility between neighboring land uses also remains an issue. Property owners have been expressing increasing concern on development applications presented before both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board. (pages 10-11)*

## **3. Borough of Florham Park Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, 2017**

Prior to the 2017 HEFSP, the Borough of Florham Park adopted a Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2008 and submitted to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) for substantive certification. Due to court decisions invalidating the growth share methodology, the Plan was not reviewed by COAH. The new Plan is intended to conform to the guidance provided by the NJ Supreme Court in the March 9, 2015 decisions.

The Borough contracted with Econsult Solutions to calculate the components of need for this iteration of the Third Round obligation. These calculations are as follows:

- Prior Round obligation for 1987 – 1999 = 326 units

- Prospective Need obligation for 2015 – 2025 = 500 units
- Present Need / rehabilitation obligation = 68 units

Concerning its Prior Round obligation of 326 units, Florham Park identifies 293 units and 82 credits for a total of 375 units/credits which may be applied, leaving a surplus of 49 units for application to the Third Round obligation. Concerning its Prospective Need of 500 units, the Borough will apply its previous round surplus, and has identified an additional 96 units/credits which may be applied (credits include rental, assisted living and senior bonus credits). This leaves a remaining Third Round obligation of 355 units. The Plan proposes to meet this remaining obligation through various inclusionary zones/projects, both existing and proposed, which include the following:

- The Green at Florham Park (portion of Block 1401, Lot 1)
- Sun Valley (Block 4201, Lots 32, 33, and 34)
- The Alfieri Site (Block 501, Lots 4 and 5; Block 601, Lots 1, 2, and 3; and Block 702, Lot 9)
- Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth (Block 1301, Lot 2)
- Afton Village (Block 905, Lot 30.02)
- 215 Ridgedale Avenue (Block 801, Lot 4)
- 147 Columbia Turnpike (Block 1903, Lot 5)
- B&B Associates (Block 1906, Lots 12 and 13)

The Borough adopted its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”) of the Master Plan in 2017, which outlines housing development to be constructed in fulfillment of the Borough’s share of the statewide, court-mandated Third Round affordable housing obligation. The HEFSP outlines the construction of approximately 1,438 additional housing units, including 363 affordable units, through the year 2025. In total, the anticipated residential development is mostly multifamily units in the form of apartments or townhouses. As a result, it is anticipated that the Borough will experience changes to the total population and demographic makeup in the next 5 years. Changes to the makeup of the population have implications to both the current and future needs for open space, parks, and recreation in Florham Park.

### III. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES & PLANS

The following section details the history of Open Space and Recreation Elements adopted by the Borough in 2009 and 2011.

#### 1. Summary of the Borough of Florham Park Recreation Master Plan, 2009

In 2009, the Recreation Committee completed a Recreation Master Plan for the Borough. The focus of the Plan is to inventory the existing parkland in the Borough, identify the recreational needs in the community, and provide a guide for meeting those needs. The Plan identified the following goals (page 1):

- Stabilization of existing facilities and infrastructure to include repair, update, and improvements as outlined
- Introduction of new and additional features to existing recreational facilities

- Development and design of a new community park that will be dedicated to active recreation
- Planning for the future of all recreational aspects within the Borough.

The Borough is home to several parks used for active (facility-based) recreation. All of the parks were given a set of recommended steps towards improving the quality of the park and addressing some of the open space and recreation needs facing the Borough. The following parks were studied in the plan:

- Emmett Park Complex
- Stobaeus Field
- Beechcrest Park
- Board of Education Properties and other Municipal properties

Recommendations were tailored to the individual site and included recommendations for adding pedestrian paths and trails, upgrades to athletic facilities and lighting, repairs and upgrades to the infrastructure supporting the park facilities, and improvement to park signage. In addition, the Recreation Committee recommended the Borough also preserve open space for the sake of passive (resource-based) recreation – activities such as bird watching, walking trails, nature studies, and environmental education. As of 2009, there were about 180 acres of Borough owned property designated as open space.

## **2. Summary of the Borough of Florham Park Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2011**

The 2011 Borough of Florham Park Open Space and Recreation Plan provided a detailed update of the 2001 Florham Park Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Plan, prepared by the Land Conservancy of New Jersey, reconfirmed the goals of the 2001 document, updated the inventory of preserved open space and provided a detailed block and lot inventory of additional public and private lands that may be appropriate for preservation. According to the document, the Borough of Florham Park has 395 acres of permanently protected open space, including Federal and County lands, and land owned by non-profit organizations. These lands make up about 8% of the municipality's total land area. Of the 395 acres of preserved lands reported, 36 acres have been preserved since the adoption of the previous 2001 Plan.

In order to increase the amount of preserved land in the Borough, the Plan recommended that the Borough utilize a diverse inventory of potential preservation properties. The Borough identified 56 acres of farm-assessed property and 740 acres of vacant land as potential open space. In addition, the plan identified privately owned lands of which a portion may be suitable for recreation or conservation. Utilizing this expanded definition of potential open space, the Plan identified an additional 1,621 acres of potential open space. This figure included public lands, school property, church and charitable properties and cemeteries. Also included were residential and commercial lands greater than two acres in size. A list of priority sites for open space acquisition was not included.

A series of maps were included in the Plan showing environmental features and preserved lands. These maps culminate in a Greenway Map that incorporates the municipality's natural, historical, cultural and recreational resources and demonstrates how they are linked together. Specific greenways and blueways identified include the Passaic Meadows and Black Meadows Greenway,

the Emmet Park Greenway, the Passaic River, Spring Garden, Pinch Brook and Black Cat Ditch Blueway.

The Plan's "Action Program" was divided into short-term, medium-term, long-term and ongoing actions. Recommendations included the evaluation of vacant properties for potential acquisition, development of an acquisition priority list and the expansion of the Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) with several tax exempt and tax foreclosure properties. The plan also supported investigation of the River-Friendly Business Certification program to increase awareness of the Whippany and Passaic River Watersheds. The Plan supported continued application to the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund and the NJ Green Acres program for funding to protect local open space.

## IV. REVIEW OF OTHER PLANS

### 1. New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, 2001

The State Planning Commission adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) on March 1, 2001. The State Plan serves as a guide for public and private sector investment in New Jersey, looking toward the year 2020. The State Plan has not been updated since 2001. The vision that it presents is "Livable Communities and Natural Landscapes". The primary objectives of the State Plan are the redevelopment, maintenance, and revitalization of existing communities and the development of new communities in compact forms with a mix of uses. Thus, the overall goal of the State Plan is to promote development and redevelopment that will consume less land and fewer natural resources, and use the State's infrastructure more efficiently.

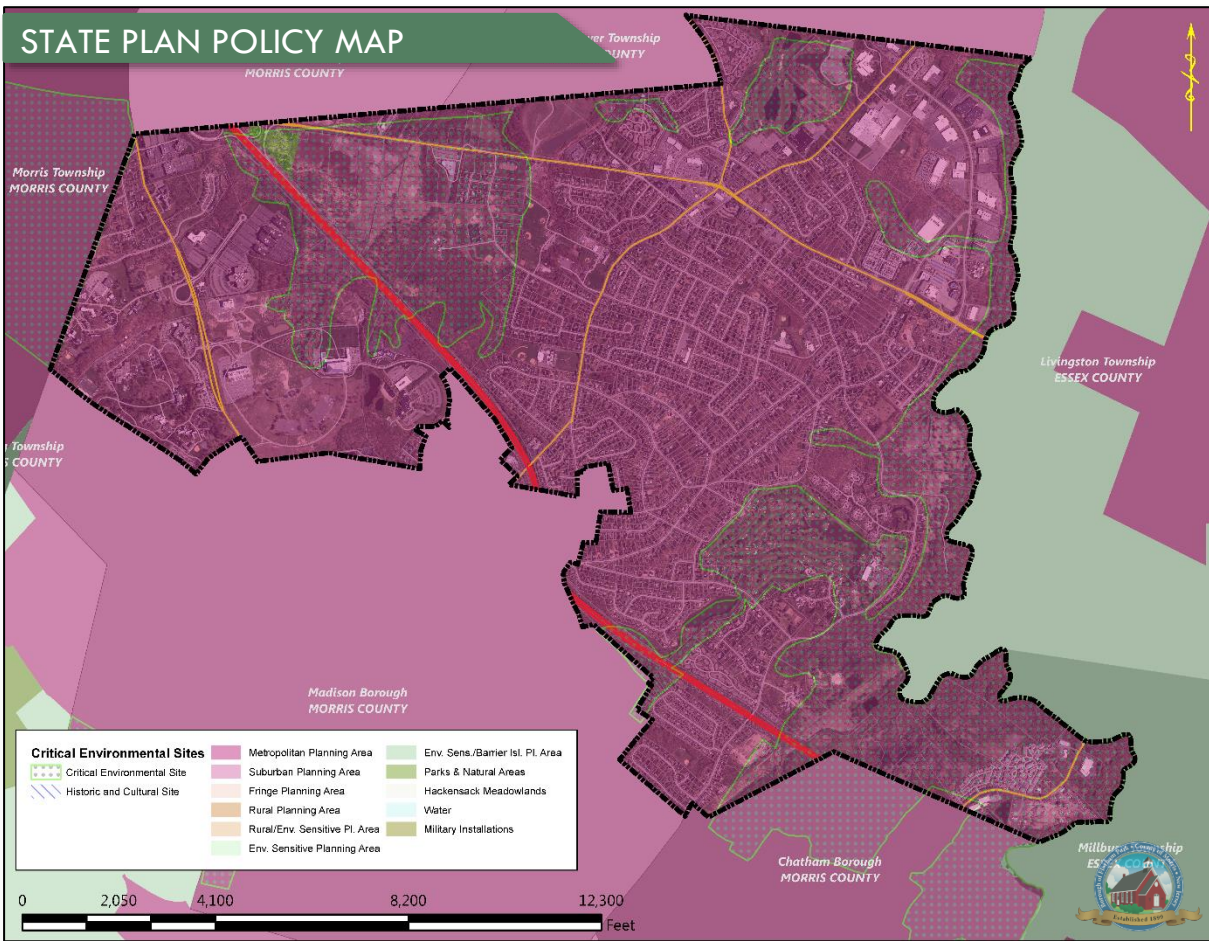
The SDRP identifies five Planning Areas within the State where different sets of goals and guidelines are considered appropriate to determine development activities. These Planning Areas are labeled as Metropolitan, Suburban, Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive lands. The SDRP also identifies Designated Centers where future development and redevelopment activities are most appropriate and will be actively promoted. Centers are categorized as Urban Centers, Regional Centers, Towns, Villages, and Hamlets corresponding to criteria including size, regional location, population, residential and employment densities, and available housing stock. The combination of Planning Areas and Designated Centers establishes a comprehensive framework for pursuing land use and development regulation throughout New Jersey.

The Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) comprises the most intensely developed regions in the state. The goals in this planning area category revolve around revitalizing existing cities and towns by encouraging compact growth and redevelopment. The Metropolitan Planning Area is identified as the most appropriate location for future development in New Jersey. The Borough of Florham Park is located entirely within the PA1, Metropolitan Planning Area. The map of Florham Park Borough within the boundaries of the New Jersey State Plan Planning Areas is shown in the map on the following page.

Additionally, portions of the Borough hatched and outlined in green depict areas known as "Critical Environmental Sites" ("CES") of the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The goal of the Critical Environmental and Historic sites designation is to protect the features and landscapes of historic or aesthetic significance that are less than one square mile in extent, and to help organize planning for new development or redevelopment by singling out the elements of natural systems,

small areas of habitat, historic sites, and other features that should continue to be expressed in the future landscape through protection and restoration. The presence of CES gives land owners and developers important advance information on how to shape their proposals for development of the land around them, focusing on including them within the design and function of the development whenever possible, while protecting them from adverse impacts. Designating a site as a CES means that the site is of local, regional or statewide significance and that its protection and enhancement is of primary importance.

While the SDRP was undergoing revision and update, and a draft update was released in 2011, it was never fully adopted. A draft of this 2011 State Plan is still available for review on the Office of Smart Growth website.



# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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## CONTENT

- I. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS
- II. HOUSING IN FLORHAM PARK
- III. COMMUNITY RESOURCES
- IV. LAND USE CHANGES

# I. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Analysis of various demographic factors provides not only a “snapshot” in time during the preparation of this plan, but likewise an overview of the historical factors and trends that may influence the demand for open space, parks, and recreation services throughout the Borough of Florham Park.

An overall understanding of the population trends in Florham Park is necessary to identify the present and to anticipate future needs for open space, parks, and recreation services and facilities. Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also change over time.

Table 4-A shows the population each decade from 1930 to 2020, based upon the Decennial Censuses. The table indicates that largest population growth occurred in the 1960s, when it more than tripled. The population has only seen a decrease in one decade, as recorded by the 1990 Census which showed an almost 9% decline. However, since 1990, there has been a steady growth in population, although numbers indicate that it may be slowing in recent years.

Year	Total Population	% change
1930	1,269	--
1940	1,609	26.7%
1950	2,385	48.2%
1960	7,222	203%
1970	8,094	12.1%
1980	9,359	15.6%
1990	8,521	-8.9%
2000	10,294	20.8%
2010	11,696	13.6%
2020	12,585	7.6%

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Censuses*

Table 4-B shows the median age for the Borough of Florham Park, the County of Morris, the State of New Jersey, and the United States from 2000 through 2020. The median age in Florham Park has fluctuated over time, and while it decreased significantly from 2000 to 2010, it rose again in 2020. The other geographic areas show a steady increase from 2000 to 2020. Florham Park’s median age has been higher than the USA as a whole each decade, while it has trended lower than both Morris County and New Jersey as a whole since 2010. The age of residents is important because Florham Park will continue to need to plan for the appropriate age groups that it will be serving.

	2000	2010	2020
<b>Florham Park</b>	43.8	38.1	39.2
<b>Morris County</b>	37.8	41.2	42.6
<b>New Jersey</b>	36.7	38.9	39.8
<b>USA</b>	35.6	37.1	37.9

*U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Censuses*

Table 4-C below demonstrates the Census documented changes in Florham Park’s population since 2000. The table indicates that the percentage of children under 5 has decreased as a proportion of the population since 2000, but have increase in numbers over time. Two age cohorts – 5 to 19 and 35 to 44 – have experienced both a drop in percentage of the total population makeup as well as sheer numbers in at least one decade. From 2010 to 2017, the 5 to 19 age cohort dropped



from 2,654 persons or 22.7% of the population to 1,911 persons or 16.2% of the population. The 35 to 44 age cohort represented a decrease in number from both the 2000 and 2010 recordings, declining from 1,368 people in 2000 to 1,187 in 2017. Additionally, both the 55 to 64 and 65 and over age cohorts have seen steady increases in population. In particular, the 65 and over population has increased by nearly 22% in sheer numbers and grown by 3.5% of the total proportion of the population between 2010 and 2017. There have been other steady increase in size and proportion of the 20 to 24 age cohort, while the 25 to 34 and 45 to 54 have also increased in numbers over time.

All of this information indicates that the population of Florham Park has an aging population, as well as a number of families with younger children. Adolescents in their earlier twenties may be more likely to live at home, which may account for the growth in that age cohort, while young professionals that are slightly older are moving to Florham Park because of its hub of businesses and proximity to job centers. Finally, combined with anecdotal knowledge of the Borough, there appears to be a trend of “lifelong” residents seeking to remain in the Borough, which has led to “aging in place” and overall growth of the senior population. The Borough is experiencing some of the same trends as seen throughout the U.S. of an increasing median age and greater proportion of seniors.

**Table 4-C: Population by Age 2000-2020, Borough of Florham Park**

Age	2000		2010		% Change from 2000	2020		% Change from 2010
	#	%	#	%		#	%	
Under 5	542	6.1	554	4.7	+2.2	501	4.3	-10.5
5 to 19	1,502	16.9	2,654	22.7	+76.7	1,990	17.1	-25.9
20 to 24	325	3.7	1,246	10.7	+283	1,661	14.2	+33.3
25 to 34	865	9.7	1,000	8.5	+15.6	1,371	11.7	+37.1
35 to 44	1,368	15.4	1,423	12.2	+4.0	1,007	8.6	-29.2
45 to 54	1,356	15.3	1,515	12.9	+11.7	1,299	11.1	-14.3
55 to 64	1,093	12.3	1,337	11.4	+21.9	1,455	12.4	+8.8
65 & Over	1,806	20.3	1,967	16.8	+8.9	2,435	20.8	+23.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,857</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,696</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>+32.1</b>	<b>11,719*</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>+0.2</b>

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses: 2000 and 2010, and 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates\*

Figure 4-D helps to visualize the change in age composition for the period between 2010 and 2020. The largest percentage increase over this period was seen in the 25 to 34 age range, followed by the 20 to 24 and 65 and over age ranges. The largest decrease in population was in the 35 to 44 age range, followed by the 5 to 19 age range. The decrease in the 35 to 44 age range is notable as the groups both preceding and following this age range both experienced population growth. Addressing the needs of the older members of the community will be of great importance to Florham Park, but the needs of other age ranges, nonetheless, will also be quite significant. The Borough faces a future of substantial needs for growing families and senior services.

**Figure 4-D: Change in Age Composition in Florham Park, 2010 to 2020**

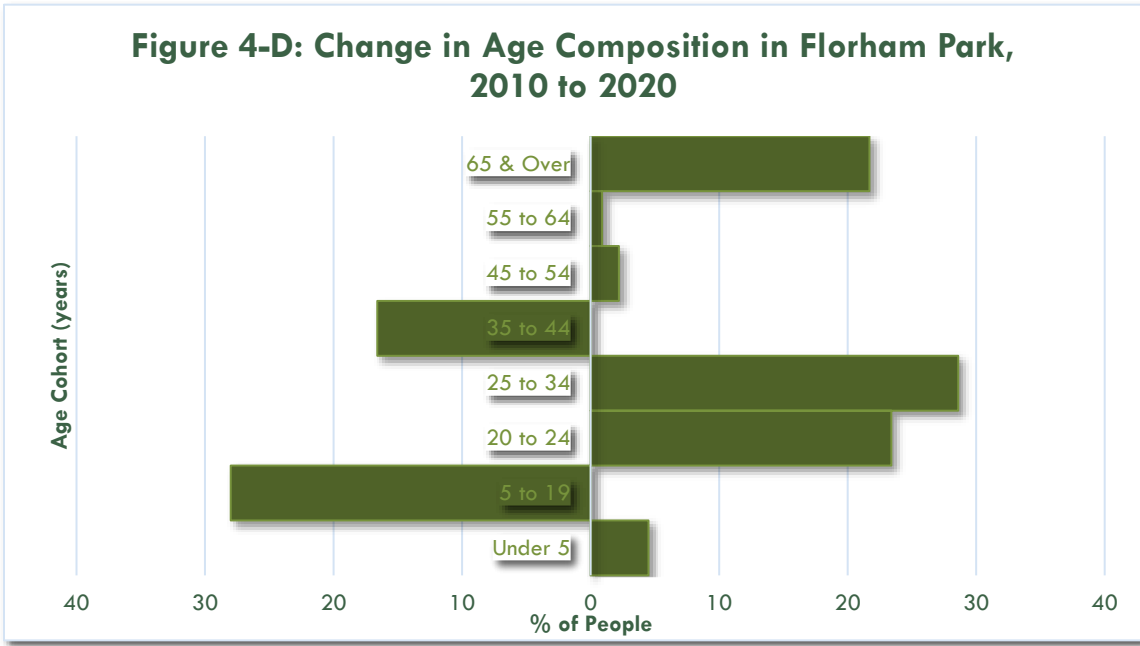


Table 4-E shows the average number of people per household and household size from 2000 and 2020. The table indicates that the average household size dropped very slightly from 2000 to 2010 from 2.62 to 2.48, and again to 2.41 in 2020. Households of 1 Person increased steadily every decade, while every other household size decreased as a proportion of total households.

**Table 4-E: Persons Per Household 2000-2020, Borough of Florham Park**

Household Size	2000		2010		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 Person	671	20.7	1,067	26.7	1,390	32.7
2 Persons	1,161	35.8	1,344	33.6	1,388	32.6
3 Persons	551	17.0	635	15.9	590	13.9
4 or More Persons	856	26.4	957	23.8	886	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,239</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,254*</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Average Persons Per Household</b>	<b>2.62</b>		<b>2.48</b>		<b>2.41</b>	

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses: 2000 and 2020, and 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates\*

## II. HOUSING IN FLORHAM PARK

### A. Housing Analysis

The Borough of Florham Park offers a diverse and stable housing stock. As of the 2010 Census, there were approximately 4,201 housing units in the Borough, of which 2,781 (66.2%) are owner occupied and 1,222 (29%) are rental units, according to the 2010 Census. The Borough has recently compiled data on the existing attached or multifamily rental and for-sale units, and found that there are approximately 2,107 in total existing – which corroborates with the breakdown of rental versus owner units because multifamily units tend to be renter occupied. Census data shows that of the total housing units, approximately 95%, or 4,033 units, are occupied. Further breakdown shows that the homeowner vacancy rate is estimated at 1% and the rental rate is estimated at 3.1%. Anecdotal data has shown that most of the rental units in the Borough have waiting lists, and help to create such a low vacancy rate because of the demand.

The multi-family housing stock was largely built between 1990 and 2009, with over 77% of all rental units constructed in this time period according to 2017 ACS Estimates. This could likely be linked with the much of the zoning that created the opportunity for the provision of affordable housing within the Borough being established at that time. Census data shows that of all housing units, 22% were built between 1980 and 2000, 23% were built between 1960 and 1980, and 26.7% were built between 1940 and 1960. Thus, the Borough has a housing stock that is both diverse in its age and housing type. This housing mix provides options for occupants of different household size, income level, and age.

The median value of a home in Florham Park is \$612,500 and the median rent is in excess of \$2,524 as of the most recent 2020 Census ACS 5-Year Estimates. Previous Census data helps to demonstrate the historical median sales in Florham Park, which shows that in 2000 the median value was \$322,400 – representing an almost two-fold increase by 2020. Nearly 65 percent of the owner-occupied dwellings were valued between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 or more in 2020, which was a dramatic increase over the previous Census value of 14.3% in 2000.

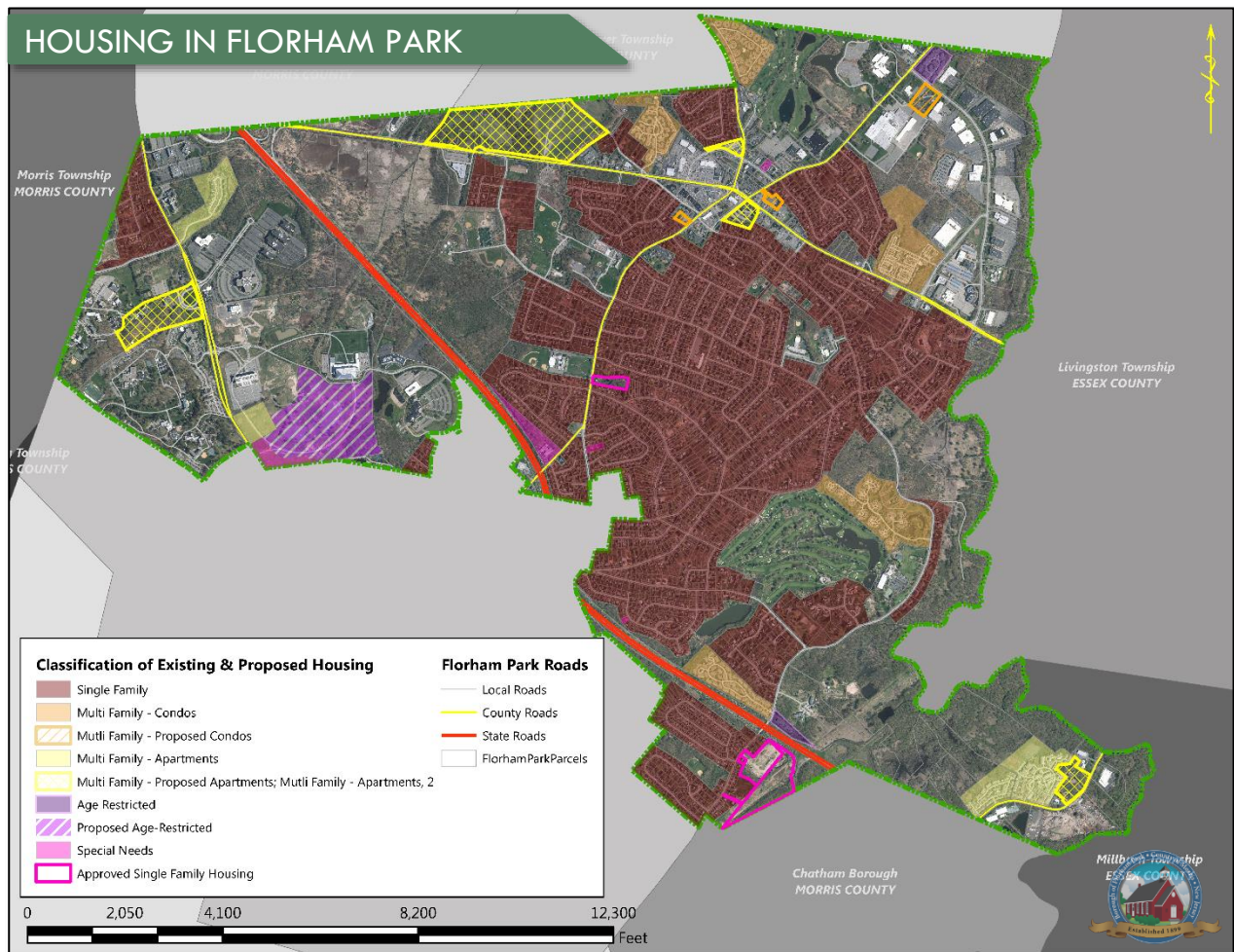
### B. Projected Development

In addition to the existing housing stock, the Borough has two single-family residential developments that are in the approvals or construction phase. On a larger scale, the Borough adopted its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”) of the Master Plan in 2017, which outlines housing development to be constructed in fulfillment of the Borough’s share of the statewide, court-mandated Third Round affordable housing obligation. The HEFSP outlines the construction of approximately 1,438 additional housing units, including 363 affordable units, through the year 2025. In total, the anticipated residential development is mostly multifamily units in the form of apartments or townhouses. As a result, it is anticipated that the Borough will experience changes to the total population and demographic makeup in the next 5 years. Changes to the makeup of the population have implications to both the current and future needs for open space, parks, and recreation in Florham Park.

The map below depicts the existing and proposed housing in the Borough. The most prominent feature on the map shows the red color, which denotes single-family housing in the Borough. While most single-family housing is existing, there are a number of proposed residential projects with a

housing mix that include new single-family homes which are shown in a pink outline. Additionally, existing townhomes and condominiums which function similarly to single-family homes and are conducive to families are represented in the light orange color. Multi-family apartments are shown in yellow, and age-restricted communities are shown in purple.

Many proposed housing projects include an attached or multi-family housing component, and are shown by the lines and cross-hatching overlaying the site in orange and yellow, respectively. These largely represent the sites used to satisfy the Borough's State mandated affordable housing obligation, which is outlined in the Borough's 2017 HEFSP. These projects are in varying stages of approvals, and many are anticipated to be built in the next 3 to 5 years.



The sites shaded in bright pink represent special needs housing in the Borough, which ranges from senior assisted living to group homes for development disabilities. Overall, Florham Park has a number of housing opportunities scattered throughout the Borough to provide a diversity of options, which are anticipated to expand with the developments outlined through the HEFSP.

The following table is correlated to the above map, and represents the existing projects in orange, yellow, and purple, and the proposed or approved projects hatched in orange, yellow, and purple.

<b>TABLE 4-F: EXISTING AND PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY OR ATTACHED UNITS IN FLORHAM PARK</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF UNITS</b>	<b>AFFORDABLE UNITS</b>
<b>EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY OR ATTACHED UNITS</b>			
<b>MULTI-FAMILY/ATTACHED FOR SALE</b>			
Belantrae Condominiums (Block 101, Lot 2)	250 Ridgedale Ave	190 TH	--
Hearthwood Village Condominiums (Block 702, Lot 1)	38 Park St	192 Condos	--
Brandywyne Condominiums (Block 3901, Lot 1)	Brandywyne Dr	160 Condos	--
Florham on the Fairways (Block 3101, Lot 1)	O'Neill Drive	89 Condos	--
<b>AGE RESTRICTED</b>			
Northgate Condominiums (Block 301, Lot 1)	1 Northridge Drive	33 Condos	--
Brooklake Park (Block 4201, Lot 17)	58 Brooklake Road	24 Condos	--
<b>MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL</b>			
Avalon Bay (Block 303, Lot 1)	58 Columbia Tpke	270 Apartments	--
Riverbend (Block 4201, Lot 26)	45 Passaic Ave	200 Apartments	50 Rental
Sun Valley I (Block 4201, Lot 29)	57 Passaic Ave	305 Apartments	75 Rental
Sun Valley II	Passaic Ave	115 Apartments	29 Rental
The Ave (Block 1401, Lot 1.07)	90 Park Ave	256 Apartments	--
Woodfield Estates (Block 1201, Lot 4)	188 Park Ave	155 Apartments	155 Rental
<b>UNITS PROPOSED TO SATISFY THIRD ROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OBLIGATION</b>			
<b>MULTI-FAMILY FOR-SALE</b>			
Braemar Homes (Block 303, Lot 11)	2 Vreeland Road	50 TH	10 TH
Afton Village (Block 905, Lot 30.02)	2 Hanover Road	16 TH	2 TH
B&B Associates (Block 1906, Lot 12 and 13)	165-167 Ridgedale Avenue	7 TH	1 TH
<b>AGE-RESTRICTED</b>			
The Green at Florham Park / Del-Webb (Block 1401, Lot 1.06)	86 Park Ave	425 TH	18 Age-Restricted TH
<b>MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL</b>			
Ridgedale Plaza Associates (Block 801, Lot 4)	215 Ridgedale Ave	54 Rental	11 Rental

Alfieri Property (Block 501, Lot 4; Block 601, Lots 1-3; Block 702, Lot 9)	Columbia Turnpike	560 Rental	112 Rental
Palmont Associates (Block 801, Lot 4)	147 Columbia Turnpike	126 Rental	25 Rental
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth (Block 1301, Lot 2)	Park Avenue	200 Rental	40 Rental
Sun Valley III (Block 4201, Lots 32, 33 and 34)	Passaic Ave	160 Rental	32 Rental

### III. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The residents of Florham Park can enjoy all of the amenities associated with living in the NY Metro region, while also enjoying the benefits of a safe and family-friendly community. With exceptional schools, recreational opportunities, and a positive business environment, Florham Park has established itself as a well-rounded community and ideal place for families, professionals, and retirees. In addition to key community and social services, Florham Park also offers a number of activities and local organizations for all ages.

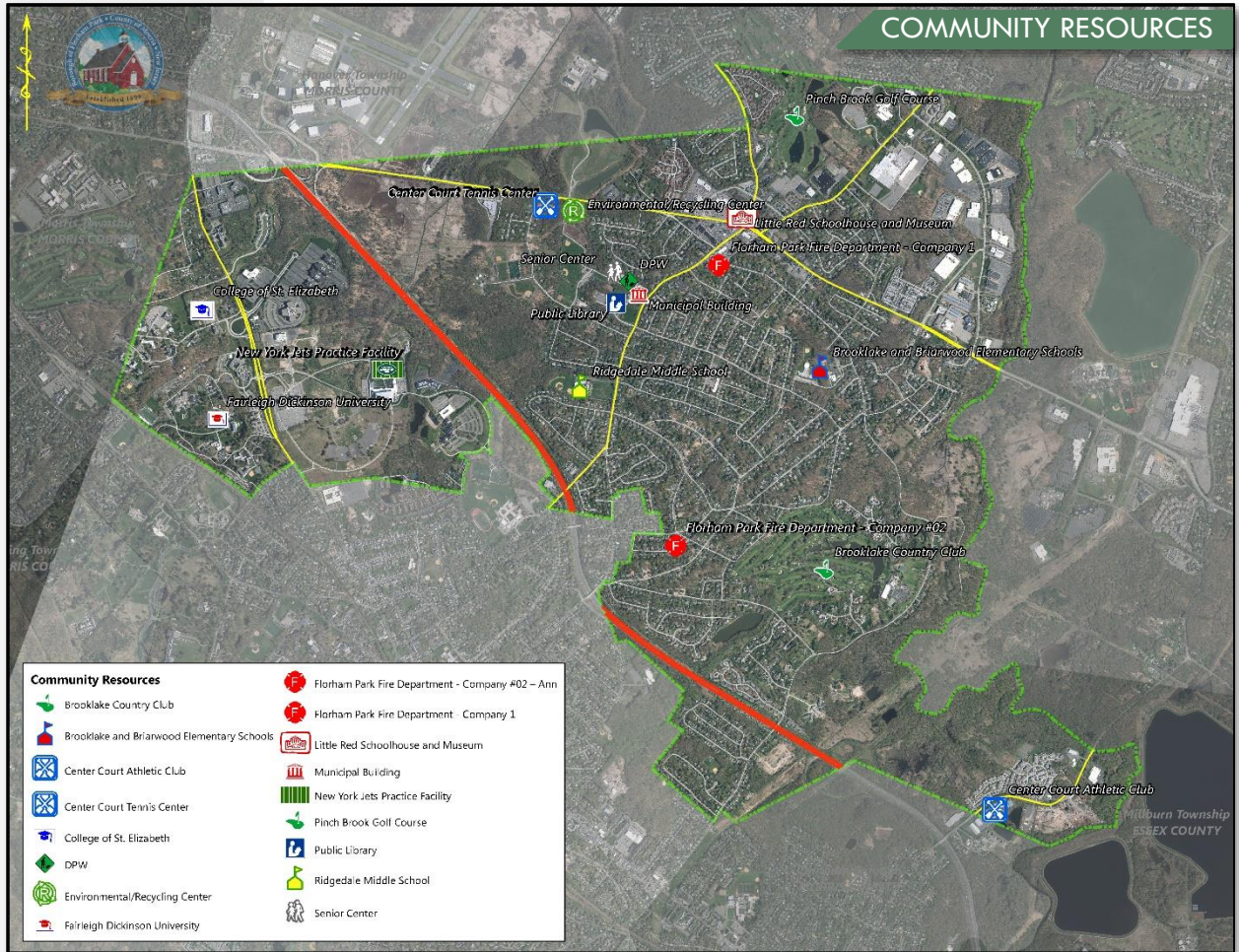
*Borough Events*

Florham Park prides itself on its close-knit community and hosts many Borough-wide events to help bolster that connection. Typical events include the annual Fourth of July Celebration and Fireworks display and Summer Concert series held on the Great Lawn of the Municipal Complex.

*Local Resources*

The Florham Park Free Public Library, located within the Municipal Complex, hosts events and activities and events year round including storytime series, yoga and movement classes, crafting sessions, and kids movie showings throughout the year. The Florham Park Senior Center offers residents age 62 and up countless daily activities, field trips, seminars, and parties throughout the year. In addition to activities, the center provides a variety of key social services, including arranging transportation when needed to and from the center and partners with AARP for events. Additionally, the Borough encourages and fosters volunteer opportunities that have direct benefits to many residents.

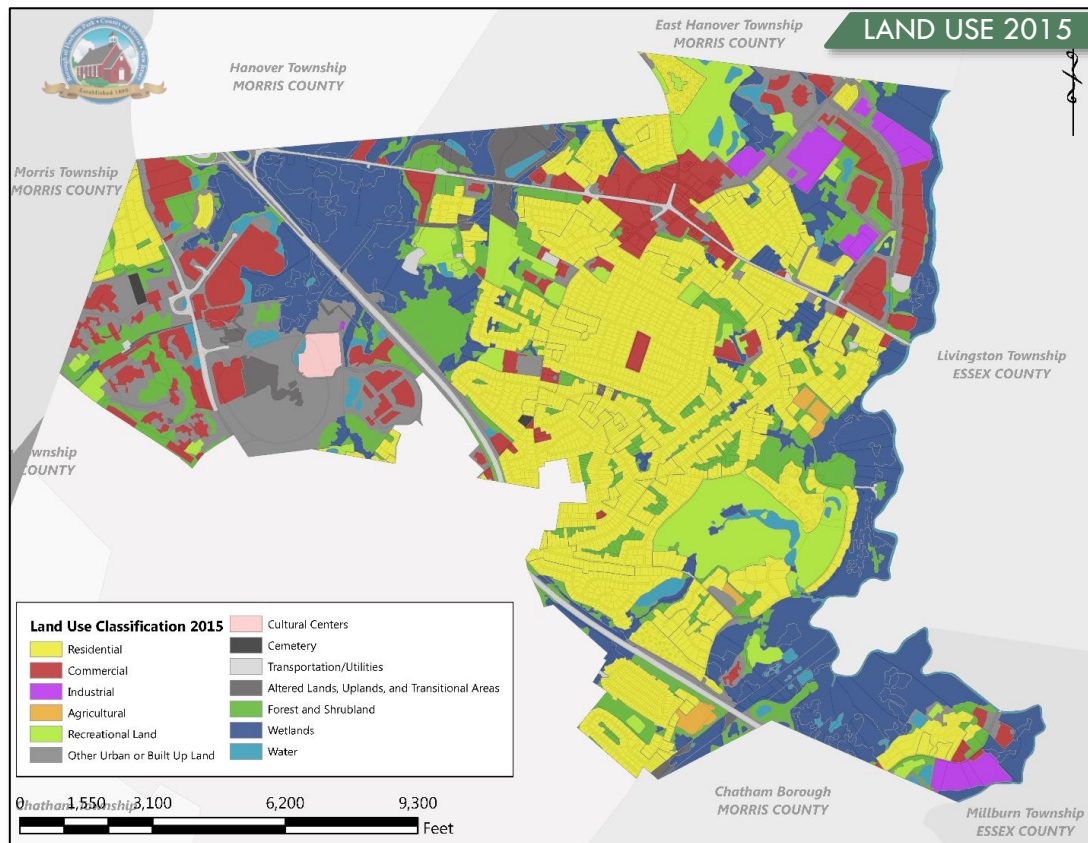
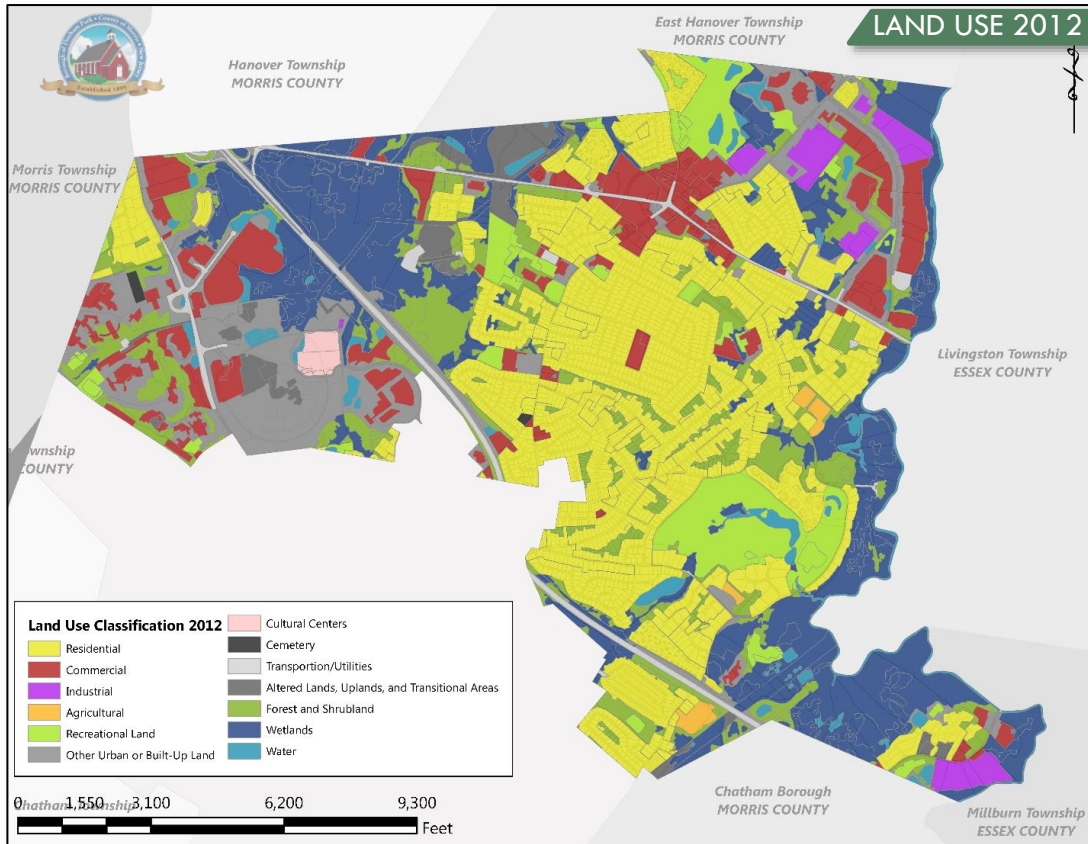
The map below helps to depict some of the social, community, and local business resources that the Borough offers its residents and visitors.



## IV. LAND USE CHANGES

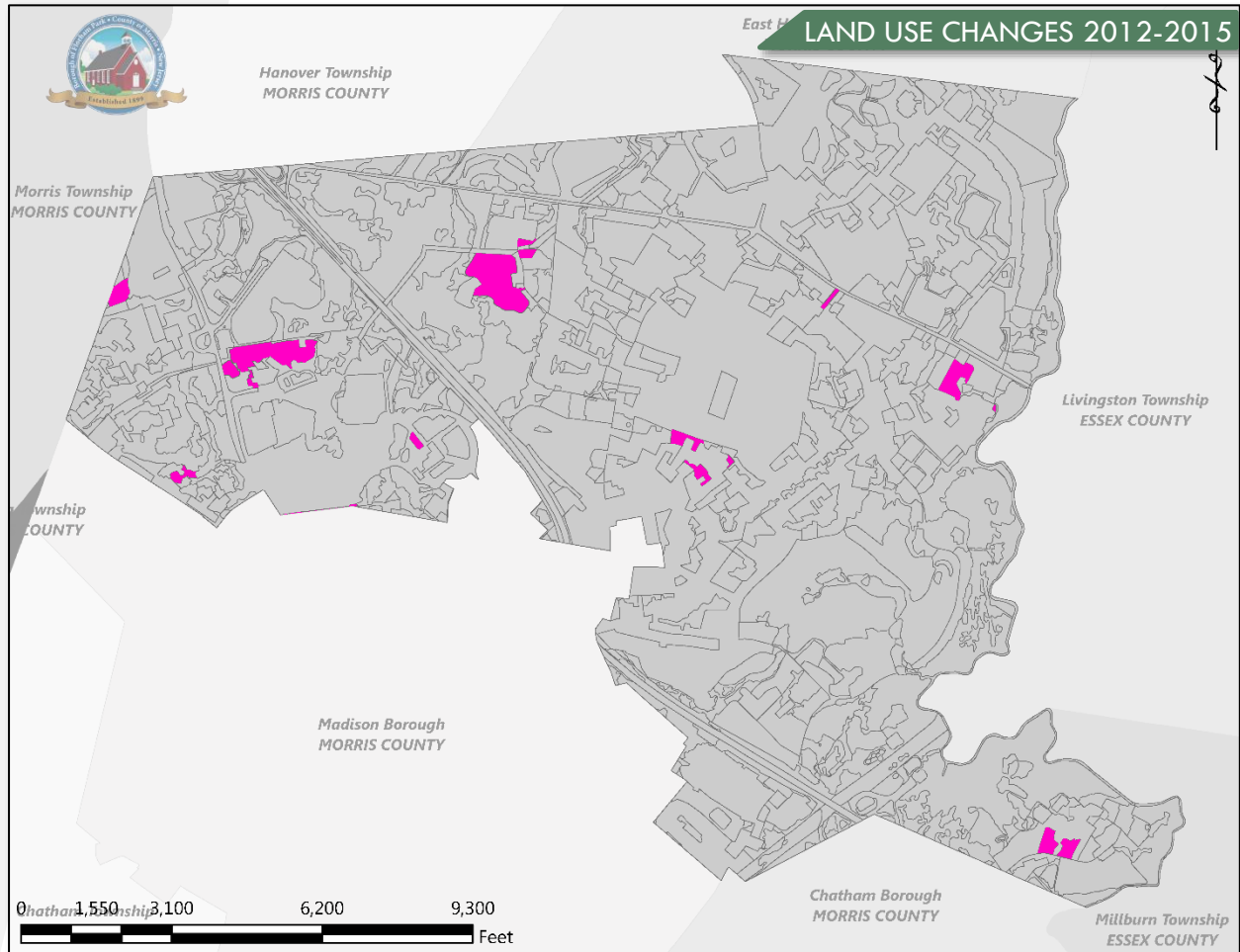
Florham Park Borough is 7.6 square miles, or 4,864 acres, in area. It is developed primarily as a suburban community with strong pockets and corridors of commercial and retail businesses. Land use/land cover data produced by the NJDEP provides land use classifications that show generally how land is developed. Utilizing data produced from different years allows for a visualization of land use changes over time, and can help to analyze how a municipality is developing its land.

The following maps from 2012 and 2015 show the land use/land cover in Florham Park. The yellow areas represent residential development – ranging from low to high density, while red represents commercial development and purple represents industrial. Environmentally sensitive land with both water and wetlands is shown in light and dark blue, respectively. Undeveloped land is largely shown in a pale green as forest or shrubland, and recreational sites are shown in bright green. There are more general classifications such as “other urban or built-up land” and “altered lands, uplands, and transitional areas”, which are shown in medium and dark shades of grey. Cultural centers and stadiums are shown in pink, cemeteries are shown in black, and transportation or utility uses are shown in light grey.





The distinctions and changes between the 2012 and 2015 land use/land cover data is difficult to discern. However, the following map helps to distinguish the areas in the Borough that have undergone change between those years. The subsequent Table provides a more detailed breakdown of the amount of land, and type of land use/land cover change between 2012 and 2015.



**TABLE 4-G: FLORHAM PARK BOROUGH  
LAND USE/LAND COVER CHANGE 2012-2015**

Acreage	2012 LU/LC	2015 LU/LC
2.642	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY OR MULTIPLE DWELLING
3.286	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY OR MULTIPLE DWELLING
8.896	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	COMMERCIAL
4.148	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
0.491	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, MEDIUM DENSITY	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
1.979	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY

0.451	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
0.301	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
0.243	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
0.167	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
0.940	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, LOW DENSITY
1.039	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	COMMERCIAL
0.061	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	COMMERCIAL
5.546	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	COMMERCIAL
0.037	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	TRANSPORTATION/UTILITIES
0.037	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	TRANSPORTATION/ UTILITIES
4.035	FOREST	RESIDENTIAL, RURAL, SINGLE UNIT
1.409	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	COMMERCIAL
0.025	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	COMMERCIAL/SERVICES
1.392	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
0.277	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
1.952	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
3.223	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
1.637	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	STORMWATER BASIN
1.056	FOREST	RECREATIONAL LAND
5.466	FOREST	RECREATIONAL LAND
0.603	FOREST	RECREATIONAL LAND
1.003	FOREST	RECREATIONAL LAND
0.127	WETLANDS	RECREATIONAL LAND
0.174	WETLANDS	RECREATIONAL LAND
17.471	TRANSITIONAL AREAS	RECREATIONAL LAND
0.482	FOREST	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND
4.734	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	SHRUBLAND
0.395	FOREST	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.395	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, MEDIUM DENSITY	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.519	RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE UNIT, MEDIUM DENSITY	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
1.241	RESIDENTIAL, RURAL, SINGLE UNIT	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.100	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.532	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.239	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.788	OTHER URBAN OR BUILT-UP LAND	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.811	FOREST	TRANSITIONAL AREAS
0.327	FOREST	TRANSITIONAL AREAS

# OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

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## CONTENT

I. OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES

II. FACILITY INVENTORY

III. PROGRAM INVENTORY

IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS

# I. OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES

## A. Local Resources

The Florham Park Recreation Department is the master element responsible for organization and direction of the Borough park and recreation facilities and program offerings. It represents the significant interface between the general public and the municipal administration for all matters related to the provision of Recreation programs and Park facility operations.

The entirety of this enterprise is performed by two municipal employees (Director, Program Director) who undertake the responsibility for programming the entire activity calendar for the Borough including an enormous array of youth, adult and senior activities, special events and management of the park system, play fields, playgrounds and Senior Center.

The Recreation Department provides comprehensive management, oversight, staffing, scheduling, registration, insurance and program direction for in-house activities as well as numerous social, educational and recreational events out of town.

Public representation in Borough recreation planning is the responsibility of the Borough Recreation Committee, a group of residents appointed to seats on that Committee. This advisory group is linked to the Borough Council through an appointed liaison/member of the committee who directs requests, proposals and responses to the committee for discussion at monthly meetings.

Only two Borough representatives engage the public directly by answering the phone at the Recreation offices. They are the Director and Program Director, both simultaneously sharing a fairly impressive juggling act of preparing dozens of seasonally changing programs while dealing with the urgencies arising from those most current. The Recreation Department is located within the Community Center in close proximity to one of the Borough's largest recreation facilities at Emmett Park. The Community Center includes offices, a reception area, storage space, a meeting room and adjacent restrooms, an activity room and food service facility.

Beginning in 2000, the Borough Council began funding the "Capital Improvement Fund for Open Space" equal to one cent per \$100 of assessed value. The amount was lowered to one half of one cent per \$100 of assessed value in 2008. From its inception through 2009, it has collected \$1,420,462. The Borough of Florham Park's local fund for open space is not an established fund in that the contributions made are not derived by a separate tax that was established through referendum, but rather are derived as a component of the annual appropriation of the Capital Improvement Fund made in the annual budget. The monies there are not dedicated for open space; their disbursement is at the discretion of the Borough Council. There is no ordinance or resolution that addresses an annual contribution to open space in the Borough; it has been done as a practice within the budget procedure almost every year. There is no local requirement of the Council to make such contribution.

In general, open space and recreation planning is more efficient and cost-effective when supported by a stable source of funding, such as an open space tax or similar, and the implementation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan as a component of a comprehensive Master Plan. This allows a local government to acquire lands in its open space and recreation plan without making multiple,

site-specific applications to Green Acres. An open space tax provides a local revenue stream to fund open space preservation and recreation projects.

As the Open Space and Recreation programming and facilities within the Borough continue to grow in number or size, the Borough should continue to consider facility management to ensure the longevity of open space, fields, and facility equipment.

## **B. State Resources**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection created the Green Acres Program in 1961 to assist counties and municipalities throughout the State in enhancing existing recreation facilities and acquiring land for preservation and recreation purposes. In this mission, the Green Acres Program administers five program areas including: State Park and Open Space Acquisition; Local Governments and Nonprofit Funding; Stewardship and Legal Services; and Planning and Information Management. Its Local Governments and Nonprofit Funding program area includes the Planning Incentive Program which provides grants and loans to counties and municipalities to acquire land for public recreation and conservation purposes which have enacted an open space tax and adopted an open space and recreation plan. Failure to comply with both of these requirements limits the ability of a governmental entity to obtain Green Acres funding. In addition, matching grants are only awarded for preserved lands identified in an open space and recreation plan.

As a condition of applying for and receiving Green Acres funding, each municipality or county is required to prepare and maintain a Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), listing all Green Acres-funded properties in the municipality or county as well as all other lands held for conservation and/or recreation purposes. Lands listed on a ROSI include those owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the municipality (or county) and may include land owned in fee, land leased by the municipality or county for recreation purposes, land owned by a private entity upon which the municipality or county holds a conservation easement, or any land in which the municipality or county holds a specific recreation and/or conservation interest.

Properties included on a ROSI are to be held for conservation and recreation purposes in perpetuity, and may not be transferred from municipal or county ownership without first making an application to the State House Commission for what is termed a “disposal” of such lands. Similarly, properties included on a ROSI may not be used for purposes other than conservation or recreation without first making application to the State House Commission for what is termed a “Diversion” of such lands.

## **C. Funding and Acquisition History**

In 2000, The Borough of Florham Park developed a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan. Completed in 2001, this Plan qualified the Borough for enrollment in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Green Acres Planning Incentive (PI) Program. As a result, the Borough has received \$2,300,000 in funds from the Green Acres Planning Incentive Program. Additionally, having an Open Space and Recreation Plan that is adopted and approved by the State of New Jersey (as the Borough of Florham Park’s) allows other organizations (such as non-profit land trusts) to contribute their Green Acres funding to land preservation projects in the Borough. In addition, the Borough has received \$5,492,500 in Morris County grant awards through the Morris County Preservation Trust Fund for land conservation in the municipality. Since the inception of the open space program, the Borough has completed 6 projects with Morris County

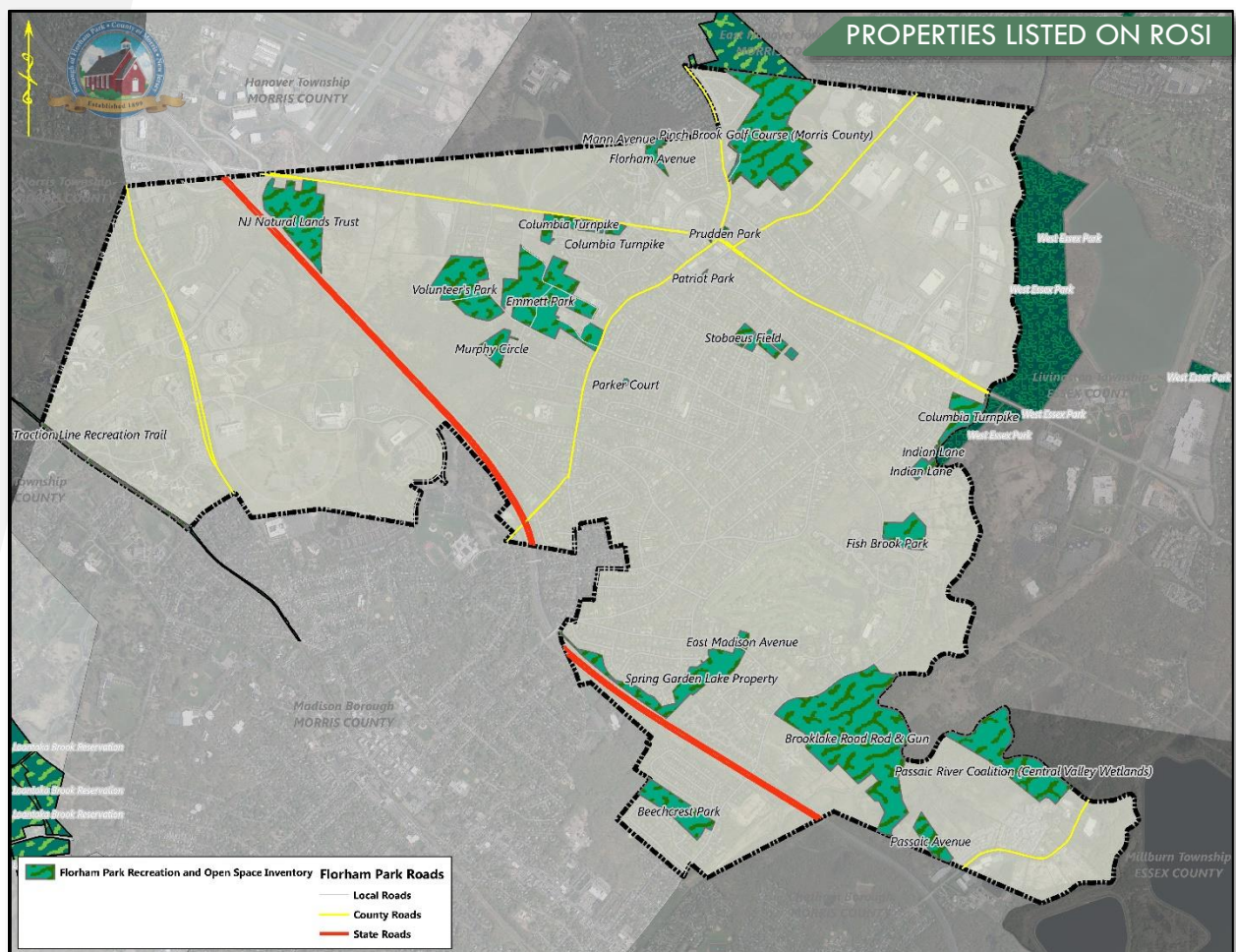
grant awards which has protected 13.28 acres of land in the Borough – 11.44 acres at Fish Brook Park (Block 3201, Lots 1 and 22.01); and 1.84 acres at Stobaeus Park (Block 2009, Lots 5, 15, 16, and 19). Land has been preserved to protect residents from flooding events, to conserve the Borough’s sensitive natural resources, and to expand and create recreational resources. Fish Brook Park is a former farm that provides the citizens of the Borough a beautiful space for resource-based (“passive”) recreation, as well as valuable habitat for native plants and wildlife. Stobaeus Park was expanded in 2011 with 4 parcels and it functions as an important active recreation resource for the Borough, including a frequently used baseball diamond. Since the 2011 Plan, the Stobaeus Park parcels have been formally added to the Borough ROSI. Lastly, the Borough received \$100,000 from The Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (MCUMA) towards the purchase of a portion of Fish Brook Park. Additionally, the Borough has undertaken and completed the construction of “Volunteer’s Park” since the completion of the previous plan. The site was acquired through the portion of the former Exxon site north of Route 24, and was reserved under the rezoning for wetlands restoration, open space, and playing fields. Finally, the Borough was awarded a total of \$24,060 through the Morris County Preservation Trust’s Recreational Trail Grant Program for the construction of the Stobaeus-Briarwood Trail.

## II. FACILITY INVENTORY

### A. Preserved Municipal Open Space (Classified on ROSI)

Several properties owned by the Borough are used for conservation and recreation purposes, and are listed on Florham Park's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) filed with NJDEP Green Acres. Currently, there are 33 parcels listed on the ROSI totaling 330 acres, including the 64 acre County owned Pinch Brook Golf Course and 36 acre parcel owned by the Passaic River Coalition.

Since the last Open Space and Recreation Element was completed, 8 properties were formally added to the ROSI, including four (4) small properties located on Burnside Avenue with a total 1.84 acres – Block 2009, Lots 15-17 and Lot 19; the two (2) small portions of Block 1301, Lots 1 and 2 comprising of the Traction Line Recreation Trail; the County-owned Pinch Brook Golf Course property; and the Passaic River Coalition parcel.



The Borough of Florham Park contains 398 acres of permanently protected open space. This includes land owned by the state (66 acres), county (65 acres), Borough (231 acres), and non-profit organizations (36 acres), making up 8.3% of its 4,778 acres (7 square miles). The greenways identified within the Borough of Florham Park are Passaic Meadows Greenway, Black Meadows

Greenway, and Emmett Park Greenway. There are four blueways: Passaic River, Spring Garden Lake, Pinch Brook, and Black Cat Ditch. In addition, the Environmental Commission has identified the forested land cover in the Borough as important for conservation and has included these areas on its Greenway Map. The Borough is home to a portion of the Traction Line Trail and the Environmental Commission has completed a footpath around Spring Garden Lake. As an enrollee in the Sustainable Jersey program, the Borough is encouraged to look into the establishment of bicycle routes to provide alternative modes of transportation for residents.

<b>TABLE 5-A: FLORHAM PARK RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY (ROSI)</b>				
<b>BLOCK</b>	<b>LOT</b>	<b>ACREAGE</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>NAME</b>
PORTION OF:				
1301	1	1.5	145 PARK AVE	Traction Line Recreation Trail
1301	2	0.35	PARK AVE	Traction Line Recreation Trail
1701	9	46.9	111 RIDGEDALE AVE	Emmett Park
1801	27	8.1	2 PARTRIDGE LN	Columbia Turnpike
1802	1	1.8	1 PARTRIDGE LN	Columbia Turnpike
1901	8	0.157	201 RIDGEDALE AVE	Campfield Gardens
1903	6	0.35	314 BROOKLAKE RD	Patriot Park
2009	17	0.512	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park
2009	20	0.459	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park
2009	15	0.516	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park Ext.
2009	16	0.516	BURNSIDE AVE REAR	Stobaeus Park Ext.
2009	18	0.918	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park
2009	19	0.512	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park Ext.
2011	2	2.9	LESLIE AVE	Stobaeus Field
2012	1	2.89	BURNSIDE AVE	Stobaeus Park
2101	57	0.228	INDIAN LN REAR	Indian Lane
2101	18	6.95	COLUMBIA TPKE	Columbia Turnpike
2201	25	6.363	MURPHY CIRCLE REAR	Murphy Circle
2302	1	0.3874	PARKER CT	Parker Court
3201	1	0.5	196 BROOKLAKE RD	Fish Brook Park
3201	22.01	11	200 BROOKLAKE RD	Fish Brook Park
3201	23	0.41	OVERLOOK DRIVE, REAR	Indian Lane
3201	4	2.59	23 INDIAN LN REAR	Indian Lane
3601	15	1.5	65 EAST MADISON AVE	East Madison Avenue
3801	1	25.81	70 EAST MADISON AVE	Spring Garden Lake
4001	41	15.411	35 BROOKLAKE RD	Beechcrest Rec Area
4201	24	7.85	PASSAIC AVE	Passaic Avenue
4201	36	35.58	85 PASSAIC AVE	Central Valley Wetlands
4201	15	79.8	BROOKLAKE RD	Brooklake Rd
801	51	2.78	FLORHAM AVE	Florham Avenue
801	52	0.84	42 MANN AVE	Mann Avenue
902	4	0.26	152 COLUMBIA TPKE	Prudden Park

Since the adoption of the last Open Space Element, the Borough has acquired properties for preservation or recreation use, including: Volunteers Park site (portion of Block 1402, Lot 1.01); Block 2905, Lot 33 (known as the Baldwin/Hillside Park Pass); and Block 1003, Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4. It is recommended that these properties all be added to the Borough Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI).



## **B. Classifying Florham Park's Open Space, Parks, and Recreation**

The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines provides definitions for park classifications to consider types of uses, size and relative service area of each park. It also acknowledges that each community is unique in terms of geographical, cultural and socioeconomic make-up. As such each community or park agency should develop its own standards for recreation, parks and open space, with the NRPA definitions as a guide. An open space, parks, and recreation classification system helps not only inventory open space resources, but likewise helps to evaluate recreation opportunities available to the public.

This is especially important for communities like Florham Park that are largely developed, and don't offer opportunities for significant expansion of amenities, facilities or open space. As a means of organizing the public open space facilities found in Florham Park, the park areas are classified according to a hierarchy that provides for a comprehensive system of interrelated parks. All parks can be placed into specific categories or classifications. Some parks that meet neighborhood needs and have specialized amenities could be placed into more than one classification, but are placed in the classification that meets the broadest definition. The park and open space classifications that are appropriate for Florham Park do not necessarily meet the NRPA guidelines in a strict sense as far as size or amenities, but are appropriate to the overall offerings of the Borough. The classification criteria have been modified and utilized for Florham Park as follows in Table 5-A.

**TABLE 5-B: CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

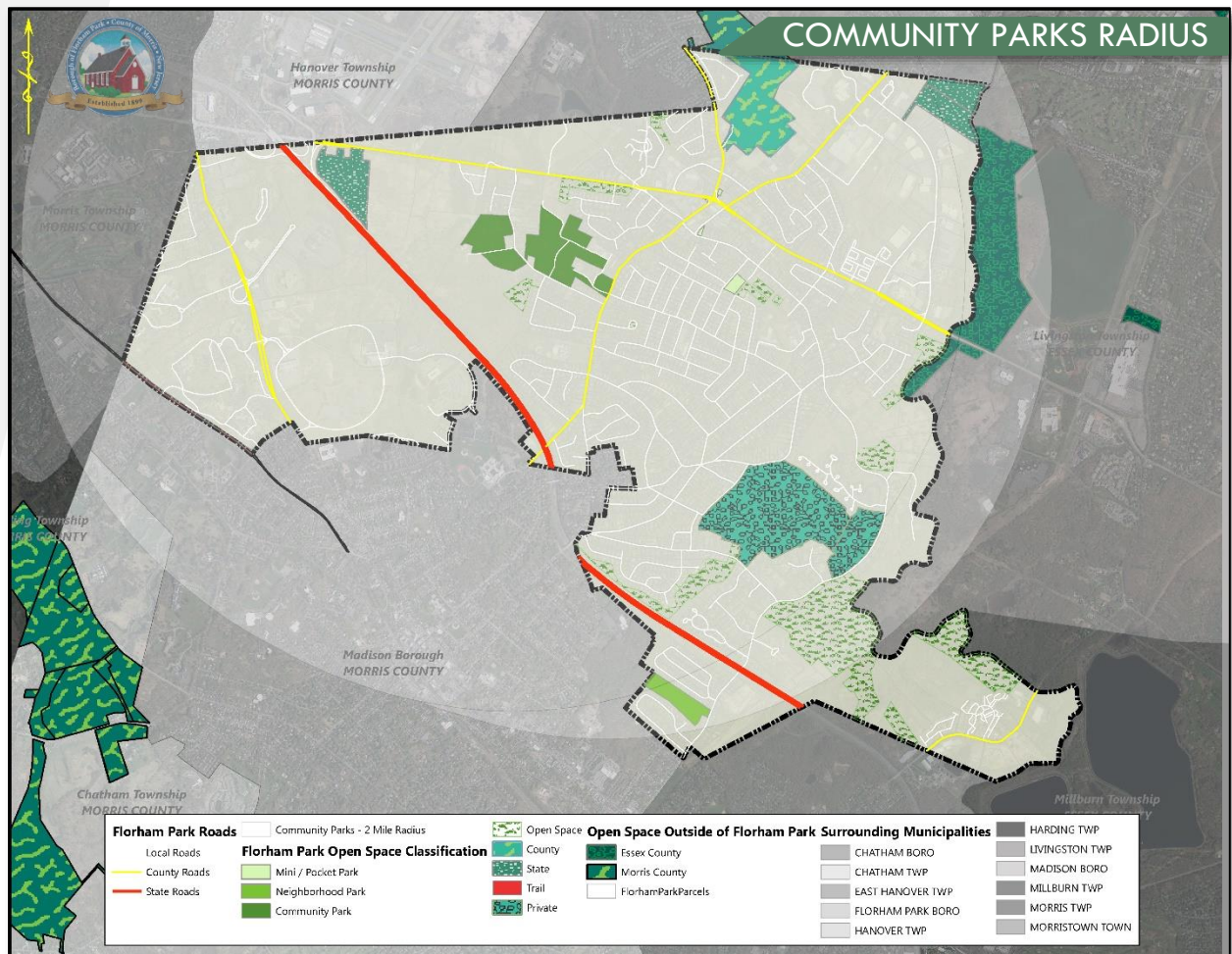
PARK TYPE	TYPICAL SIZE & SERVICE AREA	ACRES/ POPULATION	TYPICAL FACILITIES	FEATURES
<b>LOCAL OPEN SPACE</b>				
<b>Mini-Park or Pocket Park</b>	+/- ¼ Mile 5 Minute Walk	0.25 acres/ 1,000	Playground/tot lot equipment, benches, picnic tables, gazebos, ornamental landscape features	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population area, or that serve a specific function or age group.
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	5-15 Acres ½ - 1 Mile	2.0 acres/ 1,000	Recreational activities such as field games, court games, picnicking and playground areas.  Many neighborhood parks may also contain athletic fields that are used by community athletic organizations, thus serving the community as a whole.	Generally designed with a focus on informal active and passive recreation that serves neighborhood recreation needs.
<b>Community Park</b>	15-50 Acres (25+ acres preferred, but special amenities or athletic fields whole may be on smaller sites)  1-5 Miles	5.0 acres/ 1,000	These parks may contain significant athletic complexes, aquatic amenities, walking paths, picnic areas and various other active and passive amenities depending upon community needs and site suitability.	The focus of a community park is on meeting community-based recreation, athletics and open space needs.
<b>Linear Park / Trail</b>	N/A	N/A	May also include active play areas, fitness courses, picnic areas, etc.	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel (pleasure driving, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc.).
<b>REGIONAL OPEN SPACE</b>				
<b>County or State Park</b>	100 + 5-6 Miles Travel time within 20 minutes.Acres	5.0 acres/ 1,000	Should include unique natural areas of ecological interest. Should be located off of major roads. Destination-oriented parks.	Large properties that contain some active recreation facilities and a large percentage of natural or geographical features. Capable of providing a range of specific recreational facilities.
<b>Nature Park / Preserve</b>	Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A	Majority of park to remain in its natural state.	Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest. Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency.

The parks and recreation facilities inventory in this section identifies each park by its park type category based upon the categories in Table 5-A and also lists the specific facilities that are located within each park.

## 1. COMMUNITY PARKS

Florham Park has 2 Community Parks - Emmett Park and Volunteer's Park – which are both centrally located near the Borough Municipal Building. Community Parks are generally diverse in nature, serving a broader purpose than the neighborhood or mini parks. While community parks may include neighborhood park amenities, and do act as neighborhood parks as well, the focus of a community park is on meeting community-based recreation, athletics and open space needs.

These parks may contain significant athletic complexes, aquatic amenities, walking paths, picnic areas and various other active and passive amenities depending upon community needs and site suitability. Community Parks usually serve multiple neighborhoods, and with special amenities serving the residents of the entire Park District. With neighborhood park amenities, the Community Park typically is designated to serve an area within a 1/2 mile to over 3 mile radius.



**a. EMMETT PARK**

Block 1701, Portion of Lot 9

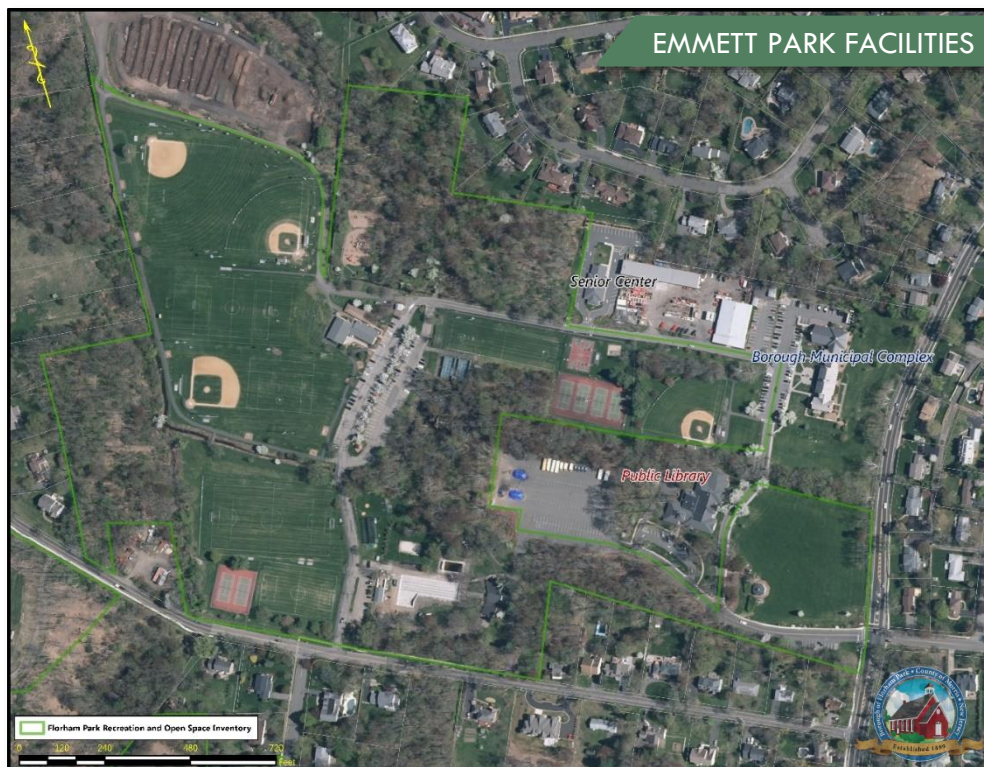
111 RIDGEDALE AVE

46.9 acres

**1. Site Location**

Emmett Park is located in central Florham Park, and the parking for the park can be accessed from Elm Street to the south, or via Ridgedale Avenue through the Municipal Complex and along Longley Lane to the east. Emmett Park has been the flagship recreation resource for the bulk of Borough programming since its initial development 40 years ago. It has grown in size and increased in diversity over that time period to its current condition, as a complete community park. At 49 acres in area, the site is not overly large for its purposes particularly as much of the site interior space is undevelopable because of wetlands and drainage courses. It consists of two fairly distinct portions of the park. One shares higher land with the Borough Hall, Library, Public Works and a new senior center, and includes a one (1) diamond ballfield, four (4) tennis courts, one (1) lighted basketball court, one (1) small multi-purpose field, two (2) platform tennis courts, a bocce alley and various walkways and wet, forested spaces. This is the oldest portion of the recreation complex and as it was created piecemeal, is not the most sensible design for current purposes.

The second site type is a filled wetland in the floodplain. It is wide open, flat, and reliably wet. The Borough has struggled for years against the seasonal and sudden impacts of storms and water table fluctuation in an annual battle to manage and maintain reasonably competent turf surfaces. This portion of the park is the primary athletic field complex in the Borough. It consists of: one (1) Little League diamond baseball field, one (1) 50'/70' baseball field and one (1) standard diamond baseball field, one (1) regulation sized and one (1) small sized soccer/multi-purpose field, one (1) football/lacrosse field, two (2) tennis courts, a batting cage pair, a large play equipment area, a picnic shelter, a community pool, and a community center. This complex is separated from the remainder of the park by a main driveway and parking areas.



## 2. Existing Facilities

The park is one of the two Community Parks in Florham Park with approximately 49 acres of parkland developed for recreational purposes. The park offers a wide variety of amenities, including multiple diamond fields, multiple tennis courts, a basketball court, a playground, multiple multi-purpose/ soccer fields, a football/lacrosse field, batting cages, community pool. The park also offers support facilities such as picnic shelters, restrooms, and a community center. The park offers lighted fields nearest to the community center building, which share use as diamond fields for baseball and softball, and multi-purpose for soccer, lacrosse, and football.

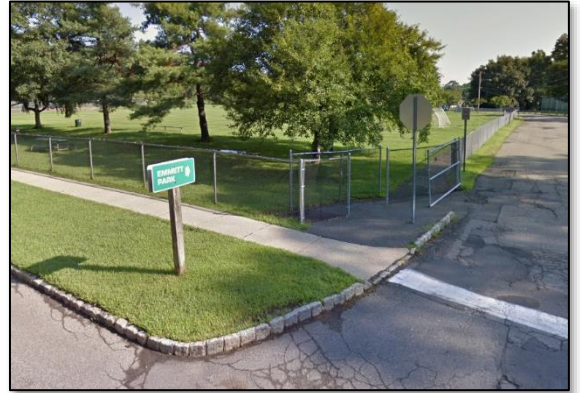
- Lighted, little league diamond baseball field
- Lighted, diamond softball field
- Lighted, senior league diamond baseball field
- Lighted, football/lacrosse field
- Lighted, football/lacrosse practice field
- Elm Street small-sized soccer field
- Regulation sized soccer field
- Pond field – multi-purpose practice field
- Fenced diamond baseball field
- Craig Keeler Memorial Basketball Court
- Pat and BJ Highland Memorial Tennis Courts
- Platform Tennis Courts
- Elm Street Tennis Courts
- Batting Cages
- Bocce Courts
- Dale Anderson Jaycees Tot Lot
- Municipal Pool
- Paved walking trails
- Large picnic shelter
- Community center with restrooms

## 3. Facility Issues

- Piecemeal design creates distinct and separated areas
- Limited seating areas
- Seasonal flooding of fields

## 4. Signage

- There are existing signs for Emmett Park located at 1) the intersection of Hauptman-Dailey Memorial Way and Longley Lane near the Borough Municipal Building, and 2) along Elm Street.



**b. VOLUNTEER'S PARK**

Block 1402, Portion of Lot 1.01

41 ELM ST

25.7 acres

**1. Site Location**

Volunteer's Park is a 113-acre land tract acquired as part of the former Exxon site. The site is segregated by use into a 26-acre element dedicated to active recreation, with the remainder being preserved for nature study, conservation, and passive purposes.

This park is the newest open space and recreation facility in Florham Park, and was constructed with the intention to resolve many of the field deficits and some of the chronic management issues presented by the existing recreation fields. The park consists of: one (1) lighted, synthetic turf multi-purpose soccer/football/lacrosse field; one (1) lighted, turf surfaced multi-purpose field; one (1) non-lighted additional grass turf multi-purpose field; one (1) lighted, little league diamond baseball field; one (1) lighted, little league diamond baseball/softball field; one (1) standard diamond baseball field; one (1) basketball court; one (1) playground/tot lot; one (1) building structure inclusive of a large activity room, meeting room, offices, restrooms, a kitchen and storage and mechanical rooms; a community garden; a perimeter pathway system; driveways and parking lots. As all of these fields are much larger and better drained than other system fields, as well as fully fenced, lighted, and provisioned with permanent seating, the preference to utilize them will be likely makes them in higher demand amongst local Borough teams and leagues. Additional lighted field spaces will further improve the availability of scheduling opportunities, particularly for older groups of participants who will be able to play under lights. Future expansion opportunities for the Park may include the addition of trail ways, nature study areas, and linkages to other recreation areas as consistent with elements of the Borough's Open Space Plan.



## 2. Existing Facilities

The park is the second of the two Community Parks in Florham Park with approximately 26 acres of parkland developed for recreational purposes. The park offers a wide variety of amenities, including multiple diamond fields, a basketball court, a playground, multiple multi-purpose fields. The park also offers support facilities such as a tot lot, spectator seating, restrooms, and a community building.

- Lighted, turf surfaced multi-purpose field
- Non-lighted grass turf multi-purpose field
- Lighted, little league diamond baseball field
- Lighted, diamond softball/baseball field
- Non-lighted, senior league diamond baseball field
- Basketball court
- Tot lot/playground
- Paved walking trails
- Community garden
- Community/concession building with restrooms

## 3. Facility Issues

- Requires additional maintenance, which may require resources beyond Borough DPW
- Popularity of new fields because of turf and lighting

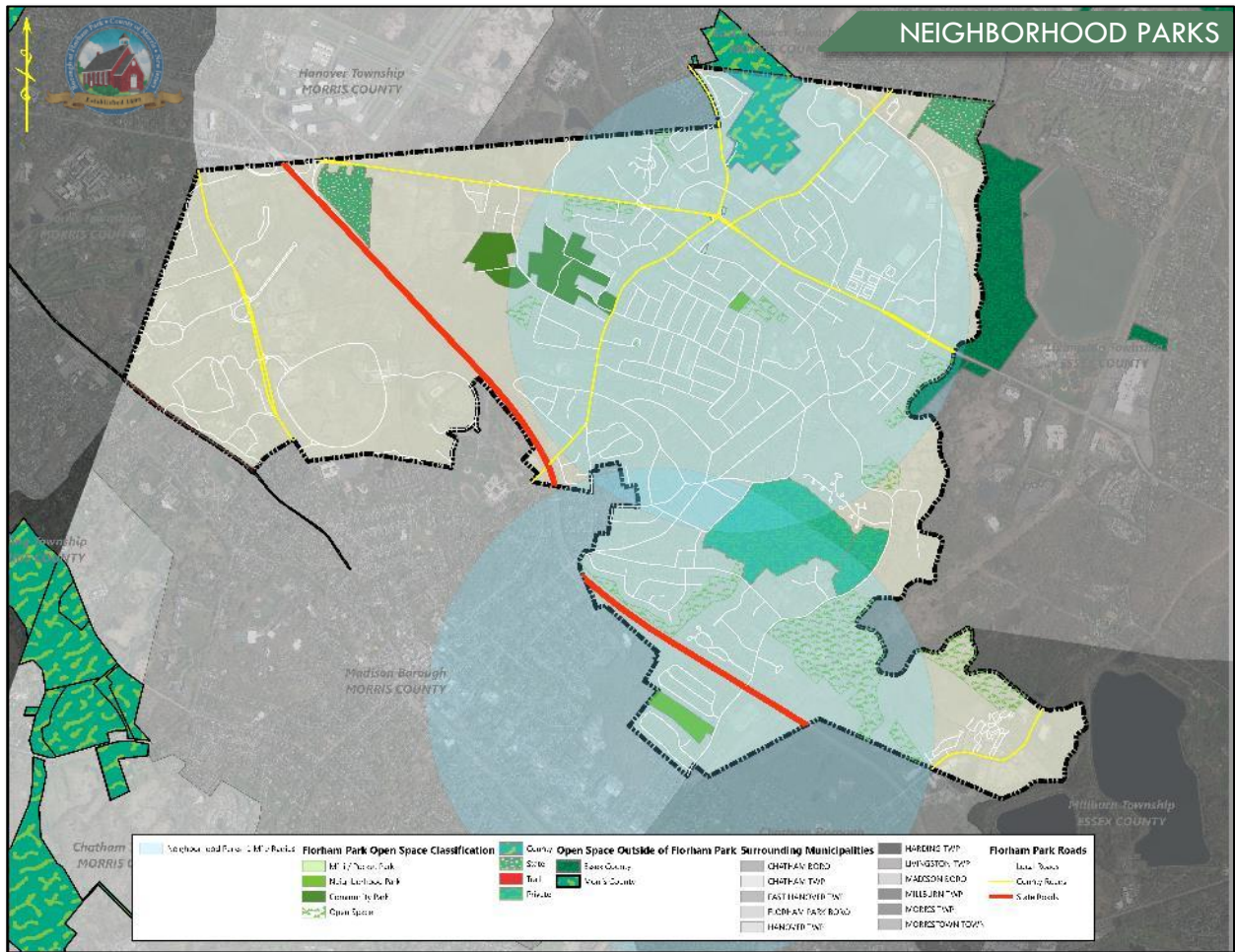
## 4. Signage

- There does not appear to be signage at the intersection of Elm Street and the Volunteer's Park entryway, or it is not easily visible.



## 2. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Florham Park has 2 Neighborhood Parks - Beechcrest Park and Stobaeus. The Neighborhood Park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Generally designed with a focus on informal active and passive recreation that serves neighborhood recreation needs, area is provided for recreational activities such as field games, court games, picnicking and playground areas. Many neighborhood parks may also contain athletic fields that are used by community athletic organizations, thus serving the community as a whole. Neighborhood Parks serves an area within a ¼ to ½ mile radius uninterrupted by major roads or other barriers.





**a. BEECHCREST PARK**

Block 4001, Lot 41

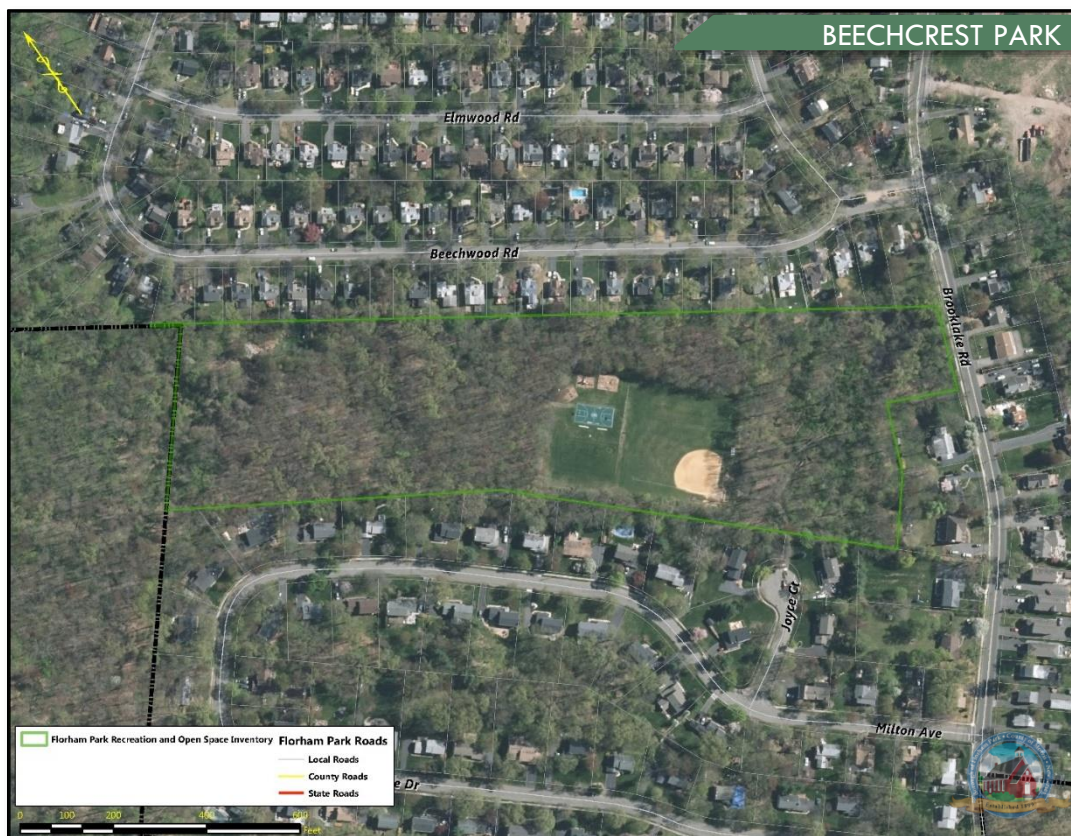
35 BROOKLAKE RD

15.4 acres

**1. Site Location**

Beechcrest Park is located at the edge of Florham Park adjacent to lands of Madison Borough and Florham Park Borough. It is entirely surrounded by residential development and is separated from the bulk of the Borough by Route 24. The land tract associated with the Park is 15 acres in area, consisting primarily of lowland forests. Approximately 2 acres of the entire property has been developed as an active park, and includes a softball/multi-purpose field, basketball courts, a play equipment area and few site amenities and furnishings. It is accessed by pedestrians and small service vehicles by two, barely improved pedestrian lanes (one from Joyce Court and one from Beechwood Rd. Neither of these routes is designed for regular vehicle use and no designated parking area occurs to accommodate the participants in system sports programs. Adjacent neighbors have become accustomed to periodic parking along the curbs of Joyce Court as practices or games are scheduled at the ballfield here.

The multi-purpose field here has a significant utility to the spatial demands of the girl's softball program as a commonly utilized practice facility and to the soccer program as a practice field, despite the handicap imposed by inadequate parking. Though too short in its outfield distance for regulation play and too small in available outfield area to enable satisfactory dimensions as a soccer game field, it is in quite good condition and fence and backstop improvements have resolved some previous issues. The field's margins are not adequately large to provide space for well-developed spectator space and some additional fencing or barriers are yet needed to intercept balls rolling into the surrounding woodland edges.



## 2. Existing Facilities

Beechcrest Park is a significant recreation asset to the Borough as a true neighborhood park. Though it is minimally developed it has ideal characteristics of proximity to adjacent neighborhoods and is accessible by foot or bicycle to many surrounding residential areas. Lack of parking diminishes its utility as a community recreation feature and access conditions overall are a liability.

This site has been improved as a direct response to recommendations of the previous Master Plan Update. Improvements have been initiated and funded through the Borough Engineer's office as part of the Borough's ongoing facilities improvement policy.

These improvements include: demolition and grass surface repair of deteriorated tennis courts; construction of wing fences at the softball field; replacement of the backstop at the same field, improvement of furnishings and minor site surface improvements; replacement of basketball backstops and court surface repair. New playground equipment (funded by the New York Jets) has been added to the existing play area. The park also includes a backstop and infield for use as a diamond field. Facilities of this park include:

- Small diamond baseball field
- Tot lot/playground
- Basketball Court

## 3. Facility Issues

- No parking, which leads to parking on adjacent neighborhood streets
- Remote location in the Borough and limited accessibility

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### **b. STOBAEUS PARK**

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*Block 2011, Lot 2*

LESLIE AVE

2.9 acres

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## 1. Site Location

Stobaeus Park is located along Leslie Avenue, near the intersection with Keyes Street. It can also be accessed from Felch Road, which provides access to an approximately 25 space surface parking lot. Stobaeus occupies a site within the most densely developed residential area of the Borough and can be accessed via sidewalks by pedestrians and cyclists as well.

## 2. Existing Facilities

This park primarily serves residents in the adjacent neighborhood. The park is largely comprised of and used as a diamond baseball field with spectator seating and fencing. There is also a playground adjacent to the baseball field. The parking lot was constructed in recent years to serve the park.

Additional land adjacent to the Park has been acquired in recent years, which may provide additional circulation opportunities and linkages. As of 2018, a pathway/bikeway linkage to the Board of Education lands occupied by the Brooklake/Briarwood schools complex was completed as the Stobaeus-Briarwood Trail through the Morris County Preservation Trust's Recreational Trail Grant Program.

- Diamond baseball field
- Tot lot/playground

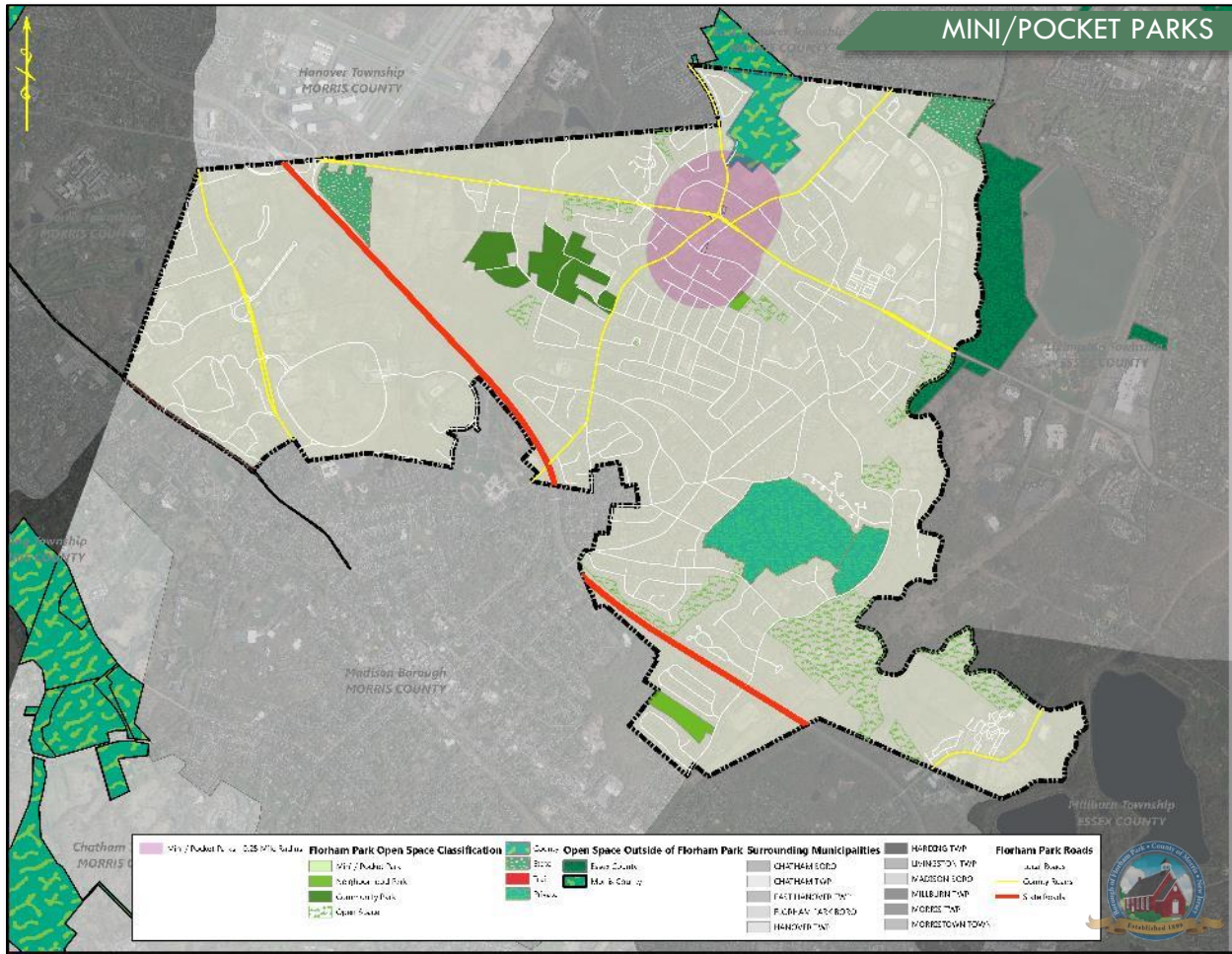
### 3. Park Issues

- Baseball outfield is not regulation size.
- Infield margins, coaches boxes, and edges overall, require proper delineation and reconstruction.
- The backstop is too close to home plate (less than 25 feet), pursuant to national Little League specifications.
- Concrete walkways throughout the site could be improved for better pedestrian circulation.
- Sloping on the site causes barriers to access.



### 3. MINI- / POCKET-PARKS

Florham Park has 3 Mini- or Pocket-Parks –Prudden Park; Patriot Park; and Campfield Garden. Mini-parks have specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population area, or that serve a specific function or age group. Mini-Parks serve an area within a ¼ mile radius or 5 minute walk.



#### a. PRUDDEN PARK

Block 902, Lot 4

152 COLUMBIA TPKE.

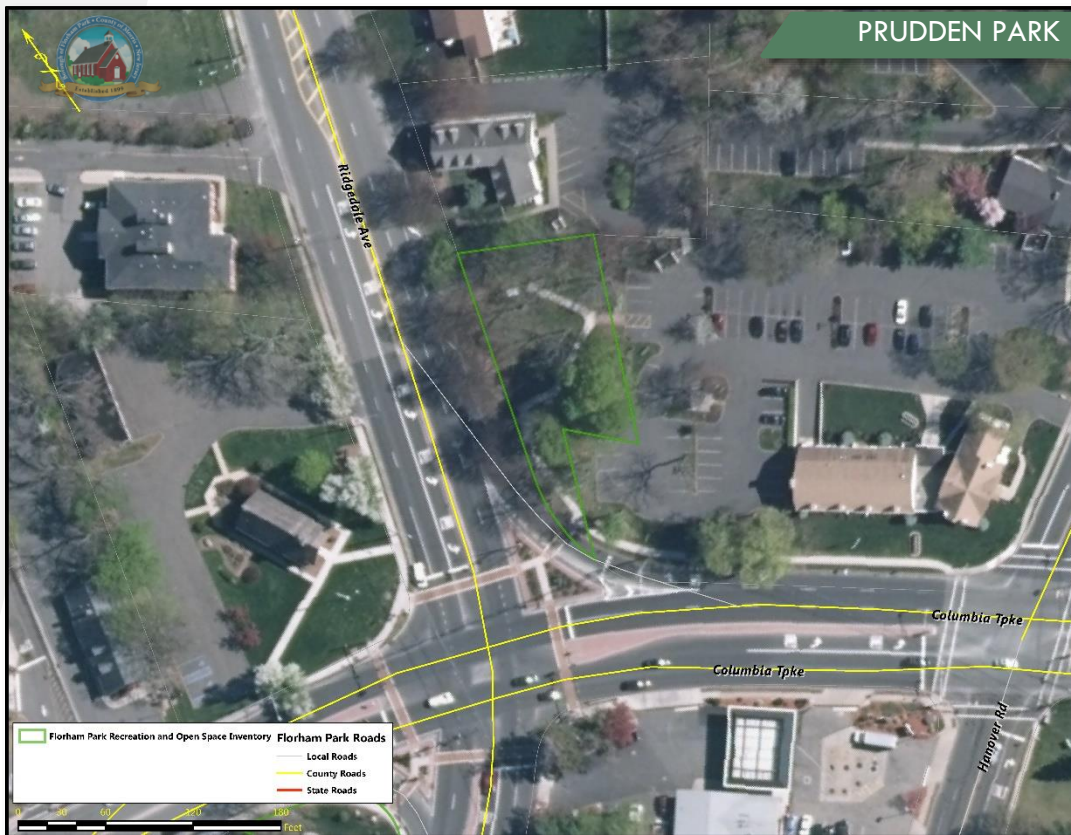
0.26 acres

#### 1. Site Location

Prudden Park is a pocket park located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Columbia Turnpike and Ridgedale Avenue, surrounded largely by a busy corridor and commercial businesses. The park is accessible by sidewalk, and largely includes signage, landscaping, walkways, and benches along the walking path.

## 2. Existing Facilities

This park primarily serves as a dedicated space that provides an aesthetic feature at a busy intersection.



## b. CAMPFIELD GARDEN

Block 1901, Lot 8

201 RIDGEDALE AVE

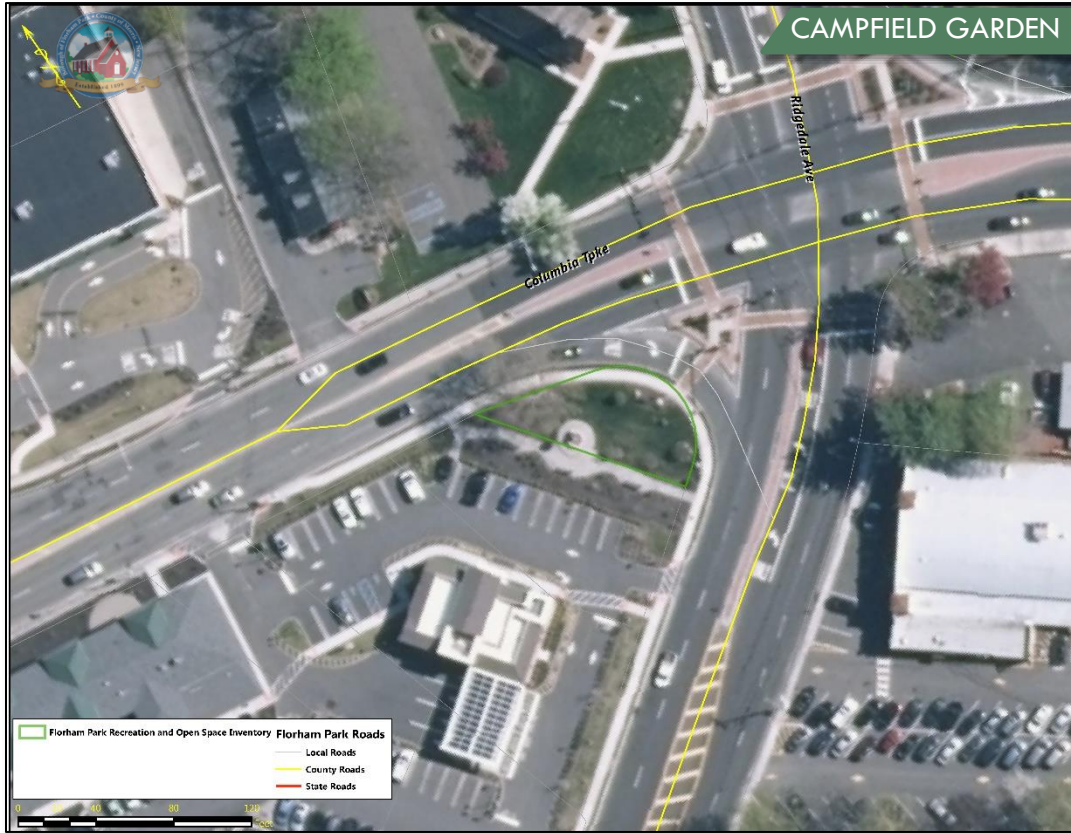
0.157 acres

### 1. Site Location

Campfield Gardens is a small pocket park located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Columbia Turnpike and Ridgedale Avenue, surrounded largely by a busy corridor and commercial businesses.. The park is accessible by sidewalk, and largely includes landscaping and a Town Clock feature. The site includes signage that acts as a plaque dedicated to the first settlers of Florham Park, and is maintained by the Garden Club of Florham Park.

### 2. Existing Facilities

This park primarily serves as a dedicated space that provides an aesthetic feature at a busy intersection.



**c. PATRIOT PARK**

Block 1903, Lot 6

314 BROOKLAKE RD

0.35 acres

**1. Site Location**

Patriot Park is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Hanover Road and Brooklake Road. The park is accessible by sidewalk along Hanover Road, which terminates at Brooklake Road. The park does not have internal walkways and mostly is comprised of a single bench in a shaded area.

PATRIOT PARK



#### 4. LINEAR PARKS

Traction Line Recreation Rail Trail <i>Block 1301, Portion of Lots 1 and 2</i>	N/A
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The Traction Line Recreation Trail of the Patriot's Path system is a paved, multi-use path for bicycling, walking, and jogging. In 1981, Jersey City Power and Light Company donated portions of the property to the Morris County Park Commission. The trail was developed with cooperation of the Jersey Central Power and Light Company (JCP&L) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), and was opened in June of 1986. In 1993, the county received a grant through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act for an extension of the trail. The Fit-Trail stations were installed in September 2012, and donated by BASF.

The trail parallels the NJ Transit Railroad tracks and traverses through the properties of the College of St. Elizabeth and Fairleigh Dickinson University for approximately 3,900 linear feet (0.73 miles).

#### 5. COUNTY LAND

Pinch Brook Golf Course <i>Block 201, Lot 2</i>	234 RIDGEDALE AVE	64.03 acres
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Morris County owns a 65 acre parcel in the Borough of Florham Park located at 234 Ridgedale Avenue that is a portion of the Pinch Brook Golf Course. This golf course is an 18 hole course, and is open to the public.

#### 6. STATE LAND

NJ DEP <i>Block 301, Lots 6 and 7</i>	VREELAND ROAD AND HANOVER ROAD	32.3 acres
New Jersey Natural Lands Trust <i>Block 1203, Lot 1</i>	Columbia Turnpike	32.66

The State of New Jersey owns three preserved parcels in the Borough of Florham Park totaling 66 acres. The largest of these is 32 acres and is owned by the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, an independent branch of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, dedicated to the preservation of "land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space."

It is located on Columbia Turnpike in the northwestern corner of the Borough. The other two parcels are owned by the Department of Environmental Protection. They are in the northeastern corner of the Borough along the Passaic River, and are preserved in their natural state for flood storage purposes.

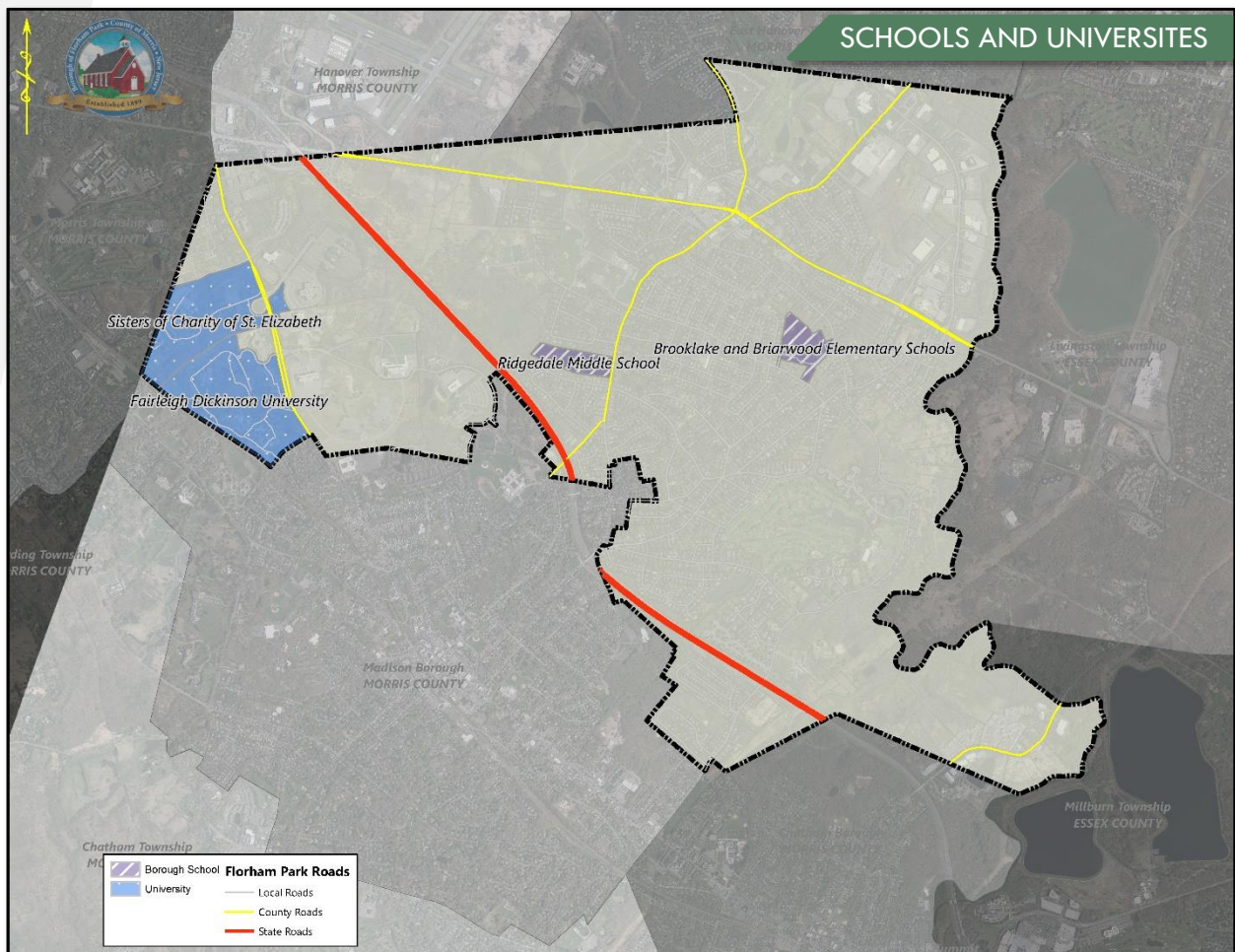


## 7. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

One middle school and two elementary schools are located in Florham Park. These schools offer athletic fields which may be available, possibly for a fee, to the public if not in use by the school teams. The following list outlines the facilities at each school. Board of Education sites in Florham Park appear to operate distinctively from the general recreation issues of the community. It is reported that these fields are sometimes available for recreation use but are typically preserved for school activities. Of the three sites, only the middle school and Briarwood Elementary have been meaningfully utilized to support the programming of the Borough recreation system.

Elementary school properties are more likely to provide an experience similar to what might be expected at a public park, for they offer facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, and open play areas that are typically found in a Neighborhood Park. The Middle school recreation facilities, in contrast, tend to be limited to baseball/softball diamonds, rectangle fields, and tennis courts developed specifically for school sports teams and are often locked or otherwise closed for public use. These school parks are more accurately classified as Special Use Parks.

Additionally, there are 2 Colleges and Universities located within Florham Park – the College of St. Elizabeth and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Both are located in the western extent of the Borough along Park Avenue.



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**a. RIDGEDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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*Block 2201, Lot 1*

152 COLUMBIA TPKE.

0.26 acres

The Ridgedale Middle School includes a space behind the school that has been developed into a baseball and a softball field and an extended outfield turf area that is utilized as a multi-purpose field. The most northerly of the developed fields is known as the (pit) and is regarded to be the best regulation baseball field in the system. It is occasionally available to Borough recreation but generally is reserved for school programming. The softball field is a less developed, smaller field adjacent to the school building. The multi-purpose outfield area is utilized for school scholastic and intramural play but is not sufficiently large to accommodate a regulation athletic field, as may be needed for soccer or football. Though the athletic field site here has a compound-like appearance resulting from the quantity of fencing constructed, the fields are comparatively well maintained and are little influenced by ground water or runoff.

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**b. BRIARWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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*Block 2501, Lot 8*

151 BRIARWOOD RD

0.35 acres

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**c. BROOKLAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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*Block 2501, Lot 8*

235 BROOKLAKE RD

0.35 acres

The Briarwood and Brooklake Elementary schools are paired on adjoining land tracts surrounded by residential development along both Briarwood and Brooklake Roads. The areas on the site adjacent to the school buildings have been developed into large parking areas, paved playgrounds with play equipment areas, along with a pair of large lawn areas which have been very casually improved for playfields. A baseball infield has been created in a corner of the Briarwood site, which is utilized for little league and softball programming and the outfield space is available for multi-purpose field sports practice. This field is low and wet, thus regularly limited by rainfall events and seasonal high water tables.

These sites are completely surrounded by single family residential districts. They could likely be regarded as potential neighborhood park sites as well as elementary school sites. Recent acquisition of adjacent forest lands along Stobaeus Park are undeveloped, but may add a future opportunity for a pedestrian linkage or trail system to a much larger neighborhood.

## 8. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

ST. ELIZABETH UNIVERSITY (Block 1301, Lot 2)	2 CONVENT ROAD	103 acres
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St. Elizabeth University (formerly College of St. Elizabeth) is located on a 103 acre parcel in the far western edge of the Borough of Florham Park, adjacent to Fairleigh Dickinson University. It has a mixed tax classification because a portion (approximately 60 acres) of this parcel is considered tax exempt by the Borough.

FAIRLIEGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY (Block 1301, Lot 1)	285 MADISON AVENUE	131 acres
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Fairleigh Dickinson University is located along Park Avenue in the far western end of the Borough. A smaller portion of the University (30 acres) is located adjacent to this parcel in Madison Borough. The official entrance to the University is 285 Madison Avenue.

## 9. PRIVATE LAND - COUNTRY CLUB PRIVATE GOLF COURSES

There are a total of 155 acres spread out over six parcels in the Borough of Florham Park that are categorized as private golf courses and country clubs. The large majority of this acreage (150 acres spread out over two parcels) consists of the Brooklake County Club. This Club is in the eastern end of the municipality between Brooklake Road and Bradburn Road. The remaining five acres and four parcels are a portion of Morris County Golf Club, most of which is in Morris Borough.

# III. PROGRAM INVENTORY

Quality recreational programming is an important aspect of a healthy community. As citizens of all ages seek to enrich their lives with productive use of leisure time, the availability of a diverse range of recreational activities becomes increasingly vital. Quality recreational programs also reinforce societal values such as a community's attractiveness to parents and business leaders and civic spirit/pride. The Florham Park Recreation Department commits itself to providing active recreation opportunities, and doing so, maintains several parks, open space tracts, and recreation buildings in conjunction with the Department of Public Works. Florham Park has seen an increase in the use of its recreational facilities since the completion of its Open Space and Recreation Plan Update in 2011.

The Recreation Department is exclusively responsible for organization and delivery of programming. The Recreation Department provides comprehensive management, oversight, staffing, scheduling, registration, insurance and program direction for in-house activities as well as numerous social, educational and recreational events out of town. Physical management, maintenance and general repair of system facilities is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works and funding for capital improvements, equipment replacement and facility repair/renovation is directed and funded through the Engineering Department.

A wide variety of recreational programming is available in Florham Park Borough in the form of athletic programs, camps, before and after school programs, special events, senior programs, programs for special populations, and more. The Florham Park Recreation Department provides and schedules the facilities for these programs (including rental of private facilities); however, many of the programs and leagues are managed by other agencies or organizations.

Significant recreational programs organized or advertised by Recreation Department include Youth Programs such as Summer Outdoor Basketball, Winter Recreation Basketball, Fall Cheerleading, Softball, Wrestling, Ice Hockey, Rugby, Lacrosse, Little League Baseball, Youth Soccer, and Football. Additionally, the Recreation Department organizes Adult Programs such as Men's Softball and Yoga. There are numerous summer programs offered annually, which include: Summer Day Camp, Tennis Clinics, Kiddie Kamp, Florham Park In Training (FIT) Youth Sports Performance Camp, and other numerous professionally directed youth sports clinics. The Recreation Department also helps to facilitate other year round activities such as a Ski Club, a cooperative agreement for memberships with the Millburn Golf Course, and recreation activities for disabled residents as a member of the Morris County Adaptive Recreation Program (McARP), sponsored by the ARC of Morris County.

The following list provides a more detailed description of the recreation programs offered in the Borough:

#### 1. Florham Park Little League and Baseball Club



This organization is wholly organized and operated by Borough residents. Since its creation in 1949, it has been non-profit, self-funded sports associated dedicated to teaching, and conducting little league baseball for Florham Park youth. Little change has occurred in the club in the years since the previous master plan update. It continues to deliver its programs which now offer training to area youth as young as 4 years old up to 15 year olds playing on full sized fields. The younger aged players require 60 foot format infields and senior league level require 90 foot format infields for their gameplay.

The mainstay fields for this program are Stobaeus field, Borough Field and Emmett Park Field #1, which accommodate the bulk of play and practices for all of the younger sub-divisions of play. Senior league shares the Emmett Park Field #3 field with lacrosse, as the outfield is overlapped by the lacrosse line striping, thus eliminating the prospect of simultaneous utilization. It is unclear yet if the recent addition of lighted fields at Volunteer's Park has added to potential fields for the Little League to utilize.

Florham Park Little League is well organized at every level, very flexible with respect to adapting to existing conditions and forward looking with respect to program expansion and facility improvement.

## 2. East Hanover / Florham Park Girls Softball Association



This organization is a jointly run softball program merging the participants, facilities, and management of the two municipalities. It is a large program offering training and completion in four subdivisions for area girls between the ages of 5 and 15. The program is fully integrated such that each team includes players from both towns.

The program is very well administered and popular, it has introduced pitching and skills clinics, separated the youngest (Bonnies) player group into two separate groups to improve the player experience and is looking forward to expansion of post season travelling teams as well as a division for older girls. The experience for Florham Park players has been one where practices occur locally at Briarwood, Beechcrest, Emmett Park Field #2, Ridgedale Upper, and occasionally at a private field located on the ADP site, but because of the quality disparity between East Hanover and Florham Park field conditions, the bulk of games are conducted in East Hanover.

Association representatives report late drying, protracted wetness and general field surface management as limitations to more game play on older Borough fields. They have observed that renovation of infields to enable quicker drying and incorporation of lighting to enable game completion would enhance their operations. The distribution of fields throughout Florham Park is seen as less attractive than a more “centralized” location. Previous feedback from the Association noted the distinct bias toward East Hanover fields for games as inconvenient, and as a situation where Borough interests could be more equitably served by creation of more competent, lighted fields at home. The Borough followed the recommendation of the previous Updated Plan with the dedication of a new lighted softball field at Elm Street Park, which should enhance softball gameplay and provide more attractive fields for the league.

## 3. Florham Park Soccer Association

The Florham Park Soccer Association is the largest operating youth sports enterprise in the Borough, and is a non-profit, self-supported club. Soccer’s main season remains in the fall for the bulk of recreation play, while travelling soccer continues through a full spring season as well as summer clinics, tournaments and training. Soccer



utilizes a variety of fields within the Borough for its several levels of training and competition, and although they are regarded as fields, only one actually is regulation size.

In the past, full-sided teams practiced on the Emmett travel field (formerly, the systems only full sized field) while all others utilized various other “fields” occurring on baseball outfields or smaller generally flat, generally rectangular lawn spaces at Emmett, Beechcrest, or Briarwood school sites. Field spaces at Briarwood and Beechcrest are potentially competent but both are remote and neither is well supported due to lack of parking at Beechcrest, and lack of restrooms at Briarwood.

Volunteer’s Park has doubled the field capability of the entire field system in the Borough, and is a response to many organization’s requests for improved facilities. This group has been a primary beneficiary of its substantial improvements. Its development provides access to a lighted, regulation-sized fields and restrooms to support spectators. Lighting has contributed to the ability to create additional practice sessions and enable scheduling games for older player groups. It must be recognized however that the preference for all levels to play on the new fields will transfer an enormous load to the two turf grass fields which, if not thoroughly established and scrupulously maintained will be quickly impacted by utilization.

#### 4. Florham Park Football Club (Falcons)



The Florham Park Football Club is over 40 years in existence. The program accepts children between the ages of 5-14 and offers training in football fundamentals. Younger participants play flag football and graduate to tackle football organized into six divisions (A, B, C, D, JV and Varsity)

The football program previously utilized a newly renovated, but small lawn space at pond field for the flag division, lines out a football field on outfield space of Emmett Park Field #3 practice field for older players, and a 50 x 100 yd game field adjacent to the Emmett Park Field #3 practice field. The teams practice three or four times per week and play once per week, generally on Saturday. Football practice begins in early August. Games begin in September and continue until mid-November.

Unlike most other team sport programs, Falcons Football is equipment intensive requiring sleds, pads, dummies,

ladders and other equipment arranged on the ground surfaces. This type of equipment also requires secure weatherproof storage near the practice fields. Efficient operation of football training and practice obliges the entire operation to be somewhat contiguous to enable training to move from equipment to field space quickly as available time for practice is diminishing as the season advances. Lighting addition at the football main field has improved this situation but is insufficient in area to usefully support the entire program.

The Falcons like all other large programs sharing space on the Emmett fields have been influenced by wet conditions, overuse, scheduling conflicts, inadequate space and lost scheduling opportunities. Though improvements in lighting have expanded opportunity to increase practice time, the ground surface conditions have not been improved in any meaningful way and remain subject to the incidence of rain events, flooding and protracted drying. Volunteer's Park has doubled the field capability of the entire field system in the Borough, and is a response to many organization's requests for improved facilities. Its development provides access to a lighted, fence controlled game field with spectator accommodations, a full-sized lighted practice field, permanent seasonal space for location of field equipment, and restrooms to support spectators.

## 5. Florham Park Lacrosse (Hornets)



The Florham Park Lacrosse Program is one jointly administered and organized by the recreation department and the parents providing coaching, training, and typical logistical requirements of the program. The program has expanded in size over time to include various age groups for both boys and girls teams.

Due to the nature of the sport, which requires regulation sized fields with ample sideline room – similar needs as football - the completion of Volunteer's Park has greatly enhance the ability to facilitate this program on Borough fields. The fields formerly available to the program at Emmett Fields Complex were difficult to utilize because of their size constraints and proximity to other fields. Volunteer's Park has doubled the field capability of the entire field system in the Borough, and provides access to more appropriate fields for lacrosse including a lighted, fence controlled game field with spectator accommodations, a full-sized lighted practice field,

permanent seasonal space for location of field equipment, and restrooms to support spectators.

## 6. Florham Park Cheerleading (Falcons)



The Florham Park Falcons cheerleading squads are a group of Borough children directed by the Recreation Department in conjunction with the Florham Park Falcons program. The cheerleading program welcomes participants from 1st to 8th grades, preparing girls in cheers, halftime routines, dances and formations to perform at half-time for football teams of the same grade. The official season for performances is coincident with football game season but training in tumbling, cheers, and routines occurs from spring through summer and in clinics, all of which are organized and instructed by parent volunteers and coaches. The squads also participate in festivals, the Borough parade and special events.

Cheerleading relies upon indoor (gymnasium) and outdoor spaces for its training, and has utilized Brooklake School in the past. This program also benefits from the construction of Volunteer's Park, where synthetic turf presents an opportunity for practice and preparation for performances where games may be held.

## 7. Florham Park Tennis

Despite the fact that all of the Borough's tennis courts are located at Emmett, the system is provided with a quantity of courts adequate to its immediate demand levels. These have been amplified in their value as training facilities for the important life sport virtues of tennis through the Recreation Departments program of professionally directed training sessions. This program is offered to Borough residents in six, week long summer sessions, utilizing the court pair adjacent to Elm St. in Emmett Park. This program is exemplary of the potential opportunity for Borough/private sector enterprise which may be undertaken on recreation facilities.

## 8. Florham Park Day Camp Program

The Day Camp Program is an over 60 year old offering for children of Borough residents. It is directed and organized by trained staff, and is a six-week service, offering a full day of supervised activities. It has been located at the Community Center at Emmett Park and



utilizes the pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, library and outdoor spaces of Emmett Park. Camp programming includes arts and crafts, performance arts, sports, field trips, a carnival and free play and socialization supervised by area youth councilors. The regular program hours (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM) are extended to 7:30 in the A.M. until 5:00 in the P.M. to facilitate drop-off and pick-up by parents, maximizing the convenience for working residents.

The day camp program is a significant recreation support service opportunity for Borough residents, particularly where summer supervision of younger children represents an important concern, as well as a significant expense for families with two working parents.

#### **9. Florham Park Kiddie Camp**

The Kiddie Camp program is another Recreation Department organized program occurring subsequent to the completion of the day camp program. It provides an engaging morning activity (9:30 – 11:30 AM) for two summer weeks. Here pre-school and kindergarten registrants are led in arts, crafts, free play, and socialization by a staff of day camp councilors employed by the Borough. It has been located at the Community Center at Emmett Park.

This type of program should not be underestimated as a significant recreation resource deserving continuing support. It integrates resident youth into a familiarity with the recreation system and for participating parents, is evidence of a Borough intention to reach into the general public, offering diverse services beyond the most familiar sports programs.

#### **10. Florham Park Teen Camp**

The Teen Camp is a logical Extension of the Day and Kiddie Camp themes, but is an outward bound experience originating at the Community Center. In this program area, teens (7th, 8th and 9th) graders embark daily on a variety of excursions to area activities including: amusement parks, the beach, movies, golf, and other day trips. Though only peripherally related to facilities of the park, this popular four-week long program is evidentiary of the community's participation in Borough programs that offer reliable structured and supervised activities for their children during the summer months. The Borough has the capability to increase and diversify these very important alternative recreation programs as a vehicle not only for support of

working families summer options but for continuous reinforcement of the popular recognition that recreation in the Borough is a holistic system with benefits for many of the most diverse needs and preferences.

### **11. Other Park System Users**

In addition to the many types of Borough organized recreation programs and the independent sports association requirements for facilities, a variety of other groups routinely seek opportunity on Borough facilities. These groups access field space by prior arrangement through the recreation department and are fit into available opportunities by reservation. Typically, these groups represent other in-town organizations or regional sports interests. These may include: Holy Family School Girls softball, FP/Madison American Legion baseball, FP fire department softball and various sports teams from the Ridgedale Middle School. In addition to requests for facilities from entities associated with or occurring in the Borough, recreation accommodates requests as possible for independent groups as they are periodically presented. These typically include: a men's outdoor summer basketball league, the men's summer baseball team, the men's tennis team, St. Elizabeth's Tennis Team, the Platform Tennis Club and a number of other fall ball requests.

## **IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS**

### **A. Facilities Analysis**

The parks and recreation area classifications were described in Section II, followed by a description of each facility in Florham Park, and these classifications are consistent with the National Recreation and Park Association Guidelines and slightly modified for Florham Park specifically. Level of Service Standards (acres per thousand population) for each park type in Florham Park are generally established numbers by National Recreation and Park Association Guidelines. These goals are consistent with communities throughout New Jersey and the nation.

The Needs Analysis consists of the following elements:

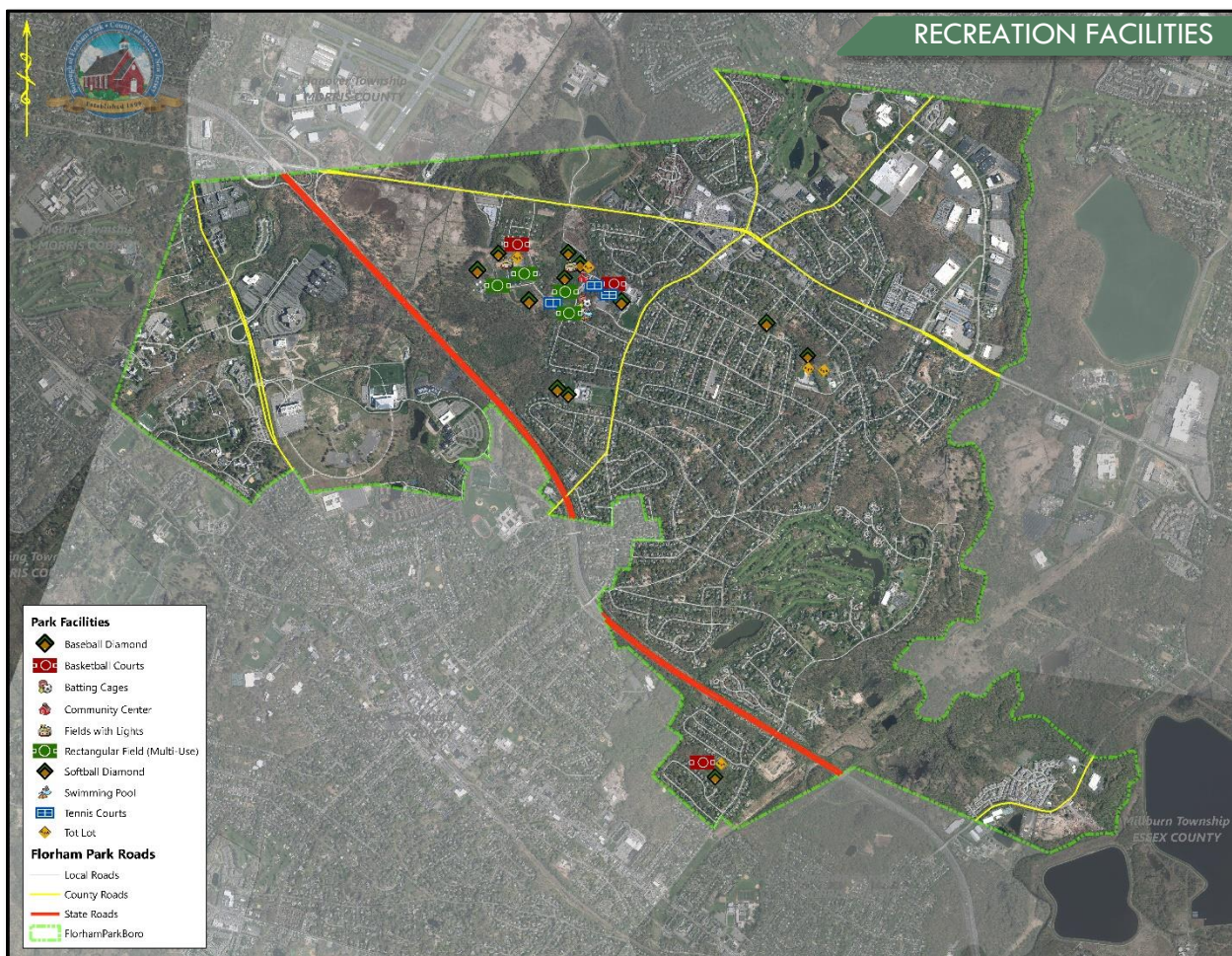
1. A discussion of the parks and recreation needs by park type;
2. Facilities Needs Analysis and Level of Service Standards formulated using accepted standards and guidelines,
3. A discussion of the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities;
4. A discussion of recent trends in parks and recreation.

### **1. Parks and Recreation Facilities**

The Facilities Inventory in Section 5 of this Plan classified each of the parks in the Borough and described many of the facilities within each park location. The following table (Table 5-C) represents a cumulative inventory of the facilities, along with the following map which shows where they are located within the Borough.

<b>TABLE 5-C: PARK FACILITIES IN FLORHAM PARK</b>		
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<i>Emmett Field Complex</i>	Lighted, little league diamond baseball field	Baseball
	Lighted, diamond softball field	Softball
	Lighted, senior league diamond baseball field	Baseball
	Lighted, football/lacrosse field	
	Lighted, football/lacrosse practice field	
	Elm Street small-sized soccer field	
	Regulation sized soccer field	
	Pond field – multi-purpose practice field	
	Fenced diamond baseball field	Baseball
	Craig Keeler Memorial Basketball Court	Basketball
	Pat and BJ Highland Memorial Tennis Courts	Tennis
	Platform Tennis Courts	Tennis
	Elm Street Tennis Courts	Tennis
	Batting Cages	Baseball, Practice
	Bocce Courts	Games, Passive Recreation
	Dale Anderson Jaycees Tot Lot	Playground
	Municipal Pool	Swimming
	Paved walking trails	Trail, Walking
	Large picnic shelter	Public Use
<i>Volunteer's Park</i>	Lighted, turf surfaced multi-purpose field	Football, Lacrosse, Soccer
	Non-lighted grass turf multi-purpose field	Football, Lacrosse, Soccer
	Lighted, little league diamond baseball field	Baseball
	Lighted, diamond softball/baseball field	Baseball
	Non-lighted, senior league diamond baseball field	Baseball, Softball
	Basketball court	Basketball

	Tot lot/playground	Playground
	Paved walking trails	Trail, Walking
	Community garden	Public Use
<i>Stobaeus Field</i>	Diamond baseball field	Baseball
	Tot lot/playground	Playground
	Footpath	Trail, Walking
<i>Beechcrest Park</i>	Small diamond baseball field	Baseball, Softball
	Tot lot/playground	Playground
	Basketball Court	Basketball
<i>Traction Line Recreation Trail</i>	Paved trail for walking, biking	Trail, Walking
<i>Spring Garden Lake Footpath</i>	Footpath	Trail, Walking



## 2. Level of Service

Table 5-D, outlines the Level of Service Standards by Park Type which provides a breakdown of the needs for each type of park in Florham Park. This table does not include parks that are part of school sites; however, they may serve some of the park or playground needs for nearby residents. This table identifies the current park acreage for Florham Park and compares it to that

of the recommended acreage per population values. The values include developed parkland that is owned by Florham Park and identifies that the Borough has a surplus of 7.27 acres of developed parkland in 2020, which is largely attributable to the sheer size of the Community Parks. This is evidenced by the individual deficiencies in both Mini/Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks.

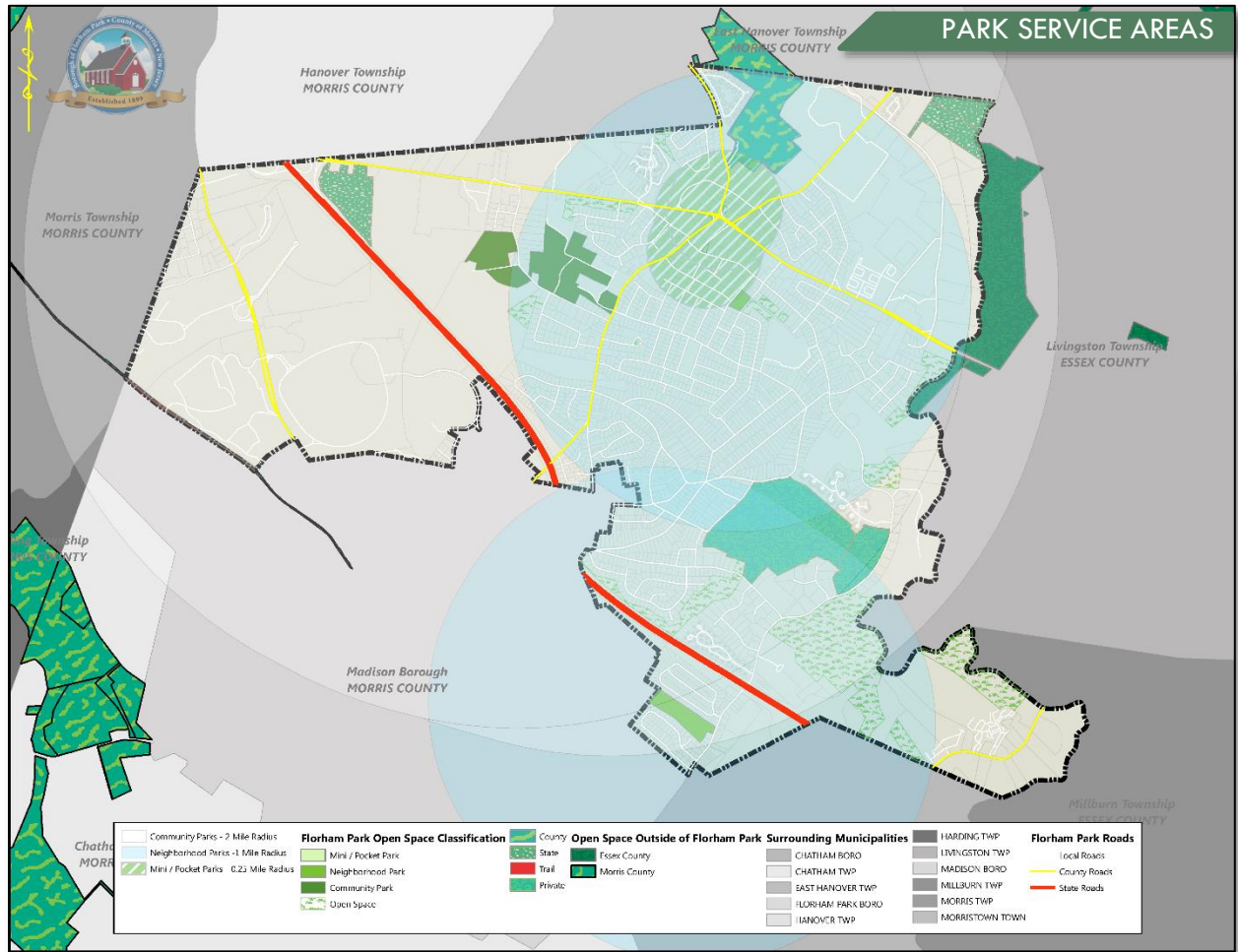
<b>TABLE 5-D: LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS BY PARK TYPE IN FLORHAM PARK</b>				
<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Existing Developed Acres</b>	<b>Recommended Acres/1000 Population</b>	<b>Recommended per Florham Park Population (11,792)</b>	<b>Surplus or Deficit</b>
<b>Mini/Pocket Park</b>	0.767	0.25	2.9	-2.133
<b>Neighborhood</b>	18.3	2	23.4	-5.1
<b>Community</b>	73	5	58.5	+14.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	92	7.25	84.8	+7.27

### 3. Geographic Distribution of Parks and Facilities

The spatial distribution of parks throughout Florham Park is important because residents are more able and willing to access facilities that are close to their homes. The map on the following page, entitled “Park Service Areas”, indicates an inventory of the existing parks with service areas for each of the various types of parks. The white radius shows a 2-mile range of Community Park, the blue radius shows a 1-mile range of a Neighborhood Park, and the green radius shows a 0.25-mile range of a Mini Park. This map serves to indicate the gaps where neighborhoods may not be served very well by parks or certain types of parks.

The central portion of Florham Park has the largest number of parks, and much of the area lies within a mile range of any park and within two-miles of a Community Park. The southeastern portion of the Borough, north of Route 24 and along Passaic Avenue, is an exception and is less well-served by parks despite a cluster of medium to high density residential developments. Private open space facilities are largely relied upon within these developments rather than public open space. Many single-family residential neighborhoods that comprise the majority of land use in the central strip of the Borough are within 1 mile of the Neighborhood parks, although considering the size of this area and separation by major vehicular corridors, could be improved with Neighborhood park facilities at lesser intervals to encourage more visitors accessing the site by foot and bicycle rather than driving since parking is not present or limited at these parks. The two-mile radius of Community Parks and cluster of the two major parks in the same central/western area of the Borough is less of a concern because these larger and more expansive park systems provide ample parking that invites visitors from much further distance. However, it is recommended that any the development of additional Community parks be considered on the eastern portion of the Borough, as much as it

is feasible, to expand the radius of park services and provide alternate options to neighboring residents.

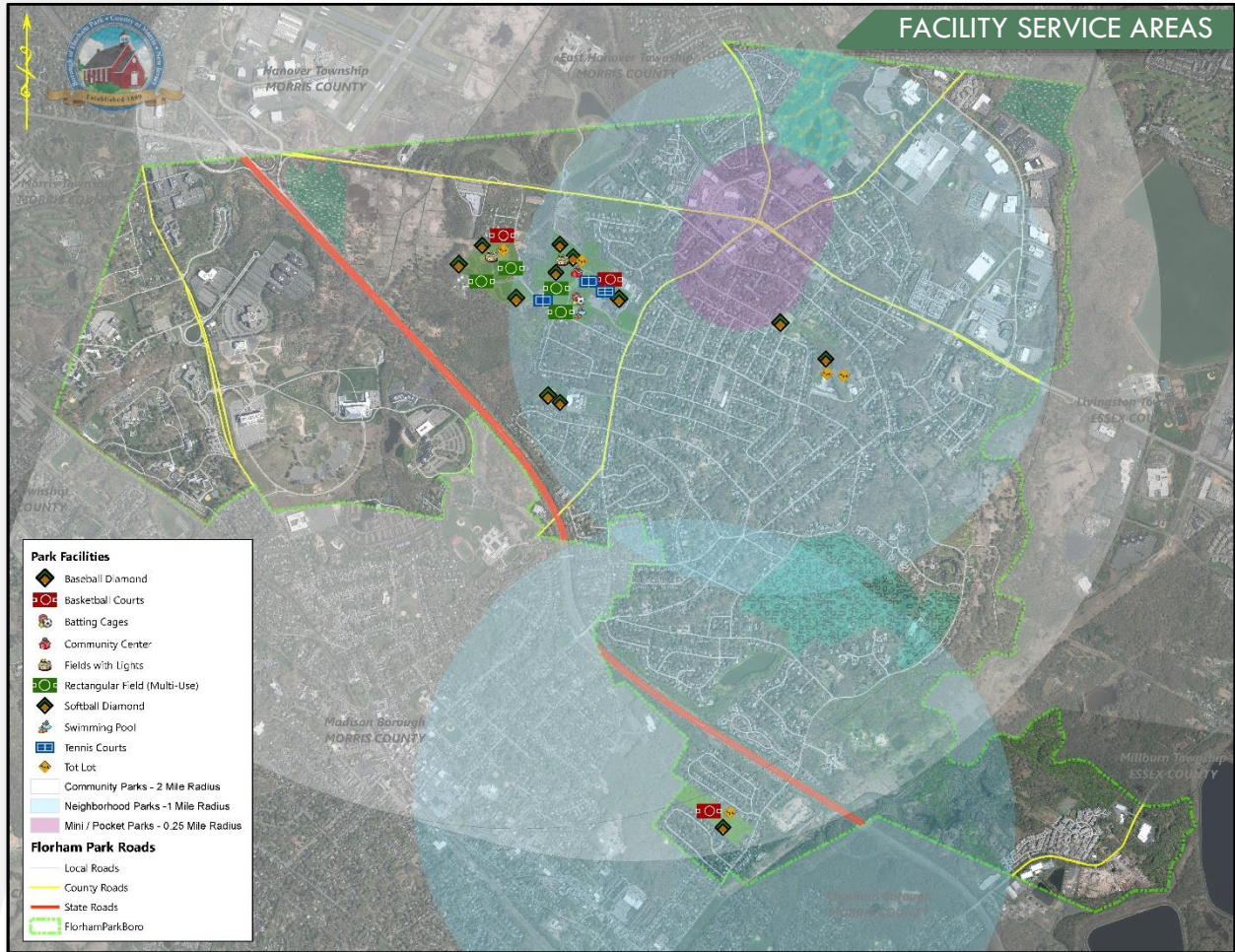


#### 4. Geographic Distribution of Facilities

Another portion of the needs analysis consists of a review of the geographic distribution of specific types of facilities provided to residents. Service areas for these key facilities are indicated in the map below, which utilizes a mapping of the park facilities and the radii used above. The map on the following page, entitled “Facility Service Areas”, presents areas of Florham Park Borough that are located within a 2-mile, 1-mile, and 0.25-mile radius from these facilities. Facilities at parks are signified by different symbols, and unlike the Park Service Areas analysis, fields and facilities at school properties are likewise included here.

The map indicates similar conclusions as the distribution of the park types, because many of these classifications capture the size, thus largely, the magnitude and variety of facilities that may be offered at that park. However, since school properties and their facilities are included, it shows that these may provide additional park services to neighboring residents within walking distance. Overall, the map shows that public tennis courts and rectangular fields (for sports like soccer, football, and lacrosse) are localized to the Community Parks, while diamond fields for baseball

and softball are distributed fairly evenly throughout the park system. Additionally, lighted fields and specialty services like batting cages and the community pool are confined only to Community Parks. Finally, while basketball courts appear to be accessible to most parts of the Borough, these types of facilities are useful within neighborhood to facilitate informal recreation and interactions. Where possible, multi-purpose courts should be considered adjacent to residential areas.



# ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND

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## CONTENT

I. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

II. PRESERVED LANDS

III. CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

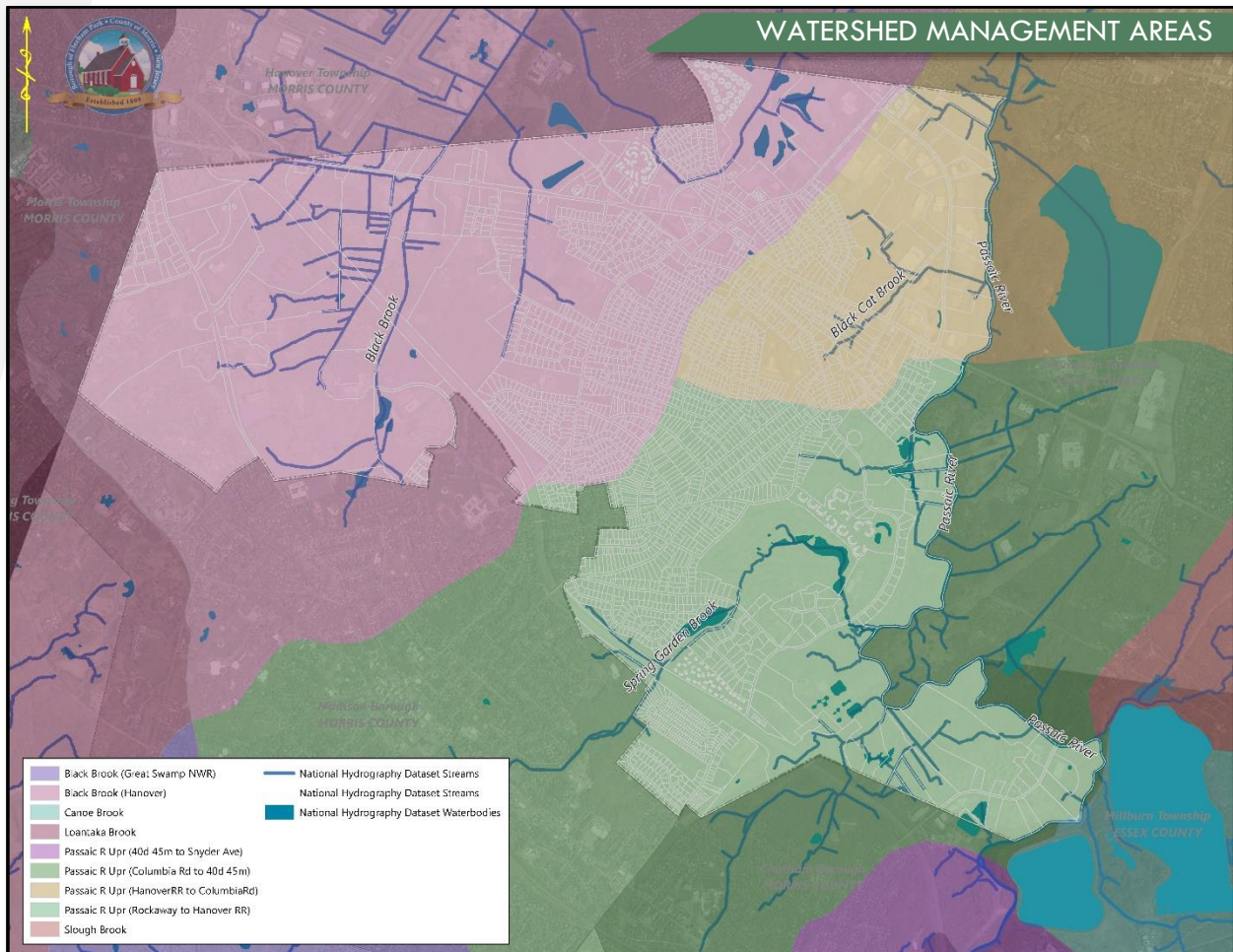


# I. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

Florham Park Borough has several environmentally sensitive areas. Natural resources identified within the Borough include the Passaic River, Pinch Brook, the watershed lands of the East Orange Water Company, Spring Garden Lake, and the Black Meadow Natural Area. The Passaic River, which forms Florham Park’s eastern border, flows just over 4.5 miles along the edge of the Borough. A large wetlands area occurs in the southeast portion of the Borough, in the River’s floodplain. The Borough’s wetlands are an important area for preservation. The Borough should continue to protect the Passaic River corridor, as well as protect its steep slopes and groundwater recharge areas.

## A. Watersheds

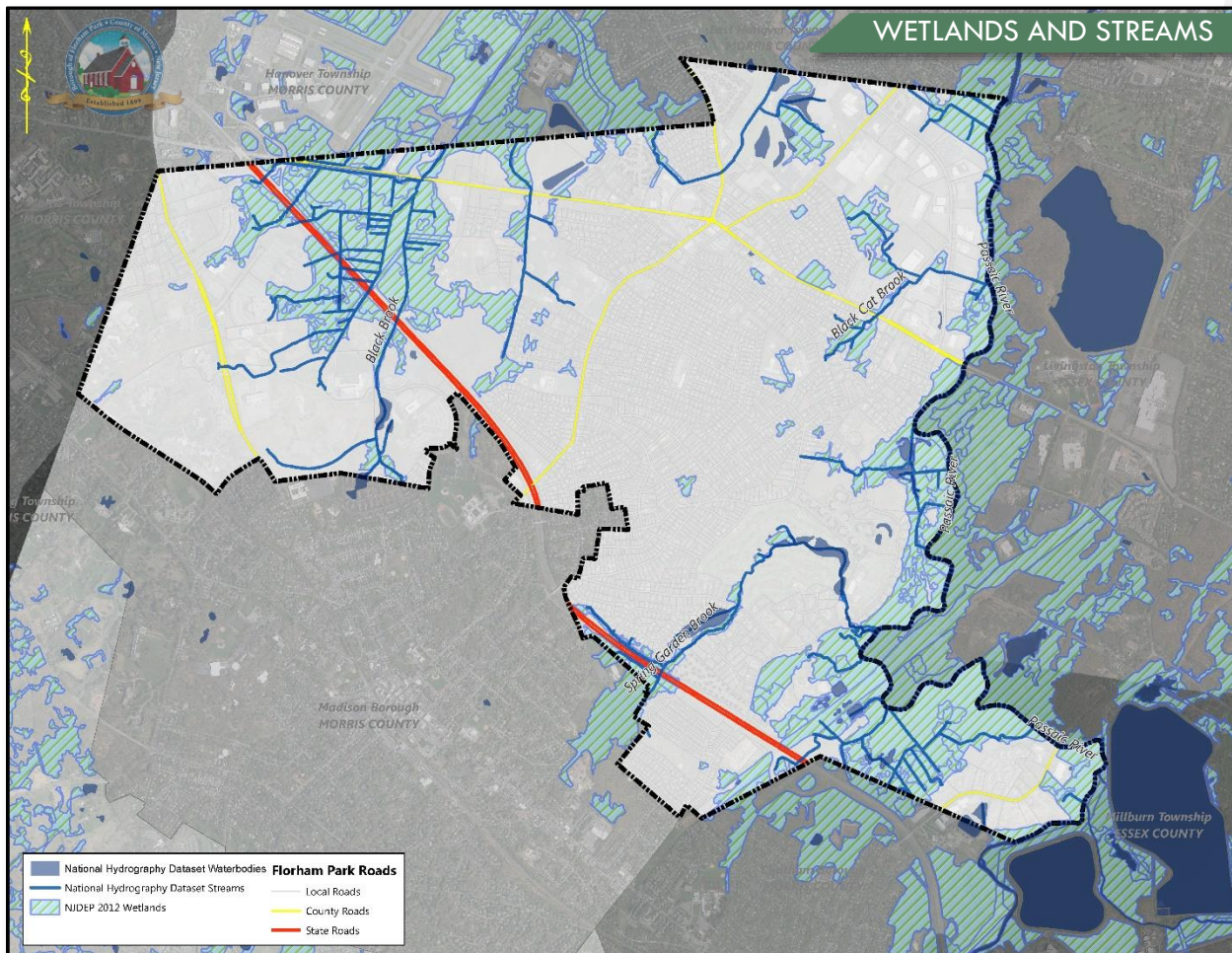
Florham Park lies within the Upper Passaic, Whippany, and Rockaway Watershed. Additionally, the Borough is located within three sub-watersheds areas – Black Brook (Hanover), Passaic River Upper (Columbia Rd to 40d 45m), and Passaic River Upper (Hanover Rd to Columbia Rd). The other notable waterways in the Borough are Passaic River, Spring Garden Brook, Black Cat Brook, Hassock Brook, and Pinch Brook. The Passaic River’s headwaters, located in south-central Morris County, are of exceptional water quality. The upper reaches of the Passaic, which are north of Florham Park, have received Federal Wild Trout Stream designation and a New Jersey designation as a trout production stream (Morris County Department of Planning and Development 1998).



Watersheds determine to what surface water body precipitation will drain. As precipitation is transported to surface water bodies it accumulates pollutants from lawns, roads, and storm drains. Florham Park continues to look toward the quality of the Passaic River in assessing the non-point source pollution inputs of the community.

## B. Wetlands

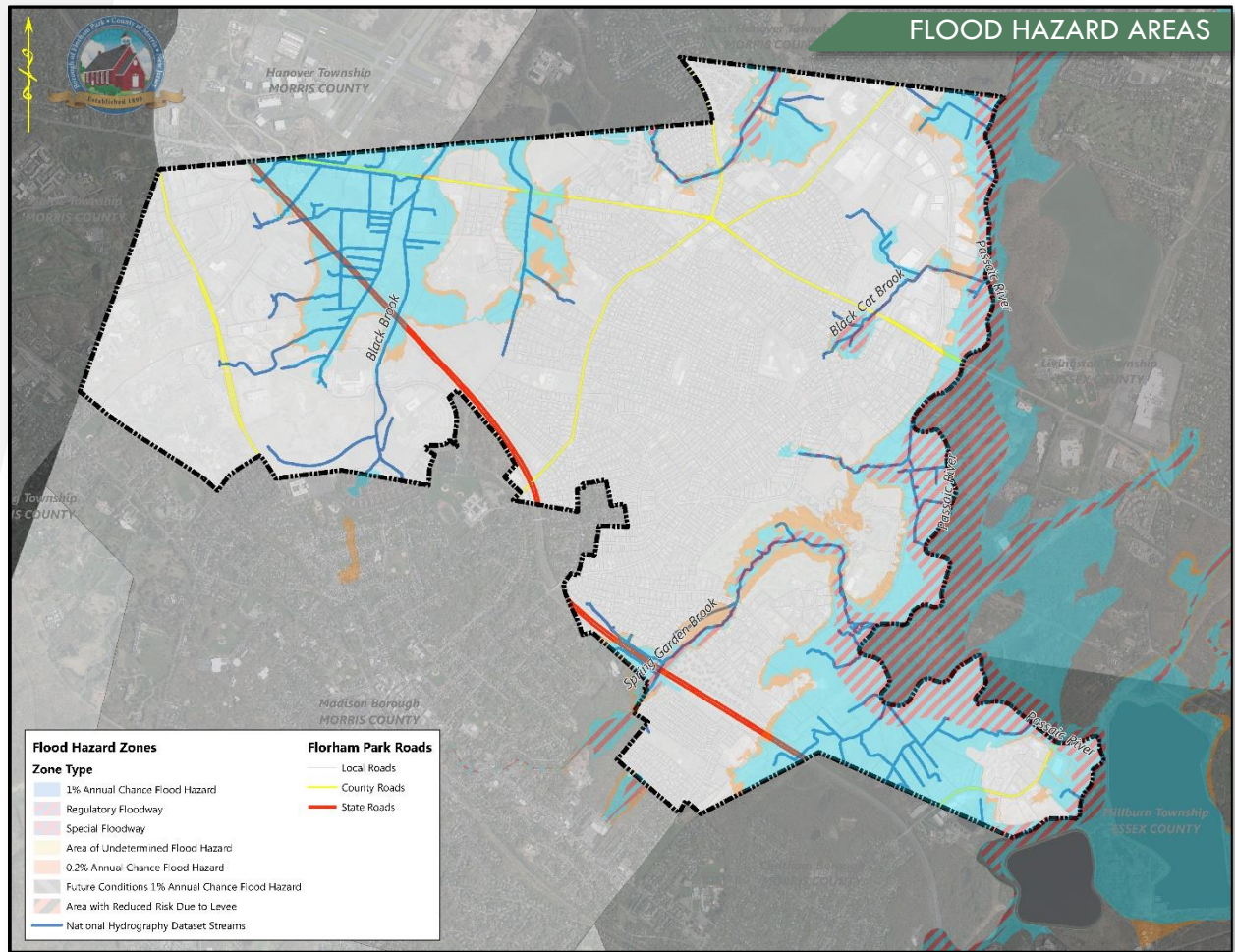
Wetlands mitigate flooding through their immense storage capacity, buffer pollutants, and provide aquatic wildlife habitat. In Florham Park, the largest and most contiguous wetlands are located in the northwestern and southeastern section of the Borough, related largely to the Black Brook and Passaic River floodplains, as well as their associated tributaries. The Central Valley Wetlands cover a large portion of the southeastern corner of the Borough and extend into Livingston Township to the northeast and Madison Borough to the southwest. The Black Meadows Wetlands cover a large portion of the northwestern section of the Borough, and extend into East Hanover and Hanover Townships, and within Florham Park Columbia Turnpike divides the southern portion from the northern portion. There are other isolated patches of wetlands in the Borough near Black Cat Brook.



### C. Flood Hazard Areas

Land areas that are covered by the floodwaters of the base flood and at high risk for flooding are called special flood hazard areas (SFHAs), or floodplains. These are geographic areas that the FEMA has defined according to varying levels of flood risk. These areas are indicated on flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs). The SFHA is the area where the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the area where the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies. The SFHA are “high risk areas” and “high risk – coastal areas” which include: Zones A, AO, AH, A1-30, AE, A99, AR, AR/A1-30, AR/AE, AR/AO, AR/AH, AR/A, VO, V1-30, VE, and V; and each zone reflects the severity or type of flooding in the area.

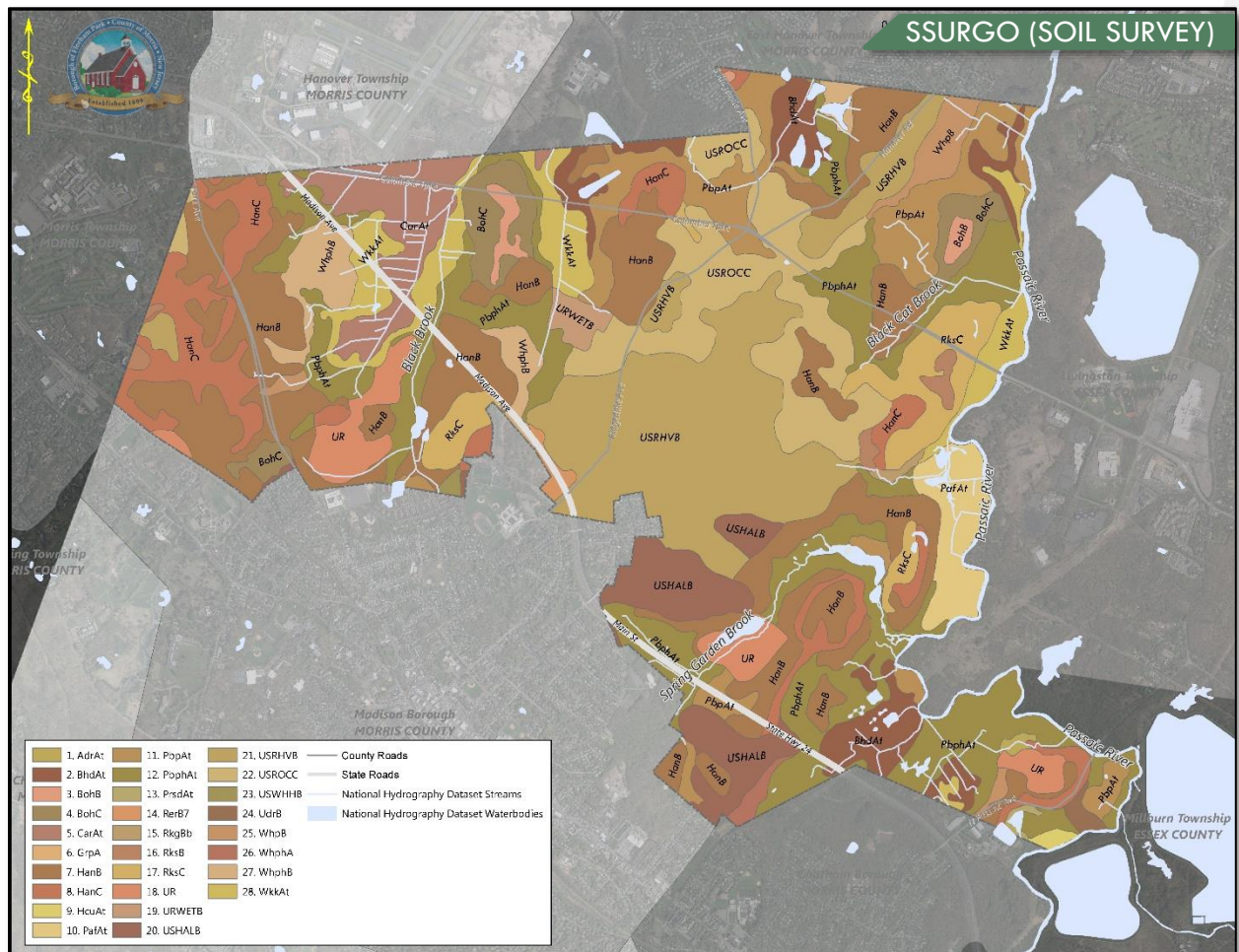
Flood Hazard areas prepared by FEMA Flood Hazard Area mapping are depicted below in varying shades that depict their designations. Overall, most Flood Hazard Areas occur adjacent to major waterways, and the most important designations are shown in blue (Zone A - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding or 100-year floodplain), orange (Zone B - Area of moderate flood hazard, usually the area between the limits of the 100-year and 500-year floods), and striped (regulatory floodways).



## D. Soils

New Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) soils layers were developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), of the US Department of Agriculture, as part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. The data are from the SSURGO database developed and maintained by the NRCS. Since the original posting of SSURGO data sets, the NRCS has modified the data structure of the digital soils data, and posted the new data sets for twenty New Jersey counties on their new distribution site, the Web Soil Survey.

Soil type and quality not only dictates what can be grown, but also what can be built. Soils determine what type of vegetation will occur in a given area and how quickly precipitation will drain to the ground. While the Soil Survey Geographic Soils (“SSURGO”) identifies 28 different soil types in Florham Park, there are three major soil types present based upon their total calculated area. Additionally, approximately 6.04 acres are classified as “Water”.



The most prevalent is “HanB”, which is described as “haledon silt loam” with 3 to 8 percent slopes. Haledon soils consist of very deep, somewhat poorly drained soils in low positions on undulating uplands. The use and vegetation associated with this soil type is used for housing or urban development, and the vegetation is largely forest dominated by oak and maple with some birch

and ash. Most areas are wooded or in idle fields. This soil type is identified throughout the Borough, and is not localized in any single area. Haledon soils are somewhat poorly drained, and surface runoff is medium to very high.

The next largest soil type present in Florham Park is “PbphAt”, which is described as “Parsippany silt loam, sandy loam substratum” with 0 to 3 percent slopes and frequently flooded. Parsippany silt loam soils consist of deep, poorly drained soils in extinct lake basins and near streams. A small portion of these soils has been found to be used for crops, hay and pasture, but most Parsippany soils are in woodland. Originally swamp white oak, elm, ash, and swamp maple grew on these soils. Parsippany silt loam soils are poorly drained, and surface runoff is negligible to high. This soil type is found throughout the Borough.

The final major soil type in Florham Park is “USRHVB”, which is described as “urban land-Riverhead complex” with 3 to 8 percent slopes. Riverhead soils consist of very deep, well drained soils formed in glacial outwash deposits derived primarily from granitic materials. They are on outwash plains, valley trains, beaches, and water-sorted moraines. Most of these soils have been cleared and are used for crops or are in suburban development. Principal crops are potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, corn, and hay. Native vegetation is black, white, and red oaks; American beech; and sugar maple. Riverhead soils are well drained, and the potential for surface runoff is low to medium. This soil is largely localized to the central portion of Florham Park, along Ridgedale Avenue towards Madison Borough and Hanover Road towards East Hanover Township.

**FLORHAM PARK SOILS**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Acres in FP</b>
1	AdrAt	Timakwa muck, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	0.525
2	BhdAt	Biddeford silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	16.549
3	BohB	Boonton gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	2.692
4	BohC	Boonton moderately well drained gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	11.097
5	CarAt	Carlisle muck, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	14.907
6	GrpA	Great Piece loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.0001
7	HanB	Haledon silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	79.620 <sup>1</sup>
8	HanC	Haledon silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	26.881
9	HcuAt	Hatboro-Codorus complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	0.629
10	PafAt	Palms muck, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	9.273
11	PbpAt	Parsippany silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	27.372
12	PbphAt	Parsippany silt loam, sandy loam substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	67.069 <sup>2</sup>
13	PrsdAt	Preakness dark surface variant sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	0.488

14	RerB7	Reaville deep variant channery silt loam, 0 to 6 percent slopes	1.237
15	RkgBb	Ridgebury loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	0.569
16	RksB	Riverhead gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	2.337
17	RksC	Riverhead gravelly sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	15.617
18	UR	Urban land	12.045
19	URWETB	Urban land, wet substratum, 0 to 8 percent slopes	2.452
20	USHALB	Urban land-Haledon complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes	17.416
21	USRHVB	Urban land-Riverhead complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes	58.612 <sup>3</sup>
22	USROCC	Urban land-Rockaway complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes	33.082
23	USWHHB	Urban land-Whippany, occasionally flooded complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes	0.442
24	UdrB	Udorthents, refuse substratum, 0 to 8 percent slopes	0.958
25	WhpB	Whippany silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	5.388
26	WhphA	Whippany silt loam, sandy loam substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes	1.164
27	WhphB	Whippany silt loam, sandy loam substratum, 3 to 8 percent slopes	10.029
28	WkkAt	Willette muck, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	19.697

## II. PRESERVED LANDS

### A. Greenways and Blueways

Florham Park Borough offers myriad opportunities for outdoor recreation that invite residents and visitors to experience a range of activities. Within and along its borders, the Borough hosts lands dedicated to open space, scenic waterways and open waters, and a mixture of historic sites, and a thriving downtown area. Building on these opportunities, the following system presents a vision that can be implemented over time as opportunities, funds, and manpower permit.

Florham Park has a considerable amount of preserved and undeveloped open space in addition to the park properties. These lands have been acquired and preserved as opportunity presented itself over recent Borough history. An inventory of twenty-six of the thirty-three total sites on the ROSI are preserved open space that is listed on the Borough's ROSI. At nearly 80 acres, the recently acquired Brooklake Rod and Gun Club tract constitutes nearly half of this preserved inventory; and Greenwood Avenue (25 acres), Fish Brook (11 acres), Passaic Avenue (8 acres) and Columbia Turnpike (7 acres) constitute the significant remainder of larger preserved parcels. The most recently acquired parcels are the Stobaeus Park properties on Burnside Avenue.

Greenways are areas of focus for conservation and recreation (or, where the area of focus is based on a watercourse, a "blueway"). These are "corridors of protected public and private land established along rivers, stream valleys, ridges, abandoned railroad corridors, utility rights-of-way, canals, scenic roads, or other linear features. They link recreational, cultural, and natural features,

provide pathways for people and wildlife, protect forests, wetlands, and grasslands, and improve the quality of life for everyone”. Greenways favor public spaces that welcome and engage the community in general; especially those who like to explore and experience things on foot. Their purpose is to “expand the opportunities for urban recreation, to provide alternative ways to move through the city, and to enhance the experience of nature and city life”. In addition, local recreational areas are used throughout the year by both children and adults, and there is a need to expand the park system to accommodate the programs and activities enjoyed by residents. Considerations for a vision that knits together various part of the community are shown on the following Section under “Conservation Recommendations”. The greenways identified within the Borough of Florham Park are:

- 1) Passaic Meadows Greenway
- 2) Black Meadows Greenway
- 3) Emmett Park Greenway
- 4) Passaic River Blueway
- 5) Spring Garden Blueway
- 6) Pinch Brook Blueway
- 7) Black Cat Ditch Blueway
- 8) Forest Patches

Trails are also identified:

- 1) Traction Line Trail
- 2) Spring Garden Lake Footpath
- 3) Bicycle Routes

## **B. Conservation and Environmental Stewardship**

The Florham Park Environmental Commission coordinates a number of activities within the Borough related to environmental conservation, stewardship, and education. The Environmental Commission is a leader in land management and stewardship in Morris County creating a conservation management area within the riparian corridor of the Passaic River and implementing a restoration plan at Spring Garden Lake that is appreciated and enjoyed by residents from throughout the Borough. A summary of stewardship activities is provided below and added to from previous plans.

- Germershausen Park Conservation Management Area: A 9/11 memorial was finished in 2009 and a walking trail was completed that year, with boardwalk sections over the wet area. Due to regular flooding of the boardwalk and walking trails, it was under-utilized and is no longer marked. The small frog pond and native species of plants surrounding it have been well maintained. During the 2021/2022 school year, an Eagle Scout project was completed to dredge the frog pond and replace the damaged liner, allowing the water levels to remain consistent and the population of frogs to thrive. A bench has been installed near the pond and the information kiosk has been rebuilt, allowing for the posting of updated information on the various frog types that inhabit the pond.
- Spring Garden Lake – The Environmental Commission addresses issues such as the proliferation of invasive species, water quality, passive recreation and wildlife habitat improvement. To do so, it has retained the services of Princeton Hydro, LLC to monitor

and help maintain the water quality of the lake. These services have ranged from annual water quality activities such as surveys, alum treatments, fish maintenance, 2 generations of floating wetlands construction and maintenance and spraying of invasive phragmites along the shoreline to conducting an updated bathymetric survey and a watershed assessment in 2021. This data has been used to create a Lake Management Plan to assess the overall health of the lake and create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals to serve as a central part of the Action Plan for the next one-, two-, and five-year periods. This plan is a significant component in the Borough's recent grant application in response to the RFP from the NJ DEP for proposals for lake restoration grants.

- Cleanup activities are regularly coordinated with volunteers at Spring Garden Lake to remove debris and maintain the footpath around the lake. Additionally, the Borough and Environmental Commission completed the construction of a foot bridge over a concrete spillway near East Madison Avenue.
- 8 benches have been installed at various points near the footpath around the lake to facilitate the use and enjoyment of the lake.
- Local Boy and Girl Scouts have completed several projects at Spring Garden Lake, including the addition of a native species garden, pollinator garden, rain garden and bat boxes as well as the restoration of the original floating wetlands.
- A grant of \$1,500 was awarded to the Environmental Commission in 2022 from ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) for removal of invasive phragmites and replacement with native species along the southwest corner of the lake near the Woodbine Avenue entrance.
- A grant of \$176,900 was awarded to the Borough in 2022 from NJDEP (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection) for the design, installation and maintenance of a system to reduce phosphorus concentrations and improve aquatic life.

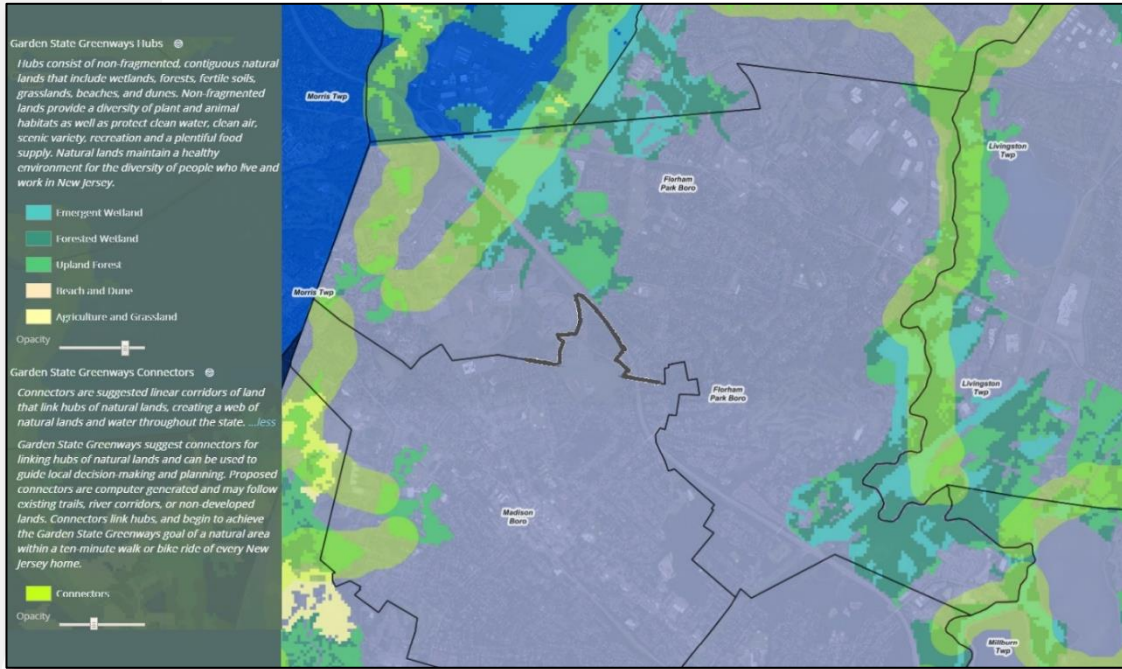
### III. CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

While the Borough of Florham Park has a number of preserved open space properties, there are additional opportunities to provide pathways and trails, educational signage or interpretive features, sitting areas, reinforced landscaping and all other potentials for civic engagement. An environmental group in the State, Conservation Blueprint, has undertaken analyses related to improving and utilizing greenway and blueways specific for these purposes. Conservation Blueprint is a data-driven, interactive mapping tool made possible through a partnership of The Nature Conservancy, Rowan University, and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, together with a collective of 21 conservation-focused groups, both governmental and non-profits.

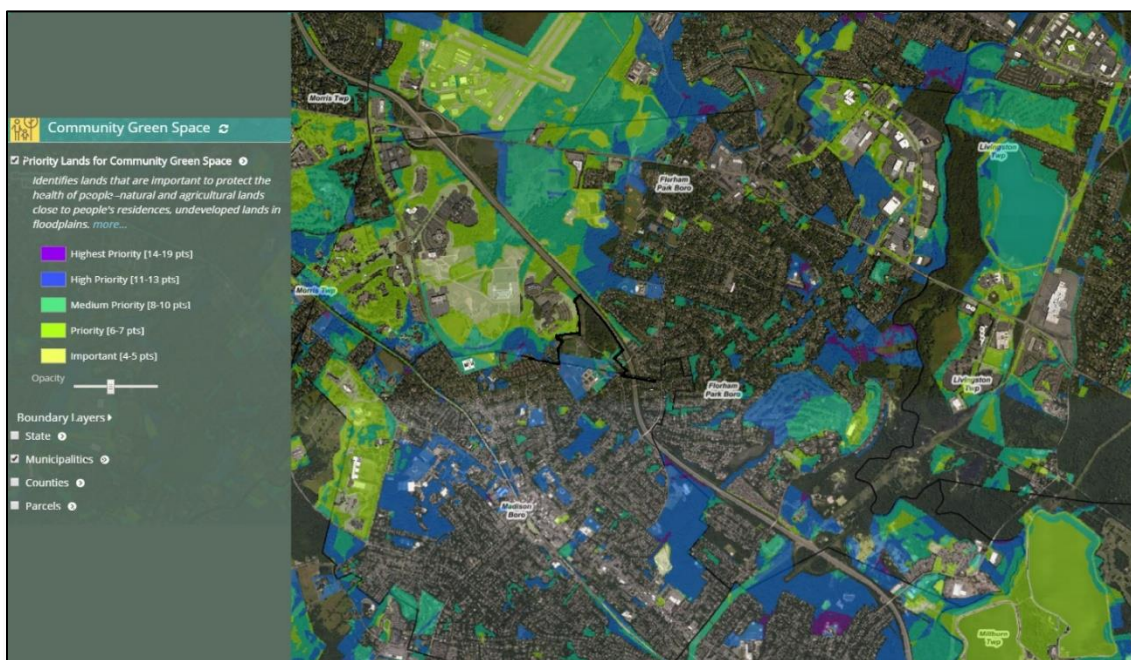
Conservation Blueprint provides information on greenway hubs and connectors. Hubs consist of non-fragmented, contiguous natural lands that include wetlands, forests, fertile soils, grasslands, beaches, and dunes. Non-fragmented lands provide a diversity of plant and animal habitats as well as protect clean water, clean air, scenic variety, recreation and a plentiful food supply. Natural lands maintain a healthy environment for the diversity of people who live and work in New Jersey.



Connectors are suggested linear corridors of land that link hubs of natural lands, creating a web of natural lands and water throughout the state. Connectors are suggested for linking hubs of natural lands and can be used to guide local decision-making and planning. The following map produced through Conservation Blueprint's interactive mapping tool shows proposed connectors that are computer generated and may follow existing trails, river corridors, or non-developed lands. Connectors link hubs, and begin to achieve the Garden State Greenways goal of a natural area within a ten-minute walk or bike ride of every New Jersey home.



Additionally, Conservation Blueprint identifies land important to protect for connecting people to nature and recreation in NJ through priority listing as shown in the map below, and also includes undeveloped lands in floodplains that may be environmentally sensitive. Overall, the Borough should utilize this tool in the future for assessing land with the potential to be preserved and create a priority system for properties based on their characteristics.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## CONTENT

I. OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSES

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

# I. OBSERVATIONS & ANALYSES

The following are a series of observations, findings, and information gained from the planning process, and potential solutions were identified to be further evaluated as recommendations within this Plan.

## A. Existing Park Improvements

### i. Observations

- a. Florham Park Borough offers 7 developed parks - and 4 with recreational facilities, over 396 acres of open space, and a wide variety of programs.
- b. Developed park facilities with lighted fields are restricted to Community Parks, geographically clustered in the central western portion of the Borough. Athletic field and court lighting has been applied to Borough fields and courts at Emmett, since the potential to significantly improve recreation opportunities was recognized as a practical response to use stress and scheduling issues. Its inclusion at the Volunteer Park fields shows a recognition for the importance of lighting to move practice and completion sequences to more convenient times. Lighting important facilities enables utilization of them equivalently to the more convenient schedule that naturally occurs as days lengthen in the late spring and early fall.
- c. Many Borough fields, particularly rectangular fields, are not regulation-sized and present limitations for use other than team practices.
- d. Developed park facilities with synthetic turf fields is limited, while some non-turf fields have presented both maintenance and scheduling issues due to flooding or lingering field conditions.
- e. Picnic areas are best if developed in a natural setting and should be developed in every Neighborhood, Community, and Mini-Park as well as in passive parks such as nature parks. Community parks provide better opportunities for the development of large shelters (group reservable picnic shelters), such as the single one located at Emmett Park.

### ii. Potential Solutions

- a. There are substantial opportunities at existing parks to improve field and facility conditions through step-by-step or field-by-field strategies to tackle specific park issues such as lighting, flooding, or dimensions.

## B. New Park and Facilities Development

### i. Observations

- a. There is one notable area in the southeastern portion of Florham Park that is more than a half mile from a developed park or playground. This area has a high

concentration of existing and new residential housing with Riverbend development and the Sun Valley phases.

- b. Florham Park has a deficiency in Neighborhood Parks. These parks should serve more localized neighborhood populations and be more accessible by non-vehicular means.
  - c. Community Parks are concentrated within the central, western portion of Florham Park, and are largely within a 2-mile radius from most of the Borough. The development of additional recreation facilities in the Borough should be located in the eastern portion of the Borough, if possible.
  - d. The change in population of Florham Park is expected to remain consistent into the future, especially due to the additional development of housing, but the trends show that the population is aging. The number (and percentage as a whole) of children is decreasing, and the number (and percentage as a whole) of seniors is increasing.
  - e. Florham Park has undeveloped parkland and open space on its ROSI, some of which could be developed into new active and passive park facilities.
  - f. Many of the needed facilities for existing parks could be incorporated into new parks, including trails/bike paths, courts, fields, indoor facilities, and picnic pavilions.
- ii. *Potential Solutions*
- a. The Borough should investigate opportunities to develop parkland at existing Borough-owned properties for additional Neighborhood Parks in select areas.
  - b. New park development should include playgrounds and reservable picnic shelters whenever possible. New parks should also consider the need for a variety of facilities, particularly those preferred by the local community.
  - c. Outdoor fitness equipment should be installed at select parks to provide an opportunity for improved fitness for residents, including seniors.
  - d. Consider unmet facility needs as part of any new park development.
  - e. Develop park facilities that provide intergenerational activities for all age groups.

## **C. Connectivity through Pathways, Bike Lines, and Trails**

### *i. Observations*

- a. Florham Park currently only has one linear trail, the Traction Line Recreation Trail, which runs parallel to the New Jersey Transit Line railroad tracks. The linear trail stretches from Danforth Road, by Fairleigh Dickenson University, to Morris Avenue in Convent Station, and Washington's Headquarters in Morristown, and is regularly used by commuters and students. The Traction Line features the Fit-Trail with ten cardio and strength training stations, installed in 2012. The Borough also has

footpaths, Spring Garden Lake Footpath - which was improved with a pedestrian bridge over a concrete spillway near the lake's main parking area in 2018, the Stobaeus-Briarwood trail - which was completed to connect Stobaeus Park with Briarwood and Brooklake elementary schools, and trails within the Germershausen Park Conservation Management Area.

- b. Some parks provide limited connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods through sidewalks (no walkways or connecting trails despite adjacency).
- c. Proper bicycle parking is generally insufficient at the parks.

ii. *Potential Solutions*

- a. The Borough should continue to utilize County Preservation Grants to construct or expand trail opportunities within and between parks.
- b. Additional improvements, such as lighting, benches, trail markers, or outdoor fitness equipment (parcours), should be considered to enhance trail experiences.

**D. Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education**

i. *Observations*

- a. Florham Park has a considerable amount of preserved and undeveloped open space in addition to its park properties. Spring Garden Lake and the Germershausen Park Conservation Management Area represent prime examples of the stewardship of the Environmental Commission, in its work to utilize these sites for trails, species identification, removal of invasive species, and planting of hundreds of native shrubs and wildflowers.

ii. *Potential Solutions*

- a. Preserved properties similar to Germershausen Park Conservation Management Area that are not appropriate or available for the development of recreation facilities should be investigated for their use as interactive nature or conservation preserve areas.
- b. Nature trails within protected greenways could provide both educational and aesthetic value, as well as usable passive recreation space between developed parks.
- c. An adopt-a-trail program could also assist in the acquisition of funding for trail improvements.
- d. Increased engagement of the Environmental Commission with local schools, businesses, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the community to foster education and collaboration in creating programs related to sustainability and environmental initiatives.

## **E. Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts**

### *i. Observations*

- a. There are a number and variety of outdoor athletic fields and courts throughout the Borough. Public tennis courts and rectangular fields (for sports like soccer, football, and lacrosse) are localized to the Community Parks, while diamond fields for baseball and softball are distributed fairly evenly throughout the park system. The Borough has some fields with lighting that provide the ability to utilize the fields more than fields without lights.
- b. Basketball courts appear to be accessible to most parts of the Borough, but are largely in main parks. These types of facilities are useful within neighborhood to facilitate informal recreation and interactions. Where possible, multi-purpose courts should be considered adjacent to residential areas.

### *ii. Potential Solutions*

- a. Where possible, multi-purpose courts should be considered adjacent to residential areas.

## **F. Indoor Recreation**

### *i. Observations*

- a. The Borough Community Center Building located within the Emmett Park Complex provides opportunities for indoor recreation, such as fitness classes, camps, and other gatherings. However, it cannot provide indoor practice facilities for larger team sports.
- b. Indoor areas for recreation are largely limited to public school buildings or private recreation providers, as the Borough does not have any indoor facilities.

### *ii. Potential Solutions*

- a. As youth competition and student athlete development evolves over time, trends have shown that many sports are heading towards year-round schedules to make athletes more competitive with their counterparts around the nation. While private development may serve the needs of these team sports or individual athletes, an indoor facility would set Florham Park apart. This would be a huge undertaking, but should be considered in the future if space or funding becomes available due to its likely popularity and marketability.

## **G. Programming**

### *i. Observations*

- a. Florham Park Borough provides a wide variety of recreational programming in the form of athletic programs, camps, before and after school programs, special events,

senior programs, programs for special populations, and more. The Florham Park Recreation Department provides and schedules the facilities for these programs (including rental of private facilities); however, many of the programs and leagues are managed by other agencies or organizations.

- b. As a result of changing demographics and parks and recreation trends, some additional programs should be developed. Program offerings should be available for all residents regardless of age or disability. Additionally, programs should also be designed to maximize opportunities for participation by providing convenient locations, a variety of starting times, and by providing opportunities for multiple generations.

ii. *Potential Solutions*

- a. Adult fitness and wellness programs should be investigated to develop additional fitness programs to meet this need. Specifically, as trends show the population aging the Recreation Department could help come up with series of guidelines for programs designed specifically for older residents.
- b. Fitness and wellness programs could be expanded for all ages, and partnerships with healthcare providers could be utilized to increase the availability of these programs.
- c. Additional intergenerational programming could include nature based activities outdoors (fishing, gardening, bird watching) and arts and crafts activities indoors (music, painting, cooking).

**H. Maintenance and Operations**

i. *Observations*

- a. The DPW has established seasonal procedures for maintenance of all types of field surfaces and associated structures, pathways parking areas, irrigation and drainage systems and a host of common park site features. These are performed as part of the conventional assignment load of department employees and constitute the background condition typical of a service year. Emergencies, system component failures, vandalism, very wet or very dry weather, special events or special administrative requests and particularly, flooding present special circumstances and require responses which must be overlaid upon normally scheduled work or occasionally discontinuing that work. The fields that DPW manages at Emmett and Beechcrest are chronically and severely impacted by ground water affects.
- b. It is reported that the persistent heavy programming of all system fields, particularly those at Emmett, coupled with the high incidence of drainage related impacts effectively eliminates the opportunity to close field groups for repair or complete renovation. Typically, spot repairs of damaged surfaces are performed at season ends but adequate time for establishment is rarely available.

- c. The construction of Volunteer’s Park represents an advancement in the Borough’s facilities, with not only a doubling the stock of larger, rectangular fields, but also providing turf fields with lighting. However, both the field conditions as well as its comparative age to older Borough facilities will likely make it a popular venue. Periodic evaluation of field and facility conditions is vital to understanding the maintenance requirements necessary to upkeep the park.
- ii. *Potential Solutions*
- a. Flooding mitigation strategies should be explored further to make fields more resilient to minor storm events.
  - b. The Borough should utilize professional trained in the routine maintenance tasks of infield, turf, and equipment repair for more effective facility management, especially for newer facilities. and
  - c. In order to generate additional revenues that could be used to offset maintenance and improvement costs, the Recreation Department should consider potential usage fees for facility users.
  - d. Additional volunteer opportunities, similar to the stewardship and efforts of the Environmental Commission, should be explored for the maintenance or improvement of park properties. An important effort in order to promote volunteer opportunities would be encourage the creation of volunteer group that could recruit and organize volunteers, raise funds and apply for grants, and to work toward the implementation of improvements outlined in this Master Plan Element.
  - e. Florham Park Borough should also continuously investigate new and inventive funding sources for parks and recreation improvements. These efforts should include the pursuit of grants for the development and operation of parks and recreation facilities and programs.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section describes the recommendations for Open Space, Parks, and Recreation in Florham Park and provides details of recommended changes to operations, programs, and facilities in the Borough. The recommendations for open space, parks, and recreation operations and policy changes are focused on efforts to increase volunteer opportunities, improve communication of program and facility availability in Florham Park, generate additional revenue, and to enhance the already excellent Recreation Department.

### A. GENERAL

1. Adopt this Open Space and Recreation Master Plan Element.
2. Petition for the Volunteers Park site (portion of Block 1402, Lot 1.01), Block 2905, Lot 33 (known as the Baldwin/Hillside Park Pass), and Block 1003, Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 to be added to the Borough Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI).



3. Anticipating the future development of land in the Borough for housing and the development of active parklands with Volunteer's Park, the Borough should identify future sites for developed parkland.
4. The addition of Neighborhood Parks or Pocket Parks within residential areas could greatly improve neighborhood access to open space. The Borough should work to identify potential sites for simple improvements on existing open space land within residential areas.
5. Due to limited land, the Borough should consider enacting an Ordinance requiring an open space set-aside for medium to high density residential projects, which would ensure localized park space that can serve new units and reduce gaps in park service in underserved areas.
6. The Borough should explore bike paths to provide additional connectivity for residents, not only between parks, but likewise to provide multi-modal opportunities. The Borough should consult the Morris County Master Plan's Bicycle and Pedestrian Element for specific recommendations related to Florham Park, and coordinate with the County in developing its own Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
7. While a resolution was passed almost 10 years ago related to the Borough's participation in the Sustainable Jersey Program., the Borough has not yet achieved certification, but should continue to explore qualifying sustainability activities.
8. The Borough has successfully leveraged grant funding to acquire and preserve open space properties and should continue to evaluate potential sites for future acquisition.
9. Florham Park has a considerable amount of preserved and undeveloped open space in addition to its park properties. Sites that are not appropriate or available for the development of active recreation facilities due to environmental limitations or restrictions should be investigated for their use as interactive nature or conservation preserve areas for passive recreation.
10. The Borough should continue to research and apply for grant and funding opportunities that can be used for open space and park improvements and the construction of trails.

## **B. FACILITY SPECIFIC**

While the Parks of Florham Park offer a variety of amenities, some park features are in need of improvement, and additional facilities will improve service levels and help meet the needs of changing demographics.

### **1. Community Parks**

- a. *Emmett Park*

- The Borough should explore flooding mitigation strategies to improve the quality of the field conditions, lighten constant maintenance requirements, increase field usability, and prevent scheduling complications.
- While Emmett Park has the largest volume of field and court facilities in the Borough, a reorganization of the field layouts should be considered and undertaken to optimize the number of regulation-sized fields.
- Existing signage along entrances to the complex are only partially useful, due to the site's expansive and unique layout. Additional signage could help provide visitors new to the site with additional direction and help to advertise the site.
- Due to the nature of the layout of the rear fields at Emmett Park, the numbering system is only as helpful as signage or field identification markings for visitors to the park. This is a simple measure that could improve not only visitor experience, but make the complex appear more well-organized and attractive.
- Within Emmett Park, an outdoor fitness trail could easily be installed along at regular intervals along the existing walking paths and serve as an optimal resource for parents, spectators, and even Borough employees throughout the work day.

*b. Volunteer's Park*

- Periodic evaluations should be conducted to ensure proper maintenance of turf improvements.
- There does not appear to be existing signage at the site entrance to the complex along Elm Street. Since the park is fairly new, this should be installed for wayfinding purposes and to showcase pride in the efforts of completing the new facility.

**2. Neighborhood Parks**

*a. Stobaeus Park*

- The Borough has been successful in seeking County grant funding and should continue to seek additional funding to improve trail connections between Stobaeus Park and Briarwood/Brooklake School properties.

**3. Walkways and Connecting Trails**

- a.* Additional walkways and connecting trails are needed at all parks in Florham Park to improve overall connectivity within the parks as well as to provide accessibility for disabled park users. All park facilities, including playgrounds, game courts, shelters, athletic fields, and spectator areas should be connected through paved walkways. To assure that all portions of parks meet accessibility requirements, Florham Park Borough should conduct an ADA Accessibility Assessment of all facilities, programs, and communications.

- b. Environmentally sensitive areas not capable of supporting active recreation, such as particular preserved sites or greenways, which currently lack pathways and trails, educational signage or interpretive features, sitting areas, reinforced landscaping, and all other potentials for civic engagement should be explored.

#### **4. Support Facilities**

##### *a. Facility Lighting*

- As it is capable of enabling opportunities for recreation, it is recommended that lighting should be a prominent objective of improvement for existing and future developed parkland sites with recreation fields and facilities.

##### *b. Drinking Fountains*

- Drinking fountains should be provided at all parks and should be placed throughout the site to allow easy access. Most parks in Florham Park would benefit from additional drinking fountains. It is also recommended that drinking fountains include a spigot to allow for hose attachments, pet watering, and bottle filling.

##### *c. Restrooms*

- Restroom facilities are largely limited to Community Parks within the Borough. Where possible, the Borough should make it a priority to provide restroom facilities on park sites.

##### *d. Picnic Areas and Shelters*

- Picnic areas should be developed in every Neighborhood, Community, and Mini-Park as well as in passive parks such as nature parks. Community parks provide better opportunities for the development of large shelters (group reservable picnic shelters). Small picnic shelters or gazebos are recommended at smaller parks, such as Stobaeus and Beechcrest.

##### *e. Outdoor Fitness Equipment*

- Outdoor fitness equipment (parcours) should be installed at select parks along walkways, footpaths, and trails to provide an opportunity for improved fitness for residents, including seniors.

08

# APPENDIX

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