

III. LAND USE PLAN

This chapter provides a description of each land use district, proposed natural resource overlay districts, and low impact development policies. Following the adoption of the land use plan, the Town's zoning ordinance will need to be reviewed and revised to maintain consistency with the land use plan and to provide more detailed standards for implementing the plan's recommendations.

LAND USE DISTRICTS

The following land use districts are illustrated on Figure 1: Existing Land Use Map and described in more detail below. Where it is appropriate, recommendations for changes to the districts are indicated in ***bold italics***. These recommendations are also identified on Figure 4: Proposed Zoning Changes.

- Medium Density Residential (R-75)
- Higher Density Residential (R-50)
- Multi-Family Residential (R-MF)
- General Office (B-1)
- Highway Business (B-2)
- Central Business District Office (B-3)
- Central Business District (B-4)
- South Main Business (B-5)
- Neighborhood Business (B-6)
- Light Industry (I-1)
- Heavy Industry (I-2)
- Riverfront Redevelopment (RRA 1 through 6)
- Phillipsburg Commerce Park Redevelopment

Residential Districts

- *Medium Density Residential*

This district corresponds to the current R-75 zone. The primary use is single-family homes at a density of five to six dwelling units per acre. Multi-family dwelling units are permitted as a Conditional Use.

- *The Board should consider rezoning the portion of the R-75 zone that is between the railroad and the riverbank at the southernmost point of the Town to the RRA-3 Riverfront Recreational/Heritage. This would ensure consistency with other riverfront redevelopment areas as well as advance the goals for the railroad / heritage uses desired for this area.*

- *Higher Density Residential*

This district corresponds to the current R-50 zone. The primary use is single-family homes at a density of eight to nine dwelling units per acre. Multi-family dwelling units are permitted as a Conditional Use.

- *The Board should consider rezoning the portion of the R-50 zone that is between the railroad and the riverbank toward the southern area of the Town to the RRA-3 Riverfront Recreational/Heritage. This would ensure consistency with other riverfront redevelopment areas as well as advance the goals for the railroad / heritage uses desired for this area.*

- *Multi-Family Residential*

This district covers the existing Housing Authority property. The density in this district is 20 dwelling units per acre on five-acre tracts. Other multi-family residences exist in the Town and are permitted as conditional uses in the R-50 and R-75 zones where appropriate. One differentiating factor is that the minimum acreage requirement does not apply in the R-MF districts.

Commercial Districts

- *General Office*

This district primarily accommodates the Hospital and supportive commercial uses on Roseberry Street. Representative uses include medical facilities and office buildings intended for business, executive, professional and administrative purposes, including financial institutions.

- *The hospital on Roseberry Street should be added as a permitted use in the B-1 zone with appropriate bulk and design standards. §625-54 Permitted uses.*

- *Highway Business*

This district corresponds to the B-2 zone and is intended for highway oriented businesses along the Route 22 corridor.

- *The block bordered by Anderson, Marshall, Heckman and Roseberry (e.g. office building & pharmacy), the WAWA property, and the Chase Bank do not have highway frontage and should be considered for rezoning to B-6 neighborhood business.*

- *Central Business District Office*

As a result of the last comprehensive rezoning, the B-3 Office zone only covers a handful of properties at Broad and Third and at the southern end of Fairview, and at the Toll Bridge crossing.

- *The Board should consider combining the B-3 district with the adjoining B-1 office districts as the parcels have highway frontage.*

- *Central Business District*

This district covers the commercial core of South Main Street from McKeen Street to Union Square. It is intended to serve as the Town's central business district offering a variety of retail and service establishments and mixed-use buildings in a traditional "Main Street" environment. It is currently the subject of a study related to neighborhood preservation.

- *South Main Business*

The South Main Business District corresponds to the B-5 zone at the southern end of South Main from approximately Center Street to the Pohatcong border. It is meant to accommodate a range of commercial uses similar to the Central Business District but on larger lots.

- *Neighborhood Business*

The district at the corner of Center and Roseberry Streets is geared toward neighborhood commercial uses such as retail and service businesses to complement the Phillipsburg Commerce Park redevelopment area and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- *The Board should consider including residential as a permitted use in this district as there are many single- and multi-family dwellings that are not currently permitted in the zone.*

Industrial Districts

- *Light Industrial*

The Light Industrial district corresponds to the current I-1 zone. The purpose of this district is to accommodate a range of well-designed, modern commercial and industrial uses conducted entirely within the confines of a fully enclosed structure and in strict compliance with the Town's performance standards. The district also includes a conditional townhouse option on Howard Street. District includes some residential that should be considered for re-zoning so as to conform to existing land uses.

- *Heavy Industrial*

The Heavy Industrial district is located at the northern end of Broad Street. It is similar to the I-1 district with the exception that trucking terminals and bulk storage are permitted.

- *The Board should consider combining the two industrial zones into one "I" Industrial district with updated standards to specify that trucking terminals and bulk storage are permitted in the (new) I zone along River Road only. The existing I-2 zone located between the railroad and riverbank at the northernmost point of the Town's riverfront should also be considered for rezoning to RRA-1 given it is primarily riverbank.*

Redevelopment Districts

- *Riverfront*

The Riverfront redevelopment area covers the length of the Delaware River waterfront from approximately Fifth Street at the northern end to Pursel Street at the southern end and contains six sub-districts that reflect the objectives for each area. The goal of the redevelopment plan is to capitalize on the recreational and cultural assets of the riverfront district to support the revitalization of the historic downtown through the creation of new business, residential, and eco-tourism opportunities.

- *Phillipsburg Commerce Park*

The Phillipsburg Commerce Park redevelopment area covers the former Ingersoll Rand complex. The redevelopment plan envisions a large-scale industrial/office park, with good rail and highway access, buffered from the adjoining neighborhoods. Since the first drafting of this Land Use Plan, the Phillipsburg Commerce Park – or Bridge Point 78, as it is known – has been under construction since October 2018, and as of September 2019 the project has secured its first lease in the 975,000 square foot warehouse.

A new entrance to the site from Route 22 / Memorial Parkway includes a new traffic signal, a left turn lane for those traveling west, and the realignment of Lock Street.

Potential Redevelopment Areas

The Board should consider the following properties for redevelopment (Figure 5 – Proposed Redevelopment / Rehabilitation Study Areas):

1. South Main Street from the Black Bridge to McKeen Street. The Town is looking to revitalize storefronts and residential properties along this stretch of South Main Street and there is potential for that to happen through State and Federal programs.
2. Block 1004, Lot 2 – 543 Marshall Street, Kandola Real Estate, LLC – 0.81 ac.
3. Block 1005, Lot 3 – 540 Marshall Street, The Norton Partnership – 1.96 ac.
4. Block 1503, Lot 39 – Mercer Street, Town of Phillipsburg – 0.31 ac.
5. Block 1503, Lot 40 – 29-31 Mercer Street, 620 Lehigh Drive, LLC – 0.82 ac

NATURAL RESOURCE OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Phillipsburg does not presently have a master plan conservation element. The land use plan does, however, provide for overlay districts to address certain critical resources within the Town. It is recommended that the Town prepare a master plan conservation element to further define these and other resources identified in the Town's ERI and explore the creation of additional overlay districts and supporting ordinances.

The following overlay districts apply throughout the Town as identified in the Phillipsburg ERI or as otherwise indicated by site-specific investigations.

Riparian Areas

Riparian areas are hydrologically connected to surface water through overland surface runoff, hydric soils, wetlands or subsurface flow. Riparian areas moderate fluctuations in water temperature, help maintain ground water recharge and stream flow, stabilize stream banks and provide flood storage areas. The riparian areas in Phillipsburg are associated with the Delaware River and the Lopatcong Creek. (See ERI Figure 8)

Buffers will need to be established, however, to protect the integrity of the water resource from impairment due to proximate land uses and/or future development activities. Key functions of buffers include stormwater and flood water retention and filtration, water quality protection, temperature moderation, aquatic ecosystem integrity and channel integrity. Minimum standards for such buffers should be consistent with those established by the NJDEP, which are as follows:

- 300 feet along both sides of any Category One (C1) water, and all upstream tributaries situated within the same HUC 14 watershed.
- 150 feet along both sides of the waters not designated as C1 waters.
- 50 feet along both sides of the water for all other surface water bodies.

By way of example, the following activities and facilities are generally prohibited in a riparian area:

- Removal or clear-cutting of trees and other vegetation or soil disturbance such as grading, except for selective vegetation removal for the purpose of stream or riparian area stabilization or restoration projects that require vegetation removal or grading prior to implementation.
- Storage of any hazardous or noxious materials.

- Alteration of watercourses, regrading, dumping of trash, soil, dirt, fill, vegetative or other debris.
- Use of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and/or other chemicals in excess of prescribed industry standards or the recommendations of the Soil Conservation District.
- Roads, driveways, motor vehicle traffic or parking lots.

Steep Slope Protection Areas

Phillipsburg contains 284 acres of moderately and severely constrained slopes. They are generally found along the river and along railroad rights-of-way. (See ERI Figure 11)

As noted in the ERI, disturbance of such areas can trigger erosion and sedimentation, degradation of surface water quality, silting of wetlands, and alteration of drainage patterns. These processes, when severe, can result in land slumping and landslides that can damage both developed property and ecosystems. The severity and extent of slopes, soil characteristics, and land cover all affect the potential for damages from the disturbance of steep slopes. Accordingly, the following policies will guide the regulation and management of steep slope protection areas.

- Maps and delineations of steep slope protection areas should be updated and improved as better information becomes available and/or as new areas are identified through project reviews pertaining to individual sites and properties.
- Land disturbance within all steep slope protection areas should incorporate *low impact development* techniques to minimize the extent of such disturbance and the potential negative impacts resulting from it.
- Land disturbance within areas of severely and moderately constrained slopes should be prohibited altogether, with exceptions only for linear development.

Carbonate Rock

Phillipsburg is located in a region that is entirely underlain by carbonate rock (See ERI Figure 18). Management of development activities in carbonate rock areas is necessary to address the potential problems that are common to these areas.

Of particular concern are the potential negative impacts of land development practices that do not properly consider the constraints and challenges presented by carbonate

rock areas particularly where karst features are found. The term “karst” describes a distinctive topography that indicates dissolution of underlying carbonate rocks. As noted in the ERI, dissolution of underlying carbonate rocks (such as limestone and dolomite) by surface water or ground water can cause surface depressions and the development of such features as sinkholes, sinking streams, enlarged bedrock fractures, caves and underground streams. Sinkholes function as funnels, directing surface water runoff into karst aquifers with little or no attenuation of any transported contaminants. Stormwater basins, septic system leaching fields, sewers, agricultural runoff, lawn runoff, underground pipelines, and soil disturbance may also contribute contaminants directly to ground water through karst features.

In addition to ground water concerns, karst areas can lead to public safety concerns. Sinkholes present a geologic hazard as they may undermine such infrastructure as stormwater basins, roads, sewer lines, septic systems, and natural gas lines.

Accordingly, the following policies will guide the regulation and management of carbonate rock areas.

- Continuously update and improve maps and delineations of karst features within carbonate rock areas including all lands that drain into carbonate rock areas that contain karst features as better information becomes available and/or as new areas are identified through project reviews pertaining to individual sites and properties.
- Carefully examine land development applications for potential impacts to carbonate rock areas containing karst features, whether by direct disturbance, or by indirect means such as introduction of additional stormwater runoff.
- Ensure that issues and concerns related to carbonate rock are similarly evaluated and addressed in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of public infrastructure projects.
- Prohibit from carbonate rock areas containing karst features and from lands identified as draining into such areas, the construction or installation of new uses, structures or facilities that present an unacceptable risk of hazardous and/or toxic discharge.
- Require that the major potential contaminant sources (PCS) listed at the end of this section incorporate ongoing management of toxic chemical sources and prohibition of non-permitted discharges, so that the potential for ground water

contamination is minimized and the opportunity for discharge discovery and control is maximized.

Wellhead Protection Area

A wellhead protection area is an area around a public community water supply well (PCWS) that delineates the amount of time it will take ground water (and any potential contaminants) to flow to the well. The wellhead protection areas are divided into three tiers based on flow rates: Tier 1 (two years); Tier 2 (five years); and Tier 3 (12 years). There are four PCWS wells with associated protection areas in or bordering Phillipsburg. (See ERI Figure 23)

Through regulation of land use, physical facilities and other activities within WHPAs, the potential for ground water contamination can be reduced by preventing the introduction and migration of pollutants into ground water sources that supply water supply wells. The following policies will guide the regulation and management of wellhead protection areas in the Town.

- Identify and ensure proper management of existing land uses within wellhead protection areas that have a significant potential for contributing pollutants of concern to ground water.
- Prohibit land uses and activities that pose significant risk of ground water contamination from locations delineated as Tier 1 and Tier 2 wellhead protection areas, with enhanced protections within the first 200 feet of any public water system wellhead.
- Require that major potential contaminant sources (PCS) in Tier 1 wellhead protection areas incorporate ongoing management of toxic chemical sources and prohibition of non-permitted discharges, so that the potential for ground water contamination is minimized and the opportunity for discharge discovery and control is maximized.
- Ensure that stormwater management plans pertinent to both development applications and municipal-wide planning, address wellhead protection requirements.
- Encourage stormwater reuse for non-agricultural irrigation and other non-potable water purposes to minimize the volume of stormwater discharges (other than from clean sources) within a Tier 1 or Tier 2 wellhead protection area.

- Restrict development activities that pose threats to the water quality of public water supply wells.
- Ensure that development activities and existing land use activities implement best management practices to protect the quality of ground water within wellhead protection areas.
- Ensure that the uses, structures or activities permitted within utility service areas, as proposed within the municipal portion of the Areawide Water Quality Management Plan or Wastewater Management Plan will not adversely affect any wellhead protection area.

MAJOR POTENTIAL CONTAMINANT SOURCES

Based on New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act regulations and NJDEP regulations

1. Underground fuel and chemical storage and oil tanks regulated by NJDEP under provisions of the Underground Storage of Hazardous Substances Act (N.J.S.A. 58:10A-21 et seq.).
2. Above-ground storage facility for a hazardous substance or waste with a cumulative capacity greater than 2,000 gallons.
3. Automotive service center (repair & maintenance).
4. Dry cleaning processing facility.
5. Road salt storage facility.
6. Cemetery.
7. Highway maintenance yard.
8. Truck, bus, locomotive maintenance yard.
9. Site for storage and maintenance of heavy construction equipment and materials,
10. Site for storage and maintenance of equipment and materials for landscaping excluding household storage and maintenance of such equipment.
11. Livestock operation containing 300 or more Animal Units (AU) [1 AU= 1000 pounds of live animal weight] as defined by the NJ Department of Agriculture in its Criteria and Standards for Animal Waste Management, at NJAC 2:91.
12. Quarrying and/or mining facility.
13. Asphalt and/or concrete manufacturing facility.
14. Junkyard/auto recycling and scrap metal facility.
15. Residential or agricultural motor fuel in NJDEP exempted underground storage tanks (i.e., under 1,000 gallons).

MINOR POTENTIAL CONTAMINANT SOURCES

Based on New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act regulations and NJDEP regulations

1. Underground storage of hazardous substance or waste of less than 50 gallons.
2. Underground heating oil storage tank with a capacity of less than 2,000 gallons.
3. Sewage treatment facility regulated by a NJPDES permit granted under NJAC 7:14A.
4. Industrial waste line.
5. Septic system disposal field.
6. Facility requiring a ground water discharge permit issued by the NJDEP pursuant to N.J.A.C 7:14A et seq.
7. Stormwater retention-recharge basin or an industrial property receiving runoff from surfaces other than roof areas.
8. Dry well on an industrial property receiving runoff from surfaces other than roof areas.
9. Waste oil collection, storage and recycling facility.
10. Agricultural chemical bulk storage and mixing or loading facility including crop dusting facilities.
11. Above-ground storage of hazardous substance or waste in quantities of less than 2,000 gallons.
12. Livestock operation containing 8 or more Animal Units (AU) [1 AU= 1000 pounds of live animal weight] or those receiving 142 or more tons of animal waste per year as defined by the NJ Department of Agriculture pursuant to its Criteria and Standards for Animal Waste Management, at NJAC 2:91.

DEVELOPABLE AND UNDEVELOPABLE LANDS

Phillipsburg Developable Suitability map (Figure X) represents the areas of land physically suitable for development in the Town of Phillipsburg determined by an analysis of specified land use types from existing GIS data. Areas that are considered developable are those that are not presently developed and vacant-land lots. The variables that were deemed unsuitable for development are Agricultural lands, Wetlands, Open Space and Recreation lands, and areas that are 12% slope or higher. This map's intended use is to get a general idea of where eligible land for development might be found in Phillipsburg. If interest to develop in one of these locations is considered, a more thorough study of the area of interest should be conducted.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

This plan embraces the concept of Low Impact Development (LID) and seeks to ensure its maximum use in land development activities throughout the Town. LID encompasses a broad array of development and management techniques that can minimize or mitigate the potential adverse impacts of land use and development on the natural environment. LID is used in stormwater management, resource management, "green" building, and sustainable site design. In stormwater management for example, LID techniques can be employed to capture rainfall, filter it through existing vegetation, and maximize its absorption by on-site soils in order to recharge ground water supplies. In site design, LID would incorporate strategies to reduce site disturbance, limit impervious coverage, and integrate existing natural features affecting the site and/or its immediate surroundings into the proposed layout and design.

To accomplish such aims, specific LID standards should be developed and incorporated into Phillipsburg's land use regulations. LID practices should include, but by no means be limited to the following:

1. Stormwater management LID standards that preserve or mimic the natural hydrologic features and characteristics of the land.
 - a. Use of stormwater management features that maintain, restore and enhance the pre-existing natural drainage patterns of the site.
 - b. Limitations on impervious coverage allowances to maximize stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff.

- c. Requirements for site-specific hydrologic studies which identify the velocity, volume and pattern of water flow into, through and flowing from a parcel proposed for development.
 - d. Requirements that stormwater management systems employ a “design with nature” approach by use of grass channels, dry swales, wet swales (vegetated channels designed to retain water or marshy conditions that support wetland vegetation), infiltration basins, bio-swales and water gardens, constructed wetlands, green roofs, and other low impact approaches to attenuate and control stormwater and provide multiple environmental benefits.
2. LID practices that minimize land disturbance during construction activities.
- a. Requirements for site-specific analysis of environmental features and constraints as an integral component of site design.
 - b. Limitations on site disturbance, soil compaction, clearing and grading to the minimum necessary to allow for permissible development.
 - c. Provisions to minimize soil erosion and airborne dust during construction and to protect streams and other water bodies from silt and sedimentation.
3. LID best management practices applied where any development application proposes disturbance of a resource identified in the Town’s ERI.
- a. To the maximum extent practicable identified resources should be avoided or their disturbance minimized through site design.
 - b. The quality and value of the resources located on development sites should be maintained by use of LID strategies that minimize the impacts of development to the maximum extent possible.
4. LID practices for design of sites, buildings, structures and roadways. Development and redevelopment projects should follow a prescribed conservation design planning process that considers existing site features and site context; maximizes opportunities for open space and connections to open space systems; and incorporates LID practices in all aspects of stormwater management, site layout, and resource protection. In addition to the previously listed items (1-3, above) these include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Use of water conservation measures in site layout and structures, including but not limited to such practices as water efficient landscaping (including use of native and drought-tolerant plant species), rain collection systems, use of gray water, and water-efficient landscape irrigation.
- b. Use of low maintenance landscaping that encourages retention and planting of native vegetation and minimizes lawn areas and use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- c. Use of pervious paving materials and minimization of impervious surfaces.
- d. Use of micro-climate conditions to maximize solar gain for winter heating and minimize solar gain during high temperature summer conditions.
- e. Re-use and recycling of building materials when development involves demolition.
- f. Inclusion of energy-efficient features in site layouts and buildings.
- g. Roadway design standards (subject to RSIS limitations) that incorporate LID techniques to address stormwater management, limit impervious coverage, ensure planting of native and drought-resistant vegetation, and integrate other “green street” design initiatives.

Green Buildings

To the extent feasible, all development is encouraged to incorporate sustainable building principals consistent with the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System developed by the U.S. Green Building Council or other comparable system for measuring sustainability. The LEED system is a voluntary national standard that defines high performance green buildings, which are healthier, more environmentally responsible, and more efficient structures.

Green buildings blend environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance features designed to:

- Enhance and protect ecosystems and biodiversity
- Improve air and water quality
- Reduce potable water consumption
- Reduce solid waste
- Conserve natural resources
- Minimize strain on local infrastructure
- Reduce energy and operating costs
- Optimize life-cycle economic performance
- Improve air, thermal and acoustic environments
- Enhance occupant comfort and health

Buildings constructed in accordance with the LEED rating system often optimize the use of natural daylight and ventilation, capture water runoff for internal use, utilize finishes and materials low in volatile organic compounds to improve indoor air quality, utilize recycled and renewable building materials, optimize climatic conditions for internal heating and cooling through site orientation and design, utilize energy efficient

ZONING REVISIONS

The zoning ordinance will need to be revised to ensure conformity with the land use plan. At a minimum, the zoning map should be revised as illustrated on Figure 4 to ensure consistency with the land use districts. The zoning ordinance will also need to incorporate use standards, bulk requirements, design standards and nomenclature changes to reflect any new or revised districts and to generally implement the goals and policies of the master plan.

Following is a summary of the zoning changes needed to implement the land use plan:

1. The Board should consider rezoning the portion of the R-75 zone that is between the railroad and the riverbank at the southernmost point of the Town to the RRA-3 Riverfront Recreational/Heritage. This would ensure consistency with other riverfront redevelopment areas as well as advance the goals for the railroad / heritage uses desired for this area.
2. The Board should consider rezoning the portion of the R-50 zone that is between the railroad and the riverbank toward the southern area of the Town to the RRA-3 Riverfront Recreational/Heritage. This would ensure consistency with other riverfront redevelopment areas as well as advance the goals for the railroad / heritage uses desired for this area.
3. As a result of the last comprehensive rezoning, the B-3 Office zone only covers a handful of properties at Broad and Third and at the southern end of Fairview, and at the Toll Bridge crossing. The Board should consider combining this district with the adjoining B-1 office districts as the parcels have highway frontage.
4. The hospital on Roseberry Street should be added as a permitted use in the B-1 zone with appropriate bulk and design standards. §625-54 Permitted uses.
5. The Board should consider including residential as a permitted use in the B-6 Business-Neighborhood district as there are many single- and multi-family dwellings that exist in the zone, but are not currently permitted.
6. The Board should consider combining the portion of I-2 zone that is between the railroad and the riverbank at the northernmost point of the Town's riverfront given it is primarily riverbank. The remaining portion of that zone would remain as I-2.

7. The Board should consider the following areas for a redevelopment study and a rehabilitation area study (see Figure 5):
 - a. South Main Street from Reese Street to McKeen Street (B-4 Zoning District – Potential Area in Need of Rehabilitation Study).
 - b. Block 1004, Lot 2 – 543 Marshall Street, Kandola Real Estate, LLC – 0.81 ac.
 - c. Block 1005, Lot 3 – 540 Marshall Street, The Norton Partnership – 1.96 ac.
 - d. Block 1503, Lot 39 – Mercer Street, Town of Phillipsburg – 0.31 ac.
 - e. Block 1503, Lot 40 – 29-31 Mercer Street, 620 Lehigh Drive, LLC – 0.82 ac

IV. OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) has been prepared to help guide future open space acquisitions and recreational development in Phillipsburg and conforms with the New Jersey Green Acres guidelines for participation in the Planning Incentive Program. The plan consists of: a set of goals, an inventory of existing open space and recreation facilities; a recreation and open space needs analysis; and an action plan for the preservation and expansion of the open space and recreation system.

Phillipsburg is essentially built-out. Only 2% of the total parcel acreage outside of the two redevelopment areas is vacant. This provides limited opportunities for preserving additional open space or creating new recreation land other than along the Delaware River. In a mature town such as Phillipsburg, the concept of open space sometimes needs to be redefined. The vision of large green spaces, although desirable, is not always practical. The OSRP therefore offers the following general recommendations:

- Make the necessary improvements to create the most efficient and inclusive use of existing parks and recreation facilities
- Continue to develop the Riverfront Heritage Trail System
- Maintain the Urban Forest
- Support the Morris Canal Greenway Initiative
- Install Public Art
- Identify opportunities for new open space – only if it is substantial and usable or already developed. (Abandoned rail beds, school property, housing authority property)

GOALS

Phillipsburg's open space and recreation goals center on optimizing the recreation potential of the riverfront, expanding upon existing resources throughout the Town, and protecting sensitive environments and habitats. The specific goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan are as follows:

1. Preserve, maintain and develop a comprehensive open space and recreation system that provides active and passive recreation opportunities for all age groups and ability levels.
2. Work to address recreational deficiencies in underserved areas and neighborhoods.
3. Pursue funding through federal, state and county agencies to help acquire, maintain and improve recreation and open space facilities. Work with non-profit organizations and private property owners to acquire direct title, deed restrictions, and conservation easements for open space.
4. Preserve the Town's community forest resource to improve air and water quality, reduce energy costs, increase property values, improve citizen health and beautify the Town.
5. Optimize the recreation potential of the Delaware River and the Morris Canal.
6. Identify opportunities to expand open space and recreation opportunities through acquisition, easements, donations, shared services, interagency cooperation and redevelopment agreements as they become available.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY

There are just over 130 total acres of recreational and open space land in Phillipsburg (see Table IV-1 and Figure 7). All of the land is owned by either the Town or the State. There are no federal or county-owned open space or recreation facilities in Phillipsburg.

Municipal

Almost 80% of the dedicated open space and recreational land in Phillipsburg is municipally-owned. The three largest parks are Delaware Heights Park, Walters Park, and Delaware River Park, which together account for approximately 75% of the entire system. The complete municipal inventory is provided in Table IV-2 and illustrated on Figure 7.

Table IV-1 Parks and Recreation Summary	
Jurisdiction	Acreage
Federal	-0-
State	26.25
Warren County	-0-
Municipal	104.27
Total	130.52
Source: Green Acres Database, Warren County Open Space Plan, Phillipsburg Tax Records	

Delaware Heights Park on Carpentersville Road is the largest park covering 26.63 acres. Approximately 13 of those acres are located in Pohatcong Township. The park is located at the southwestern corner of Phillipsburg on a high point overlooking the Delaware River. Recreation facilities include ballfields, basketball court, playground, and rest rooms.

Walters Park covers 25.89 acres and provides ballfields, tennis and basketball courts, a picnic pavilion, rest rooms and an outdoor pool.

Delaware River Park covers 19.06 acres primarily along the Delaware River. The park is accessed from Howard Street and includes ballfields, basketball courts, a skate park, dog park, and restrooms. The park includes a portion of the former Morris Canal ROW.

The Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) is a listing of all the parcels held by the Town for recreation and conservation purposes. The ROSI is filed with the State to fulfill certain requirements of the NJ Green Acres Program. An updated ROSI is provided in Appendix A.

**Table IV-2
Municipal Parks & Open Space
Town of Phillipsburg**

Map Key	Name	Location	Block/Lot	Acres	Recreation Facilities
<i>Developed/Partially Developed Open Space</i>					
1	Delaware Heights	Carpentersville Road (Pohatcong)	3001/21 3003/12 3004/21 (94/102)	26.63	ballfields, playground, basketball, rest room
2	Walters	Meyner Road	1901/1,2, 6,8,9,10 1902/1 1804/5 1807/1	25.89	ballfields, tennis, basketball, pool, picnic, playground, restroom
3	Delaware River	Howard Street	1502/40, 42,53 2102/1	19.06	ballfield, basketball, skate park, dog park, rest room
4	Green Street	Green Street	2703/13	6.26	ballfields, basketball, playground, restrooms, picnic area/pavillion
5	Madison Fields	Madison Street	2701/10	2.90	ballfields
6	Bentley Park	Corliss Avenue	506/2	2.86	ballfield
7	Lock Street	Lock Street	2609/5,6	1.96	passive open space, benches
8	Boat Launch	Riverside Way	901/2	1.32	ramp, benches, picnic tables
9	Hill Street	Hill Street	2430/23 thru 42	2.31	ballfield
10	Shappel	South Main St.	1420/1	.74	memorial, gazebo, benches
11	Howell Playground	North Main St.	209/11	.48	basketball, playground
12	Hillcrest Circle	Hillcrest Blvd.	525/1	.45	landscaped island
13	Firth Playground	Marshall Street	1110/1	.40	playground
14	Mercer Street	Mercer Street	1503/39	.36	basketball, playground
15	Valley View Circle	Hillside Road	2607/1	.29	landscaped island

16	Brainard Playground	Brainard Street	923/9	.26	playground
17	St. Johns Playground	Chambers Street	1416/14	.21	playground
18	Brainard Tot Lot	Brainard Street	914/7,8	.14	tot lot
19	Edison Monument	Congress Street	2606/1	.07	monument
20	Bullman St. Steps	Connecting Front & S. Main Streets	N/A	.04	steps/municipal ROW
21	Phillipsburg Steps	Connecting Front & Randall Streets	N/A	.01	steps/municipal ROW
			Sub Total	92.64	
Undeveloped Open Space					
A	N/A	Between Lopatcong Creek & No. Riverview Road	2901/1	7.43	none
B	N/A	Limekiln Road	2506/1,18	4.20	none
			Sub Total	11.63	
TOTAL ACRES				104.27	

Source: Town of Phillipsburg Tax Records; Recreation Department; Field Survey

State

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) owns 26.25 acres of undeveloped open space in Phillipsburg. The acreage figure is somewhat misleading though as 18 of those acres are located along a thin strip of the Delaware River riverbank stretching from the Morris Canal Arch south to the Lopatcong Creek outfall (see Figure 7). The remaining eight acres are located at the northernmost end of North Main Street and Delaware Road.

Table IV-3 NJDEP Properties	
Location	Acres
North Main St/ Delaware Road	8.07
Riverbank	18.18
Total	26.25
<i>Source: Phillipsburg tax records</i>	

School Properties

As outlined in Table IV-4, all of Phillipsburg's public schools, with the exception of the Green Street School, provide some degree of outdoor recreation facilities.

Table IV-4
School-Based Recreation Facilities
Town of Phillipsburg (2020)

Map Key	Name	Recreation Facilities
1	(New) High School	Ball fields (soccer, baseball, etc.) Gymnasium w/ multiple courts, media center
2	(Former High School) Middle School	stadium, ballfields, tennis, basketball
3	(Former Middle School) Elementary School	Ballfield, playground
4	ECLC	Playground, gymnasium, media center
5	Andover Morris Elementary	none, current police station
6	Barber Elementary (Bd. Of Ed. Office)	basketball court
7	Freeman Elementary (Municipal Building)	none

Source: Phillipsburg School District; Phillipsburg Recreation Dept.; Field Survey

RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS

To estimate the amount of open space required for recreational purposes, the 2013 – 2017 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) cites the *Balanced Land Use Concept* as the most appropriate methodology for New Jersey. These standards serve as a minimum guide for measuring the effectiveness of recreational open space programs being implemented by the various levels of government. The balanced land use approach determines long-term public recreation goals as a percentage of land area; and defines land as a finite resource for which there are other legitimate competing uses such as transportation, commerce, and housing.

This approach is based on the amount of *developed* and *developable* land relative to the amount of *non-developable* land. Developed/developable areas include existing

development and vacant land; and exclude land with slopes over 12%, wetlands, and preserved open space and farmland, which make up the non-developable category.

The balanced land use guidelines establish a municipal acreage goal equal to 3% of the developed/developable area of the municipality. In Phillipsburg that yields a goal of 48 acres; and an existing surplus of 56 acres.

Balanced Land Use Calculation

Developed / Developable Land	Municipal Standard	Open Space Goal	Existing Municipal Open Space	Surplus
1608 acres	3%	48 acres	104 acres	56 acres

Based on the balanced land use methodology Phillipsburg has exceeded the number of recreation acres that can be reasonably expected given the physical limitations of the Town. It is important to note however, that the NJDEP standards are “universal” in that they are applied across the board to urban, suburban and rural municipalities alike. They are not customized to a particular landscape or population and do not account for a community’s specific needs or programs. To provide a more accurate determination of the Town’s future recreation needs, further analysis would need to be conducted to establish specific local standards for various categories of active and passive recreational activities. The need should be based on current activity levels and participation patterns, and demographic trends related to age, leisure time, income, etc.

ACTION PLAN

The action plan provides direction for the coordinated implementation of the OSRP. The action plan indicates how the Town intends to address OSRP needs and goals based on the abilities of the community and fiscal constraints. As noted earlier, only about 2% of the parcel acreage in Phillipsburg is considered vacant, leaving minimal opportunity for preserving additional open space or creating new recreation land.

In a mature town such as Phillipsburg, the concept of open space sometimes needs to be redefined. The vision of large green spaces, although desirable, is not always practical. Open space, or the notion of greening a community and providing breaks in a densely developed landscape can, however, be woven into the fabric of the community through the use of street trees, pocket parks, small plazas and sitting areas, and the installation of public art in civic spaces. Ideally, this inventory of existing open spaces and recreational lands, as well as proposed areas for conservation for open space, would be managed by the Open Space Advisory Committee that recommends the maintenance of existing facilities and the acquisition of new facilities.

The OSRP therefore offers the following general recommendations for the Town:

- Support the Open Space Advisory Committee to oversee the following:
- Preserve, maintain and develop a comprehensive open space and recreation system that provides active and passive recreation opportunities for all age groups and ability levels.
- Work to address recreational deficiencies in underserved areas and neighborhoods.
- Pursue funding through federal, state and county agencies to help acquire, maintain and improve recreation and open space facilities. Work with non-profit organizations and private property owners to acquire direct title, deed restrictions, and conservation easements for open space.
- Preserve the Town's community forest resource to improve air and water quality, reduce energy costs, increase property values, improve citizen health and beautify the Town.
- Optimize the recreation potential of the Delaware River and the Morris Canal.
- Identify opportunities to expand open space and recreation opportunities through acquisition, easements, donations, shared services, interagency cooperation and redevelopment agreements as they become available.

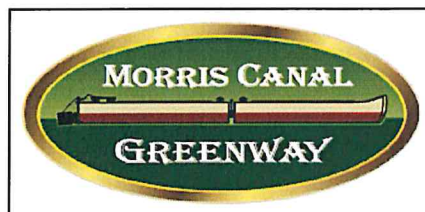
Phillipsburg Riverfront Heritage Trail

The primary open space and recreation initiative is the Phillipsburg Riverfront Heritage Trail. The PRHT is an interconnected system of existing and proposed local, regional, and bi-state trails that provides unique eco-heritage and recreation tourism opportunities for residents and visitors. The 2014 *Design & Implementation Manual* sets the stage for the development of the trail system by providing specific guidance regarding the official trail logo, trail alignments and improvements, signage, and acquisition strategies.

The Riverfront Heritage Trail system consists of four main trails, three spurs, and one loop trail – eight trails in total. Each trail is described in more detail in the manual. The entire system is illustrated on [Map 6](#).

Morris Canal Greenway

In 2012 Warren County released the *Morris Canal Greenway 25 Year Action Plan* with detailed recommendations for establishing an interpretive greenway along the entire length of the canal through Warren County. The plan examines ways to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access along the canal greenway while also promoting historic awareness. The action plan provides strategies and recommendations to guide the development of the greenway over the next 25 years.



The plan divides the 33-mile long greenway into 12 manageable segments. The segments are based on their ability to provide a destination; create linkages; possess a unified character; ability to function on its own; and require similar strategies along its length. Phillipsburg hosts two segments: Segment 1 – Downtown to Lock Street; and Segment 2 – Lock Street to Route 22. The Morris Canal Greenway has been incorporated into the Phillipsburg Riverfront Heritage Trail.

Improvements to the Existing System

The OSRP recommends that the Open Space Advisory Committee evaluate the condition of each of the Town's parks and prepare a short and long-term action plan for specific park improvements. A broader effort could include an analysis of the opportunities and constraints related to each park's location,



configuration, accessibility, unique onsite conditions, and funding options, and preparing a conceptual master plan for each park.

New Open Space

The Town should also evaluate any surplus lands connected to public rights-of-way such as streets, highways, utilities, and railroads, and any publically-owned vacant land for potential use as open/civic space or pedestrian/bicycle trails. At the time of the preparation of this draft, the Phillipsburg Recreation Department indicated that maintenance would be a priority and that the Town would not look to acquire any new open space, unless it was sufficiently improved and did not require a lot of maintenance. As it stands now, the Department and the Town are focusing on maintaining the lands they currently own.

As a general policy, properties that are impacted by natural or other disasters, abandoned, or exhibit severe deterioration should also be evaluated for possible acquisition for open space through fee simple purchase, easement, or donation. This policy should especially target properties abutting existing open space. Environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands should also be evaluated as potential open space candidates.

The OSRP also recommends that the open space requirements in the Town's development ordinances be revisited to ensure that large scale residential and commercial projects provide quality open/civic space that meets the following criteria: (a) the space is strategically located to be attractive and easily accessible to either the tenants or the general public, as opposed to being placed on the "leftover" portion of the parcel; and (b) the space is of adequate dimension to provide amenities such as play equipment, sitting areas, or public art, as opposed to narrow or oddly shaped landscape strips. In other words, the planning and design of the open space should be as integral to the project as the planning and design of the building.

Community Forestry Management Plan

At one time the Town had an active Shade Tree Commission that is now down to one staff person. The Town ought to consider re-establishing that committee and adopting a community forestry management plan, which could be incorporated into this OSRP at a future date. The community forestry management plan is enabled by the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. In addition to establishing the Community Forestry Council, the act enables New Jersey's communities to reduce or eliminate their exposure to litigation due to the decline of the community tree resource. The basis for this protection is a properly planned local community forestry program

implemented through a state approved management plan, as well as municipal participation in the state's Training Skills and Accreditation Program.

The community forestry management plan is an essential guide to successfully achieving a healthy and safe community forest. By developing and implementing a management plan for a town's shade trees, the Town's tree program can become more proactive and efficient resulting in a decrease in tree maintenance and removal costs, shortened response time to citizen requests for work and a decrease in hazardous tree situations.

The community forestry management plan includes the following elements:

- Mission Statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Liability Statement
- Community Overview
- Community Forestry Program Administration
- Community Map
- Training Plan
- Public Education/Awareness/Outreach
- Statement of Tree Budget
- Statement of Plan Implementation

The Community Forestry Management Plan applies primarily to the public realm – street trees, parks and public lands. Trees within the private realm also contribute to the community forest and should also be afforded similar protections and management strategies. To that end the OSRP recommends that the Town consider adopting a tree protection and replacement ordinance to ensure a holistic approach to maintaining the community's forest.

Public Art

Public art can make communities more attractive and create memorable experiences for its residents and visitors, improve the community's landscape and quality of life, and celebrate community identity and cultural diversity. Gateways, shopping districts, public buildings and parks, and transit stations are all potential candidates for permanent or semi-permanent installations of public art. There are a variety of methods that a municipality can use to integrate public art into the development of the community including advisory boards and coordination with private institutions, non-profit and community organizations. A municipal arts council is one such example.

To assist in this effort, the Town can solicit the assistance of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) and the Warren County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The NJSCA administers a comprehensive grant program in conjunction with County Arts Councils and offers financial assistance to individual artists, non-profit organizations, and government entities to aid in operational costs of an organization, exhibitions, and festivals. The NJSCA conducts technical assistance workshops throughout the state to familiarize prospective grant applicants with the various organizational grant programs of the Council.

V. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Municipal Land Use Law requires the master plan to include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the proposed development of the municipality, as developed in the master plan to the master plans of contiguous municipalities (Lopatcong and Pohatcong Township - See Figure 8), the master plan of the county in which the municipality is located (Warren), the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Strategic Plan), and the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Lopatcong Township

In the northern section of Phillipsburg where it shares a border with Lopatcong Township, the zoning is primarily residential in nature except for where the Town's B-1 district abuts the Township's R-100 and R-75 districts. Lopatcong's R-75 district permits public buildings, semi-public and non-profit facilities, which is in concert with the Town's St. Luke's Hospital and Church property in the adjacent B-1 zone, on Roseberry St.

Moving south, the Town and the Township share a boarder in the vicinity of Route 22 which was designated a Redevelopment Area in 2013. The Town's PCPRA Zone and the Township's HB/ROM Zone have together become the site of the "I-78 Industrial Park" currently under construction.

Pohatcong Township

Moving further south where the Town shares a border with Pohatcong Township, it appears there are some inconsistencies with the adjacent zoning in the Township. In Pohatcong, zoning in this area, from west to east, includes: B-2 (Business); AH (Affordable Housing); B-3, B-2, and B-1 (Business), R-4 and R-3 (Residential) and B-3 (Business). On the Town side, the zoning from west to east includes R-75 (Residential) PAC (Planned Adult Community – B-2 Business District Overlay Zone), B-5 (Business) and R-75 again.

This analysis shows that the Town must be conscious of potential large-scale developments in the Township's AH zone, where up to 24 units in one building may be permitted given certain bulk requirements. This would be directly adjacent to the R-75 zone in the Town and therefore should be required some buffering of uses if they are to be more intense.

The other adjacent zones do not appear to pose as intense of a use. The Township's B-3 zone permits all business uses, houses of worship and farm and agricultural uses. This would be adjacent to the Town's R-75 Zone which permits detached single-family, parks, public buildings, houses of worship and public utilities / services.

Warren County

Phillipsburg's land use and open space plans are largely consistent with the County's 2004/2005 Strategic Growth Plan and the following county goals:

- Preserve and enhance historic and open space resources.
- Focus growth in existing centers.
- Encourage desirable development that provides local employment opportunities in existing centers.

Phillipsburg's plan also incorporates the following smart growth principles advocated by the county strategic plan:

- mixed land uses;
- compact, clustered community design;
- range of housing prices and types;
- walkable neighborhoods;
- use of existing infrastructure;
- infill and redevelopment of existing centers;
- redevelopment of brownfields;
- open space and farmland preservation; and
- interconnectivity of roadways, pedestrian ways and neighborhoods.

NJ State Strategic Plan

The 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was scheduled to be replaced by a new "State Strategic Plan" in 2012/2013. At the time this master plan was being prepared, the new State plan was still in final draft form. The Draft State Strategic Plan would eliminate the planning areas found in the SDRP in favor of *Priority Growth Investment Areas* and *Priority Preservation Investment Areas*. To guide the criteria for identifying these investment areas the State Strategic Plan establishes "Garden State Values." According to the Strategic Plan, these values reflect the appropriate balance of channeling growth toward existing infrastructure, promoting urban and first tier suburban redevelopment initiatives, and protecting critical natural resources.

Phillipsburg's land use plan and OSRP are in alignment with the following Garden State Values:

- Concentrate development and mix uses.
- Prioritize redevelopment, infill, and existing infrastructure.
- Create high-quality, livable places.
- Diversify housing opportunities.
- Provide for healthy communities through environmental protection and enhancement.
- Protect, restore and enhance agricultural, recreational and heritage lands.

Highlands Regional Master Plan

Phillipsburg is located entirely within the Highlands Planning Area – where conformance with the Regional Master Plan is voluntary – and has been designated a Highlands Center, which supersedes Highlands zones in favor of locally-developed comprehensive planning policies.

The Highlands Center is designed to allow for compact mixed use development that supports local and regional economic and commerce needs and protect Highlands resources by incorporating Smart Growth principles and Low Impact Development techniques. The Center provides for areas of infill development and redevelopment that are both consistent with available water supply and wastewater treatment capacities, and designed in accordance with smart growth development standards.

The land use plan includes policies covering Highlands resources that are considered to have the most impact on – or be impacted by – future land use decisions. To that end the land use plan establishes Town-wide *Natural Resource Overlay Districts* that address riparian areas, steep slope protection areas, critical wildlife habitat, carbonate rock, and wellhead protection areas. The plan also embraces the concept of *Low Impact Development* practices designed to minimize or mitigate the potential adverse impacts of land use and development on the natural environment.