

Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Update



Newtown Commons Marker

September 2010

Adopted: January 11, 2011



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Bucks County
Open Space Program
A Commitment to Land Preservation



**Borough of Newtown
Bucks County, Pennsylvania**

RESOLUTION No. 1-11-11

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING
OPEN SPACE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Council of the Borough of Newtown recognizes that the Borough contains open space and natural areas that contribute to the quality of life and economic health of our community which are worthy of preservation; and

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Commissioners have renewed funding of the Bucks County Open Space Program through a referendum overwhelmingly passed by voters on November 6, 2007, the purpose of which is to protect in perpetuity those natural resource areas and farmlands deemed essential to preserve the unique character of Bucks County; and

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Open Space Program provides an allocation of funding for protection of open space resources by municipalities provided that the municipality first prepares an approved municipal open space plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Newtown wishes to participate in the Municipal Grant Program; and


NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the Borough of Newtown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania hereby resolves that the Newtown Borough Open Space Plan, dated September 2010, prepared in compliance with the Municipal Open Space Plan Guidelines distributed by the Bucks County Open Space Program, has been discussed at a public meeting and is hereby adopted in its entirety in the form attached hereto, as the official Open Space Plan of the Borough of Newtown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution to be attached to, and made part of said Open Space Plan, and furthermore, that the Borough of Newtown intends to take actions as appropriate to implement the goals of the Open Space Plan.

THIS RESOLUTION has been duly prepared and adopted by the Governing Body of the Borough of Newtown in public meeting held this January 11, 2011.

NEWTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

By:


Julia Woldorf, President

Attest:


Marcia Scull, Secretary



Acknowledgements

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The following individuals have contributed to the completion of this plan. We would like to thank all of them for their time and expertise.

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Newtown Creek

Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Update

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I. Plan Summary

Background

Since the completion of Open Space Plan in 2001, the Borough has implemented a number of its recommended actions. Utilizing the information contained in the 2001 plan, the Borough was able to purchase the unused property adjacent to the Chancellor Street School from the Council Rock School District. This one acre parcel is now the Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park. The park combines open space and a children's playground and was dedicated to honor the Borough's police officer slain in the line of duty in September, 2005.

In addition to this purchase, the Borough was able to acquire some easements along the Newtown Creek to help facilitate a walking and biking trail that will eventually link to the Newtown Area Regional trail. The Borough continues to be interested in evaluating the former SEPTA rail corridor for a potential greenway trail. The Borough continues to investigate the feasibility of acquiring an easement through the Artesian Water Company property. Finally, the Borough has acquired or accepted dedication of façade easements on buildings of significant value and has considered the adoption of overlay districts to provide setbacks and screening from sensitive historic, natural and scenic resources.

The addition of these properties, reduced land values resulting from changes in the economy, and the opportunity to add more land as open space through a new round of Bucks County Open Space Program funding, were indications to the Borough that an updated open space plan was needed to help the Borough refine its goals and means of obtaining them.

Purpose

This plan has been prepared to update Newtown Borough's Open Space Plan of February 2001. This document supplements key elements of the 2001 Plan and includes the requirements described in the Bucks County Municipal Open Space Program: Municipal Open Space Plan Guidelines 2008. The open space plan is a valuable guide, allowing the Borough to re-evaluate its current park and open space resources as well as provide guidance and plans to augment these important, but scarce resources.

Plan Organization

This plan update is organized similar to the 2001 plan; however the specific chapters reflect the order and content required by the new Bucks County Open Space Program guidelines. This update incorporates existing data from the 2001 plan and new or updated information as appropriate. This update draws heavily from the Borough's recently adopted comprehensive plan and includes a new set of resource maps. A property status report for the Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park, purchased via County Open Space Funds, is included as an attachment to this updated plan.

II. Community Background

Historic and Regional Setting

Newtown Borough has a rich history spanning over 300 years. Originally surveyed in 1684, Newtown is a classic example of William Penn's village planning principles in which each purchaser owns a lot within the townstead (containing a central common) and a plantation in the outlying areas. By 1700, the community grew to a substantial size along the banks of the Newtown Creek. Newtown served as an outpost for Continental soldiers during the Revolutionary War and served as the headquarters of General George Washington before and after the Battle of Trenton. Due to its convenient location and the presence of existing buildings for public business, Newtown was the county seat from 1726 until 1813, when the courts and county offices moved to Doylestown. During this period, there was significant economic growth and development. The oldest library in Bucks County (and third oldest in the state) is the Newtown Library, which dates back to 1760. The first educational institution in town was Newtown Academy, built around 1798.

During the nineteenth century, Newtown was an important agricultural center. Many affluent farmers moved into the village and constructed prominent Victorian houses, many of which can be seen today along sections of Chancellor and State Streets and Washington Avenue. Newtown was incorporated as a Borough in 1838. Since then, and well into the twentieth century, the Borough continued to grow and prosper as a center for commercial and professional services for the surrounding area.

Today, Newtown Borough is nearly built-out, but contains significant natural, scenic and historic resources. Within the Borough are excellent and varied examples of architectural styles, including eighteenth century early Colonials, early nineteenth century Classic Revivals, late nineteenth century Queen Annes, and early twentieth century Colonial Revivals. With the listing of Newtown Historic District in 1979, the Borough became nationally recognized. The Borough also contains many formal tree-lined streets that add to its historic charm. Natural resources enhance the Borough's character and are primarily associated with the vegetation and rocky banks along the Newtown Creek and its tributary known affectionately as "Old Skunky".

Although the Borough's population and development status has stabilized in the past decades, the surrounding region has experienced tremendous growth. The growth can be attributed to a variety of factors, including population increases in central and upper Bucks County, access to Interstate 95 and its general location within the Princeton-New Brunswick corridor in New Jersey and close proximity to both Philadelphia and New York City. Transportation to the area is good with primary state roads such as Route 332, 413, 532 and the Newtown Bypass although public transportation is presently significantly limited.

The regional setting of the Borough is shown in Figure 1 and a more detailed map is shown on Map 1 – Base Map.



Figure 1 - Regional Location

Population and Housing Trends

(This section updates the population and housing trends data contained in the Open Space Plan of 2001. The primary source of the updated information comes from the Borough's Comprehensive Plan.)

According to information contained in the Borough's Comprehensive Plan, the Borough has been a population center for more than 300 years and is now nearly fully built-out. Population trends cited from 1930 to 2000 note that the Borough grew about 26.8% from its 1930 population of 1,824 to its 2000 population of 2,312, a change of about 500 people over seventy years.

From a regional perspective, Newtown Borough has declined in population since 1980, compared to the significant growth in adjacent Newtown Township and moderate growth county-wide. These changes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 - Population Change in Newtown Borough, Newtown Township and Bucks County 1980-2007						
Area	U.S. Census Population			Estimate 2007	Numeric Change 1980-2007	Percent Change 1980-2007
	1980	1990	2000			
Bucks County	479,211	541,174	597,635	621,144	141,933	29.6%
Newtown Borough	2,519	2,565	2,312	2,347	-172	-7.3%
Newtown Township	4,527	13,685	18,206	18,961	14,434	302.2%
Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census 1990 and 2000. Population Estimate - DVRPC, 2008						

However, the trend of declining population seems to be changing. Population estimates for 2007, prepared by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), indicate a slight increase of about 1.5% between 2000 and 2007. These statistics are noted in Table 2. Trends in population from 1980 to 2007 are illustrated in Figure 2.



NEWTOWN BOROUGH OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE



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Data Sources: Parcels- Next Level Mapping 2000, Roads-US Census Bureau, Municipal Boundaries - PADOT 2007, Streams-PADER, Aerials - DVRPC 2005

DATE: 9/24/2010

Table 2 - Current Population and Population Estimates				
Area	Current Population	Population Estimates	Numeric	Percent
	2000	2007	2000-2007	2000-2007
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	11,957,883	-323,171	-2.70%
Bucks County	597,635	621,144	23,509	3.78%
Newtown Borough	2,312	2,347	35	1.49%
Newtown Township	18,206	18,961	755	3.98%
Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Municipal, County and Regional Population Estimates, 2000-2007, Regional Data Bulletin No. 87, July 2008.				

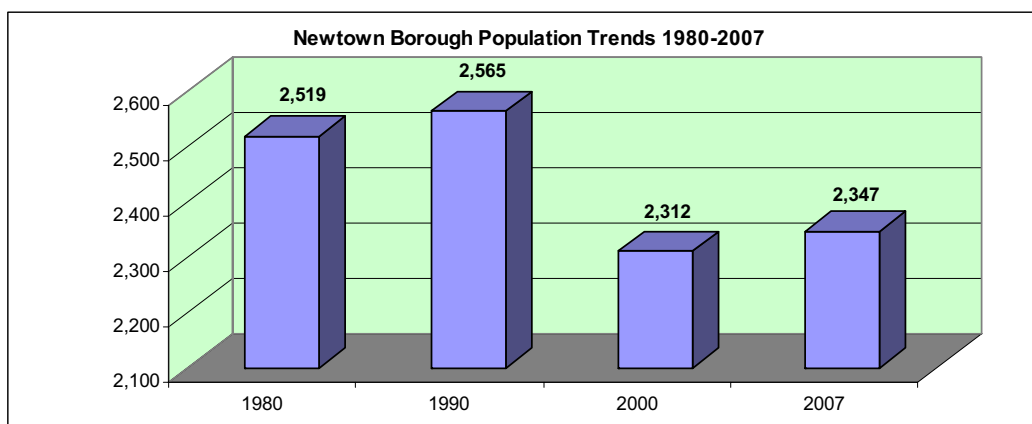


Figure 2 - Population Trends 1980 - 2007

In contrast to recent decades, the Borough is expected to grow by about 5% over the next 20 year period, based on DVRPC's forecasts. These projections are shown on Table 3 and Figure 3.

Table 3 - Population Projections for Newtown Borough Region and Bucks County 2000-2025							
Area	Current Population	Estimate	Projections*				% Change
	2000	2007	2010	2015	2020	2025	2007-2025
Bucks County	597,635	624,351	649,187	672,674	694,893	715,819	14.7%
Newtown Borough	2,312	2,347	2,313	2,367	2,418	2,466	5.1%
Newtown Township	18,206	18,961	20,346	21,428	22,452	23,416	23.5%
Middletown Township	44,140	46,868	49,841	51,294	53,009	54,624	16.5%
Wrightstown Township	2,840	2,812	3,001	3,191	3,372	3,541	25.9%
*Sources: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Regional, County and Municipal Population and Employment Forecasts, 2005-2035. Analytical Data Report No. 14, August 2007.							

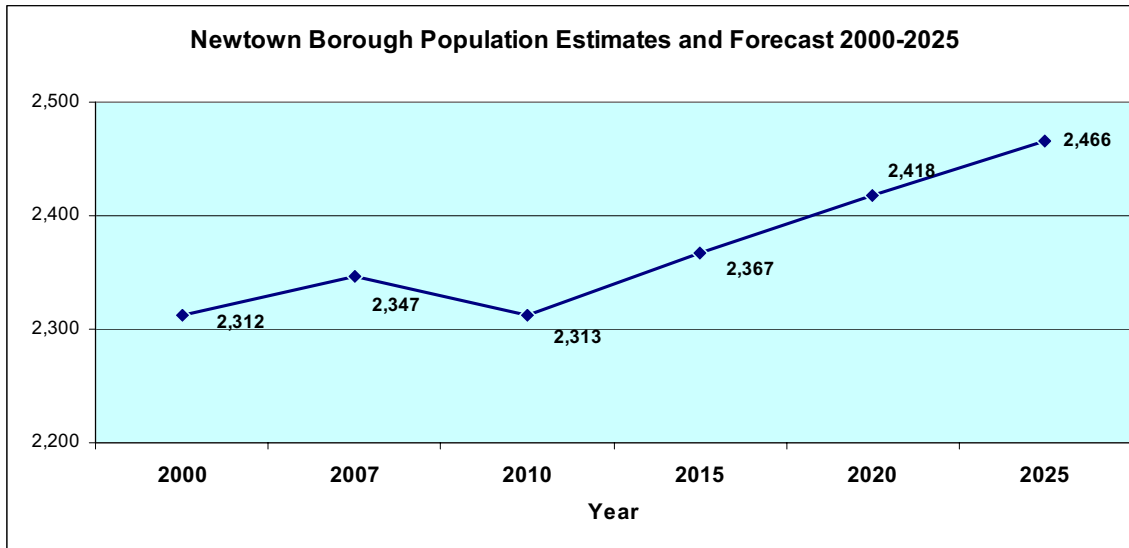


Figure 3 - Newtown Borough Population Forecast

Population Characteristics

According to data from the Comprehensive Plan, the average household in the Borough was smaller and older in 2000 than it was in 1990. As noted in Table 4, the Borough experienced decline of about 11% in population and concurrent declines in the number of households and number of family households during the decade.

Table 4 - Demographic Characteristics (1990-2000) – Newtown Borough		
Characteristic	1990	2000
Population	2,565	2,312
Median age (years)	39.0	41.2
Households ¹	1,066	920
Family households ²	673	595
Married-couple families	565	505
Non-family households ³	393	325
Householders living alone	350	275
Average household size	2.37 persons	2.35 persons
Average family size	3.04 persons	2.95 persons
Source: US Census 1. A household is an occupied housing unit 2. A family household is a household with two or more individuals related by marriage, birth, or adoption. 3. A non-family household is a household with a group of unrelated individuals or a person living alone.		

Although the median age of the Borough has increased (not unlike county and state trends) since 1990, the percent of the population over 65 has actually declined. The percent under the age of 18 has increased slightly in the same time period. These comparisons are shown on Table 5.

Recent demographic data from the 2007 American Community Survey indicated that about 12.5% of the American population is aged 65 and over. Newtown Borough's numbers from the

2000 census indicate that the township is exceeding the national, county and state averages, yet the percentage is lower than that of 1990.

As characterized in the comprehensive plan, “...comparative changes in the age distribution in Newtown Borough and Township from 1990 to 2000 seem to confirm the public impression that population turnover is occurring, with younger singles and families moving into the Borough.”¹

Table 5 - Comparison of Age Group Changes 1990-2000, Newtown Borough, Bucks County and Pennsylvania

Area	2000 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census		1990 Census	
	Median Age		% Under 18 Years	% 65 Years and Over	% Under 18	% 65 years and over
Pennsylvania	38.0	35.0	23.8%	15.6%	23.5%	15.4%
Bucks County	37.7	33.7	25.7%	12.4%	25.7%	10.9%
Newtown Borough	41.2	39.0	21.8%	16.0%	21.4%	19.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000

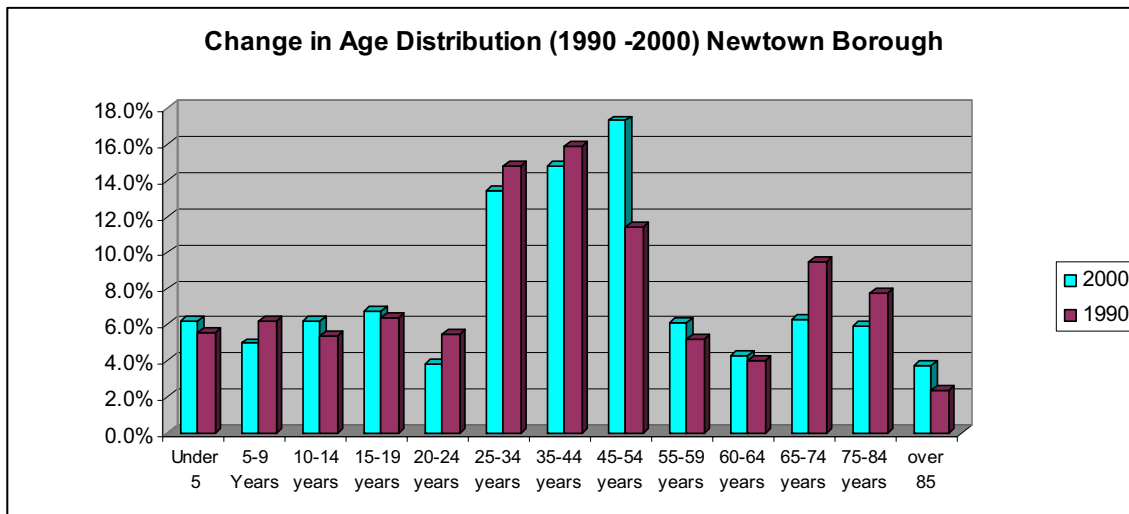


Figure 4 - Change in Age Distribution 1990 and 2000

As indicated in Figure 4 and noted in the comprehensive plan, the greatest percentage gain from 1990 to 2000 was in the 45-54 age group, which represents the leading edge of the baby-boom generation. These population trends are important when considering future recreation and open space programming needs for the Borough.

Land Use Patterns and Development Trends

As noted in the comprehensive plan, most of the Borough is already built-out and the predominant land use is residential. The plan indicates that overall land use has changed little since the previous comprehensive plan was issued in 1999. The percentage of land uses within the Borough as of 2009, are shown on Figure 5.

¹ Newtown Borough Comprehensive Plan, June 2010, pg.21.

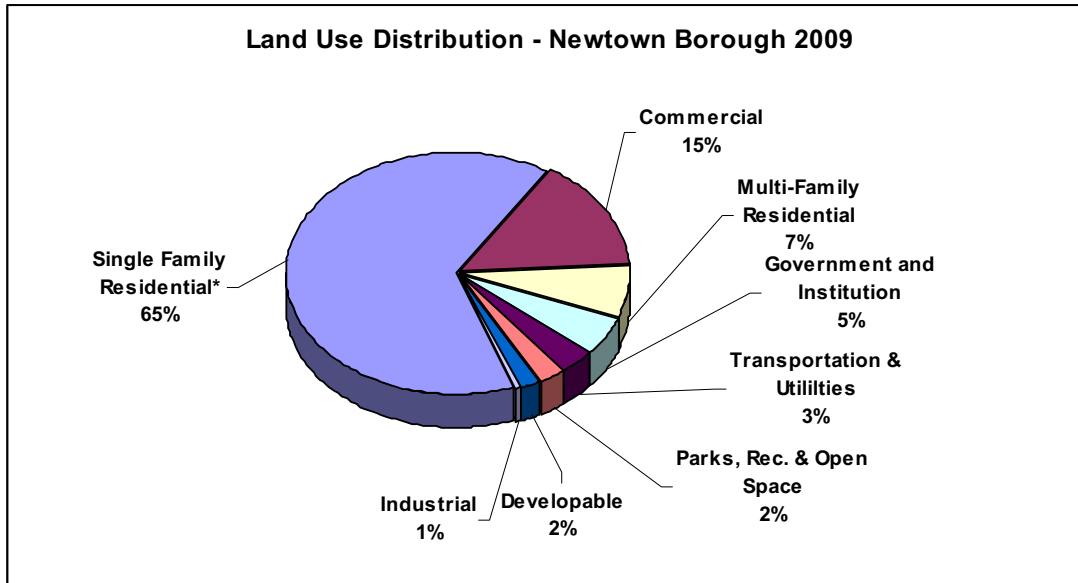


Figure 5 - Land Use Distribution - Newtown Borough

Source: Bucks County Planning Commission

Additional observations are:

- Most of the land occupied for residential purposes is occupied by single-family detached dwellings (57.5%). Another 17.2% represent single-family attached housing and 25% are two-family or multiple family units.
- Most non-residential uses can be found in four areas of the Borough: along State Street from Jefferson Street to Court Street; along South Lincoln Avenue between Centre Avenue and Sterling Street; along Washington Avenue near the eastern Borough boundary; and near the southwest entrance of the Borough, along State Street.
- Retail and service uses are largely situated in the Central Business District or in the south-central part of the Borough.
- The commercial core is located along State Street from Greene to Penn Streets. Most contain retail or service uses with some offices.
- There is limited recreational land within the Borough, including four parks in residential areas.
- Public, religious, governmental and utility uses are mostly found in the west-central portion of the Borough.
- Very little developable land remains in the Borough
- Land that is possibly developable is primarily situated within the Delta School tract on South State Street at Sterling Street and the former Stockburger Chevrolet dealership which occupies a large lot on South State Street.

The Borough Comprehensive Plan's future land use plan describes the various land use categories, and associated issues and recommendations for each.

Issues related to open space and recreation include the exploration of opportunities to add to the Borough's recreation facilities and open space. The plans notes that of special concern are ways

to create a greenway system, improve access to Newtown Creek and the vestiges of Newtown Common, and to generally maximize open space in the heart of the Borough. More specifically, the Borough is seeking to preserve as much of the Delta School Tract as open space as possible. The Delta School Tract is located within an areas zoned for the highest residential density in the Borough – BR-4 and is currently the largest remaining undeveloped tract of undeveloped land within the Borough. *“It would be advantageous for the Borough to preserve all or part of the Delta School tract as open space, and to acquire easements to protect the Newtown Creek corridor and improve public access to it.”* Specific recommendations of the comprehensive plan are included in the Goals and Objectives Chapter.

III. Goals and Objectives

Newtown Borough has a strong desire to maintain a high quality of life for its residents. Factors contributing to the quality of life include existing natural, scenic, historic and open space resources within the Borough. The Borough's recently updated comprehensive plan provides guidance in establishing the goals and objectives for open space planning purposes. Goals and objectives provide a sound basis for the assessment and implementation of open space planning strategies. A goal is typically a very broad statement of intent of the subject matter, while objectives are the means of obtaining the stated goal. Another document that is useful for the overall planning process is the *Newtown Area Linked Open Space Plan (1988)*. The following provides a summary of these two documents that have been considered in this open space plan update.

2010 Comprehensive Plan

The following are included as recreation and open space recommendations in the *Newtown Borough Comprehensive Plan (June, 2010)*:

- Update the Municipal Open Space Plan
- Investigate opportunities for acquiring additional open space and recreation areas.
- Actively retain existing open space and recreation areas.
- Pursue Open Space Plan priorities for protection through the County program and other funding sources.
- Pursue opportunities to create and expand greenway corridors, and increase public access to them, particularly by means of acquisition of easements along the Newtown Creek and in proximity to Newtown Common.
- Pursue intermunicipal cooperation with Newtown Township on recreation and open space activities of mutual benefit.

The following are included as future land use goals and objectives from the *Newtown Borough Comprehensive Plan – June, 2010* related to open space and recreation:

- Investigate opportunities to acquire the Delta School Tract
- Maximize greenway acquisition and access along Newtown Creek and the vestiges of Newtown Common. Create good pedestrian linkages between State and Sycamore Streets. Potential linkage sites include: the footbridge north of Jefferson Street; at Washington Avenue, the Greene Street Extension; connecting to Newtown Township's planned trail; the municipal parking lot; and north of Barclay Street, where a creek crossing would connect the park in the Township to the greenway.
- Consider strengthening zoning ordinance riparian buffer regulations to require greater buffers along the Newtown Creek corridor, where currently feasible or desirable to control future redevelopment.
- Use the proposed recreation area shown at the site of the former Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) Regional Rail stations along Lincoln Avenue for recreation facilities to complement the facilities across the street at Linton Memorial Park.
- Use the greenway along the SEPTA right-of-way from the station to the southern Borough line for pedestrian and bicycle use, and, if extended into Newtown Township, to link the Borough to any future rail station in Newtown Township.

Newtown Area Linked Open Space Plan (1988)

The goal of the Newtown Area Linked Open Space Plan is to create a linked open space system throughout the Newtown joint region for the benefit of the community. While Newtown Borough is not currently part of the Newtown Joint Planning Area, the applicability of providing a regional open space network is valid. In the plan, the open space system comprises two types of open space corridors – greenway links and roadway open space links. Greenway links were determined along areas of floodplains and alluvial soils, where possible, since these areas are likely to remain undeveloped due to natural resource limitations. Within Newtown Borough, a proposed greenway link is located along the Newtown Creek. Once implemented, this linkage will provide regional access to and from the borough to various points of interest.

Open Space Goals and Objectives - 2001 Plan

The following were the goals and objectives listed in the Borough's 2001 Plan:

Goal: Preserve and enhance the intrinsic value of Newtown Borough's open space resources by protecting its natural, historic and scenic resources which collectively contribute to the quality of life for residents.

Objectives:

1. Protect the Borough's natural and hydrological resources from adverse impacts.
2. Acquire additional open space land necessary to satisfy residents' demand for active and passive recreational needs.
3. Establish an open space network that connects parks, activity centers and points of interest within the Borough, as well as those in adjacent municipalities.
4. Preserve the integrity of historic resources and buildings that distinguish Newtown Borough as a unique historic setting.
5. Preserve scenic vistas and enhance primary entrances throughout the Borough
6. Support an ongoing commitment to open space planning and preservation by municipalities within the Newtown planning area.

Open Space Goals and Objectives –2010 Update

In order to update the Borough's 2001 Open Space Plan, the goals and objectives were reviewed by the Borough's Environmental Advisory Committee. As these objectives are still valid and consistent with the 2010 comprehensive plan, no changes were proposed by the committee and the 2001 goals are reaffirmed.

IV. Identification of Existing Protected Lands

Permanently Protected

The following section identifies and provides essential information about land that can be considered to be protected from development. Newtown Borough contains about 16 acres of land held under formal protection measures including Borough parks, school property, utility easements and common areas of homeowners' associations. These properties are shown on Map 2 - Existing Open Space. Table 6 provides additional details on the various publicly and privately protected lands.

Municipal Parks and Open Space Lands

Newtown Borough's parks encompass about 4.7 acres and include passive and active recreational facilities:

- Pickering Field – 3.1 acre ballpark includes baseball and multi-purpose fields located on Jefferson Street between Chancellor Street and Lincoln Avenue.
- Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park – 1 acre park combines open space with a children's playground. This park was purchased via funding from the Bucks County Open Space Program in 2005 and is located adjacent to the former Chancellor Street School, now the Council Rock School District's administrative office building. A property status report is included in Attachment 1.
- Linton Memorial Park - 0.5 acre park with play equipment on the northwestern corner of Lincoln Avenue and Penn Street
- Newtown Common - .08 acre passive park with benches and a stone marker, located along Newtown Creek, just off of Greene Street.

Newtown Borough has no county, state or federal parks within its boundaries.

Municipal Easements

There is one property easement granted to the Borough along Newtown Creek. This easement is located between West Washington Avenue and Jefferson Street, north of the movie theater and was acquired to encourage preservation of creek side properties.

Homeowner's Association Open Space

Newtown Borough has several homeowners associations (HOA) that manage common areas within their individual complexes. These include:

- Brynwood HOA – Common open space of 0.61 acres, located on the north side of Brynwood Lane.
- Barclay Court Townhome Association – Common open space of 0.883 acres located along the properties on the north side of Barclay Street.
- Newtown Park Condo Association – Common open space of 3.03 acres located near the Borough's southern border with Newtown Township, on the Southside of Barclay Street.
- Newtown Station – Includes 6 open space areas throughout the development totaling 54,306 square feet or 1.25 acres.

School District Land Holdings

Newtown Borough had one school. The former Chancellor Street School is now the Chancellor Center which serves as the administrative offices of the Council Rock School District

Utility Easements

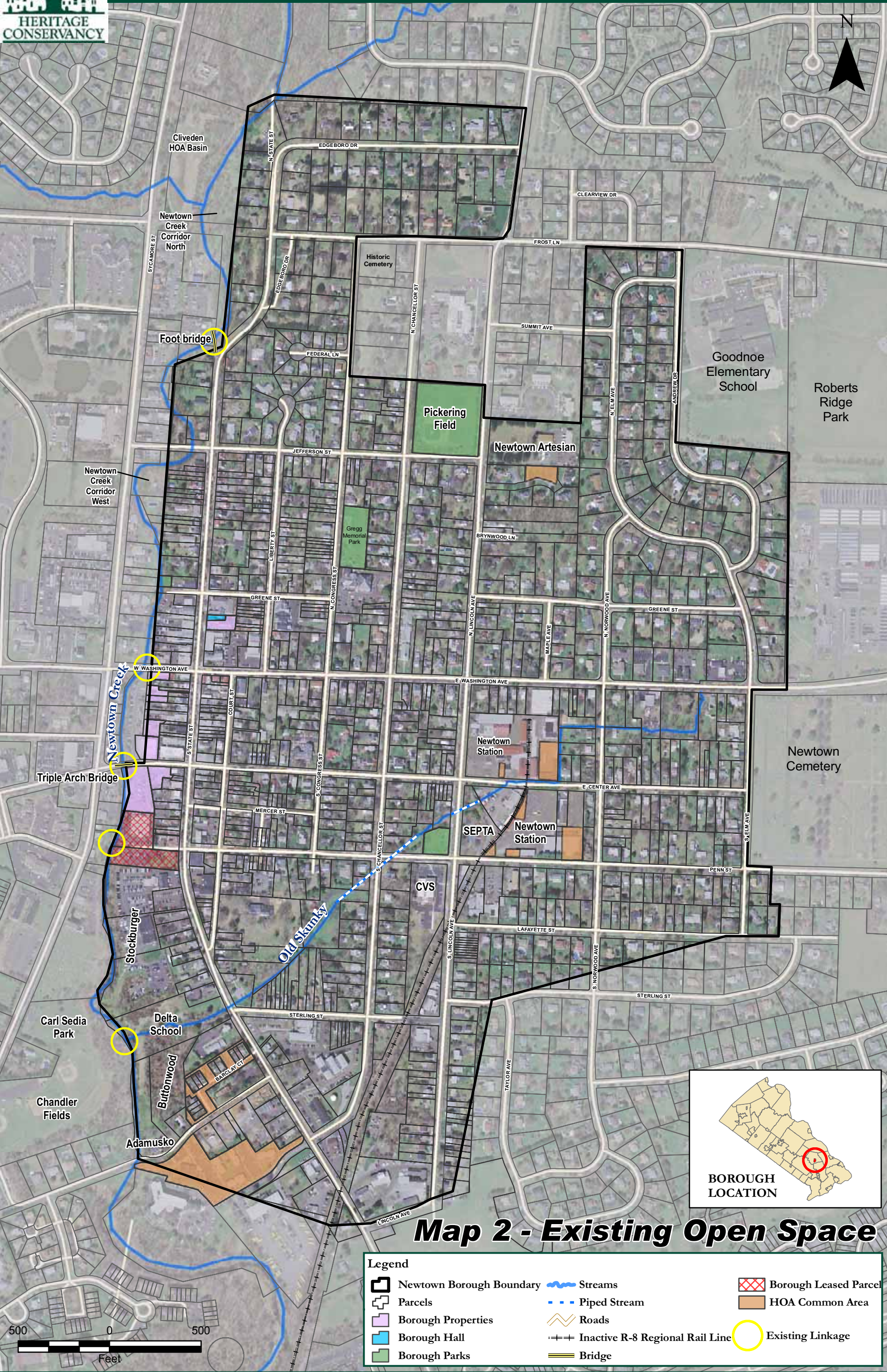
The easement for the former Fox-Chase/Newtown Regional Rail line of SEPTA is located within the Borough and extends from the former station at Penn Street and Lincoln Avenue to the southern Borough boundary. The 50 foot-wide former rail corridor and station property totals about 3.08 acres. SEPTA suspended rail passenger service on the right-of-way in 1984. As reported in the comprehensive plan, SEPTA's policy has been to retain former rail rights-of-way with the prospect of reactivating passenger service at some point in the future. This policy is supported by Bucks County as well. Through the comprehensive planning process, the Borough has indicated a desire to use the greenway along the SEPTA right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle use.

Table 6 - Permanently Protected Lands in Newtown Borough (2009)						
Parcel #	Site Name	Form of Ownership	Degree of Public Access	Level of Protection	Size (Acres)	Use
Public Protected						
28-002-268	Pickering Field	Borough	Full	fee ownership	3.14	ball fields
28-002-212	Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park ¹	Borough	Full	fee ownership	1.00	open space and playground
28-005-040	Linton Memorial Park	Borough	Full	fee ownership	0.50	Playground
28-002-034-001	Newtown Commons	Borough	Full	fee ownership	0.08	passive park
28-0020-212	Chancellor School	Council Rock School District	No access	fee ownership	2.49	administrative building
Total Public					7.21	
Private Protected						
28-0020270-003	Brynwood HOA – 27.S. State Street	Private	Association only	HOA owned	0.61	open space.
28-004-004	Barclay Court	Private	Association only	HOA owned	0.88	open space
28-004-011-002, 004	Newtown Park Condo	Private	Association only	HOA owned	3.03	open space
Multiple Parcels	Newtown Station	Private	Pocket Parks open to public	HOA owned	1.25	open space
28-005-201 28-004-071 28-004-054 28-004-013	SEPTA R-O-W	Utility	Private	Easement	3.37	transit R-O-W
Total Private					9.14	
Total Permanently Protected					16.35	

1 - Park purchased by Borough with funding from the Bucks County Open Space Program in 2005 – See Attached Property Status Report



NEWTOWN BOROUGH OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE



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Data Sources: Parcels- Next Level Mapping 2000, Roads-US Census Bureau, Municipal Boundaries - PADOT 2007, Streams-PADER, Aerials - DVRPC 2005, Potential Open Space - Heritage Conservancy and Bucks County Planning Commission

DATE: 3/14/2011

Adjacent Protected Lands in Newtown Township

Several protected resources are adjacent to the Borough in Newtown Township. At the corner of Frost Lane and Andrew Lane, the Goodnoe School sits on 14.97 acres and features a playground. The Newtown Cemetery is located along Elm Avenue between Washington Avenue and Penn Street and consists of 18.97 acres. At the corner of Frost Lane and Congress Street, a small cemetery dating to the Civil War sits on about 0.79 acres. Adjacent to the north section of Newtown Creek is a grassy detention basin owned by the Cliveden Homeowners Association. This parcel is approximately 6 acres in size. An additional Township owned parcel known as the Merion Drive Parcel follows the Newtown Creek Riparian area north of the Borough behind the homes along Merion Drive. This area totals about 8.4 acres and is undeveloped open space. Roberts Ridge Park, next to the Goodnoe School east of the Borough and Carl Sedia Park/Chandler Fields located southeast of the Borough are also active recreational resources located in Newtown Township.

Regional Park and Recreational Resources

As noted in the 2010 comprehensive plan, the Borough is fortunate that its residents can use nearby county and state park resources. These include Bucks County Community College, Council Rock Middle and High Schools; Tyler State Park; and Core Creek County Park. Borough residents also can use the Newtown Trail, a 3.7 mile linear park that connects through the Borough linking Tyler State Park with Newtown Township's Silver Lake Park along the Newtown Bypass.

V. Inventory of Vulnerable Resources

This section inventories the natural, scenic and historic/cultural resources within the Borough. The purpose of the resource inventory is to identify, map and evaluate these significant properties to help identify the most suitable lands for protection in terms of ecological significance. Most of this resource information is drawn from the previous open space plan and the Borough's comprehensive plan.

Natural Features

The natural features of the Borough contribute to its unique character and add to the quality of life for its residents. As noted in the comprehensive plan, understanding the importance of natural features is crucial to guiding land use planning and future development. The primary natural resource in the Borough is associated with the Newtown Creek riparian corridor and the Old Skunk Creek tributary. However there are other natural features related to the land as noted below.

Geology and Topography

Geology and topography exert great influence on the land uses and natural communities in a region. Regions with similar geologic and topographic characteristics are generally grouped into ecoregions or physiographic regions. The Borough lies within Gettysburg-Newark Lowlands subsection of the Piedmont physiographic region, with the Stockton formation being the predominant geologic formation. The Triassic Lowlands are characterized as a region of gentle rolling hills and ridges. As illustrated on Map3, the highest area in the Borough is the northeast section, where elevation reaches 260 feet (81 meters) above sea level. From this area, land generally slopes downward toward the southeast until reaching the southern border where heights reach about 120 feet (27 meters).

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are natural features of the landscape that generally create limitations to development. The Natural Resource Conservation Service Soil Survey for Bucks County has four classifications for slopes 0-3 percent, 3 to 8 percent, 8 to 15 percent and 15 to 35 percent. Generally, as the slope increases, the depth to topsoil and the ability of the soil to support structures usually decreases. Increased runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes require increased public expenditure for flood control and stormwater management. In addition, different species of plants and the associated wildlife that depend on these plants may be present only on slopes, creating unique wildlife habitats. There are several areas within the Borough with slopes exceeding 8 percent, including areas adjacent to the SEPTA right-of-way, along the banks of the Newtown Creek and along North Elm Avenue.

*Soils*²

The Borough is underlain by a variety of soil types. Due to the developed nature of the community, the major soil type is Urban-Lansdale Complex. Along the Newtown Creek, soils

² Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database for Bucks County, PA. Available online at <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov> accessed 11/12/2009].

consist of Bowmansville Silt Loam. The information contained in the 2001 plan is still valid with respect to soil conditions.

Hydrologic Features

The hydrologic features of the landscape include surface waters, groundwater, ponds and lakes, springs, wetlands and floodplains. These areas are described in the following paragraphs and shown on Map 3 - Natural Features.

Surface Waters

The major surface water resources in the Borough are the Newtown Creek and its tributary stream known as Old Skunky. Newtown Creek is a tributary to Neshaminy Creek in the Delaware River drainage basin. Newtown Creek flows about 9.6 miles from its headwaters in Newtown Township to its confluence with the main stem Neshaminy Creek in Middletown Township. The watershed is characterized by a mixture of forest, agricultural, residential, suburban and urban land uses. This creates a series of distinctly different landscape sections of zones as the creek flows southerly from its headwaters in the suburban northwest corner of the Newtown Township. For example, the riparian corridor in the northern most zone is made up of relatively contiguous forest and preserved lands, lending it to continued protection measures. In contrast, the sections of the creek which flow through Newtown Borough are surrounded by urban land uses and narrow riparian buffers which have been degraded through invasive species such as multi-flora rose and Japanese honeysuckle.

To reinforce the creek's multi-faceted zones and the importance of the overall health of the stream, the Newtown Creek Coalition³ "NCC" has held a series of public meetings to inform residents of the creek's potential as an environmental, cultural and economic asset to the Township and Borough. As part of this effort, the NCC has created distinct zones to reinforce the creek's multi-faceted resources. These zones are described in Table 7 and illustrated on Figure 6.

Zone	Boundaries	Municipalities	Predominant Land Use
Headwaters Zone	Headwaters to Impoundment Dam	Wrightstown, Newtown Township	Single Family Residential, open space
Zone 1	Impoundment Dam to Frost Lane	Newtown Township, Newtown Borough	Large lot residential
Zone 2	Frost Lane to Greene Street	Newtown Township, Newtown Borough	Commercial, Village Commercial and small-lot residential

³ The NCC was established in 2006 as a volunteer group made up of interested citizens living in the vicinity of Newtown Creek along with representatives from the governing bodies of Newtown Borough and Newtown Township.

Table 7 - Newtown Creek Zone Designations*			
Zone	Boundaries	Municipalities	Predominant Land Use
Zone 3	Greene Street to one lot south of Penn Street	Newtown Township, Newtown Borough	Commercial/ historically significant structures
Zone 4	One lot south of Penn Street to Barclay Street	Newtown Township, Newtown Borough	Village Commercial, institutional, and active recreation
Zone 5	Barclay Street to Newtown Bypass	Newtown Township	Residential, bus storage, office
Confluence Zone	Newtown Bypass to confluence with main stem Neshaminy Creek	Newtown Township, Middletown Township	Residential, Institutional (George School), open space.

* - Designations developed by Newtown Creek Coalition

Most of the creek's riparian areas are also privately-owned, which has created some seemingly irreversible access changes. In some locations, the stream banks have been armored with stone walls, resulting in steep bank angles and an altered channel. Restoring connections to the creek and access along the creek in this historic area will foster a sense of community and place. For these reasons and for the benefit of future generations, it is important to increase awareness of and access to the creek as an historic, economic and environmental asset to both communities.

As the Newtown Creek is a valuable surface water resource within the Borough, the comprehensive plan includes a number of recommendations to further its protection. These include enacting more stringent riparian buffer preservation standards, investigating opportunities for increased public access, establishing formal plans for the cleanup and maintenance of the creek and its primary tributary, and considering acquiring an easement along Old Skunky to facilitate protection of the watercourse.

Restoration and enhancement of the Newtown Creek riparian corridor is recommended in several recent planning studies including the Upper and Middle Neshaminy Creek River Conservation Plan (RCP) prepared by the Delaware River Keeper Network, 2003 and in the Newtown Creek Stream Assessment Study (Delaware River Keeper Network, 2005). The study included recommendations regarding riparian conditions and stream stability.

Floodplains

The 100-year floodplain is the area adjoining a stream or river that accommodates floodwater produced by the 100-year storm, which has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year. According to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared for the Borough,⁴ the 100-year floodplain boundaries within the borough extend along the Newtown Creek starting from

⁴ National Flood Insurance Program. Flood Insurance Rate Map – Bucks County Pennsylvania, Panel 431 of 532, Number 42017C0431 F, Newtown Borough. Effective Date: May 18, 1999.

areas north of Jefferson Street and then moves directly along the western municipal border. The 100-year floodplain extends about 50 feet from the creek into Newtown Borough.

The 2010 comprehensive plan highlights the flooding issues associated with the Old Skunky tributary. In particular the plan describes conditions dating back to the early 1970s, following the completion of the Washington Village subdivision along Norwood Avenue. When this development was built, there were no stormwater management regulations in place. As a result, stormwater runoff flows southerly into Old Skunky at the vicinity of Elm and Washington Avenues then flows directly into the Newtown Creek along the Delta School Tract. Over the years the runoff has contributed to the uprooting of trees which are carried downstream along with other sediment and man-made debris. There have been multiple attempts to stabilize the streambanks along Old Skunky. Stream assessments have been conducted and recommendations made. Recently, the Borough received a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to perform an engineering study on Old Skunky to address concerns regarding erosion, sedimentation, flooding, potential for standing water and mosquito breeding, structure undermining and general safety. The study was completed in 2010.

Much of Newtown Creek is closely bordered by parking lots and building infrastructure, but there are a few remaining areas adjacent to the creek. These included the areas west of Frost Lane on the east side of the creek in Newtown Township, areas south of Jefferson Avenue on both sides of the creek in Newtown Township and areas on the east side of the creek in the southern portion of the Borough behind the former Stockburger Chevrolet site, Buttonwood Farms, Delta School, and the Adamusko apartment building.

Wetlands

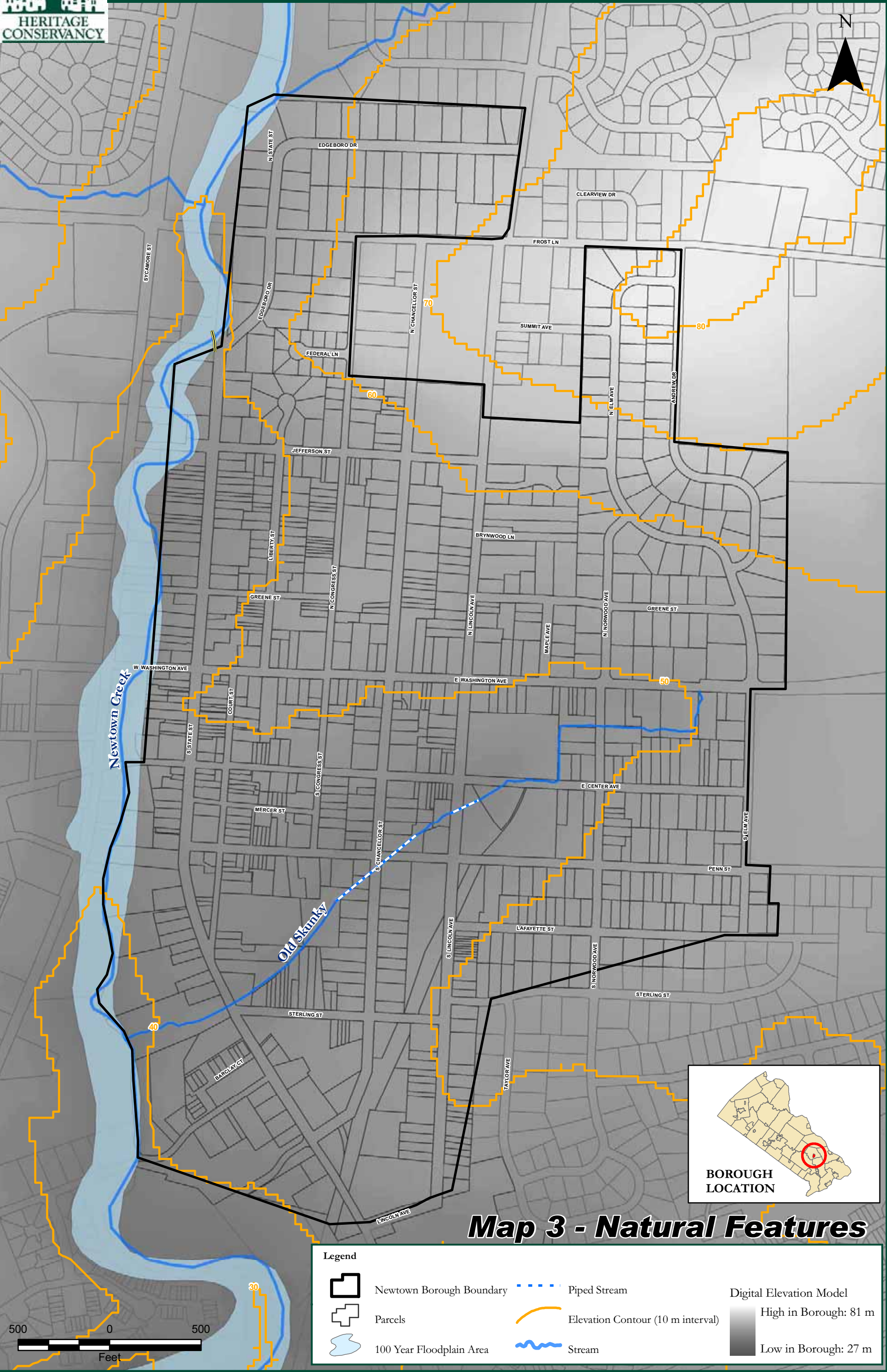
Newtown Borough's wetlands are identified in the National Wetlands Inventory. These maps provide generalized locations of wetland areas in the Borough. Field surveying and delineation are always necessary confirm wetland conditions. According to the NWI mapping, wetlands are present along the Newtown Creek in the area northwest of the intersection of Greene Street and State Street.

Water Supply

Drinking water is supplied to Borough residents by the Newtown Artesian Water Company. The company, which also supplies water to Middletown and Newtown Township, receives its water from wells and purchased water from both ground and surface water resources. The company's water system is supplied by five groundwater sources and also by the interconnection with the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCW&SA). The water purchased from BCW&SA is surface water originating from the Delaware River and treated at the Philadelphia Water Department's Baxter Treatment Plant. The groundwater supplies consist of wells located throughout the Newtown Artesian Water Company service area.



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Map 3 - Natural Features

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Data Sources: Parcels- Next Level Mapping 2000, Roads-US Census Bureau, Municipal Boundaries - PADOT 2007, Streams-PADER, Elevation Data and Contours derived from a USGS 10M DEM (NGVD1929 meters) - Langhorne, Floodplain Area - FEMA DFIRM data

DATE: 9/24/2010

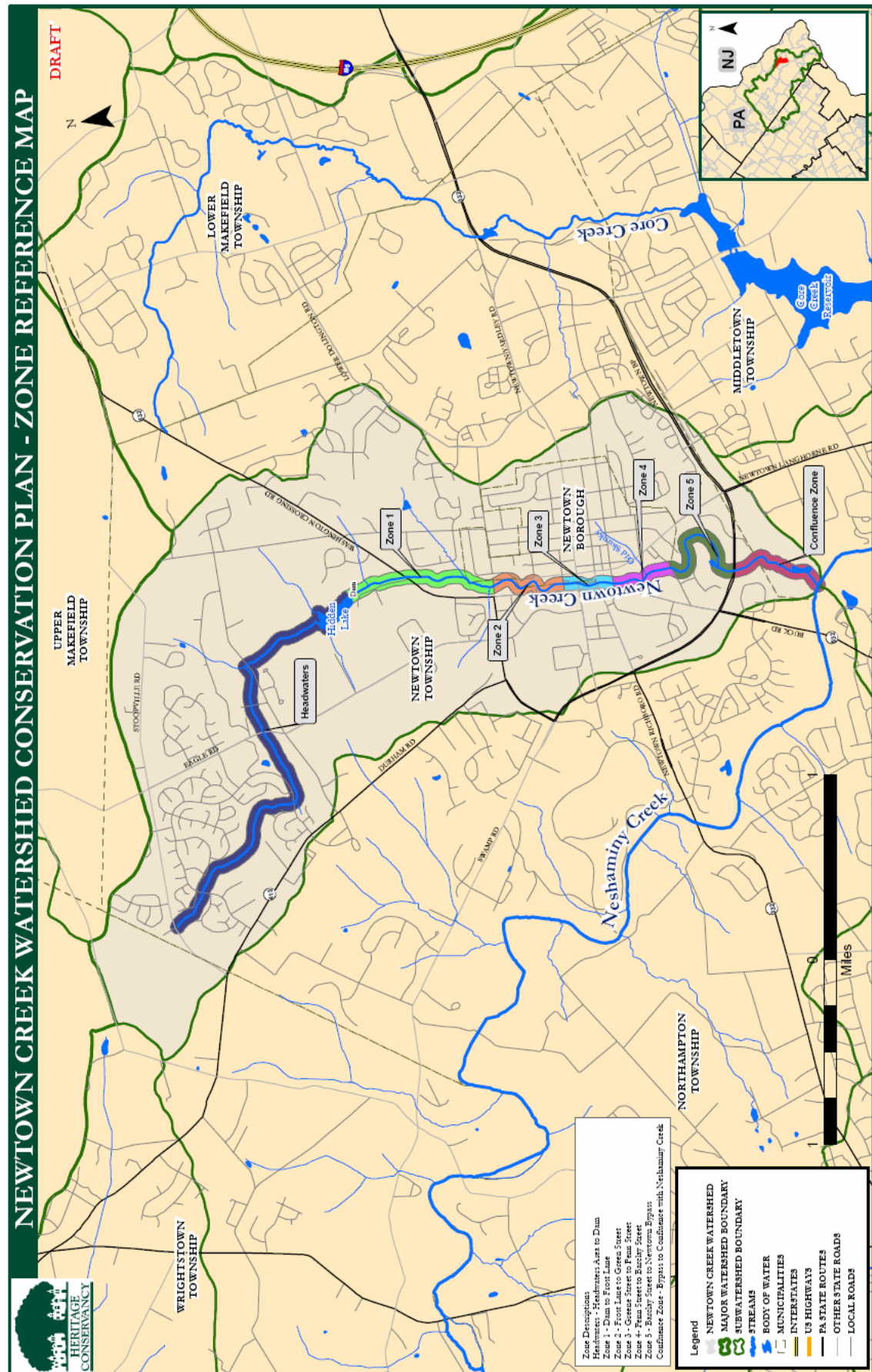


Figure 6 - Map of Newtown Creek Watershed with Zone Designations

The 2010 comprehensive plan includes three specific recommendations with respect to water supply. These are:

- Monitor efforts of both the Newtown Artesian Water Company and the BCW&SA to continue to supply safe and adequate water to the Borough
- Modify Borough ordinances to establish well head protection zones around each public water supply well. Encourage Newtown and Middletown Townships to do the same.
- Investigate the benefit of pursuing an Integrated Water Resource Plan and potential funding of such a plan in cooperation with the Newtown Artesian Water Company and Newtown and Middletown Townships.

Stormwater Management

As noted in the 2010 comprehensive plan, as development or re-development occurs within the Borough, there is a need to manage stormwater runoff in a way that recognizes the watershed wide scope of stormwater management problems and potential solutions. A comprehensive approach to stormwater management addressing both water quality and quantity is necessary to control peak flows of runoff and protect water quality and maximize infiltration of runoff to protect groundwater recharge. The Bucks County Planning Commission is currently updating the Neshaminy Creek Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan. This plan will include recommended ordinance provisions that each municipality will need to incorporate into their existing stormwater management ordinances.

In 2005, the Borough enacted Ordinance 661, known as the *Newtown Borough Neshaminy Creek and Little Neshaminy Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Ordinance*. In addition, the Borough amended Ordinance 519 (subdivision and land development) to require all subdivision and land development plans to comply with the applicable provisions of the stormwater management ordinance.

Vegetation and Wildlife

As a primarily developed municipality, there are no sites listed in the Bucks County Natural Areas Inventory within or adjacent to the Borough. Vegetation and wildlife resources are associated with the Newtown Creek riparian corridor and include some woodland areas near the southwest Borough boundary. However, as noted in the 2001 open space plan and the 2010 comprehensive plan, the Borough does contain numerous street trees both in its residential neighborhoods and downtown area. The Borough is enrolled in the Arbor Day Foundations national Tree City USA program, which requires it to carry out a community forestry program. The Newtown Borough Shade Tree Commission has prime responsibility for overseeing tree planting and maintenance. To aid in the preservation and maintenance of the Borough's trees, the Borough has a Street Tree Master Plan. This plan inventories street tree conditions, recommends planting treatments and designates an official tree for each street. Homeowners and business property owners are responsible for caring for trees located within the right-of-way adjoining private property. One of the recommendations of the 2010 comprehensive plan is to update and implement the Street Tree Master Plan, which is about 50 years old.

In 2005, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network conducted a Stream Assessment of the Newtown Creek in both Newtown Borough and Township. The study assessed the condition of stream and riparian conditions and includes recommended restoration and protection opportunities.

Since much of the riparian areas along Newtown Creek remain contiguous, the report also recommends that protection measures such as riparian ordinances, conservation easements, and tax benefits should be considered by municipalities to encourage preservation of these areas.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Newtown Borough contains many significant historic resources. While the Borough has several remarkably well designed and well preserved streetscapes, there are also a number of individual structures that help make Newtown the historic Borough that it is. These properties include many that would be individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of the more notable resources include the Bird in Hand residence (built prior to 1690), the Half Moon Inn (1733), the Edward Hicks House (1821), the Newtown Creek Bridge (1796), the Newtown Borough Council Chambers (built prior to 1854), the Newtown Friends Meeting House and graveyard (1817), the Newtown Library Company (1760). The Newtown Borough Council Chambers, the Newtown Friends Meeting House, and the Newtown Creek Bridge over Centre Avenue were all listed on the National Register of Historic Places before the historic district was created. Historic properties with open space include the Council Rock Administration property, Newtown Common and the Newtown Friends Meeting House property.

In 1999, Heritage Conservancy conducted an historic resources survey for the Borough. The Survey noted each of the Borough's historic properties, including those individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to those determined eligible on a national level, the survey identified a number of historic resources that are locally significant for many reasons. These buildings, while possibly not National Register eligible, are character defining elements of the town and additional efforts should be made to encourage preservation of not only the mass of the building, but of the features that make them significant. Many of the identified historic properties fall within the Borough's Historic District, comprised of some 400 properties and covers about 2/3 of the Borough. The Historic District includes four areas. The four sections of the Borough's historic district are: Court Street Area, State Street Section, the Washington Avenue Section, and the Penn-Congress-Chancellor Area. Newtown's Historic District was created in 1969 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and its boundaries were expanded in 1986. The historic district boundaries are shown on Map 4 – Cultural Features.

As noted in the 2010 comprehensive plan, "One of the most important concerns facing the Borough today is preserving the historic characteristics and physical soundness of buildings erected in the 18th and 19th centuries. Residents want the Borough to continue to be a community in which its history, architecture, natural resources, and buildings are valued." Additionally the plan notes that, "The preservation of community architecture, history, and culture creates a sense of place in the community, which makes the Borough an attractive place to live, work, and visit, and can aid in the preservation of residential neighborhoods that, in turn, support the town's businesses."

The Borough enacted a Historic District Ordinance and design guidelines to provide property owners with preservation information. In addition, the Borough created a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) to help protect the architectural and cultural heritage of the Historic District and Borough. The HARB is a public advisory body whose membership consists of a

registered architect, real estate broker and residents. The HARB reviews all proposed exterior changes to buildings and structures within the Historic District that are visible from the public way.

In addition to the HARB, the Borough participates in the Newtown Joint Historic Commission. The commission's primary responsibility is the protection and preservation of historically and/or architecturally significant structures in Newtown Borough and Newtown Township. The Commission is comprised of four residents from each of these two municipalities. As an advocate for historic preservation, the Joint Historic Commission can be a resource for property owners and Borough and Township boards and committees regarding historic and/or architecturally significant structures.

Newtown Borough has a number of institutions that are culturally significant. These institutions include the Chancellor Street School, the Newtown Library Company on East Centre Avenue, and a number of historically significant churches. These churches include: St. Mark's AME Zion Church, Macedonia Baptist Church, Newtown Methodist Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Newtown Friends Meeting, Glazier Center, and Newtown Presbyterian Church. Newtown Presbyterian was organized in 1734 and construction of the Friends Meeting House began in 1817. St. Luke's was constructed in 1832, Newtown Methodist in 1832, and St. Mark's in 1897. All of these places serve important community functions and are significant gathering places of the public.

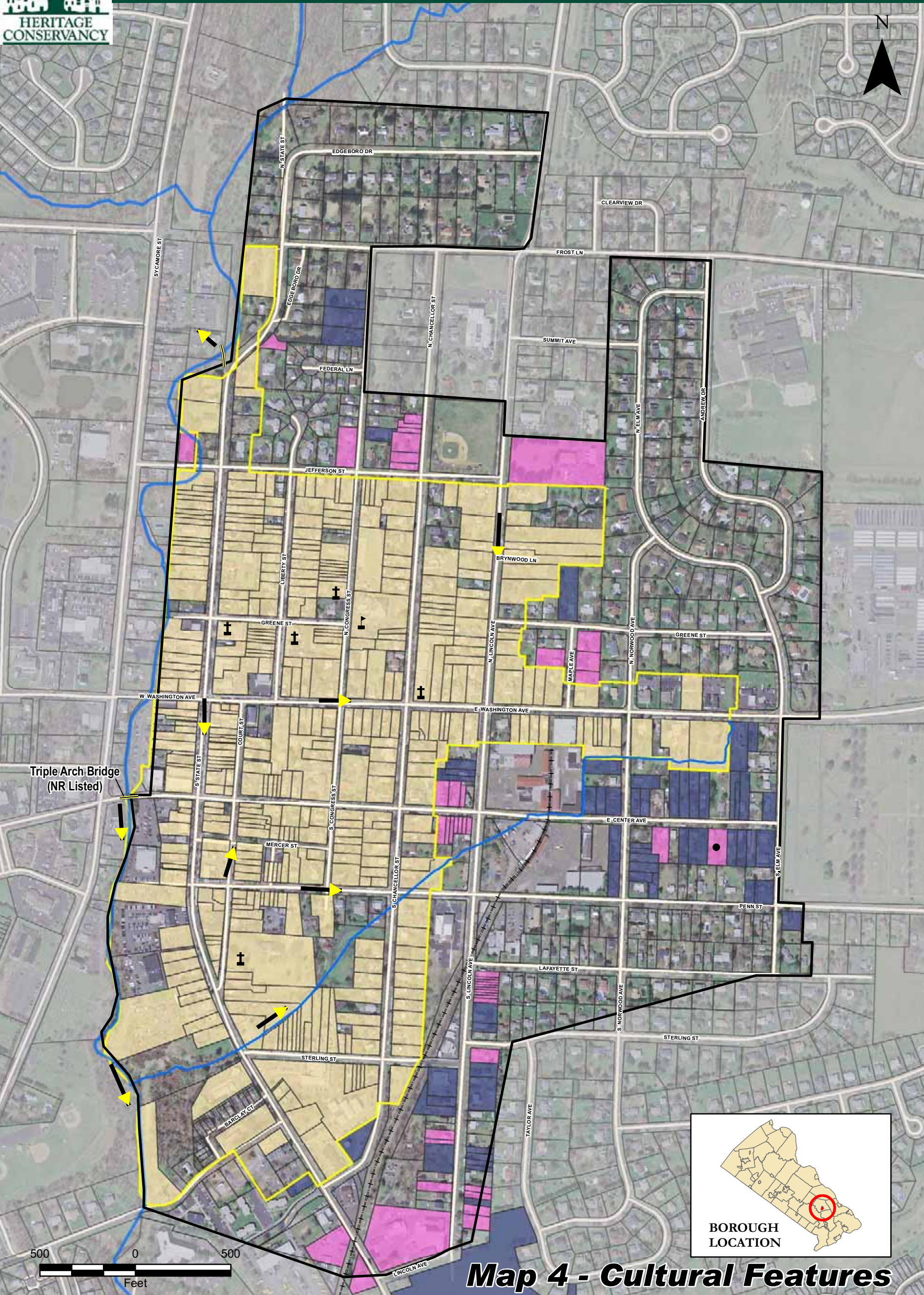
Scenic Resources

The 2001 Open Space Plan identified several scenic vistas. The first is looking down Newtown Creek while standing on the Jefferson Street and Centre Avenue Bridges. Farther downstream, a scenic vista can be viewed along this stream behind the Stockburger property. Another vista can be seen along Old Skunk looking northeast from State Street. These views are noted on Map 4 – Cultural Features.

In addition, a variety of street corridors throughout the Borough are particularly scenic. These include Washington Avenue from State Street, Court Street, up and down the commercial district of State Street, looking east along Penn Street, and looking south along Lincoln Avenue near the ballpark. These vistas are still important to Borough residents.



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Map 4 - Cultural Features

Legend

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Newtown Borough Boundary | Scenic View | Roads | Historic Significant Property |
| Parcels | Outside Historic District - Class I | Inactive R-8 Regional Rail Line | School |
| Historic District | Outside Historic District - Class II | Bridge | Church |
| Streams | Inside Historic District | | |
| Piped Stream | | | |

VI. Open Space Linkages

Introduction

Open space linkages are corridors that connect open space features such as parks, schoolyards, and natural resources. Linkages can consist of trails, sidewalks, utility lines, streets, stream corridors, floodplains and rail lines. They provide a physical connection between people and open space resources in the Borough. Open space linkages can connect neighborhoods with other activity centers and serve as safe and accessible routes for both children and adults. They allow movement from place to place without having to confront auto and truck traffic. They are also the most efficient way of extending open space to the maximum number of people. Identifying open space linkages is an important component of Newtown Borough's open space strategy.

Existing Linkages

The Borough contains many existing linkages, both formal (streets, bridges and sidewalks) and informal (greenways, trails, utility right of ways). These are further described below. Existing linkages are shown on Map 2 - Existing Open Space.

Street and Sidewalk Connections

The street network of Newtown Borough is laid out in a grid pattern. Because the Borough is only 0.5 square miles in area, open space resources are within walking distance. Most linkages within the Borough consist of sidewalks, which line both sides of the streets in most parts of town. Sidewalks provide neighborhood links to Pickering Field, Linton Memorial Park and Newtown Commons as well as many historic, cultural and natural resources of the Borough.

Portions of the Borough do not have sidewalks. Streets that do not have sidewalks include Edgeboro Drive, Frost Lane, Congress Street, Summit Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Penn Street and Elm Avenue in the east and Barclay Street, sections of Chancellor Street, and sections of Sterling Street in the south. The lack of sidewalks in the northwest part of the Borough limits pedestrian access from this area to almost all of Newtown's resources. The lack of sidewalks along Penn Street, Centre Avenue, and Elm Street limits access to Newtown Cemetery. In addition, school children living in the northwest and center of the Borough cannot walk to the Goodnoe Elementary School without walking along streets without sidewalks or by taking a circuitous route.

The Borough should consider holding public hearings to address the need for sidewalks in those sections of the Borough lacking such access. Ideas should include prioritizing needs for access and funding for such projects.

Links to Local and Regional Points of Interest

The primary access points between the borough and township are via existing pedestrian and roadway bridges across Newtown Creek. Roadway bridges are located along the Borough's western border with Newtown Township and include Centre Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Jefferson Avenue connections. There is also a pedestrian bridge over the Newtown Creek off of Edgeboro Drive that leads to a parking lot of a small shopping center along Sycamore Street. All three roadway bridges connect the Borough with Sycamore Street in Newtown Township's

Historic District. Sycamore Street is a busy two-lane arterial road running parallel to the Borough's western border in Newtown Township. Recent traffic calming measures combined with construction of new sidewalks have increased pedestrian safety within this corridor as highlighted in the Borough's comprehensive plan, "*Sycamore Street in neighboring Newtown Township is a good example of the positive effects traffic calming can have. The project consisted of new curbs and driveway aprons, sidewalks with decorative concrete patterns, patterned crosswalks, antique styled street lights, park benches and trash receptacles. These improvements have transformed Sycamore Street into a pedestrian-friendly environment.*"

Links to local and regional parks, such as Brian Gregg Park, Carl Sedia Park and Tyler State Park exist via sidewalk connections. Other points of interest include the many historic and cultural resources found within and adjacent to the Borough.

Potential Linkages

Newtown Creek and Old Skunky Stream Corridors

The most promising new linkages consist of open areas on the east side of Newtown Creek in the southern portion of the Borough, open areas along both sides of the creek below the intersection of Jefferson and Sycamore, and open areas along the creek in the north part of the Borough such as the extension of Frost Lane. These areas are mostly floodplain property and would be suitable for a walking trail or bike path. At the southern end of the Borough the creek passes the Carl Sedia Park/Chandler Fields recreation area and then continues further south until it reaches Neshaminy Creek. Potential linkages are shown on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

In the *Newtown Area Linked Open Space Plan of 1988*, a recommendation was made to make Newtown Creek part of a regional link park system for Wrightstown, Newtown and Upper Makefield Townships and Newtown Borough. The Boroughs 2001 Open Space Plan identifies this corridor as a potential trail linkage and recommended that the Borough acquire easements along the creek for the purpose of creating a walking and biking trail that would link to a regional trail network.

According to Newtown Township's Open Space Plan Update of 2009, several linkages have been established within the Township's trail system which could be connected to the Borough including connections between Chandler Field and Council Rock High School North via Sycamore Street and Swamp Road.

SEPTA Rail Line Right-of-Way

The former Fox-Chase/Newtown Regional Rail line of SEPTA presents a linkage that begins at the station property on the corner of Penn Street and Lincoln Avenue down through the southern tip of the Borough. The right-of-way runs from the Borough through Newtown Township and eventually links up with Churchville Nature Center and Churchville Park in Northampton Township. As noted earlier, the Borough has indicated a desire to use the greenway along the SEPTA right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle use.

Adjacent Municipalities

Linkages with Newtown Township are also promising. Newtown Township has prepared a trail plan where there are proposed connections at Greene Street and Washington Avenue. These

connections would link up with destinations such as Tyler State Park, Bucks County Community College, Goodnoe Elementary School, Council Rock High School North, Newtown Middle School, Carl Sedia Park and Core Creek County Park in Middletown Township. There are linkages between Chandler Field and Council Rock High School North by way of Sycamore Street and Swamp Road.

Bucks County Proposed Trail Connections

The Bucks County Planning Commission is currently preparing a county-wide greenway and trail plan. As part of its planning process, trail connection maps have been prepared for each municipality. This map is included as Figure 7.

2010 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations:

The following are recommendations related to recreation and open space included in the 2010 comprehensive plan. These recommendations include particular reference to greenways and trails and the plan notes that this issue is of special concern: *“Of special concern are ways to create a greenway system, improve access to Newtown Creek and the vestiges of Newtown Common, and to generally maximize open space in the heart of the Borough. The Borough also seeks to preserve as much as possible of the Delta⁵ School tract as open space.”*

- Maximize greenway acquisition and access along Newtown Creek and the vestiges of Newtown Common. Create good pedestrian linkages between State and Sycamore Streets. Potential linkage sites include: the footbridge north of Jefferson Street; at Washington Avenue; the Greene Street Extension; connecting to Newtown Township’s planned trail; the municipal parking lot; and north of Barclay Street, where a creek crossing would connect the park in the Township to the greenway.
- Consider strengthening zoning ordinance riparian buffer regulations to require greater buffers along the Newtown Creek corridor, where currently feasible or desirable to control future redevelopment.
- Use the proposed recreation area shown at the site of the former SEPTA Regional Rail station along Lincoln Avenue for recreation facilities to complement the facilities across the street at Linton Memorial Park.
- Use the greenway along the SEPTA right-of-way from the station to the southern Borough line for pedestrian and bicycle use, and, if extended into Newtown Township, to link the Borough to any future rail station in Newtown Township.

These recommendations have been considered, along with the recommendations contained in the Borough’s 2001 open space plan to develop the Action Plan included in Chapter X of this open space plan update.

⁵ Also referred to as Buttonwood Farms

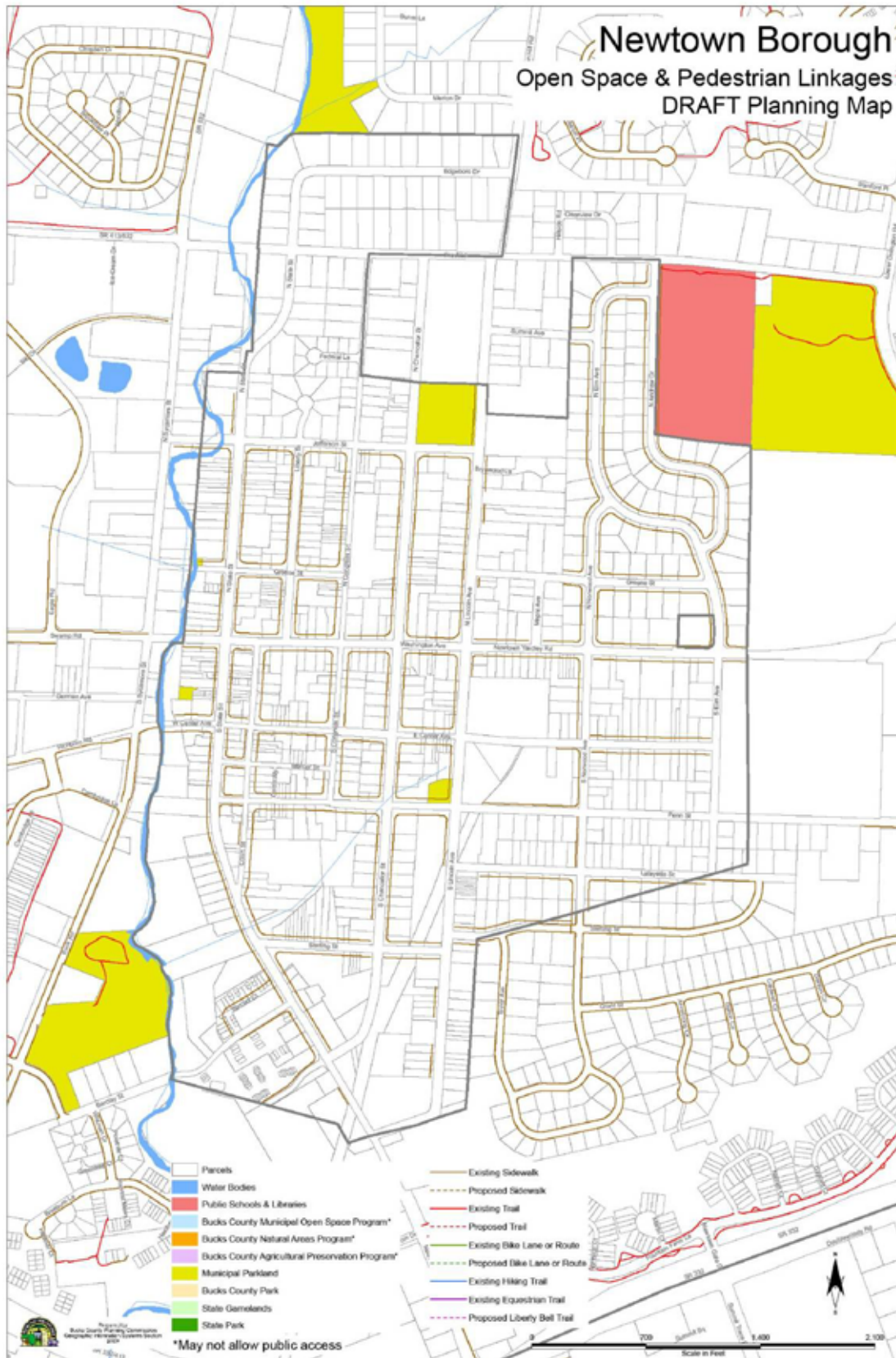


Figure 7 - Trail Linkage Map -Bucks County Planning Commission, 2009

VII. Analysis of Resources

Open space preservation is important to protect the natural historic and scenic resources of Newtown Borough. Development of open areas may alter the character of the landscape and diminish the overall quality of the community. The purpose of this chapter is to establish priorities for preservation. It identifies preservation areas, evaluates recreational needs and provides an analysis of open space resources.

Potential Preservation Areas

Several areas, due to their vulnerability to development and their important, scenic and historic features, are worthy of preservation efforts. These properties include the SEPTA station and rail line property, areas along the Newtown Creek stream corridor, and the Artesian Water Company property. Some of the potential areas are located fully within the Borough's border, while others, particularly near Newtown Creek, are partially or fully within Newtown Township. Those properties located within the Borough have higher priority than those outside of the Borough's jurisdiction. Potential preservation areas are shown on Map 5 - Potential Open Space.

Properties within Newtown Borough:

Artesian Water Company Property – This property sits on the east side of the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. Open areas exist on the front of the property with the business, parking, and storage areas on the back portion. Behind the property adjacent to North Elm Avenue, is an open area next to a residential property.

Adamusko/Pugh, Stockburger, Delta School and Buttonwood Farms Properties – These four adjacent properties are situated along the Newtown Creek in the southern portion of the Borough. Each has significant frontage along the creek both within and outside of the streams floodplain area. These properties represent an opportunity to create a greenway along the creek linking to Carl Sedia Park in Newtown Township.

SEPTA Station and Rail Line Property – The rail line runs from the station on the corner of Penn Street and Lincoln Avenue down through the southern tip of the Borough and is about 3.08 acres. The property has been out of service for a few years and is beginning to become overgrown with vegetation. In addition, the bridge passing over the rail line on Sterling Street has been removed, being replaced with a ground level bridge, essentially blocking the rail line from Sterling Street to Penn Street.

Properties adjacent to SEPTA Rail Line Property – There are several privately-owned parcels which abut the SEPTA Right-of-Way which could be considered for acquisition to support a greenway/trail corridor through the Borough. These properties include the following:

Fabian and Sons – 0.5 acres

Kotanchik (currently occupied by CVS pharmacy) – 1.05 acres

Gersch – 0.7 acres

Scarborough - 0.35 acres

Properties Located in Newtown Township – Adjacent to Borough:

Cliveden HOA and Twin Banks LLC Properties – These properties are located northwest of the Borough in Newtown Township on the east side of the Newtown Creek. They consist mostly of undeveloped floodplain property and can be accessed along a drainage-way at the intersection of Frost Lane and Edgeboro Drive.

Newtown Creek Stream Corridor West – This area is located southeast of the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Sycamore Street in Newtown Township. The stream corridor abuts several properties in Newtown Township. Although not located within the Borough boundary, these properties represent an opportunity to increase protection of the Newtown Creek stream corridor in this location, which benefits residents of both the Borough and Township.

Other Lands – There are a variety of parcels in the Borough with small building footprints in relation to overall lot size. While not mentioned by the stakeholders, an analysis of the Borough indicates the presence of potential open space as part of under-developed properties within the square formed by Penn, Chancellor, Sterling, Court and South State Streets. These areas may represent opportunities for additional pocket parks, if acquired or otherwise protected as green space by easement. One example is the Friends Meeting House site located within the area noted above. Another is the Stroupe Property along the west side of North State Street that may potentially provide access along the abandoned portion of Frost Lane.

Recreation Land Evaluation

Recreational open space needs of the Borough were evaluated using the population-based recreational open space needs assessments recently set forth by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in its May 2002 publication, *Recreational Open Space Needs Analysis for the Delaware Valley*. The national standard most commonly referred to for estimating acreage needs is the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards, published in 1983. The original NRPA standard recommended 10 acres of park land and open space for each 1,000 residents within the municipal boundary along with an equal area of large parks and forests either within or immediately adjacent to the municipality. This population-based needs assessment was most commonly used by park planners through the 1990's. However, in more recent publications, the NRPA began to take the view that fixed park and recreational open space "standards" were too crude and rigid to be applied universally to something as complicated and variable as park and recreational open space planning. In the most recent NRPA publication, *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* (1995), the NRPA notes that park planners should think of the entire community as a "park" and balance all land uses into "environmentally harmonious park, recreation, and open space land units."

The DVRPC's method for determining the need for recreational open space borrows from the past NRPA guidelines to provide a basic numerical benchmark that can assist communities in their efforts to set up a diversified and balanced park, recreation and open space system.

As defined within the DVRPC study, "recreational open space" refers to all publicly owned and accessible lands, including municipal, county, state and federal parks; state forests; state game lands; wildlife preserves; lands in the national park system and various other publicly owned and accessible lands.

This analysis begins with a common planning tool - an acreage standard - as a first step to evaluating the Borough's total supply of open space. Using the projected total population of the Borough for years 2010, 2020 and 2025, a recommended number of total acres are calculated. Under the DVRPC guidelines, the following density-based acreages are recommended:

Table 8 - Recreational Open Space Standards for Local Municipalities	
Population Density (Persons per square mile)	Recommended Acres of recreational open space per 1,000 persons
0 – 499 persons	6.0
500 – 4,999 persons	8.0
5,000 – 9,999 persons	6.17
> 10,000 persons	3.08
Source: DVRPC Recreational Open Space Needs Analysis for the Delaware Valley, May 2002	

Newtown Borough contains four parks: Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park, Newtown Commons, Linton Memorial Park and Pickering Field. County and state parks are within a short drive.

With a population of 2,312 persons (2000 census) and an area of 0.55 square miles, the Borough's population density is approximately 4,204 persons per square mile. The recommended acreage for the Borough is then calculated based on a ratio of 8.0 acres per thousand residents. These ratios are then applied for 2000, 2010 and 2020 and 2025 as shown in Table 8 below: Recommended acreage for parks and open space is calculated below:

Table 9 - Population Based Assessment of Open Space Needs 2000 - 2025 - Newtown Borough							
Year	Land in Square Miles	Population	Population Density per square mile	Recommended Parkland Standard (Persons per sq. mile)**	Acreage of parkland Needed	Acreage of Existing Parkland	Surplus or Deficit
2000 Census	0.55	2312	4203.6	8.0	18.5	4.7	-13.8
2010 Forecast*	0.55	2313	4205.5	8.0	18.5	4.7	-13.8
2020 Forecast*	0.55	2418	4396.4	8.0	19.3	4.7	-14.6
2025 Forecast*	0.55	2466	4483.6	8.0	19.7	4.7	-15.0
*DVRPC, Regional, County and Municipal Population and Employment Forecasts, 2005-2035. Analytical Data Report No. 14, August 2007.							
**DVRPC, Recreational Open Space Needs Analysis for the Delaware Valley, May 2002.							

The above table reflects population forecasts for Newtown Borough developed by the DVRPC. The DVRPC forecasts that the Borough's population will increase about 5% (or by 154 persons) over the next fifteen years. Thus, open space needs are estimated to increase from 18.5 acres to 19.7 acres. The public parks acreage and type in Newtown Borough are shown in Table 9.

Table 10 - Newtown Borough Parks		
Park Name	Acreage	Park Type*
Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park	1.0	Mini
Newtown Commons	0.08	Mini
Linton Memorial Park	0.50	Mini
Pickering Field	3.14	Neighborhood
Total	4.72	
* As noted in NRPA 1983 guidelines and referenced in Borough's Open Space Plan of 2001		

Although this analysis indicates a large deficit in park acreage, additional park needs can be met (and exceeded) by including facilities available at Carl Sedia Park, Tyler State Park and Core Creek Park. All stakeholders (Borough Council, Borough residents, developers, realtors) should be involved in the development of ideas that most benefit the community, such as the addition of recreational areas and open space.

Analysis of Preservation Areas

To establish priorities for preservation, potential areas were analyzed by the Borough's Environmental Advisory Committee with attention to the open space and recreational needs of the community. A systematic process was used to rank parcels or areas that can be recommended for open space preservation. Criteria were established to assess the relative importance and ability of parcels to satisfy the needs of open space preservation in the Borough. A scoring system is used to quantify how a potential parcel meets these criteria. Based on a parcels total score, properties can be compared to each other, for acquisition priority. The Borough is eligible for \$234,306 in county funding for acquisition; therefore cost effectiveness is an important consideration when reviewing the various sites.

The analysis relies on the following open space criteria:

- Accessibility
- Linkage Potential (part of an existing or proposed greenway)
- Location within Borough
- Natural, scenic, cultural, or historic value
- Satisfaction of the plan's goals and objectives
- Opportunity to serve multiple uses
- Development vulnerability
- Ease of acquisition (availability, owner willingness)

The scoring system is based on simple yes/no of whether a property or area meets certain open space criteria. A point system is assigned to each of the identified open space criteria currently under consideration. Criteria with an answer of "yes" are assigned a numerical value of 1, and criteria with an answer of "no" are assigned a numerical value 0. A numerical score is calculated by summing the number of criteria that are met. After the scores are tabulated they are then compared to establish acquisition priorities.

Ranking of Preservation Areas

The criteria ranking system was applied to the seven sites identified for potential preservation. Table 11 shows the scoring and ranking of the areas and the following narratives describe how they meet the open space criteria.

Table 11 - Ranking of Preservation Areas								
Property Name	Adamusko/Pugh Lot	Stockburger	Buttonwood Farms	Delta School	Cliveden & Twin Banks Properties	Newtown Creek West	SEPTA R.O.W. & Individual Multiple Properties	Newtown Artesian Water Company
Criteria								
Accessibility	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Part of a Proposed or Existing Greenway	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Location within the Borough	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
High resource value	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Meets goals & objectives	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Opportunity for multiple use	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Development vulnerability	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Ease of Acquisition	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Score	6	7	7	7	4	4	4	4

Priority Recommendations

1. Adamusko/Pugh Lot, Stockburger, Buttonwood Farms and Delta School Properties.

These four adjacent Newtown Creek corridor properties represent good opportunities for acquisition. The areas combine to form extensive frontage along the Borough's southern creek border. As development proposals have been made for the Stockburger property, the area does have a high vulnerability to development. The acquisition of these properties would satisfy several objectives of this plan, including the protection of natural and hydrological resources, establishing a network of open space resources, and protecting entrances and scenic vistas within the Borough. Acquisition of these properties would allow for improved and expanded links with regional trails along the creek and into Newtown Township.

Based on the evaluation criteria and for the issues noted above, these properties are considered a high priority for acquisition and illustrated as Tier 1 potential open space properties on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

2. SEPTA Station and SEPTA Right of Way (R.O.W.) Properties: The SEPTA rail line R.O.W. is a substantial open corridor from the center of the Borough to its southern border. The rail line is very accessible as it crosses over several streets, including Penn Street, Lincoln Avenue, Sterling Street and State Street. It has the potential to satisfy the goals and objectives of

the plan, including establishing a network of open space and preserving scenic vistas and primary entrances throughout the Borough.

Although a good candidate for preservation, the SEPTA rail line R.O.W. and station properties have some limitations. Most of the station property consists of parking areas that may have to be torn up before being used as open space. Because this rail line has the potential to be reactivated, it is unlikely that SEPTA will sell the property to the Borough. However, it may be possible to negotiate a lease agreement with SEPTA. Negotiations with SEPTA have been attempted to acquire the use of this land by means of a lease agreement. Insurance liability costs were prohibitive, but should be re-examined. Such an arrangement will not qualify for the county's open space program because land acquired through this program is required to preserve in perpetuity. In addition, SEPTA would require that the rails remain and a feasibility study be developed. The walking and biking trail, if developed along this corridor, could extend to Fox Chase in Montgomery County.

Based on the evaluation criteria and for the issues noted above, these properties are considered a moderate priority for acquisition and illustrated as Tier 2 potential open space properties on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

Individual Properties Adjacent to SEPTA Rail Line Right-of-Way:

The four privately-owned parcels adjacent to the SEPTA right-of-way should be included in feasibility studies associated with the future potential of a greenway along the rail corridor. However based on the issues identified above with regard to the SEPTA properties, these adjacent properties would be considered a low priority for acquisition. The four properties are illustrated as Tier 3 potential open space properties on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

3. Artesian Water Company Property: While the Artesian Water Company property holds some open areas in front of its main building, the focus for preservation would be establishing an easement through the property from Jefferson Avenue to North Elm Avenue. This easement would allow school children and other Borough residents to walk from the central areas of the Borough to the Goodnoe Elementary School. Not only would the easement serve as a shortcut, but it would also allow children to use sidewalks continuously from home to school. The preservation of this property would promote accessibility to Borough resources and establish a needed linkage. It would also help establish an open space network, one of the objectives of this plan. The property does have some constraints. An entranceway extends from Lincoln Avenue through this southern portion to the back of the property, where trucks and equipment are stored. An easement would be needed across this area to connect with North Elm Avenue on the other side of the property, which may be problematic for the current owner. The owner and the Borough may have liability concerns over children walking so close to heavy equipment.

Based on the evaluation criteria and for the issues noted above, this property is considered a moderate priority for acquisition and is illustrated as a Tier 2 potential open space property on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

4. Cliveden HOA and Twin Banks LLC Properties: These properties located in the northern section of the Newtown Creek consist of undeveloped floodplain in proximity to the Frost Lane R.O.W and a private drive. These properties can serve as the first segment in a trail along the Newtown Creek in the Borough and have the potential to link with a regional trail extending

north into Newtown Township. All of these properties are located outside the Borough in adjacent Newtown Township. The parcels are not identified for preservation in the township's open space update. However, their protection would benefit Borough residents due to the enhancement of open space and potential trail extensions.

Based on the evaluation criteria and for the issues noted above, these properties are considered a low priority for acquisition and illustrated as Tier 3 potential open space properties on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

5. Newtown Creek Stream Corridor West: The west corridor, while representing an important link in a possible Newtown Creek trail, has more difficulties associated with it. Multiple property owners line both sides of the creek and access along this area may be a little tight along the Borough side of the creek. While this corridor has great natural and scenic value, it is not particularly vulnerable to further development. In addition, a regional trail through Newtown Borough may only use a small portion of the creek as a pathway and instead use the Borough's extensive sidewalk system as a link. There are no planned linkages within Newtown Township adjacent to these properties; however their preservation provides a benefit to Borough residents and enhanced protection of the Newtown Creek stream corridor. Since sufficient funding may not be available to acquire (or purchase the development rights of) all of these properties, the Borough should focus its attention on the properties as ranked in Table 11.

Based on the evaluation criteria and for the issues noted above, these properties are considered a low priority for acquisition and illustrated as Tier 4 potential open space properties on Map 5 – Potential Open Space.

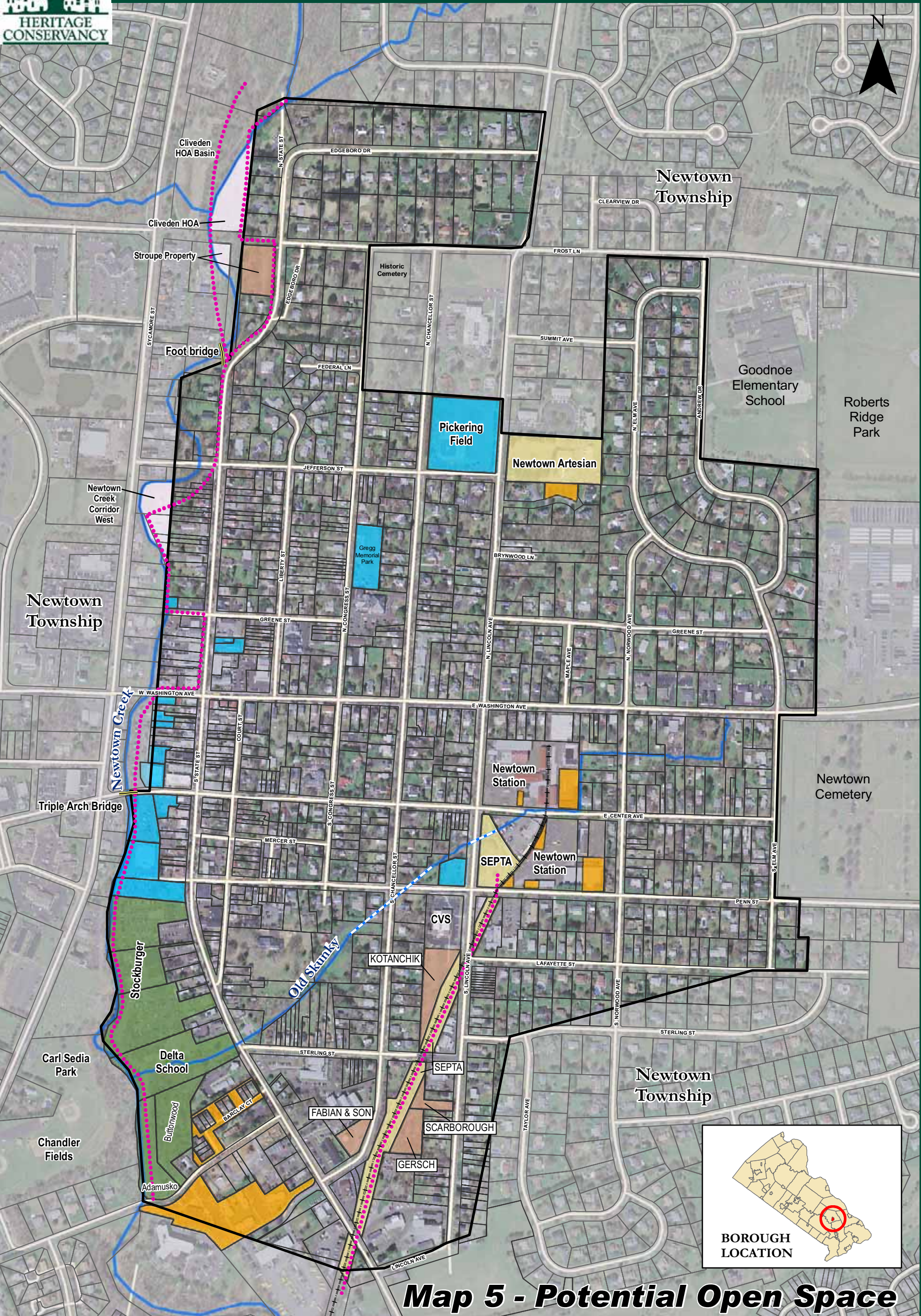
6. Other Lands within Borough

If it is determined that none of the above listed parcels are feasible for the Borough to acquire, the Borough may wish to consider the preservation of other vulnerable resources. There are many small properties in the Borough containing historic or scenic resources that are worthy of protection. These include lands affiliated with the Newtown Friends Meeting House and adjoining tracts as well as the Stroupe Property along North State Street. Additional infill development could threaten the scenic quality or historic nature of a neighborhood that residents have become accustomed to. Therefore, if the owners are willing, the Borough should evaluate the feasibility of obtaining easements on portions of these properties to prevent further development. The acquisition priorities system could be used to evaluate and rank individual properties to help identify the best properties for preservation.

The above recommendations are included in Chapter X, Action Plan.



NEWTOWN BOROUGH OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE



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Data Sources: Parcels- Next Level Mapping 2000, Roads-US Census Bureau, Municipal Boundaries - PADOT 2007, Streams-PADER, Aerials - DVRPC 2005, Potential Open Space - Heritage Conservancy and Bucks County Planning Commission

DATE: 9/24/2010

VIII. Alternative Methods of Open Space Preservation

Non-acquisition Tools and Techniques

Several different methods of open space preservation can be used to carry out the recommendations and objectives of this plan. These methods can be grouped into two categories: zoning and subdivision provisions and property rights acquisition. Each technique will be described in this chapter. In Chapter X, these techniques will be applied to the preservation priorities that were listed in Chapter VII and strategies for achieving this plan's recommendations will be outlined.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Provisions

Four types of zoning and subdivision provisions can meet the objectives and recommendations of Newtown Borough's open space plan. These include;

- Natural resource protection standards
- Performance zoning
- Overlay districts
- Design standards and guidelines

Zoning provisions such as cluster development and mandatory dedication of recreational land are options typically utilized in larger townships with more open land. However, the Borough may consider these options as appropriate if multiple parcels are assembled for protection.

Natural Resource Protection Standards

Natural resource protection standards limit the permitted amount of disturbance to natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas. They apply to all subdivisions and land development proposals and limit alteration, grading, or building upon lands with natural resource constraints. Newtown Borough has natural resource protection standards for floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands, watercourses and wetlands.

The zoning ordinance contains standards that are adequate for the protection of these resources. Floodplains are 100 percent protected and permitted uses must meet the Borough's floodplain regulations; in areas of 15 to 25 percent slope, steep slopes are 70 percent protected; in areas of 25 or more percent slope, steep slopes are 85 percent protected; woodlands are 50 percent protected; streams, watercourses, and wetlands are 100 percent protected. Newtown's natural resource protection standards are consistent with the Bucks County Planning Commission's recommended standards. As recommended in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Borough should consider strengthening its riparian buffer regulations to require greater buffer widths along the Newtown Creek corridor, where currently feasible or desirable to control future redevelopment.

Residential Performance Zoning

Performance zoning allows for increased flexibility in site design in order to protect sensitive natural areas, provide recreation land, and permit a variety of housing types. In exchange for reductions in lot size, increased open space is permitted on a site. Three standards control performance zoning on a site: density, impervious surface ratio, and open space ratio. Density is

the number of dwelling units allowed per acre of the site. Impervious surface ratio is the area of a site that does not allow the infiltration of stormwater. These areas include paved surfaces and buildings. Performance zoning limits the percent of a site that can be covered by impervious surfaces and requires a minimum ratio of open space. Newtown's zoning ordinance contains open space standards for Multifamily dwellings and Mobile Home Park uses. These uses are permitted only in the BR-3 district and a minimum of 10 percent of the site must be held in open space.

Overlay Districts

Overlay zoning districts apply regulations to an area in addition to or superseding the requirements of the underlying standard zoning district(s). Such a district may recognize unique features, either natural or man-made, that requires special attention or facilitates the development of a special character.

In general, the provisions of a zoning district must apply uniformly to each class of uses or structures within each district. However, Section 605 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) authorizes additional classifications, potentially, through the use of overlay zoning for protecting resources such as floodplains, historic areas, and wellhead protection areas. For instance, a riparian buffer ordinance is a type of overlay district that enhances floodplain management and protection of the wooded and vegetated areas along streams and rivers. The ordinance may regulate the type and extent of permitted uses within specified distances beyond the edge of a water body.

A historic preservation overlay district provides local designation and regulations of historic properties through local zoning. Historic resources may be further divided into classes depending upon their significance, with National Register properties receiving greater protection than locally identified buildings. The designation of the historic overlay district on any site must be achieved through the zoning amendment procedures identified in Section 609 of the MPC. Consequently, once amended, historic overlay zoning can include one or more of the following provisions:

- Permitting additional uses within historic structures, with a condition of use being that alterations meet design guidelines;
- Review of demolition proposals by a local historic commission;
- Review by a local historic commission of proposed subdivisions and land developments;
- Preparation of impact statements for proposed subdivisions and land developments; Buffering adjacent to historic properties;
- Review by the historical commission of the design of proposed alterations to historic properties.

Historic overlay districts are not the same as historic districts. A historic district, authorized under Act 167 of 1961, designates an area containing historic structures and protects it by limiting the type of alterations that may be made to existing buildings, reviewing proposed demolitions and ensuring compatible design of construction. Such districts are not zoning districts; the review process is a procedure separate from zoning concerns. Newtown Borough has a historic district certified under Act 167.

A historic overlay district can offer additional benefits' to the historic resources in Newtown. A historic overlay district provides additional protection to historic buildings within the historic district. It can regulate historic buildings outside of the designated historic district. And it encourages reuse of historic structures by permitting additional uses through conditional use provisions. The Borough should consider adopting a historic preservation overlay amendment to provide additional protection to resources within its historic district and help protect significant historic properties outside of the historic district.

Design Standards and Guidelines

Design review is an evaluation of the appearance of proposed buildings and structures. It can be used to provide guidance during the subdivision and land development approval process in order to improve the aesthetic quality of the built environment. In the case of historic areas, design guidelines can provide examples of desirable appearance for signs, new additions and other features to create consistency with the character of existing development.

Although Pennsylvania municipalities cannot base denial of a subdivision or land development approval on architectural design issues, they can influence design using other methods. Voluntary, nonbonding design review meetings may be held between the applicant and municipal staff or a design review committee. It is important that these meetings occur early in the application process, preferably at the sketch plan stage, before the developer has made too many design decisions. Certain design elements can be regulated, such as signs, landscaping, buffers, materials for construction, lighting and location of parking lots.

The formulation of a design review process should begin with a determination of how the municipality defines good design. Community opinion may be used to determine what features of design are important in a municipality or neighborhood. From this information and with the assistance of architects or other design professionals, a set of guiding principles of good design can be formulated and adopted by the governing body. The preparation of design guidelines that describe and illustrate preferred design approaches provides developers with a better sense of what the community is looking for.

Acquisition Tools and Techniques

The five main ways to acquire property rights are through purchase, lease, leaseback/resale, donation and easements. The following is a brief overview of these options.

Fee Simple Purchase

Purchase of land in fee simple is the most direct technique of acquiring open space. The land is owned outright with all development rights included. The method is expensive but enables a community to use the land as it sees fit.

Local governments can use many different revenue sources to purchase land, including general revenue funds, user fees, bond issues, and special fundraisers. But other county and state funding sources are also available for open space and recreational purposes, including the Bucks County Open Space Program, Community Conservation Partnerships Program (available through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources), and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Enhancement Program.

Lease

A lease is a conveyance to another of the temporary possession of use of land, for a prescribed period, in return for rent or some other compensation. Lease agreements may or may not be renewable and will be less than the landlord's term of ownership. The terms and conditions of a lease are contained in the lease agreement. The lease may provide for exclusive possession, responsibility for maintenance and insurance, and responsibility for liability.

Leaseback/Resale

Leaseback involves purchasing land in fee simple, placing use restrictions on it (such as residential development), and then leasing the property to an interested property. Leaseback allows a municipality to buy land for future use, before the price becomes prohibitive. Renting the land enables the municipality to recoup some or all of the purchase price of the land.

Resale involves buying land and selling it with deed restrictions placed on it. This enables the municipality to maintain open space on the property and at the same time eliminate tax assessment and maintenance obligations and recoup some of the acquisition costs.

Donation

Land may be donated to local or county governments or to nonprofit organizations. Land donation makes the donor eligible for income tax deductions, which serve as an incentive for this type of acquisition. Landowners can be encouraged to transfer the land to a community for no compensation. Any acquisition of fee ownership comes with costs; so many municipal officials prefer easements as a cost-effective land protection alternative.

Easements

Easements are specific property rights that are sold or donated by a property owner for the benefit of another party. Easement types include access, conservation and facade easements. Rights can be purchased to protect natural resources, open space and scenery. For example, the Borough may acquire an easement from a landowner to permit access along the Newtown Creek. A conservation easement involves acquiring rights to preserve natural features and prevent activity that would harm these features. A facade easement permits the Borough to buy rights that control the design and construction of outer wall surfaces of historic buildings. Easements permit the Borough to meet open space objectives without actually owning the land.

Private Initiatives

In addition to the tools and techniques described above, open space protection can be encouraged via private initiatives such as the establishment of non-governmental organizations including watershed or friends groups. A local example is the Newtown Creek Coalition (NCC). The NCC was established in 2006 as a volunteer group made up of interested citizens living in the vicinity of Newtown Creek along with representatives from the governing bodies of Newtown Borough and Newtown Township. Since its inception, the NCC has held regular monthly meetings that are open to the public. The NCC's mission is to improve, protect and preserve Newtown Creek and to encourage appropriate use of this natural and historic resource by the community.

Funding Sources

Funding sources and technical assistance grants for planning and acquisition are available through a variety of county, state and federal programs. The completion of this open space update makes the Borough eligible for county funds via the Bucks County Municipal Open Space Program. Having a clearly defined open space plan makes it easier for communities to obtain funding from both the County Natural Areas Program and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Community Conservation Partnership Program.

IX. Government Organization and Financing

The Borough has a council form of government. A six-member Borough Council and a mayor are elected by the voters. The Borough Council Chambers are located in a historic building at 23 North State Street. Most public meetings are held at the council chambers, including Borough Council work sessions. The Borough administrative staff is housed in the Borough building as well. Public works operations are outsourced to a private contractor, who stores some equipment in the garage at the Borough building.

The following committees provide advice to Council on matters related to open space, parks and recreation and cultural resources:

- Environmental Advisory Council: Seven member board, three year term. Meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- Historic Architectural Review Board: Seven member board, five year term. Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
- Joint Historic Commission: Eight member board, four year term. Meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 7:30 p.m.
- Recreation Board: Oversees Linton Memorial Park and Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park
Nine member board. Meets quarterly.
- Planning Commission: Seven member board. Meets monthly on the first Monday 7:00 p.m.
- Shade Tree Commission: Three member commission. Meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7 pm.

Maintenance activities associated with the Borough's Parks and Recreation facilities are financed via general operating funds.

X. Action Plan

The recommendations for the preservation of open space in Newtown Borough are based on the plan objectives stated in Chapter III and analysis of open space in Chapter VII. Because funding through the county's open space program is limited (Newtown Borough's share is \$234,306), and the Borough has no dedicated open space funding, some of the recommendations must be carried out by alternatives other than fee simple acquisition, as described in the previous chapter. The recommendations for open space preservation are listed in order of their priority.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Facilitate the preservation of all or portions of the Stockburger, Buttonwood Farm, Delta School and/or Adamusko/Pugh Tracts. All these properties are immediately adjacent to Newtown Creek and score highly in the ranking of preservation areas. While both Stockburger and Buttonwood Farm have great development potential, it may be possible to acquire portions of the properties that are adjacent to the creek and more suitable for preservation. In addition, these are areas in which cooperation between Newtown Borough and Newtown Township for the preservation of open space mutually reinforces each other.

Recommendation 2 - Reenter into negotiations with SEPTA to lease the rail station parking lot for active recreation and the rail line R.O.W. for the purposes of creating a walking and biking trail.

Although SEPTA would likely be unwilling to sell this property outright, the Borough would pursue a lease agreement to use the rail line R.O.W as a pedestrian and bike trail. A lease would allow SEPTA to maintain ownership of the property and at the same time allow the Borough to use the rail line for recreational purposes. A feasibility study (i.e. Rails to Trails Evaluation) must be undertaken before such an arrangement could be made. Pennsylvania Growing Greener grants have already been suggested for such use.

Recommendation 3 - Investigate the feasibility of acquiring an easement through the Artesian Water Company property to provide a pedestrian link from Lincoln Avenue to North Elm Avenue.

Because of the potential limitations of acquiring this easement, further study of this possibility must be undertaken. Nonetheless, this easement could serve as important pedestrian link between these two streets.

Recommendation 4 – Work with Newtown Township and private owners to encourage preservation and/or easements of open space associated with the Cliveden HOA and Twin Banks LLC property located in Newtown Township, adjacent to the Newtown Creek near the northwest section of the Borough.

Recommendation 5 – Work with Newtown Township to encourage preservation of lands adjacent to Newtown Borough along the Newtown Creek directly across from Newtown Commons (also known as the Newtown Creek West properties).

Recommendation 6— Study available open space within existing under-developed properties in the Borough to determine feasibility of acquiring easements to protect identified natural, scenic and historic resources.

There are certain lands associated with properties which are among a number of important Newtown features that are worthy of protection from development. The Borough should develop a plan for the preservation and management of these features and implement that plan by purchasing easements.

Implementation

Strategies for implementation of the Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Update must be formulated to carry out its objectives and recommendations. These strategies are outlined in Table 12 below. Each listed strategy has a time frame and a responsible agency. Time frames are divided into ongoing, short term (1-2 years), middle term (3-5 years), and long term (6-10 years). Responsible agencies consist of Borough Council, the planning commission (PC), the environmental advisory council (EAC), or other government or nongovernmental agencies and committees. Time frames are intended to be a process in which short-term strategies must be carried out before long-term efforts can be implemented.

Table 12 - Action Plan - Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Recommendations	
Recommendation 1	Facilitate preservation of all or portions of the Stockburger, Buttonwood Farm and Delta School and Adamusko Tracts using funding from the County's Municipal Open Space Program.
Short-Term	Inquire as to the availability of these Creekside properties. - Borough Council
Short-Term	Look into legal aspects of reduction of open space requirement for properties in exchange for sub-dividing the property and donating portions of property along the creek to the Borough to be restricted for open space use only, under the Municipal Open Space Program - Borough Council
Middle-Term	Purchase and/or acquire easements within the identified properties using county open space funds. - Borough Council
Middle-Term	Develop a management plan for the development and maintenance of these properties. Pursue planning grants from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: - Parks and Recreation, EAC & PC
Recommendation 2	Enter into a lease agreement with SEPTA to use the rail line for the purposes of creating a walking and biking trail.
Short-Term	Develop feasibility study for the development and maintenance of a trail that could extend to Fox Chase, Montgomery County. Pursue planning grants from the Department of Conservation

Table 12 - Action Plan - Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Recommendations	
	and Natural Resources. - Parks and Recreation, PC & EAC
Middle-Term	Negotiate a lease agreement with SEPTA - Borough Council
<i>Recommendation 3</i>	Investigate the feasibility of acquiring an easement through the Artesian Water Company property to provide a pedestrian link from Lincoln Avenue to North Elm Avenue.
Short-Term	Inquire as to the availability of an easement through the Artesian Water Company property. - Borough Council, PC, EAC
Middle-Term	Acquire easement through the property. If obtained, evaluate options for trail or sidewalk installation. - Borough Council
<i>Recommendation 4</i>	Work with Newtown Township and private owners to encourage preservation and/or easements of open space associated with the Cliveden HOA and Twin Banks LLC properties located in Newtown Township, adjacent to the Newtown Creek near the northwest section of the Borough.
Short-Term	Inquire as to the availability of incorporating these properties into a multi-municipal trail system extending from the north end of the Borough into Newtown Township. - Borough Council in cooperation with Newtown Township Board of Supervisors
Middle-Term	Develop a management plan with Newtown Township for the development and maintenance of a trail. Pursue joint planning grants from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. - Parks and Recreation, EAC, and PC in cooperation with Newtown Township Board of Supervisors.
<i>Recommendation 5</i>	Work with Newtown Township to encourage preservation of lands adjacent to Newtown Borough along the Newtown Creek directly across from Newtown Commons (also known as the Newtown Creek West properties).
Short-Term	Inquire as to the feasibility of preserving these properties to create opportunities for links connecting the Township and Borough. - Borough Council
Middle-Term	Develop a management plan for the development and maintenance of these Creekside properties. Pursue joint

Table 12 - Action Plan - Newtown Borough Open Space Plan Recommendations	
	<p>planning grants from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parks and Recreation, EAC, PC & NCC in cooperation with Newtown Township Board of Supervisors
Long-Term	<p>Purchase identified property using grant funds from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borough Council
<i>Recommendation 6</i>	<p>Study available open space within existing under-developed properties in the Borough to determine feasibility of acquiring easements to protect identified natural, scenic and historic resources.</p>
Short-Term	<p>Pursue planning grants from the Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program for the development of overlay districts and design guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PC, EAC & Newtown Joint Historic Commission
Middle-Term	<p>Develop overlay districts to provide setbacks and screening from sensitive historic, natural, and scenic resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PC, EAC & Newtown Joint Historic Commission
Middle-Term	<p>Develop design guidelines or standards to protect identified natural, historic, and scenic resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PC, EAC & Newtown Joint Historic Commission
Long- Term	<p>Purchase or accept dedication of facade easements on buildings of significant historic value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borough Council

XI. Attachments

Property Status Report: Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park

Property Status Report

Property Name: Brian S. Gregg Park Municipality: Newtown Borough
Property Owner Name: Newtown Borough
Tax Map Parcel#(s): 28-002-212-001 Date of Visit 10/11/10

Are there any changes in the property? (e.g. construction, dredging or filling, trails, timber harvest, evidence of trespass, trash, flooding, fire, etc.) Attach current photos with sites marked on a map.

There is a playground and the Brian S. Gregg Memorial

Are these changes consistent with the terms and conditions of the easement?

These changes are consistent with the terms and conditions of the easement.

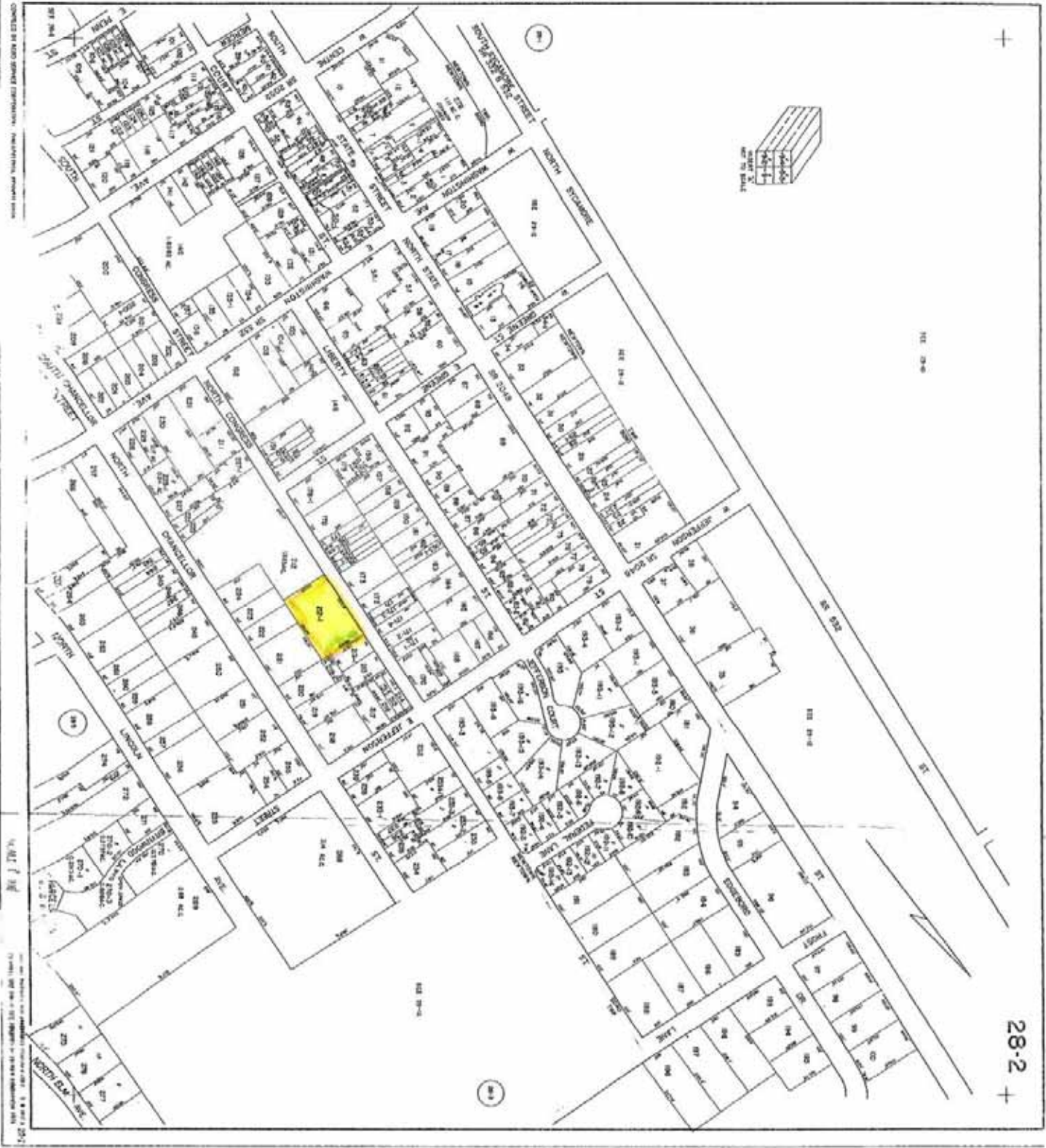
Any changes/improvements planned for property by municipality?

No further changes are planned.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

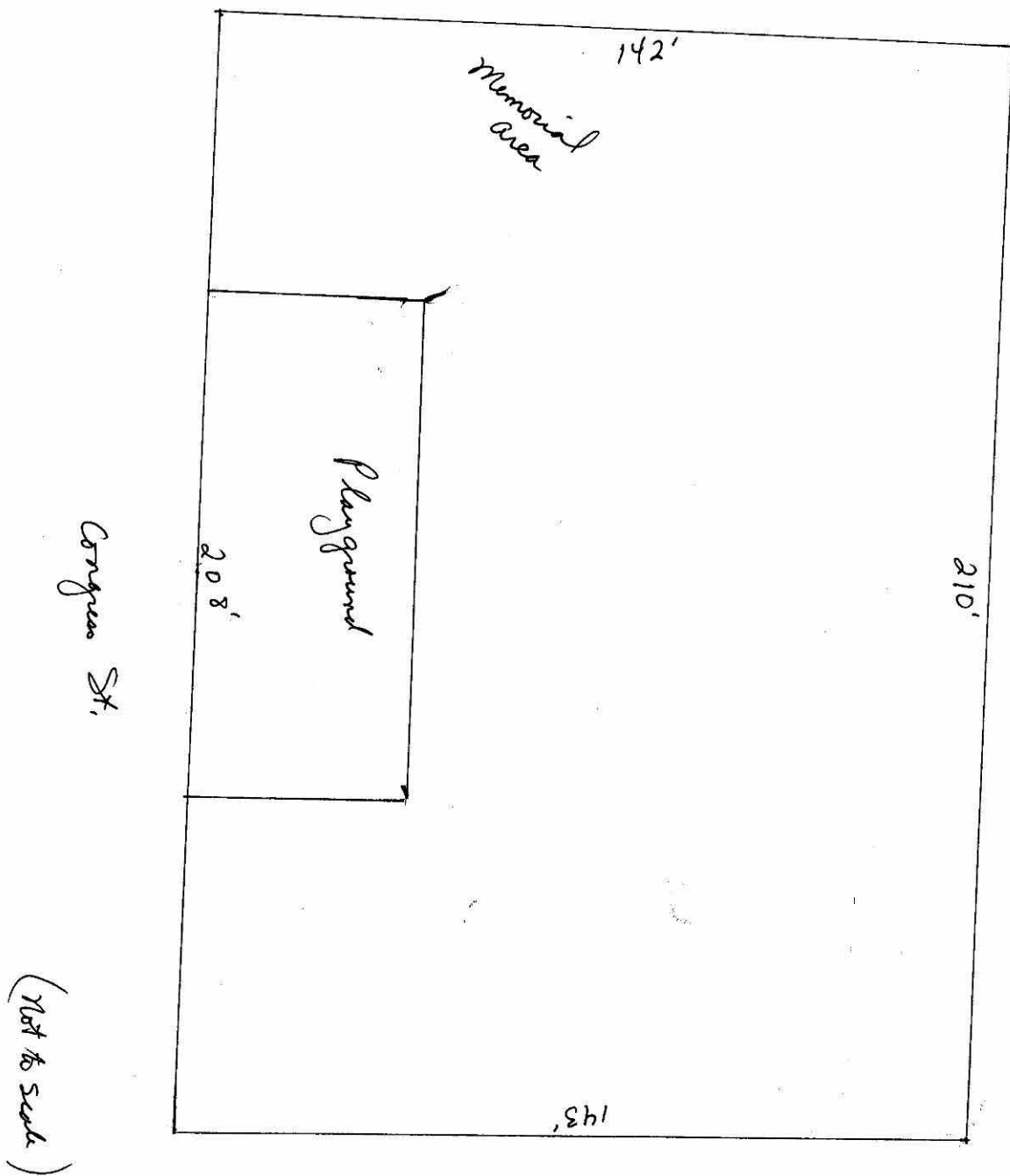
Monitor name and affiliation	<u>Robert King</u>	<u>Co-chairman EAC</u>
Signature of monitor	<u>Robert A. King</u>	

BUCKS COUNTY TAX MAP



28-2 +

Brian S. Hagg Park





Gregg Memorial Park – Playground Facilities



Gregg Memorial Park – Chancellor Center in background



Gregg Memorial Park – Memorial Marker

