

MASTER PLAN
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION
PLAN ELEMENT

For

City of Bordentown
Burlington County, New Jersey

Prepared by

City of Bordentown Planning Board
And
Burlington County Department of Economic
Development and Regional Planning

Adopted February 2, 2005

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Samuel Surtees, Chairman
Steve McGowan, Vice Chairman

**CITY OF BORDENTOWN
BURLINGTON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Bordentown is located in the northern portion of Burlington County at the confluence of Crosswicks Creek and the Delaware River. Crosswicks Creek serves as the municipal and county boundary that separates Bordentown City from Hamilton Township in Mercer County. Bordentown Township envelops the remaining sides of the City of Bordentown to the north, east, south and southwest.

The City contains approximately one square mile of landmass of which approximately 58 percent (324 acres) is developed (City of Bordentown Land Use Plan Element adopted August 4, 2004, p. 6). The balance of land is either vacant, open space and parks, and water bodies. The City has developed over the past 300 plus years. The developed areas are quite compact, reflective of late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century development patterns. This development is concentrated in the central portion of the community and along Routes 130 and 206, which form the eastern municipal boundary. With a population of 3,969 (2000 U.S. Census of the Population) the City has a net density of approximately 9.1 persons per developed acre. Another way to look at the City's net density is the number of dwelling units per developed acre: 1,757 dwelling units (2000 U.S. Census of the Population)/437 developed acres or 4 dwelling units per acre. Although the City is quite built up, the City has opportunities to enhance quality of life for its residents by preserving the undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas, linking existing open space and parks, and providing public access to these areas, particularly the City's waterfront.

The environmental setting for the City of Bordentown is unique in that streams surround practically all sides of the municipality. To the north and west are Crosswicks Creek and the Delaware River. Mile Hollow Run flows through the northern edge of the City. Love Bridge Run, which flows into Blacks Creek, forms the southern edge of the City. Blacks Creek flows along the southwestern edge of the City to the confluence of Crosswicks Creek and the Delaware River. Thorntown Creek flows northwesterly through the approximate center of Bordentown City. Associated with these streams are various types of environmental features and resources.

Extensive floodplains occur along portions of Crosswicks Creek, the Delaware River and Blacks Creek. Freshwater and tidal wetlands exist along the streams that flow through the municipality. Mixes of woodlands and open meadow exist along Blacks Creek. Mile Hollow Run, Thorntown Creek and Love Bridge Run flow through heavily wooded areas. Many of the stream embankments have steep slopes, particularly along Crosswicks Creek where bluffs of 20 to 30 feet with slopes in excess of 50 percent exist and along most of Thorntown Creek.

This open space preservation plan draws upon input from the City of Bordentown Environmental Commission, which is currently preparing a natural resource inventory for the City, and the recently adopted Land Use Plan Element for Bordentown City.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The 2004 Land Use Plan Element set forth goals and strategies for achieving the goals for developing, redeveloping and preserving the City of Bordentown. This open space preservation provides the goals and strategies that relevant to preserving environmentally sensitive lands and open space.

GOALS:

Residential

1. The historic, small town character of the City is preserved.
2. The City is an attractive place in which to live.
3. Adequate air, light and open space are provided.

Downtown Business District

1. The downtown area is expanded to incorporate the New Jersey Transit light rail station stop.

Historic Preservation

1. The heritage and historic character of the City is preserved.
2. Neighborhood beauty, property values and community pride are maintained.

Circulation and Parking

1. Pedestrian safety and quality of life are enhanced.
2. Pedestrian walkways link open space, parks, transit stops, neighborhoods and downtown business community.
3. The use of alternate modes of transportation, e.g., pedestrian, bicycling, bus and light rail, should be encouraged.

Tourism

1. The City's waterfront is revitalized.
2. Tourists are aware of and visit Bordentown City's historic places.
3. Promote the Delaware River Heritage Trail.
4. Install signage to identify historically significant buildings, structures and features in Bordentown City.

Open Space and Recreation

1. Open space is preserved in appropriate places.
2. Parks, recreation areas and community facilities in the City of Bordentown are rehabilitated.

3. The Delaware River Heritage Trail links the City with surrounding communities.

Environmental Preservation

1. Redevelopment and revitalization complements and creates opportunities for environmental preservation.
2. “Environmentally sensitive areas” are protected and prioritized.
3. Encourage the creation and preservation of greenways along stream corridors, e.g., Blacks Creek, Thorntown Creek, Ridgeway Brook, Crosswicks Creek, Love Bridge Run, and Mile Hollow Run.

STRATEGIES:

Residential

1. Use the Neighborhood Preservation Program and other innovative programs to improve the physical condition of neighborhoods.
2. Establish and maintain land use patterns and appropriate zoning that respects and reflects existing neighborhood residential densities and character.

Downtown Business District

1. Investigate opportunities available for expanding the downtown area to support the presence of the New Jersey Transit light rail station stop that serves the RiverLine light rail system.
2. Encourage the creation of formal bicycle parking areas in the downtown business district.

Historic Preservation

1. Continue the efforts to maintain property values, to promote community pride, and to beautify neighborhoods.
2. Preserve and expand the historic district within the City.

Circulation and Parking

1. Investigate and study opportunities to develop and/or expand pedestrian walkways which link open space and parks, transit stops, neighborhoods, and the downtown business community.
2. Prepare and adopt a circulation/transportation plan element addressing needs for improved parking and circulation, enhanced pedestrian safety and quality of life, and for integrating and making compatible multiple modes of transportation (such as motor vehicles, bicycles, public transportation and pedestrians). An inventory of sidewalk conditions and recommendations for improving sidewalks should be included in the circulation/transportation plan element.

Tourism

1. Explore opportunities to revitalize the City’s waterfront.
2. Promote awareness of Bordentown City’s historic places.

Open Space and Recreation

1. Preserve open space in appropriate places through acquisition or the development review process.
2. Continue to rehabilitate parks, recreation areas and community facilities in the City of Bordentown.
3. Accommodate and promote the Delaware River Heritage Trail, which is being planned by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership, Burlington County, and other riverfront communities, and which links the City to Bordentown Township.
4. Develop a relationship with the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission to pursue the redevelopment of lock number one on Duck Island.
5. Work with Green Acres Program in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware and Raritan Greenway to acquire and develop parkland, specifically along the City's stream corridor.
6. Promote the development of linkages between existing and proposed open spaces.

Environmental Preservation

1. Search for ways to achieve redevelopment and revitalization opportunities for environmental preservation.
2. Open discussions to address "environmentally sensitive areas."
3. Establish and prioritize environmental assets in the City.
4. Work with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to protect stream corridors and steep slopes.
5. Seek public and private sector funds to preserve open space in the City.
6. Require as part of development applications the preservation of open space where appropriate.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

A total of 91.74 acres of open space has been preserved in Bordentown City. The “Bordentown City Open Space Plan” shows the locations of existing open space. Table 1 provides a breakdown of existing open space ownership by acreage (acreage of parcels is approximate based on City tax maps and GIS data).

Table 1 – Existing Open Space

<u>Open Space Ownership</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Bordentown City ownership	29.44
City Board of Education School Playground	1.78
Easement held by State	58.83
State ownership	<u>1.69</u>
Total	91.74 (12.1% of City landmass)

Bordentown City and the Bordentown City Board of Education own a total of 31.22 acres. The State of New Jersey owns a total of 60.52 acres of which 58.83 acres are in the form of an easement along the bluffs and woodlands associated with Crosswicks Creek and 1.69 acres are in the form of fee simple. The total amount of existing open space represents 12.1 percent of the City’s landmass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSERVATION RESTRICTED OVERLAY DISTRICTS:

The 2004 Land Use Plan Element set forth recommendations for creating Conservation Restricted districts in order to achieve the following objectives:

1. Create overlay zones for the purpose of permitting development to occur on environmentally sensitive lands in the City. The overlay zones should be designed to restrict development to a lesser intensity on such lands.
2. Create three overlay districts: CR1 Conservation Restricted Overlay in the R-1 Single-Family Detached, Low Density District; CR2 Conservation Restricted Overlay in the CI Commercial Industrial District; and CR3 Conservation Restricted Overlay in the PC/I Planned Commercial/Industrial District.

CR1—Conservation Restricted (R-1 Overlay)

The CR1 Overlay is intended to protect and preserve the environment associated with Blacks Creek and Thorntown Creek. Residential development potential for environmentally sensitive areas of parcels of land should be transferred to areas of the parcels with less environmental sensitivity. These areas receiving the development potential should be clustered with smaller lots. For a complete explanation of the CR1 District see the 2004 Land Use Plan Element.

CR2—Conservation Restricted (CI Overlay)

The CR2 Overlay is intended to protect and preserve the environment associated with Thorntown Creek. Commercial and industrial development potential for environmentally sensitive areas of parcels of land should be transferred to areas of the parcels with less environmental sensitivity. These areas receiving the development potential should be intensified in the form of more permissible gross floor area. For a complete explanation of the CR2 District see the 2004 Land Use Plan Element.

CR3—Conservation Restricted (PC/I Overlay)

The CR3 Overlay is intended to protect and preserve the bluffs and bodies of water along Crosswicks Creek and Thorntown Creek. Significant buffers are recommended from the tops of the bluffs. Commercial and industrial development potential for environmentally sensitive areas of parcels of land should be transferred to areas of the parcels with less environmental sensitivity. These areas receiving the development potential should be intensified in the form of more permissible gross floor area. For a complete explanation of the CR3 District see the 2004 Land Use Plan Element

OPEN SPACE/PARKS AND RECREATION:

The map entitled “Bordentown City Open Space Plan” shows existing open space in the City and neighboring Bordentown Township, existing open space easements held by the State of New Jersey, State-owned open space, and school play grounds.

The following parcels of land are identified on the map for open space preservation and acquisition (acreage of parcels is approximate based on City tax maps and GIS data):

Table 2 – Proposed Open Space Preservation

<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot(s)</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Purchaser</u>
201	Parts of 2, 3 and 5	1.45	Bordentown City
202	4	2.08	Bordentown City
203	12	0.61	Bordentown City
203	13	0.10	D&R Greenway
204	1, 35, 42, 43 and 47, and parts of 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 19 and 37	25.93	Bordentown City
205	15 and 17	0.98	Bordentown City
801	1, 34, and part of 33	3.96	Bordentown City
801	2, 4, 5, 6 and 7	2.40	D&R Greenway
1601	17	1.20	D&R Greenway
1601	Part of 2	11.04	Bordentown City
1701	4	1.55	State
1701	12	0.54	Bordentown City

Total 51.48 (6.8% of City landmass)

A total of 51.48 acres, or 6.8 percent of the City’s landmass, is proposed for open space preservation.

This plan recommends the creation of the following trails as shown on the map:

Delaware River Heritage Trail – a bi-state regional trail that extends from Trenton to the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge in Palmyra Borough in New Jersey and across the Delaware River north along the river in Pennsylvania and back to Trenton.

Blacks Creek Trail – a bi-municipal trail that links Bordentown City and Bordentown Township along Blacks Creek.

Blacks Creek Trail Link – a bi-municipal trail that links Bordentown City and Bordentown Township intersecting the Black Creek Trail.

Thorntown Creek Trail – an intra-municipal trail that originates at Gilder Field and Crosswicks Street and connects to the Delaware River Heritage Trail near the railroad trestle over Crosswicks Creek.

Thorntown Creek Trail Link – an intra-municipal trail that links Thorntown Creek Trail at the southern railroad spur, travels along the rail line to the southwest to the light rail station stop and follows the northern railroad spur to the Delaware River Heritage Trail at the foot of Farnsworth Avenue.

The development of these trails requires the collaboration and cooperation of state, county and municipal entities. Funding for the creation and maintenance of these trails has not been determined at this point in time. Funding sources must be sought.

This plan makes the following recommendations in addition to the foregoing land acquisition and trail creation recommendations:

1. Create a pedestrian linkage along Railroad Avenue connecting the RiverLine station stop to the central business district to encourage economic development and open space preservation.
2. Encourage preservation of open space to create greenways along Blacks Creek, Crosswicks Creek, Thorntown Creek and Love Bridge Run.
3. Create/establish biking and walking trails, improve access to the waterfront for boating opportunities, and provide bicycle parking.
4. Develop a comprehensive annual maintenance program for all facilities.
5. Resurface the tennis courts and parking area at Gilder Field
6. Illuminate athletic facilities to provide the greatest use potential.
7. Upgrade Hilltop Park with landscaping, walkway, fencing and lighting.
8. Improve the pocket park on West Street.
9. Upgrade various planting areas throughout the City.
10. Continue the efforts and maintenance schedule outlined in the Shade Tree Master Plan.
11. The parking lot for the light rail station should be utilized for dual-purpose parking, accommodating light rail passengers, residents and patrons of the Downtown Commercial District.
12. Investigate the possibility of and potential for establishing an open space tax in Bordentown City.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS:

Environmentally sensitive areas cover 7.6 acres of which 1.9 acres represent a “brownfield” and 5.7 acres are environmentally sensitive along steep slopes, wetlands and water edges. Wetland and flood prone areas cover 115.5 acres of Bordentown City. Protecting and preserving these assets and resources are among the highest priorities for improving quality of life in Bordentown City.

This plan makes the following recommendations:

1. Develop and implement plans that protect and preserve the City’s environmental resources as well as provide public access to the City’s environmental resources.
2. Prepare a conservation plan for Bordentown City, and create and adopt an environmental management zone to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive resources and environmental assets located throughout the City.
3. Integrate local environmental preservation and protection efforts with those undertaken by Burlington County and the State of New Jersey.
4. Prepare and adopt regulations that protect such environmental resources as part of land development review process.
5. Evaluate opportunities to create greenways and parks along the Delaware River and its tributaries.
6. Develop inter-municipal agreements to control point and non-point source pollution from site-specific basis to locations throughout the watershed.
7. Prepare and adopt an ordinance that protects wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes and other environmentally sensitive areas.
8. Develop a program to educate city residents about the importance of protecting, preserving and using environmentally sensitive areas and open space.

This plan recommends the following uses of the open space parcels proposed for acquisition (see map for parcel locations):

<u>Parcel Number(s)</u>	<u>Proposed Use(s)</u>
1	- Trail head to proposed Thorntown Creek Trail - Possible community garden plots - Erect gazebo for community use
2	- Provides key linkage in Thorntown Creek Trail connecting Ocean Spray property with seminary property
3	- Active recreation for baseball field - Install trail along portion of Thorntown Creek
4	- Passive recreation and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas along Blacks Creek
5 to 9	- Passive recreation

<u>Parcel Number(s)</u>	<u>Proposed Use(s)</u>
10	- Passive recreation and demolish deteriorated dwelling
11	- Passive recreation
12	- Passive recreation and demolish deteriorated dwelling
13	- Non-motorized boat launch
14	- Conservation purposes
15 to 27	- Conservation easement
28	- Conservation purposes
29 to 32	- Neighborhood park
33	- Trail link

TOTAL OPEN SPACE, EXISTING AND PROPOSED

Table 3 summarizes the amount of existing and proposed open space for the City of Bordentown. Approximately 18.9 percent of the City’s landmass, or 143.22 acres, are recommended for open space preservation.

Table 3 – Existing and Proposed Open Space

<u>Open Space Status</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Existing	91.74
Proposed	<u>51.48</u>
Total	143.22 (18.9% of City landmass)