

**Harrison Township, NJ
Smart Growth Initiatives – 4/28/2014**

Over the past 10 years, Harrison Township has initiated several planning efforts to direct growth in a controlled and sustainable manner and to the best extent possible work to preserve the natural and environmental resources of the community. These planning efforts are consistent with long-term planning efforts encapsulated in the Township's 2006 Master Plan Re-examination and the Township's most recent Master Plan in 2013 which seek to preserve undeveloped, agricultural, and natural landscapes while focusing growth in mixed-use, walkable centers with existing infrastructure. Harrison has used a combination of tools to promote smart growth in the Township that include:

- Smart Growth zoning and redevelopment approaches to support the existing Village of Mullica Hill and to develop a new Center at Richwood,
- Comprehensive Master Planning for pedestrians, cyclists, and for multi-modal linkages to connect to local and county destinations,
- Ordinances to support solar and wind energy, and
- Strategic open space and farmland preservation planning to curb sprawl and support agriculture

Through these efforts, the Township has sought to disincentive sprawl and promote growth in centers through a combination of policy initiatives using zoning, redevelopment, and preservation through public acquisition of development rights.

Harrison Township's planning initiatives have been guided by Smart Growth principles in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The State Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 52:18A – 196 et seq.) adopted in 1985, establishes the framework for State policies and regulations related to smart growth principles. Among the stated objectives in the Act that serves this framework are the following:

- Protect the natural resources and qualities of the state, including, but not limited to: agricultural development areas, fresh and salt water wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, areas of unique flora and fauna, and areas with scenic, historic, cultural and recreational values;
- Promote development and redevelopment in a manner consistent with sound planning and where infrastructure can be provided at private expense or with reasonable expenditures of public funds;
- Identify areas for growth, limited growth agriculture, open space conservation and other appropriate designations that the commission may deem necessary;
- Coordinate planning activities and establish statewide objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination.

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted pursuant to the State Planning Act, contains a series of smart growth goals and policies. Both Mullica Hill and the proposed Richwood Town Center are in Planning Area 3 where growth is to be directed to centers to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and open space.

Policy objectives of State Planning Area 3 include the following:

- Focus development in appropriately located and designed Centers to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the environs.
- Provide for a full range of housing choices, primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate projected growth.
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment of existing Centers and existing developed areas that have potential to become Centers, or in a way that supports Center-based development, to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the environs.

Harrison Township has instituted Smart growth principles that:

1. Support preservation of agriculture and open space by actively participating in farmland preservation programs and directing growth to the centers of Richwood and Mullica Hill,
2. Promote sustainable community design that enhances opportunities to age in place, access affordable housing, utilize multi-modal transportation options, and access affordable community services,
3. Enhances environmental preservation
4. Implements policies that protect natural resources and support a shift to the use of renewable resources.

Specifics of Harrison Township's efforts are as follows:

- **Smart Growth Zoning and Redevelopment** – 1) Richwood - In 2006 Harrison Township undertook a Master Plan Re-Examination with the principal intent of addressing methods to arrest what the community saw as zoning that encouraged sprawl and the ultimate elimination of open space and agriculture in the community. The 2006 Re-Examination, prepared by Bach Associates, PC, built on goals and objectives established in the 2004 Master Plan Re-Examination and provided methodology for implementation of a vision that encourages "historic preservation, protection of agricultural lands and open space preservation, design guidelines and community balance." To effectuate this vision, the Master Plan recommended a combination of down-zoning and re-direction of future growth into walkable, mixed-use centers in areas substantially served by infrastructure.

The 2006 Master Plan Re-Examination estimated that current zoning would yield a total of 4,082 large lot and senior dwelling units and consume approximately 6,610 gross acres. The plan recommended down-zoning to allow a total of 1,756 units in the Township's environs with an encouragement for clustering in the agricultural areas of the community.

Simultaneously, the plan recommended providing zoning tools for a mixed-use, mixed housing type, walkable community to be developed at the intersection of Route 322 and Route 55. Known as Richwood, the planned community located on 360 acres of land is currently engaged in the local approval process. It is designed for a mixed-use development of 1,200 residential units (small lot singles, townhouses, and flats), +/- 900,000 s.f. of commercial use, an elementary school and 90 acres of park and open space. The plan promotes:

1. aging in place
2. homes for a mixture of socioeconomic conditions.
3. employment opportunities within a walkable radius of residential neighborhoods.
4. recreational and educational facilities in a walkable/bikable environment.
5. Infrastructure that promotes and supports walking and biking
6. densities that can support mass transit.

2) Mullica Hill - In 2013 and 2014 Harrison has been working on redevelopment plans that are designed to support the economic vibrancy of historic Mullica Hill. While early in the planning phase, the goal is to support uses and circulation connectivity that will enhance the economic vitality of Mullica Hill.

- **Open Space and Farmland Preservation** – Concurrent with planning that directs development to appropriate locations with appropriate mixes and densities, the Township has been proactive in open space and farmland preservation efforts. In 2004 the Township approved a 4 cent open space tax to aid in preserving farm and open space. By 2006 the tax was raised to 6 cents. Through its efforts the township has preserved thirty properties totaling 1,494 acres of farm land and permanently removed from development approximately 1,000 large lot dwelling units.

Open space preservation through Green Acres has accounted for an additional 137 acres of preservation.

- **Multi-Modal Connectivity** – Between 2012 and 2013, Harrison Township created a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Element to capitalize on and connect to County and regional bicycle planning efforts while locally providing a combination of on-road and off-road solutions to link neighborhoods to centers and the municipal park system. This plan also focused on providing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that serves users of a variety of ages, from young children to experienced cyclists, in order to ensure mobility options were enhanced for all members of the community. In terms of its relationship to current and future land development, the plan was designed to link to mixed-use centers, enhance multi-modal connections in existing communities, and integrated into the fabric of future development across the Township.
- **Affordable Housing**- While other communities in New Jersey have largely ignored the issue, Harrison Township has proactively worked not only to provide affordable housing, but to locate it in the township where affordable housing residents can walk to community and retail services. Using the tool of redevelopment, Harrison has approved 192 affordable units within a walkable configuration accessible to the heart of Mullica Hill (Harrison’s historic village). Affordable housing for all citizens is a key principal to Smart Growth.
- **Redevelopment** – Harrison Township has proactively used redevelopment as a tool to direct growth and development to areas of the Township within centers. In the past several years, the Township has adopted approximately redevelopment study areas and plans totaling approximately 168 acres that promote smart growth objectives by focusing development within existing centers, to areas with existing infrastructure, and by promoting development types that provide a variety of housing opportunities for individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, the Township has been consistently engaged in the redevelopment of the Richwood Town Center area, a 200+ acre walkable, mixed-use community along US Route 322 at the eastern edge of the Township.
- **Ordinances that support smart growth principles** - Harrison Township has adopted several land use ordinances and zoning changes to support smart growth principals as outlined below:
 1. **Riparian Buffer Conservation Zone**
 2. **Conservation Easement Zone**
 3. **Right to Farm**
 4. **Growth Share and Affordable Housing Provision**
 5. **Mullica Hill Historic District**
 6. **Solar Energy**
 7. **Steep Slope Regulations**
 8. **Soil Importation Regulations**

The following three maps highlight Harrison Township’s smart growth initiatives. These three maps include a State Planning Area Map, Farmland Preservation Map, and Aggregate Smart Growth Initiatives Map. These maps are meant to geographically illustrate the Township’s smart growth planning efforts.

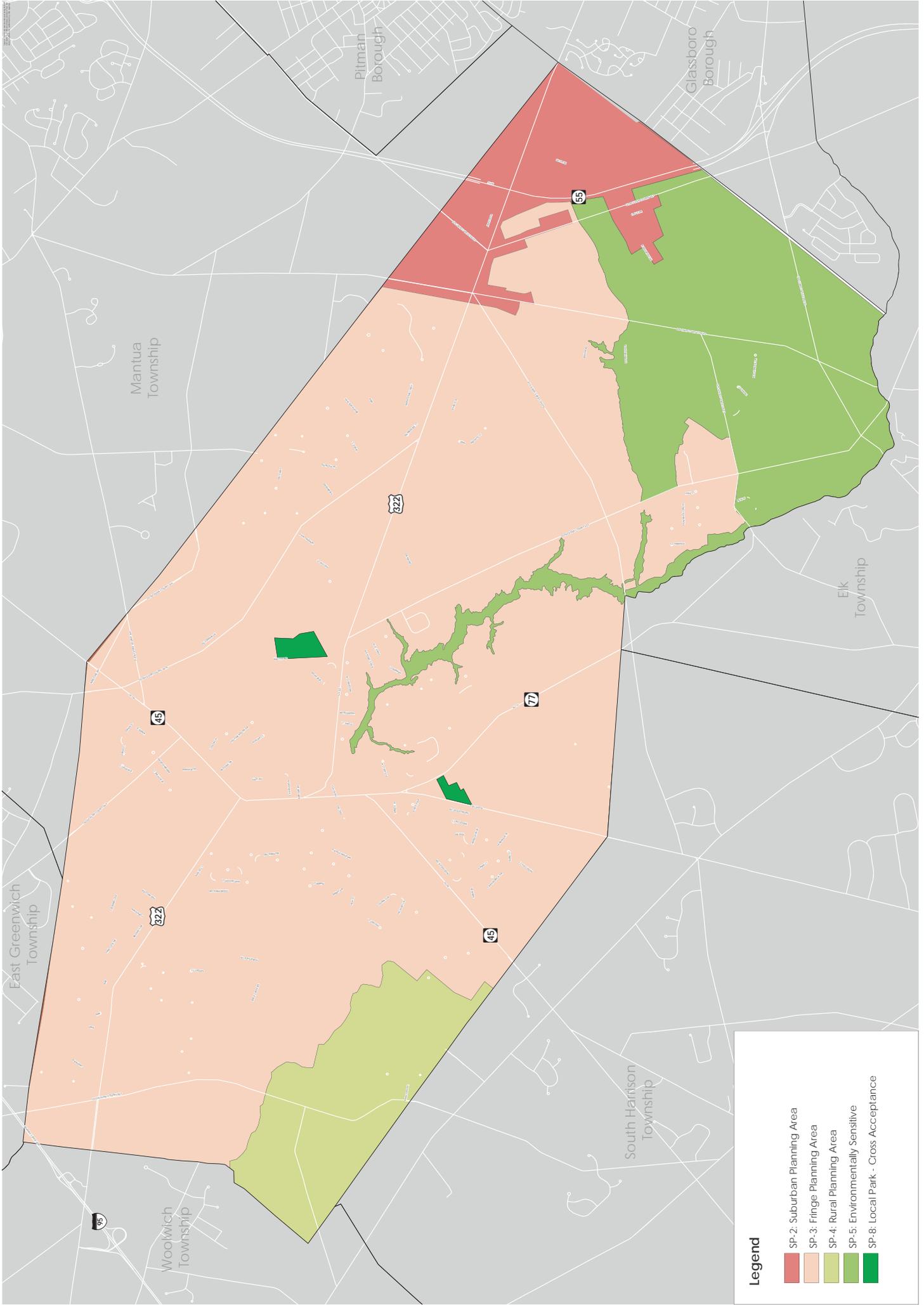
The above is submitted for your review and consideration. If you have any questions with regard to this matter or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (856) 251-9989.

Regards,

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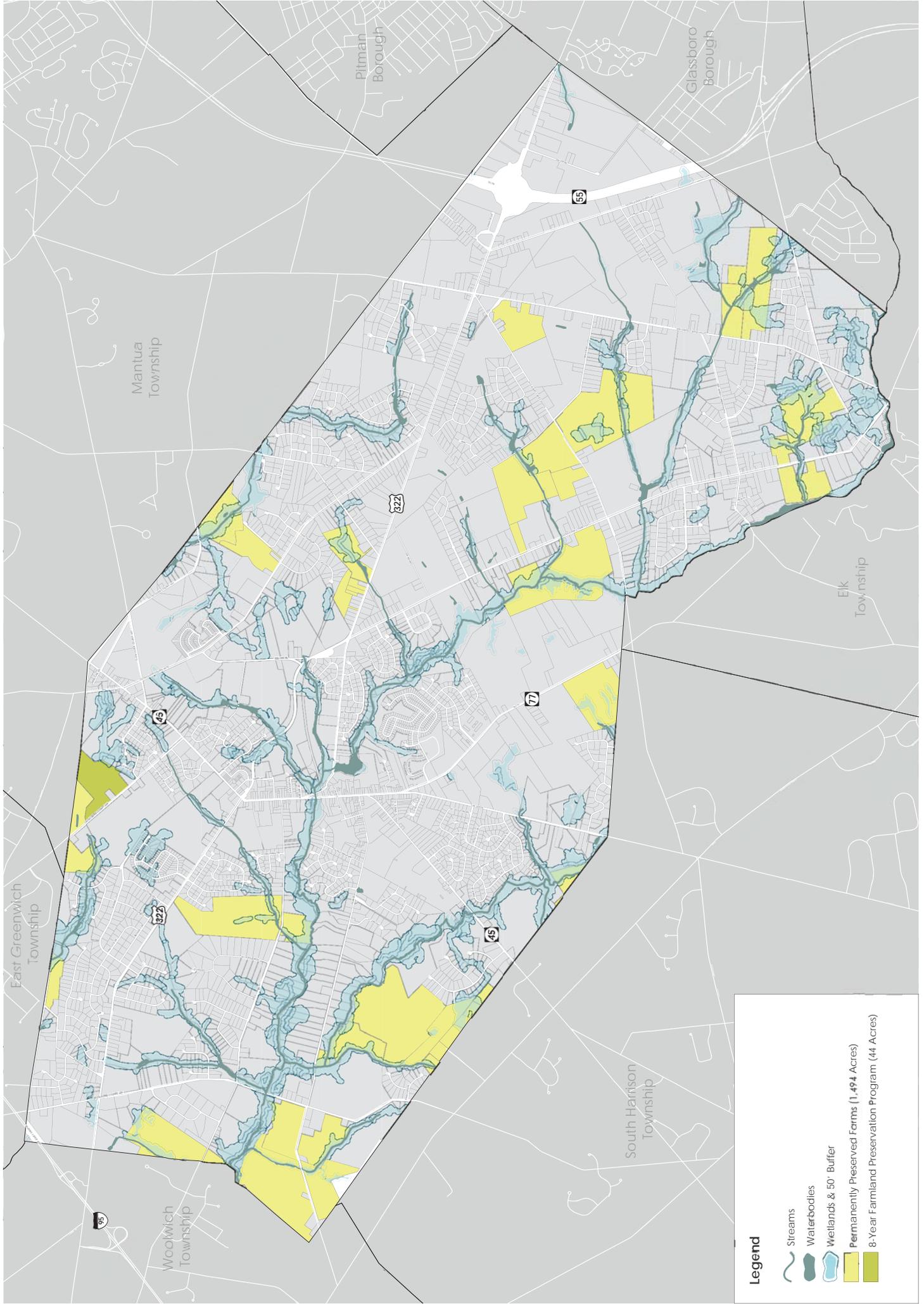
Robert F. Melvin, AICP/PP
Principal



Legend

- SP-2: Suburban Planning Area
- SP-3: Fringe Planning Area
- SP-4: Rural Planning Area
- SP-5: Environmentally Sensitive
- SP-8: Local Park - Cross Acceptance

**Harrison Township
State Planning Areas**

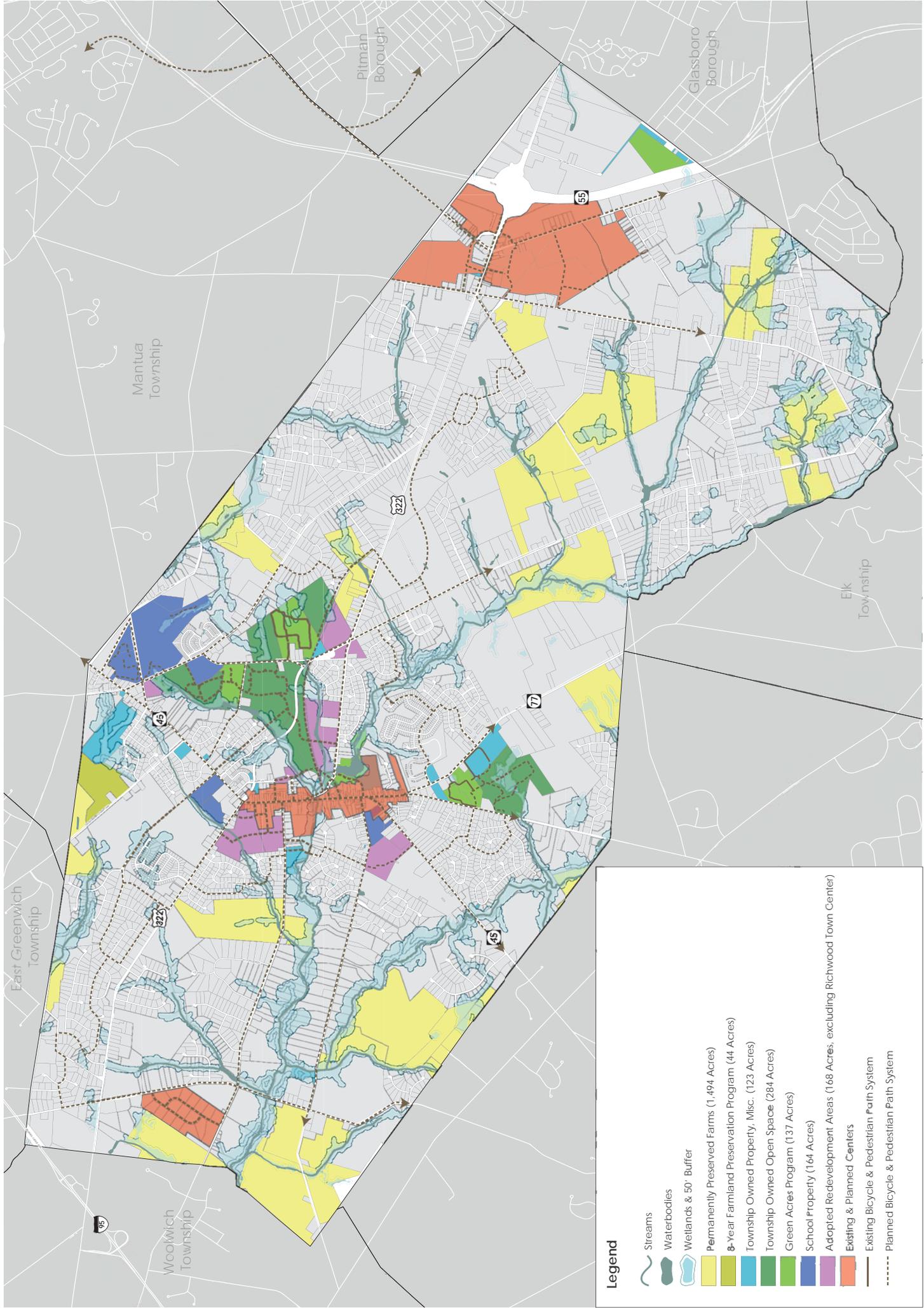


Legend

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Wetlands & 50' Buffer
- Permanently Preserved Farms (1,494 Acres)
- 8-Year Farmland Preservation Program (44 Acres)

Harrison Township
 Permanently Preserved Farmland Map





Legend

-  Streams
-  Waterbodies
-  Wetlands & 50' Buffer
-  Permanently Preserved Farms (1,494 Acres)
-  8-Year Farmland Preservation Program (44 Acres)
-  Township Owned Property, Misc. (123 Acres)
-  Township Owned Open Space (284 Acres)
-  Green Acres Program (137 Acres)
-  School Property (164 Acres)
-  Adopted Redevelopment Areas (168 Acres, excluding Richmond Town Center)
-  Existing & Planned Centers
-  Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Path System
-  Planned Bicycle & Pedestrian Path System

Harrison Township
Aggregate Smart Growth Map