

TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE

2020 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



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INTRODUCTION

River Vale Township is a fully-developed suburban community in northeastern Bergen County. River Vale is bounded to the north by New York State, the west by the New Jersey Boroughs of Montvale, Park Ridge and Hillsdale, the south by Westwood and Emerson, and to the east by the Borough of Old Tappan. Lake Tappan and the Hackensack River are located along the eastern border between River Vale and Old Tappan.



Census data shows that the Township contained 9,659 persons in 2010, which grew to an estimated 9,984 persons in 2019.¹

The Township is primarily developed with residential uses, but also contains a downtown retail area known as Four Corners, as well as parkland and three golf courses. One of the golf courses is owned and operated by Bergen County. Another golf course is

privately owned. In 2010 River Vale acquired the third golf course, known as the River Vale Country Club. The Township utilized Green Acres funding, as well as funds from the Township's open space tax assessment to purchase the golf course and club area.

River Vale is primarily developed but does contain some vacant properties. However, most are environmentally constrained with wetlands and associated buffer areas, steep slopes, floodplains and the required 300 ft. buffer for C-1 (Conservation 1) waters.

This plan is known as an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). It is prepared according to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection requirements. According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Green Acres Program, "An OSRP articulates a local government's vision of open space and recreation. It should establish a philosophical and practical justification for the protection and preservation of open space and recreation opportunities. The purpose of an OSRP is to provide a framework for implementation. Through

¹ River Vale Township 2019 Housing Element & Fair Share Plan.

an OSRP, you identify and examine open space and recreation resources important to you and lay out ways to protect and enjoy them.”

This plan is also being adopted as a master planning document pursuant to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). Discussions of both the NJDEP Green Acres and the Municipal Land Use Law requirements follow.

NJDEP REQUIREMENTS – OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

NJ Green Acres was established in 1961 to meet New Jersey’s recreation and conservation needs. The Green Acres program includes five program areas: State Park and Open Space Acquisition, Local Governments and Nonprofit Funding; Stewardship and Legal Services; Planning and Information Management, and the Office of Natural Resource Restoration. Green Acres’ Local Government and Nonprofit Funding program area includes the Planning Incentive Program which provides grants and loans to counties and towns. These grants and loans are then used by counties and towns to acquire land for public recreation and conservation purposes. Towns are eligible for the grants when they have enacted an open space tax and adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

The NJDEP has specific components that must be included in the OSRP. A description of each required component follows; however, it is important to note that the organization of the OSRP and the level of detail given to each item are at the local government’s (town or county’s) discretion.

1. Executive Summary – A summary of plan findings relative to recreation and open space needs, including the actions proposed in the plan, the origin and purpose of the plan, and the planning and public participation processes that occurred,
2. Goals & Policies – The Township’s goals and policies should be clearly stated and relate to River Vale’s philosophy of open space and recreation.
3. Inventory – The plan will document both the public and private resources that provide existing recreation and open space opportunities for the community. The inventory must include the property type, size, usage, location, facilities, degree of protection and form of ownership.
4. Needs Analysis – The plan will analyze the adequacy of the current open space and recreations systems to satisfy present and projected public recreation needs for open space as established by River Vale through the planning process.
5. Resource Assessment – The plan must include an assessment of public and private resources that have a potential for open space or recreation.

6. Action Plan – The Action Plan provides direction for the execution of the OSRP related to the Township’s identified open space and recreation needs and based on its policies.
7. General Open Space System Map - A map of the open space and recreation system that shows the location and configuration of the existing public and private open space and recreation resources, as well as sites identified in the plan as having open space and recreation potential.
8. Additional Parcel Data Requirements – Data necessary to maintain a statewide map of existing and potential open space. This map must be compatible with ArcGIS.
9. Public Participation – Public participation is required and must be detailed in the plan. River Vale held two public hearings for public participation, in addition to the hearing for plan adoption. The OSRP must include a discussion that River Vale used to gather and include citizen input, and to assess the Township’s open space and recreation needs.
10. Plan Adoption – The River Vale Land Use Board must adopt the OSRP as an element of its Master Plan. A public hearing with required notice is needed. The Board must adopt the OSRP as part of its master plan the next time the OSRP or master plan is updated.

NEW JERSEY MUNICIPAL LAND USE LAW

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) details the content of and the process of preparing, modifying and adopting a master Plan municipal master plan. The Planning Board is tasked with the preparation and adoption of the town’s master plan.

A master plan must contain a land use plan, a statement of goals and objectives, a housing plan, a recycling plan, a stormwater management plan and a statement indicating the relationship of the municipal master plan to those of the contiguous municipalities, the county and the State. There are also several optional components of a master plan, including an open space and recreation plan and a conservation plan element. This OSRP will be adopted as part of River Vale’s Master Plan and will compliment all sections of the Township’s Master Plan.

River Vale Township adopted its most recent Master Plan in 2005. The Township adopted Reexamination Reports in 2011 and 2016 and a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2019. These master planning documents were prepared and adopted in accordance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requirements.

River Vale’s 2005 Master Plan includes the required components as well as a Green Acres Open Space & Recreation Plan. Green Acres requires that the OSRP be updated every 10 years to continue funding considerations. This current plan satisfies the ten-year update requirement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

River Vale Township contains a wide variety of open spaces and recreational amenities and opportunities. The Town contains approximately 184 acres of Township owned open space and recreation opportunities, including championship golf courses, soccer and baseball fields, lacrosse fields, walking paths, as well as passive recreation areas that do not contain improvements. Of the Township total, about 145 acres are active recreation sites, and the remaining 39 acres are passive recreation. Bergen County also has approximately 161 acres of parks and open space in the Township. The County sites include an historic location, a golf course, and open space. In addition, there are three Board of Education properties, two of which are used for Township recreation purposes. The field most used by Township residents is the Mark Lane Recreation area turf field, which is actually located on Board of Education property.

River Vale Township has been very proactive in acquiring and upgrading its parks, recreation and open space areas since the last OSRP was prepared. In 2010, the Township acquired the 134-acre River Vale Country Club (RVCC), partially with Green Acres funding from NJDEP. In 2011, the Township improved the Mark Lane Recreation complex, specifically by adding a turf field that is discussed in greater detail in this report. Finally, as a result of a land use application, a small passive park, known as the River Vale Memorial Park was added to the Township's open space inventory.

Other recent improvements include:

- Construction of an open area pavilion at the Mark Lane Recreation complex.
- Upgrading the basketball courts at Mark Lane.
- Improvement of the driving range and the golf course at the River Vale Country Club.
- Installation of a bocce ball court at the River Vale Country Club golf course.
- Upgrading the tennis courts with new flooring at the Upper Grove recreation area.
- Addition of a reading patio behind the municipal library.

This OSRP is being prepared to continue the Township's long standing relationship with Green Acres, as well as its commitment to open space and recreation. Two public meetings were held to discuss open space and recreation as part of the development of this report.

The Township strives to provide a variety of recreation options to all members of its community. The Township recognizes that the present open space and recreation system is sufficient at this time. This plan focuses on improving and updating existing recreation and open space facilities, as well as extending the bicycle path. Some potential properties for acquisition are presented should such lots be needed in the future. Finally, this OSRP includes an Action Plan with long and short term projects, as well as potential funding sources.

GOALS & POLICIES

The Goals & Policies section of the OSRP must clearly state River Vale's philosophy of open space and recreation and be responsive to the Township's identified needs.

River Vale's 2005 Open Space & Recreation included Township policies toward open space preservation and the provision of recreation services. Many of these policies remain relevant today and are included in the following list, along with new policies that are relevant for 2020.

1. The River Vale Master Plan supports and strongly encourages open space preservation and the protection of natural resources.
2. River Vale initially applied for and received Green Acres funding in the early 1970s; an eight-acre environmentally sensitive tract was purchased. The Township was one of the earliest communities to apply for and receive such funding.
3. River Vale received its second Green Acres funding grant in 2002. These funds were used to acquire 18.1 acres of environmentally sensitive property adjacent to the Tappan Reservoir in 2003.
4. In 2010, the Township acquired the River Vale Country Club, both with NJ Green Acres funding and by utilizing the open space tax assessment.
5. River Vale has imposed a Municipal Open Space tax since 1998. In 2020, the tax represented 0.38 percent of the total municipal tax rate.
6. River Vale actively participated in the Cross Acceptance policy for the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
7. In 2016, the Township Planning Board adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report that recommended residential development and golf course combined development that resulted in the continuation of the privately owned golf course in the Township.
8. River Vale residents have historically supported NJ Green Acres Bond issues.
9. River Vale has adopted a tree removal ordinance and an Environmental Impact Study Ordinance.
10. Recognition of the environmental constraints that are present within Township on both publicly and privately owned properties, including but not limited to, the required C-1 300 ft. buffer, wetlands and associated buffers, flood plains and flood hazard areas. The

Township's 2019 Housing Element & Fair Share Plan included mapping of environmental constraints.

Per NJDEP directives, the Goals and Policies section should state River Vale's decisions on the:

- Public purpose it will pursue in providing recreation opportunities and protecting open space resources.
- The Township's obligation to provide open space and recreation opportunities on an equal and accessible basis for all citizens.
- How to provide recreational opportunities and facilities and for preserving open space.

This 2020 OSRP first considers the Goals & Objectives from River Vale's 2005 Master Plan that address conservation, open space and recreation, and therefore are consistent with this plan, as follows:

1. To preserve the natural environment including the preservation of wetlands and their transition areas, river and stream corridors, flood plains, surface waters including reservoirs, steep slopes, sensitive soils, natural area, remaining open spaces, forested lands, wildlife habitat and vistas.
2. To provide for the quantity, quality and availability of parks and open space to include: adding, improving and assuring proper distribution and accessibility for active and passive recreation facilities, neighborhood parks, and open space to protect environmentally sensitive areas. This also includes making better use of all parks and seeking a site for a municipal swimming pool.
3. To support the continuation of the Township's three golf courses, to the extent that they provide semi-public, private and potentially public recreation opportunities and vast open spaces.
4. To recognize and protect watershed lands, and the drainage basins of the reservoir lands within the Township. In cooperation with neighboring towns, recognize (a) their status as the regions' primary source of potable water, and (b) their strategic regional location within one of the last remaining contiguous blocks of open spaces, providing locally rare, high quality wildlife habitat.

The 2020 River Vale Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) includes the following Goals and Policies:

1. Provide a high quality and well-maintained parks, recreation and open space system that serves all of River Vale's residents.
2. Ensure that sufficient, accessible, safe and well maintained parks and recreational properties are available to River Vale's residents. Confirm that the recreation system serves all demographics of Township residents.
3. Protect and preserve the Township's three golf courses. Support the goal from the Township's 2005 Master Plan to "Support the Continuation of the Township's Three Golf Courses, to the extent that they provide semipublic, private and potentially public recreation opportunities and vast open spaces."
4. River Vale is primarily a built-out community, with limited available vacant land. Recognizing the developed nature of the community, the Township is encouraged to improve upon the open space and recreation resources that currently exist. Another focus should be connecting River Vale's existing open space and recreation facilities, as well as with other community facilities.
5. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
6. To establish linkages between open space and conservation areas via bicycle paths, trails, greenways and pathways.
7. To seek funding for the enhancement of existing open space and recreation areas and the creation of new ones.
8. To encourage, where possible, multipurpose recreational fields that are used for different sports on different schedules.
9. To improve upon and encourage the use of all golf courses in the Township, but in particular the River Vale Country Club, which is now owned by the Township, in part due to Green Acres funding. Recognize that the golf course is a recreation center that can offer different recreational opportunities, as well provide a sense of community for River Vale residents.
10. Promote public open space acquisitions, and private conservation actions that preserve and protect the integrity of sensitive environmental resources, such as groundwater, steep slopes, wetlands, and required buffer areas.

11. To utilize the Hackensack River for recreational purposes, such as nonmotorized boating and fishing.
12. Continued monitoring of recreation and open space usage to confirm that the Township's system remains adequate for its residents.

INVENTORY

River Vale contains both Township and County owned open space and recreation areas. There are no State parks or open space sites in River Vale Twp. Information about each location follows; all sites are also included on the Open Space & Recreation Map that is contained at the end of this document.

Municipal Inventory – River Vale Township Open Space & Recreation Properties

The inventory is shown on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Map.

The Township includes a wide variety of parks and open recreation opportunities, including golf courses, tennis courts, playing fields and passive recreation. A description of each site follows, as well as a table that includes all Township - owned properties. Finally, these sites are all included in the Township's



Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) through the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and have a strong level of protection.

1. River Vale Memorial Park – Block 2101, Lot 28.01: River Vale Memorial Park consists of 0.33 acres and is located off of River Vale Road. It provides passive recreation and was acquired as a condition of use variance application.
2. Ranges Field – Block 1801, Lot 4: Ranges is located on River Drive and contains 4.42 acres. Ranges includes a baseball field and a soccer field, as well as a large wooded area.
3. Grove Field – Block 1401, Lots 3 & 25: Grove Field contains 7 acres and is located behind the River Vale Town Hall and the municipal library. Grove Field includes Upper and Lower Grove areas. Upper Grove contains tennis courts, restrooms, two softball fields, and a grassy area that is used by the pre-kindergarten soccer league (a full soccer field cannot fit in this location). Lower Grove contains an amphitheater, and a 60 ft. x 90 ft. field that is used for baseball.

4. Poplar Road Park - Block 1002, Lot 1.01: The Poplar Road Park is a 2.8 acre wooded area providing passive recreation to Township residents.
5. Poplar Road Wildlife Sanctuary - Block 1002, Lot 1.02: This passive recreation location is located west of the Poplar Road Park and northwest from parcel 1-6A. The 15.3 acre sanctuary is primarily wooded and includes walking trails.
6. 1-6A – 15C John Street – Block 1001, Lot 10.01: This 5.12 acre property is situated across Poplar Road from the Poplar Road Park and consists of an open space area.
7. River Vale Country Club – Block 701, Lots 1-4, 6, 9, 12, 13 & 34: This property is both owned by the Township and held through a lease/use agreement for recreation and conservation purposes. The Township utilized Green Acres funding for the purchase of the country club. The club contains an 18 hole golf course, bar and restaurant, golf driving range and a bocce ball court. The site contains approximately 134 acres.



8. Beechcrest Park – Block 501.01, Lots 4-9, 12: This 12 acre property is located on Beechcrest Road and provides passive recreation and open space.

9. Block 903, Lot 7: This three acre property fronts on Prospect Ave. near the Sunnyhill Terrace intersection. Per Township Ordinance 0-20-88, the property is reserved for “open space passive recreation use.”

River Vale Township Owned Parks, Recreation & Open Space Inventory			
<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
2101	28.01	River Vale Memorial Park	0.33
1801	4	Ranges Field	4.42
1401	3 & 25	Grove Field	7
1002	1.01	Poplar Road Park	2.8
1002	1.02	Poplar Road Wildlife Sanctuary	15.3
1001	10.01	1-6A/15C John Street	5.12
701	1-4, 6, 9, 12, 13 & 34	River Vale Country Club	134
501	4-9	Beechcrest Park	12
903	7	Block 903, Lot 7	3
		TOTALS	184

Bergen County Open Space & Recreation Facilities in River Vale

Bergen County owns and, where applicable, operates, the following open space and recreation sites in River Vale Township. The County properties include a golf course, a historic site that also provides passive recreation, and open space. All sites have a strong level of protection. A brief description of each site follows and concludes with a summary table.

10. Baylor Massacre Site - Block 1106, Lot 29: The Baylor Massacre Site is an historic property that also provides passive recreation and open space. The Baylor Massacre property consists of 1.96 acres. The park is of Revolutionary War significance. The wooded park contains accessible pathways and historic panels that relay the story of the Baylor Massacre.



11. Valley Brook Golf Course – Block 2301, Lot 13: Bergen County owns and operates the Valley Brook Golf Course in River Vale. The county acquired the 136.15 acre property in 2006. The Valley Brook Golf Course consists of an 18-hole golf course and restaurant. In addition to Lot 13, the property also includes Lots 1, 2, 4, 5 and 22 in Block 2301, as well as Block 2401, Lot 1.

12. Bergen County Open Space - Block 2203, Lot 18, Block 2208, Lots 1, 7.01, 20 & Block 2208.01, Lot 17: The total size of the five lots is 22.61 acres. These properties are county-owned open space located along the Pascack Brook. It is assumed that properties were acquired to protect the environmentally constrained land adjacent to the brook.

Bergen County Owned Parks, Recreation & Open Space Inventory			
<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
1106	29	Baylor Massacre Site	1.96
2208/2208.01	1,7.01, 20/17	County Open Space	22.61
2301	13	Valley Brook Golf Course	136.15
TOTALS			161

Board of Education Properties

The River Vale board of Education owns and operates three schools in the Township as part of its Kindergarten through Grade 8 school district. The three schools include two elementary schools, grades kindergarten through fifth (Woodside School and Roberge School), and one Middle School serving 6th through 8th grade students, known as the Holdrum Middle School. These properties have a strong level of protection.

Board of Education properties are classified separately in an Open Space Plan because the properties are not owned by the Township. However, the Township and the Board of Education maintain a relationship that permits River Vale residents to use the fields and recreation amenities. The Township Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains the fields for the Board of Education. In addition, local club sports teams also utilize the fields for a nominal maintenance fee. River Vale Township teams are given first priority to use the town fields; club sports are provided with field times when they are available and not being used by Township groups.

Each of the three schools contains active recreational amenities that Township residents may use, as follows.

13. Roberge Elementary School

- Soccer Field
- Lacrosse field
- Baseball field
- Playground equipment

14. Woodside Elementary School

- Playground equipment
- There is a grassy area behind Woodside School, but it is not an official field. The Township Recreation Director does not utilize Woodside for Township recreation or sports.

15. Holdrum Middle School/ (adjacent to school)

- Two baseball fields that are used in the spring. The same area is used as one soccer field in the fall.
- Playground equipment.

Mark Lane Recreation Complex



The Mark Lane recreational area is located on Board of Education property behind Holdrum School. The site contains Alexander Field, which has several recreational amenities identified below.

- Turf field for football, lacrosse and soccer use. This is the field that is used most frequently in the Township.
 - Basketball courts
 - Softball field that is located within the perimeter of the turf field
- Baseball field, which is also known as Hoffman Field
 - Walking path
 - Open activity pavilion
 - Small grassy area with two batting cages that may also be used by the football teams as needed and when available.

River Vale Board of Education Properties		
<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Description</u>
2204	4-6	Roberge School
502	1 & 12	Woodside School
1301	28	Holdrum School & Mark Lane

Private Recreation

Edgewood Country Club is located in both River Vale Township and the Borough of Hillsdale. The Country Club includes a golf course and other recreation amenities. Edgewood is a private club and golf course, and is discussed later in this report.

RECREATION NEEDS

NJDEP Balanced Land Use Concept



In prior years, an acres per population standard was used to determine the appropriate amount of recreation and open space areas for a municipality. However, those standards have been abandoned because they gave municipalities unattainable results. They often showed towns as severely deficient in parkland.

One standard that is still used is known as the Balanced Land Use Concept (BLUC). This concept has been endorsed by the State of New Jersey. The BLUC states that a minimum of three (3) percent of a municipality's developed or developable land should be set aside for active recreation use. Unlike the acres per population standard, which derives higher open space needs as the population increases and the potential open space decreases, the balanced land use guidelines treat land as a finite resource. Lands classified as developable do not include slopes greater than 15 percent, wetlands, federal, state and county owned parklands, and other environmentally sensitive land that is not appropriate for development.

Several sources were considered to apply the BLUC in the analysis of River Vale's open space and recreation. These sources include the NJDEP 2015 Land Use mapping, ESRI mapping, and analysis from the Township Engineer.

River Vale Township – Analysis of Balanced Land Use Concept	
Item	Area in Acres
Developable Land in Township*	296.55
**Steep Slopes (greater than 15%) in developable areas (subtract)	22.16
Land Within County, State and Municipal Parks (subtract)	342
Board of Education Property(subtract)	44.20
***Developed Land (add)	2090.15
Total Developed and Developable	1978.34
3% of Developed and Developable	59.4

*NJDEP 2015 Land Use/Land Cover: cumulative sum of agricultural, forest and barren land

**ESRI approximation of slopes greater than 12% not including those located in protected open space

***NJDEP 2015 Land Use/land Cover: urban category

The BLUC calculations show that approximately 1,978 acres are developed or developable in the Township. The analysis results in a recommended active recreation acreage of about 59 acres. River Vale’s active open space locations of Ranges fields, Grove fields and the River Vale Country Club contains a total of about 145 acres. This total does not include the Marc Lane Recreation complex, which is probably another 17 acre site. Therefore, the Township meets the BLUC recommendation.

National Recreation & Parks Association

The National Recreation & Parks Association’s (NRPA) website states that, “The typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,281 residents served, with 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. But park and recreation agencies are as diverse as the communities that they serve, and what works well for one agency may not be best for your agency.”²



So while not a formal standard, the NRPA approximation of one park/2,281 residents equals four or five parks, which River Vale exceeds. In addition, River Vale exceeds the 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Even if the town’s population increases to 10,000 persons, River Vale easily meets the resulting 99 acres.

² NRPA website, October 2020.

Rather than using standards, it is important for municipalities to consider their own unique situations. To that end, both members of the administration and the Township's Recreation Director were interviewed about the current park and recreation system. In every instance, the Township representative advised that the current open space and recreation systems are sufficient. With the addition of the Mark Lane complex and the River Vale Country Club, the Township has a wide variety of recreation offerings.

Recreation Director

River Vale's Recreation Director, Richard O'Donnell, was consulted about field and park usage and future needs. He concluded with the Township Administration that River Vale has sufficient park and recreational facilities to serve its residents.

The Recreation Director did indicate that flag football and lacrosse are two of the fastest growing sports within the Township. He indicated that baseball and softball participation has remained constant.

Finally, when considering recreation and open space needs, it is important to note the recommendations from the 2005 OSRP that have been satisfied. First, the plan recommended acquisition of the River Vale Country Club property, which was done. Second, the plan references a shortage of publicly owned land for active recreation. In 2011, the Mark Lane recreational improvements were made, which provides significant active recreation space and opportunities and is owned by the Township Board of Education. Therefore, these needs, as identified in the prior OSRP, have been met.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The Township's population has stabilized and there is little vacant land available in River Vale for new development. The town's existing recreation and open space system provides a wide range of options, from passive recreation to active recreation including soccer fields, basketball courts, walking paths and a golf course.

At this time, the Township is not contemplating the immediate purchase of new property for open space or recreation services. As indicated in the OSRP, the Township will focus on connecting public area and making improvements to its existing open space and recreation system. The Township meets the standards identified in the Balanced Land Use Concept. More importantly, River Vale officials have described the town's open space and recreation system as meeting its residents' needs.

However, this is a long-term plan, and the Township has identified the following locations as potential future acquisitions. Many of these properties were similarly recommended in the prior

OSRP. Again, it is important to remember that as parcels become available, and/or the Township’s goals change, this plan is flexible and can be revised accordingly.

<u>Potential Sites for Acquisition Consideration</u>			
<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Property</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
1201	6, 6.01-6.03	Edgewood CC Golf Course	116
1602	7	House	3.75
1602	9	Service Station & House	4.04
1602	13	House	2.76
2103	1	Vacant; Flood Prone	2.20

Within the above table, Edgewood Country Club is an existing private recreation facility in the Township. Presently, townhomes are under construction on a portion of the property. However, as required by local ordinance, an 18-hole golf course will remain at the Edgewood property. Edgewood is included on the potential acquisition list in the unlikely event that the golf course is removed from the housing tract and is considered for sale. In addition, and as a separate proposal, there may be opportunities on the property to install a small park that would not disturb the function of the 18-hole golf course. Such a park could be located next to the housing that is presently under construction. This OSRP anticipates both potential options for the Edgewood property.

Other properties that are included on this list might protect sensitive environmentally constrained locations. For example, Block 2103, Lot 1 is a vacant and flood prone 2.2 acre site that is located on the municipal border with Westwood. This lot also could help with connecting River Vale to public properties in adjacent towns as well as protect an environmentally sensitive site.

Most of the other properties on the above table were included in the 2005 OSRP. These properties are steep, some contain ponds or other water features, and all back up to the Pascack Brook. They could potentially all offer various open space and/or recreation options while also protecting environmentally sensitive properties.

Other Resources

However, rather than property acquisition, the Township anticipates focusing on linkages such as bicycle and walkway connections in the near future, as well as upgrading its current park and open space properties, in an effort to strengthen its open space and recreation system.

River Vale has an extensive bicycle pathway system that bisects much of the Township. The bicycle route, which consists of both a tradition route and a segregated path, runs for over five miles, and is show on the map entitled, “Existing Bike Path.” As shown, the bike path runs in a north/south direction. The bike path currently connects into Hillsdale and Old Tappan, but not into Park Ridge, Westwood or Emerson. The recommended extension, as shown on the map, would result with connections in Westwood and subsequently Emerson.

This OSRP recommends the extension of the bicycle path into Westwood and Emerson, as shown on the map. These extensions would open the bike paths access to parks and recreation areas that are located in adjacent towns, such as the Pascack Brook County Park. These bicycle path improvements could be done without infringement into environmentally constrained areas.

In addition, the 2005 OSRP included several sites that are owned by the Township but used for drainage. These sites are in the areas of Dorchester Drive to Rolling Hill, south of Beechcrest Drive, Prospect Ave. to Baylor Ave., and Patriot Lane to Thurnau Drive. Unfortunately, many of these areas have limited access, contain wetlands, and are truly used for drainage and water flow purposes and therefore are not appropriate at this time for consideration. One exception might be Block 1504, Lot 2, which contains approximately 2 acres and is located between Wilma, May and Martin Streets. This site appears forested and most likely contains other environmental constraints. However, it is a larger site that currently serves as open space and could be formally recognized as such.

Natural Resources

The benefits of acquiring and preserving open space are numerous; for example, environmentally sensitive properties are saved, valuable ecosystems are preserved, and water is allowed to flow freely and naturally filter through the system. Preserving natural resources leads to a more attractive community with healthier residents.

Such natural resources exist in River Vale, and the Township recognizes their importance and seeks to ensure their preservation. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- Wooded areas
- Wetlands and associated buffers
- Floodplain areas
- Waterways and associated C-1 required 300 ft. buffers
- Threatened and endangered species
- Steep Slopes



Many of these resources are regulated by the NJDEP, including wetlands and buffers, floodplains and C-1 waterways. Wetlands are also found along most stream and brook areas, as well as, of course, the Hackensack River. The C-1 buffers are a required 300 ft. to help protect the water quality as all waterways in River Vale and surrounding towns lead to a dedicated drinking water source. Finally, there are several pockets of steep slopes in River Vale, in particular in the northern portion of the Township.

Action Plan

The Action Plan provides for the orderly and coordinated execution of the OSRP. The Action Plan includes the local government's decisions for addressing ORSRP needs and goals based on the abilities of the community and fiscal constraints. The Action Plan should encompass a five-year period and should be updated to report on progress, adjust as needed, and include proposals for action. Per the NJDEP, the OSRP is a fluid document and can be amended as needed at River Vale's discretion.

The Resource Assessment provided some potential properties for acquisition. River Vale would need to consider several criteria when considering property acquisition. These criteria include:

- Development pressure
- Environmental constraints on the site
- Proximity to an existing recreation location
- Potential to include the site in an existing bicycle or walkway network or linkage
- Suitability for active recreation, and/or conversion of existing active recreation to a multi-purpose field or use

However, and more so than property acquisition, the Township seeks to continue to improve and upgrade its recreation and open space system. Such projects that are planned in the Township are as follows:

Short Term (5 years or less)

- Extending shared use bicycle/pedestrian path along Cedar Lane and into the borough of Hillsdale.
- Constructing a new miniature golf course at the River Vale Country Club.
- Improving the golf driving range at the River Vale Country Club with new netting.
- Improving the golf course at River Vale Country Club by reconstructing the sand bunkers at the golf course.
- Reconstructing the Veteran's Memorial at Town Hall, in the area of Upper Grove field.
- Installing walkways and/or sidewalks along Poplar Road.

Long Term (6 -10 years)

- Replacing the Mark Lane turf field surface.
- Constructing two new pickleball courts.
- Reconstruct the amphitheater at Lower Grove Field so that a variety of community and recreation events can be accommodated.
- Extending the shared use bicycle/pedestrian spur to Pascack Brook County Park, including wayfinding signage and pavement markings.

- Connecting shared use bicycle/pedestrian path through Hillsdale Borough, terminating in Park Ridge Borough and including wayfinding signage and pavement markings.
- Removal of fallen trees and other debris in the Hackensack River to facilitate recreation use.

Property acquisition or proposed improvements may require funding. Funding sources via the State and Bergen County are described below.

NJDEP Green Acres Funding

River Vale has been an active participant in the Green Acres funding process. The Township collects an open space assessment and, by completing this Open Space and Recreation Plan, will be eligible for future funding. The Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant provides 50 percent matching grants to local governments for the acquisition of land for recreation and conservation purposes.

Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund

This county program provides funding for municipal park improvements, land acquisition, historic preservation and floodplain protection. This trust fund was established in 1998 and is a dedicated funding source.

Other options also include utilizing the Township’s open space tax assessment, partnering with private agencies, NJDOT grants for bicycle or alternate transportation funding, and utilizing other nonprofit options. Finally, mechanisms such as conservation easements, flexible zoning options and other opportunities can be considered.

The Action Plan presents both long- and short-term open space and recreation projects, as well as criteria to study properties that might be considered in the future for potential acquisition. Presently, the Township has a strong, well-used recreation system that provides a wide variety of opportunities for its residents. It is anticipated that the Township will continue its progressive and proactive approach to recreation and open space as it seeks to satisfy its goals of maintaining, improving and connecting open space and recreation resources in the future.

Public participation

River Vale’s Open Space & Recreation Plan has been developed with a proactive public participation component. Public informational sessions were held at two Joint Planning Board meetings, on July 29, 2020 and October 28, 2020.

These meetings were advertised in the newspaper and on the Township's website.

Mapping of the open space and recreation network was presented at the meetings. Potential goals and future planning were discussed.

Finally, this OSRP was adopted at a public meeting of the Joint Planning Board held on November 11, 2020.

CONCLUSION

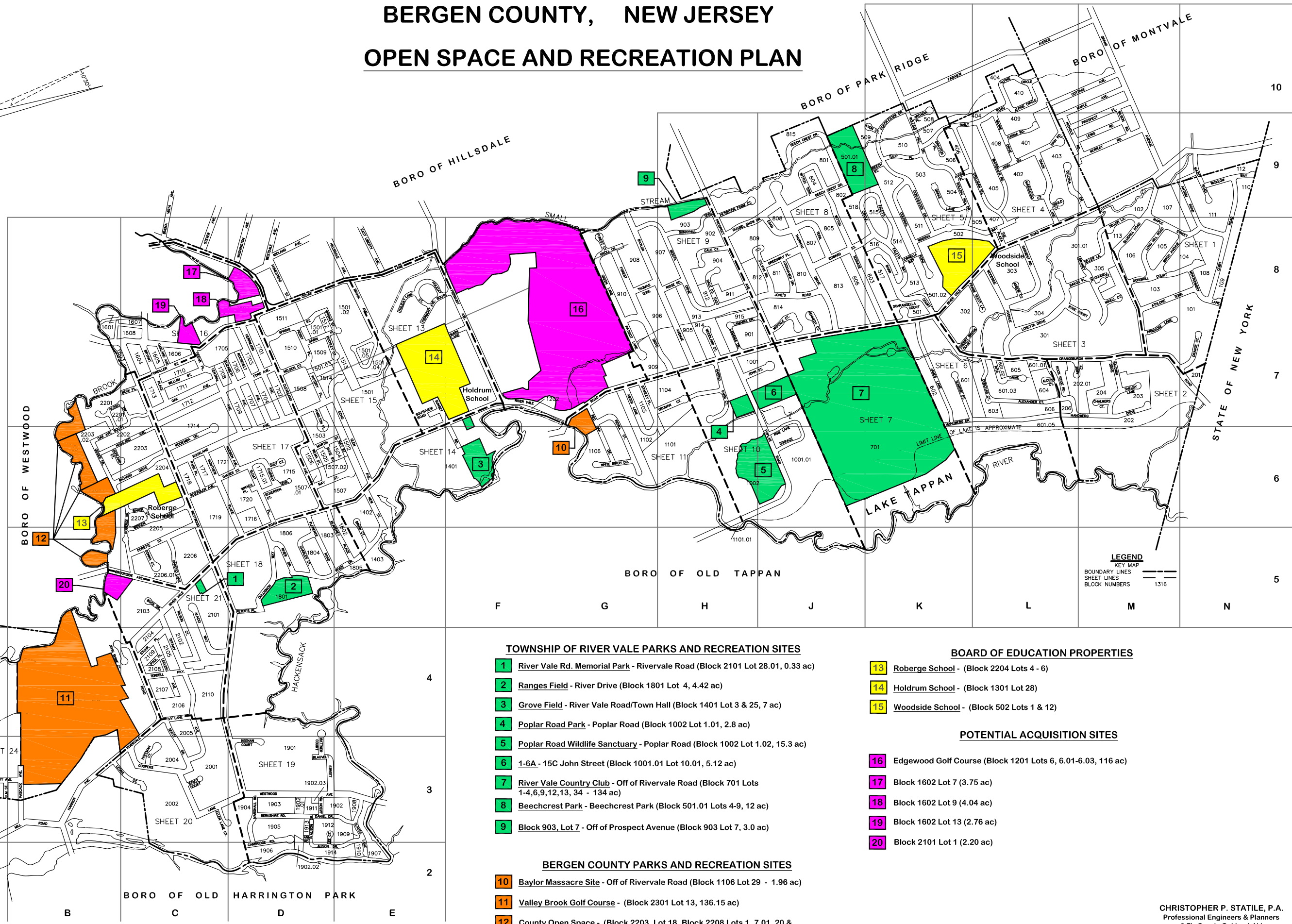
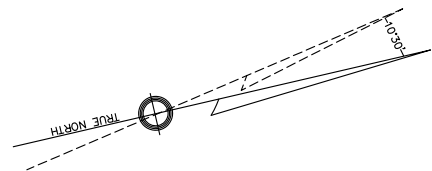
This OSRP fulfills the requirements of the NJDEP and provides a current inventory of the Township's open space and recreation offerings. Presently, the town's open space and recreation system is sufficient for its residents. Regardless, the OSRP also provides short and long term recreation goals and priorities and give an Action Plan for completing these items. This plan was developed with the required public participation, as well as input from Township officials. Finally, this plan is consistent with the Township's existing master planning documents.



TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE

BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN



TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE PARKS AND RECREATION SITES

- 1** River Vale Rd. Memorial Park - Rivervale Road (Block 2101 Lot 28.01, 0.33 ac)
- 2** Ranges Field - River Drive (Block 1801 Lot 4, 4.42 ac)
- 3** Grove Field - River Vale Road/Town Hall (Block 1401 Lot 3 & 25, 7 ac)
- 4** Poplar Road Park - Poplar Road (Block 1002 Lot 1.01, 2.8 ac)
- 5** Poplar Road Wildlife Sanctuary - Poplar Road (Block 1002 Lot 1.02, 15.3 ac)
- 6** 1-6A - 15C John Street (Block 1001.01 Lot 10.01, 5.12 ac)
- 7** River Vale Country Club - Off of Rivervale Road (Block 701 Lots 1-4,6,9,12,13, 34 - 134 ac)
- 8** Beechcrest Park - Beechcrest Park (Block 501.01 Lots 4-9, 12 ac)
- 9** Block 903, Lot 7 - Off of Prospect Avenue (Block 903 Lot 7, 3.0 ac)

BERGEN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SITES

- 10** Baylor Massacre Site - Off of Rivervale Road (Block 1106 Lot 29 - 1.96 ac)
- 11** Valley Brook Golf Course - (Block 2301 Lot 13, 136.15 ac)
- 12** County Open Space - (Block 2203, Lot 18, Block 2208 Lots 1, 7.01, 20 & Block 2208.01 Lot 17 - 22.61 ac)

BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPERTIES

- 13** Roberge School - (Block 2204 Lots 4 - 6)
- 14** Holdrum School - (Block 1301 Lot 28)
- 15** Woodside School - (Block 502 Lots 1 & 12)

POTENTIAL ACQUISITION SITES

- 16** Edgewood Golf Course (Block 1201 Lots 6, 6.01-6.03, 116 ac)
- 17** Block 1602 Lot 7 (3.75 ac)
- 18** Block 1602 Lot 9 (4.04 ac)
- 19** Block 1602 Lot 13 (2.76 ac)
- 20** Block 2101 Lot 1 (2.20 ac)

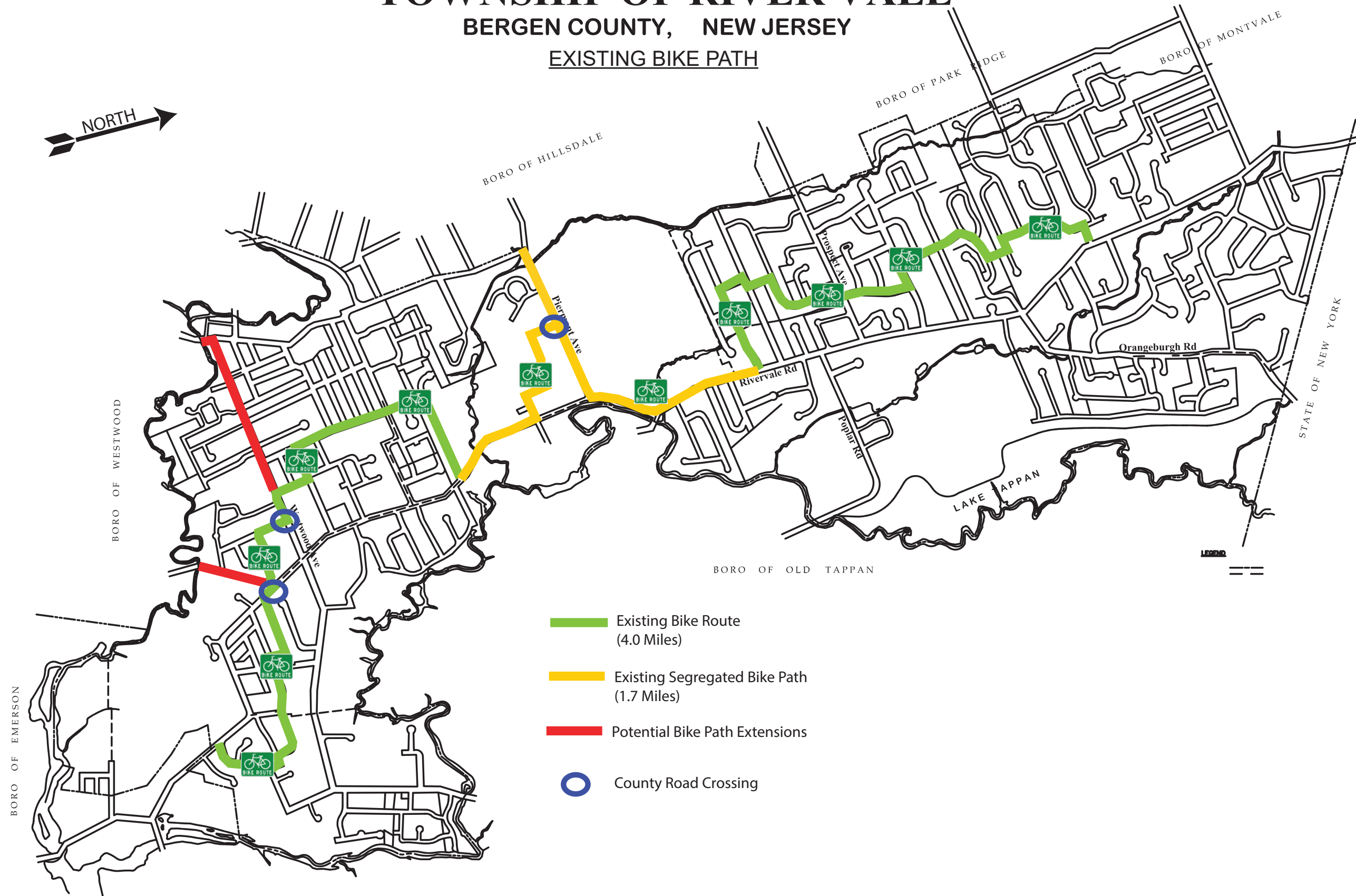
LEGEND
KEY MAP
BOUNDARY LINES
SHEET LINES
BLOCK NUMBERS
1316





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TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE

BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

EXISTING BIKE PATH



-  Existing Bike Route
(4.0 Miles)
-  Existing Segregated Bike Path
(1.7 Miles)
-  Potential Bike Path Extensions
-  County Road Crossing

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