

Connecting Habitat: Montgomery Township Open Space Preservation Program

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MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP, SOMERSET COUNTY



About Montgomery

- Southern portion of Somerset County
- 32 square miles (20,646 acres)
- Population: ~24,000
- Formerly agricultural community
→ suburban residential
- Sourland Mountains in NW corner
- Millstone River along eastern border
- 121 linear miles of streams
- 192 miles of roadway

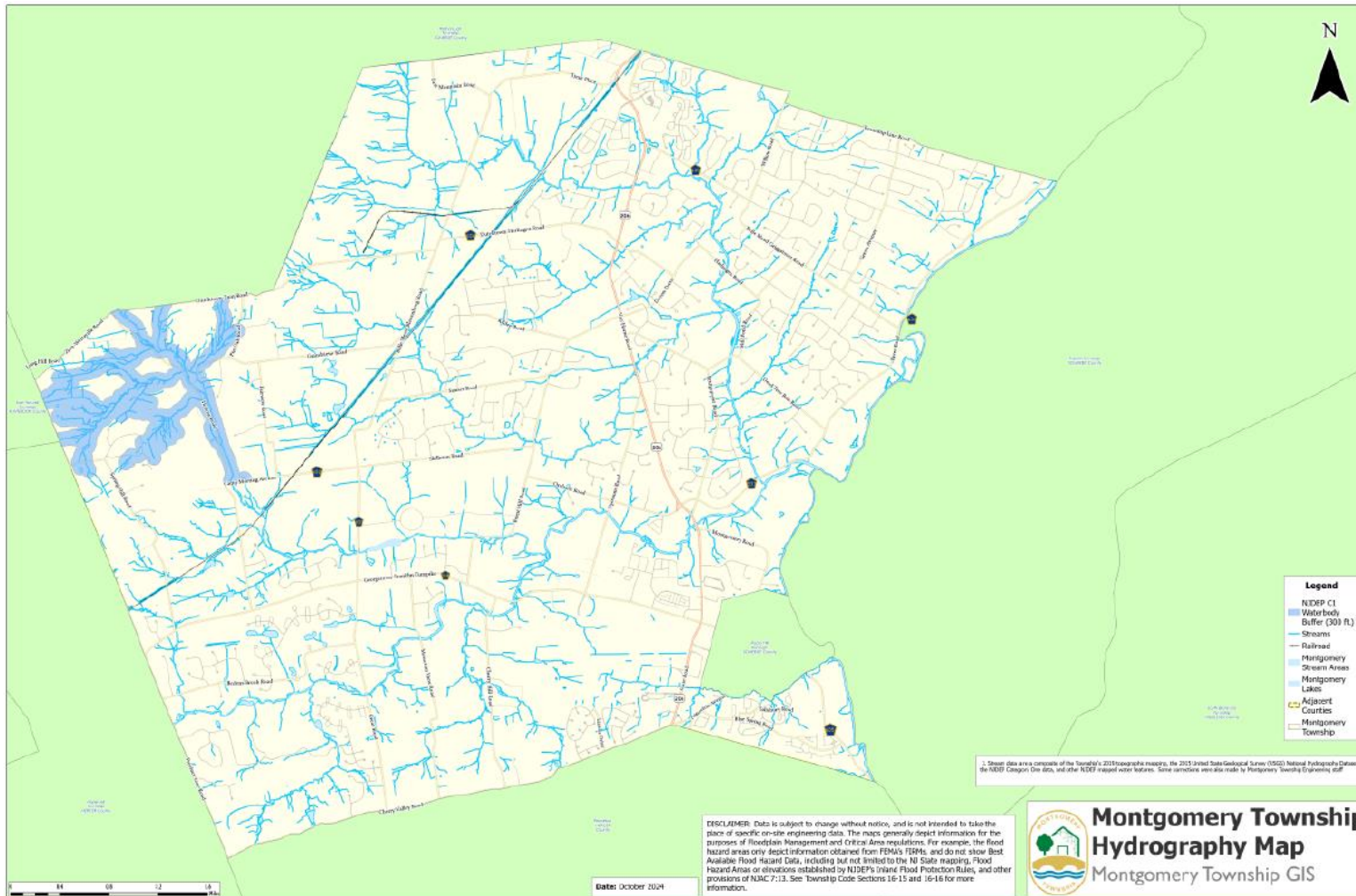


Montgomery Ordinances to Protect Habitat

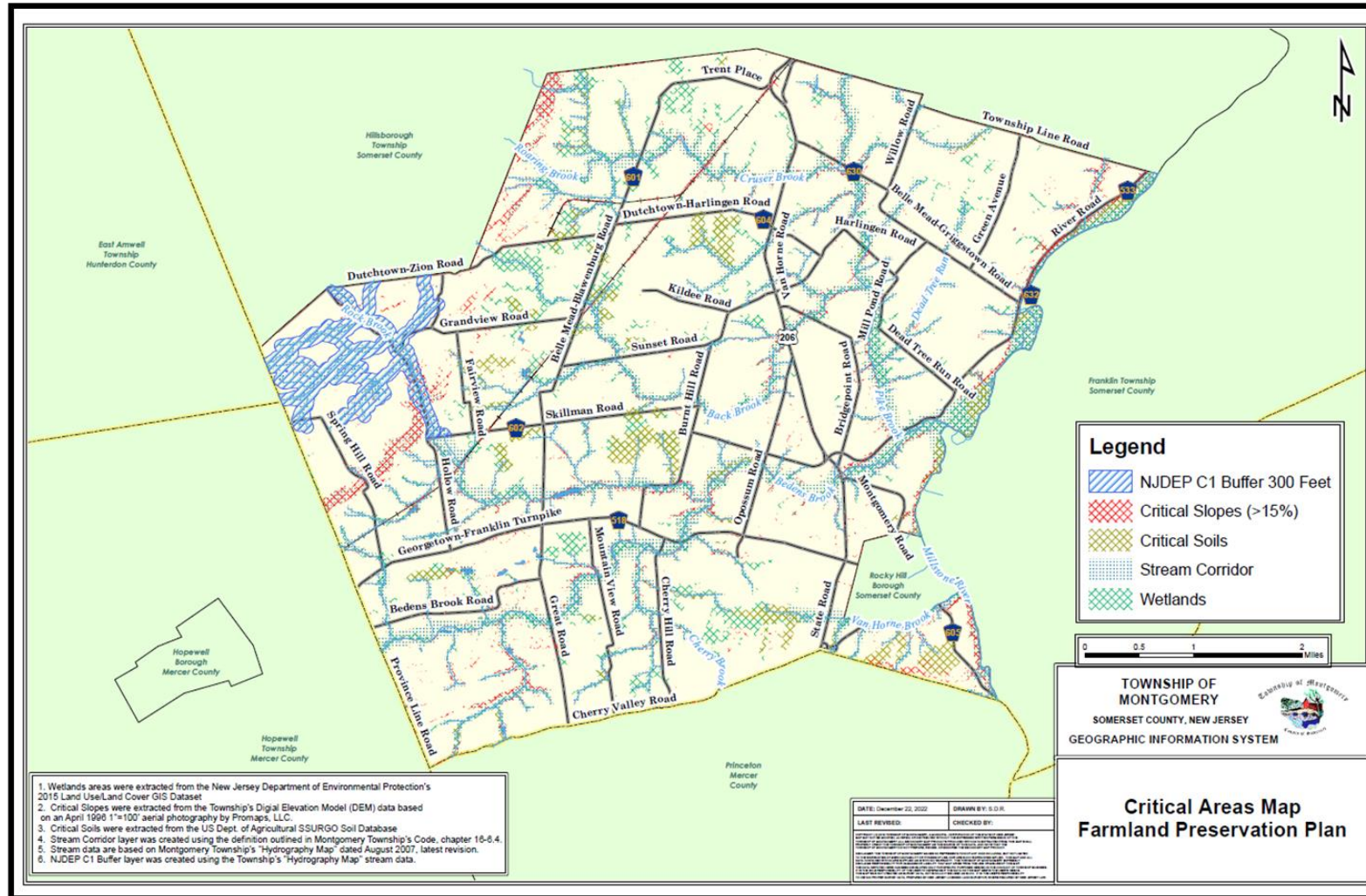


- Tree Removal / Replacement
 - Adopted April 2024
- Stream corridor ordinance
 - 100' wide additional buffer to floodway, floodplain, flood hazard area
 - Patios & additions < 500SF
 - Decks < 750SF
 - Pools
- Conservation easements/deed restrictions required on critical areas (wetlands, steep slopes, stream corridor)

Montgomery - Hydrography



Montgomery – Critical Areas



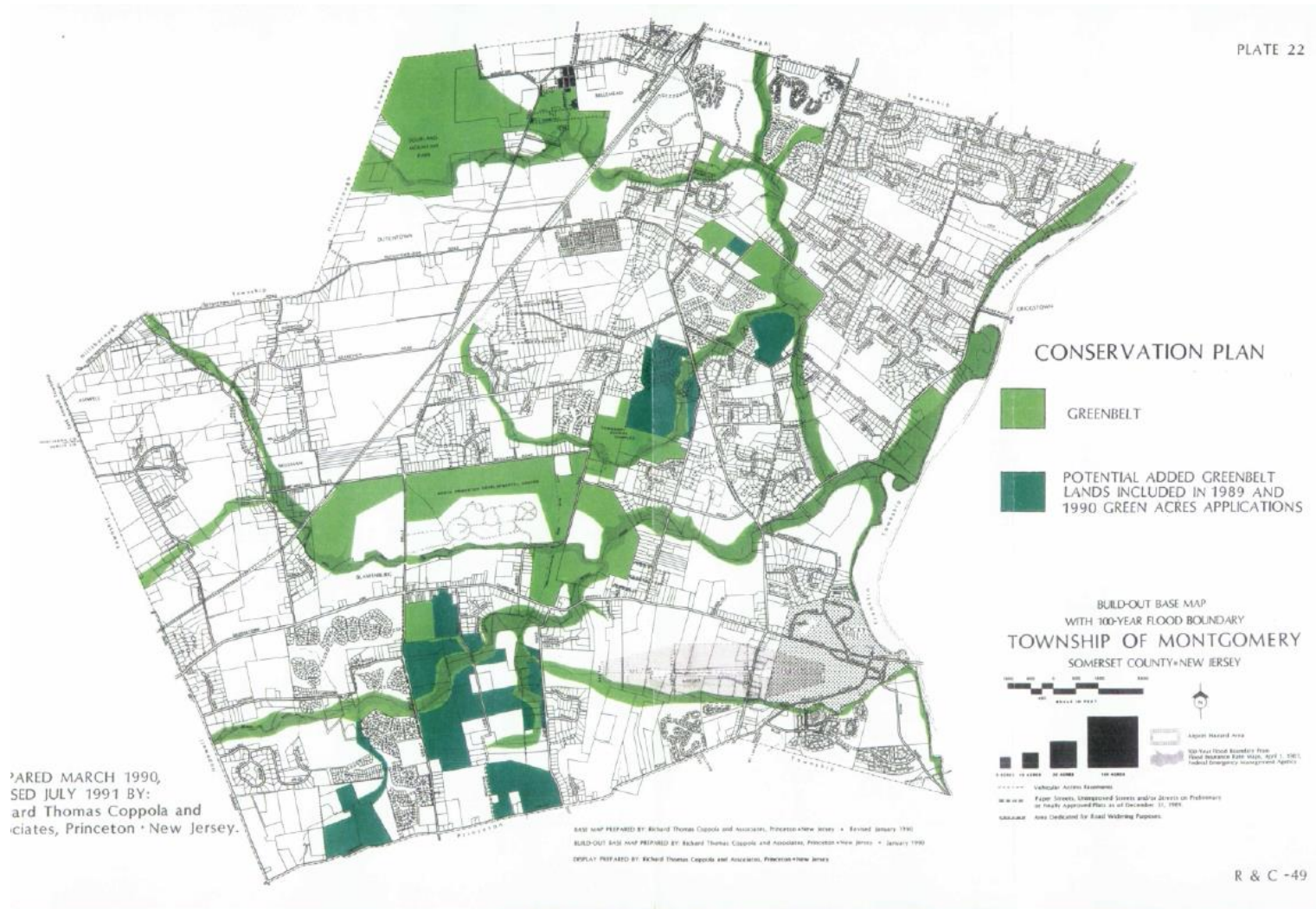
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Montgomery Open Space Preservation Program

- Open Space Committee formed 1989
 - 1960s: early preservation efforts
 - 9 members, 2 alternates
- 1991 Recreation & Open Space Master Plan
 - last updated August 2023
 - Goals, Action Plan, Funding Plan
 - **Involvement in Planning/Zoning review process**

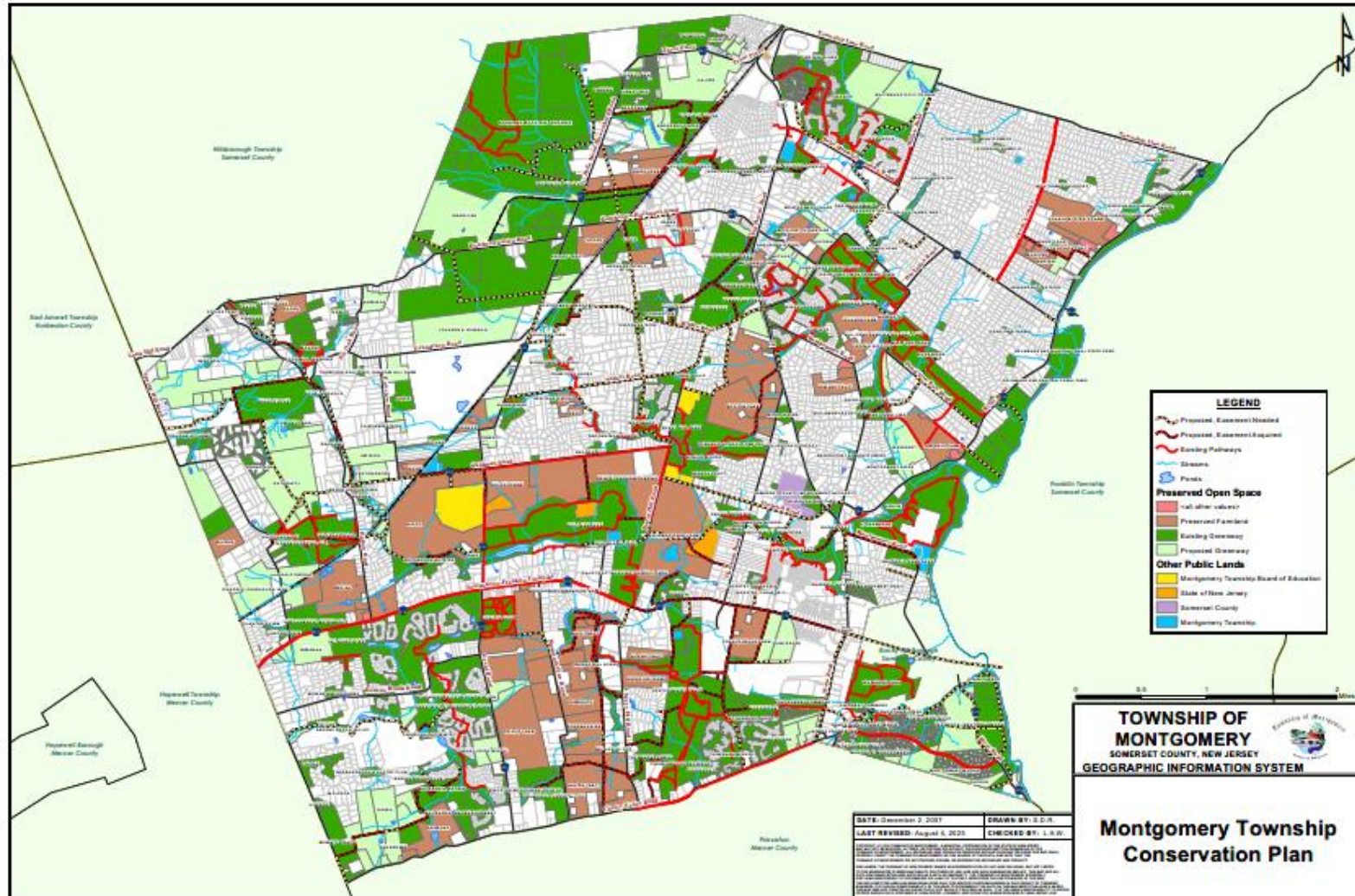


Montgomery Conservation Plan (1991)



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Montgomery Conservation Plan (2026)



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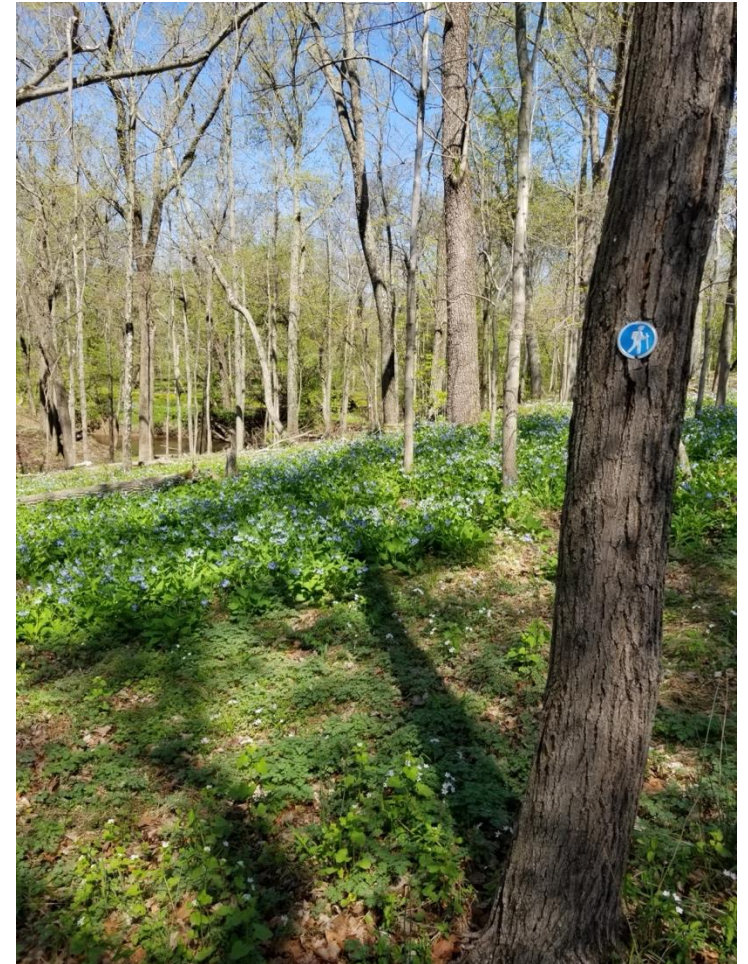
Montgomery Open Space Preservation Program



- Dedicated open space tax: 4¢ per \$100 assessed value
 - Generates ~\$1.6M annually
- **8,000+ acres** preserved to date
 - =39% of overall Township
- ~40 miles of pathways
- Partnerships

Guidelines for Evaluating Proposed Open Space *(rev. 2/13/2026)*

1. Relationship to existing preserved or planned open space? Provide pathways link in proposed network? In an “underserved” area of Township?
2. Potential for active or passive recreation? In an area with projected recreational needs?
3. Unique scenic vista, special natural resources or environmental features?
4. Development potential?
5. Evaluation of price – a bargain?



Guidelines for Evaluating Proposed Open Space – continued *(rev. 2/13/2026)*

6. Valuable buffer to scenic, natural resource, historic, recreational, residential, or existing or proposed conservation areas?
7. Good faith effort by the property owner – desire for preservation?
8. Will preservation of the land protect environmentally sensitive features such as streams, wetlands, critical soils, steep slopes, contiguous forest network etc., or help maintain the viability of agriculture in our community?
9. Opportunity to protect or improve water quality?
10. Does the property provide unique wildlife habitat, or for a diversity of wildlife habitat in an area of monoculture? **Does the property offer unique wildlife corridors according to the State Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) mapping?**

Guidelines – in practice

- Engaged Open Space Committee membership
- In-house GIS staff
 - Robust datasets
 - Web-based GIS system
- Work closely with Engineering & Public Works on road projects

Web Maps



Critical Areas Map



Developments Map



FEMA Flood Hazard Map



Montgomery General Map

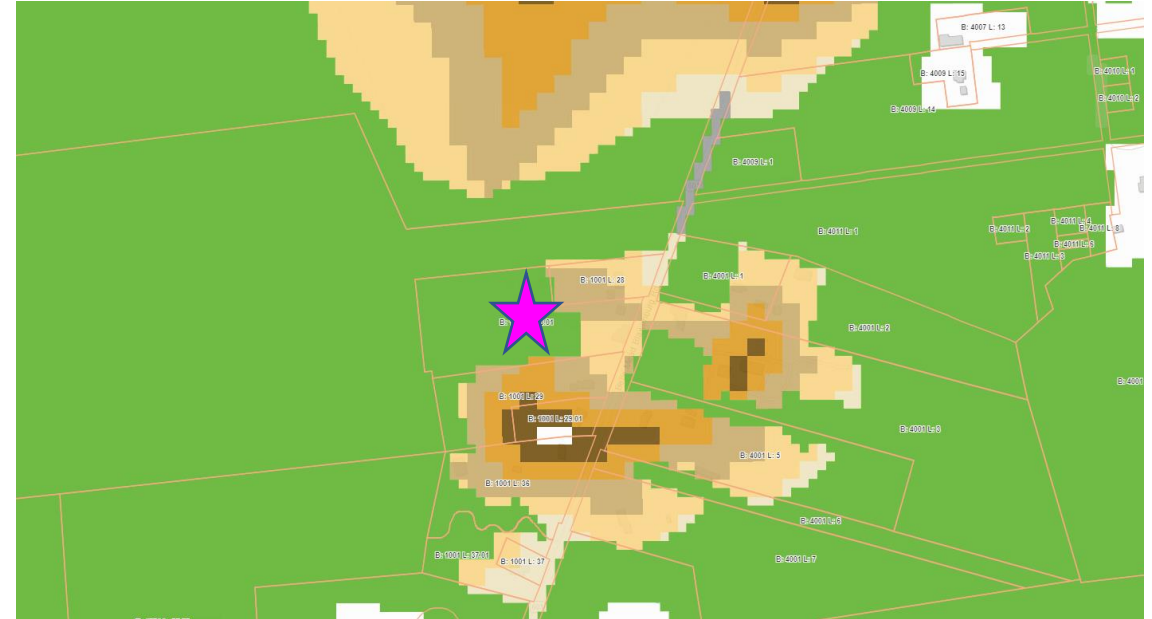
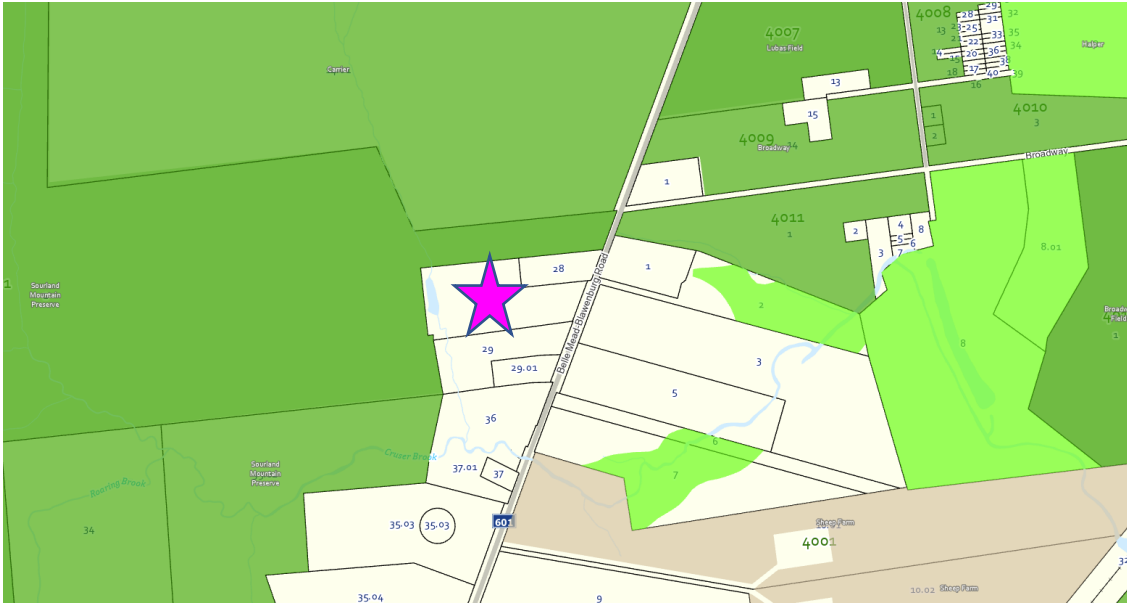


Open Space Map



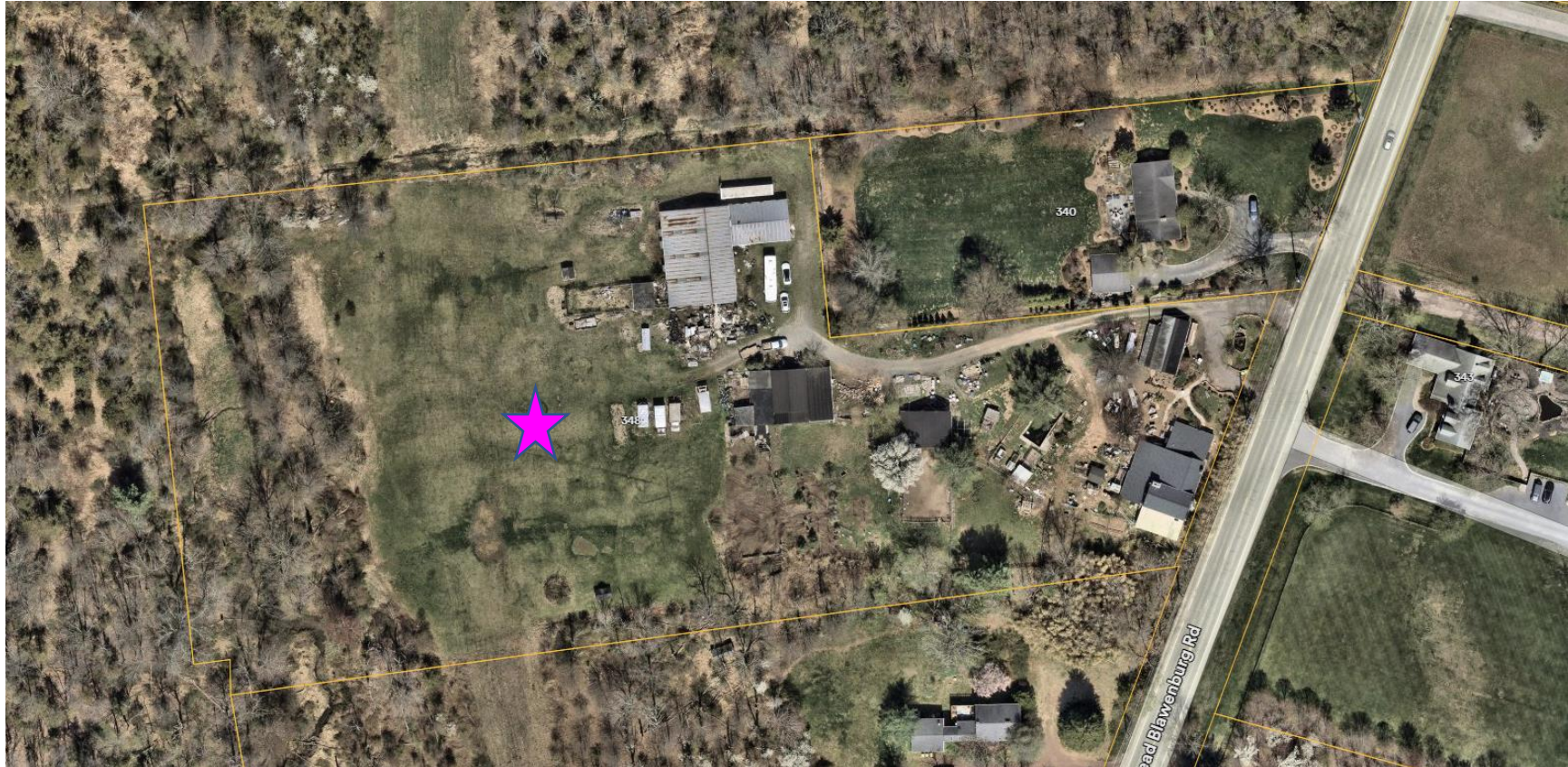
Route 206 & Route 518 - New Traffic Patt...

Guidelines – in practice – example #1



- Contacted by neighbor – saw “for sale” sign
- Adjacent to other preserved lands

Guidelines – in practice – example #1



Guidelines – in practice – example #1



\$899,000

4

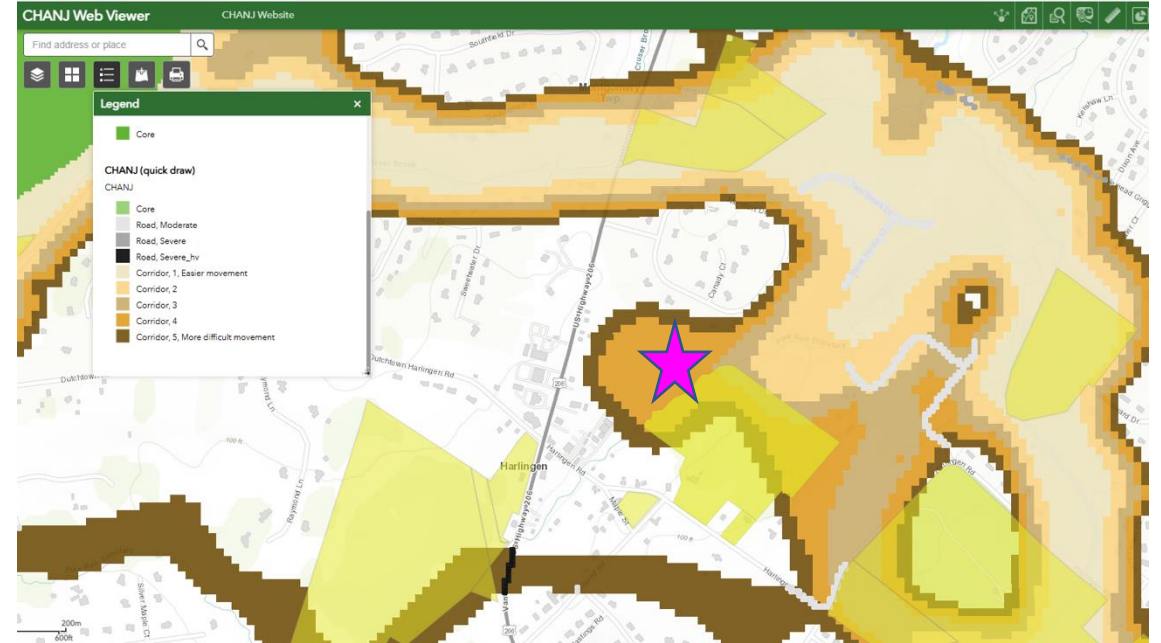
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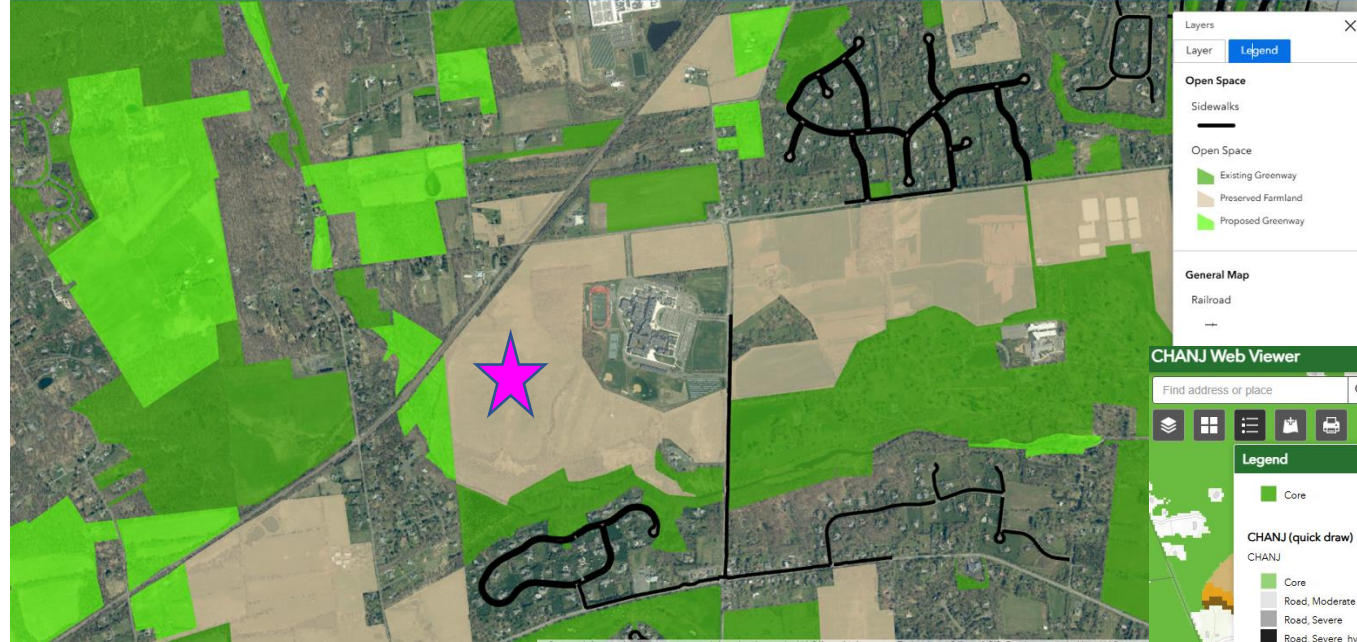


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Guidelines – in practice – example #2

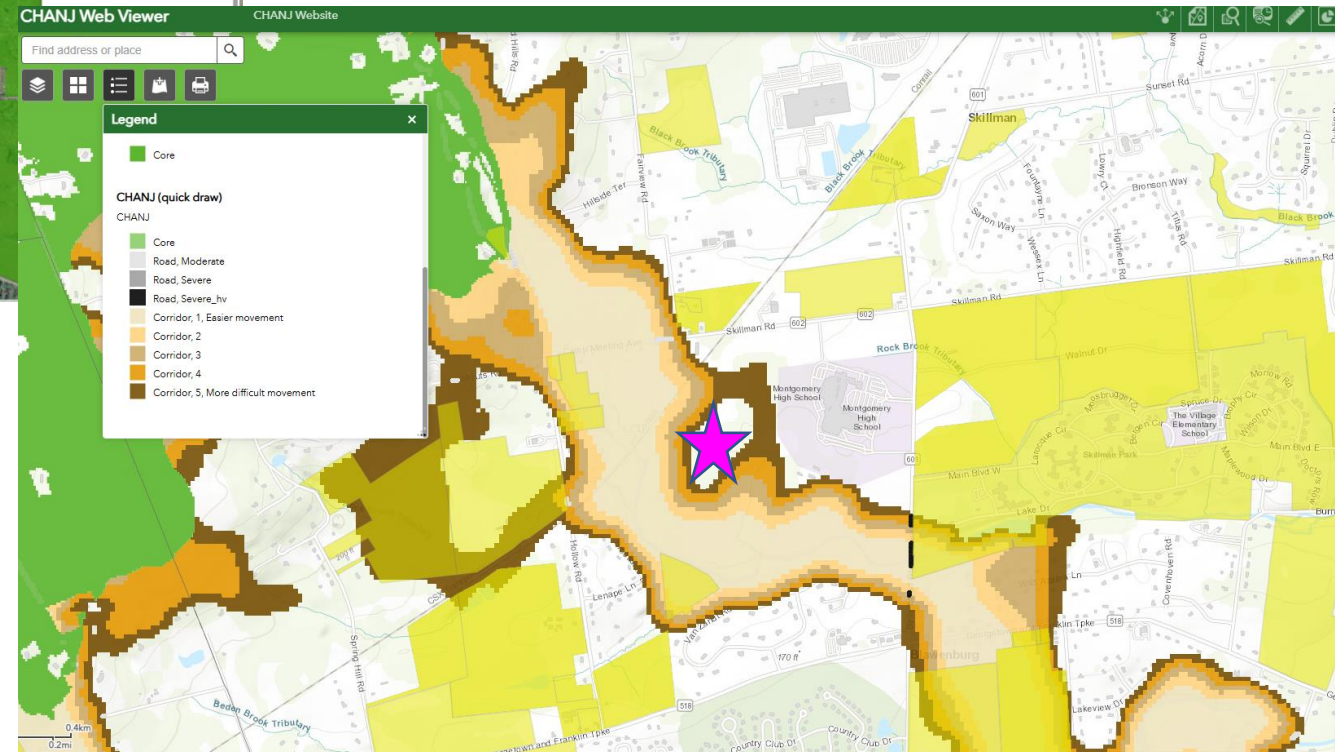


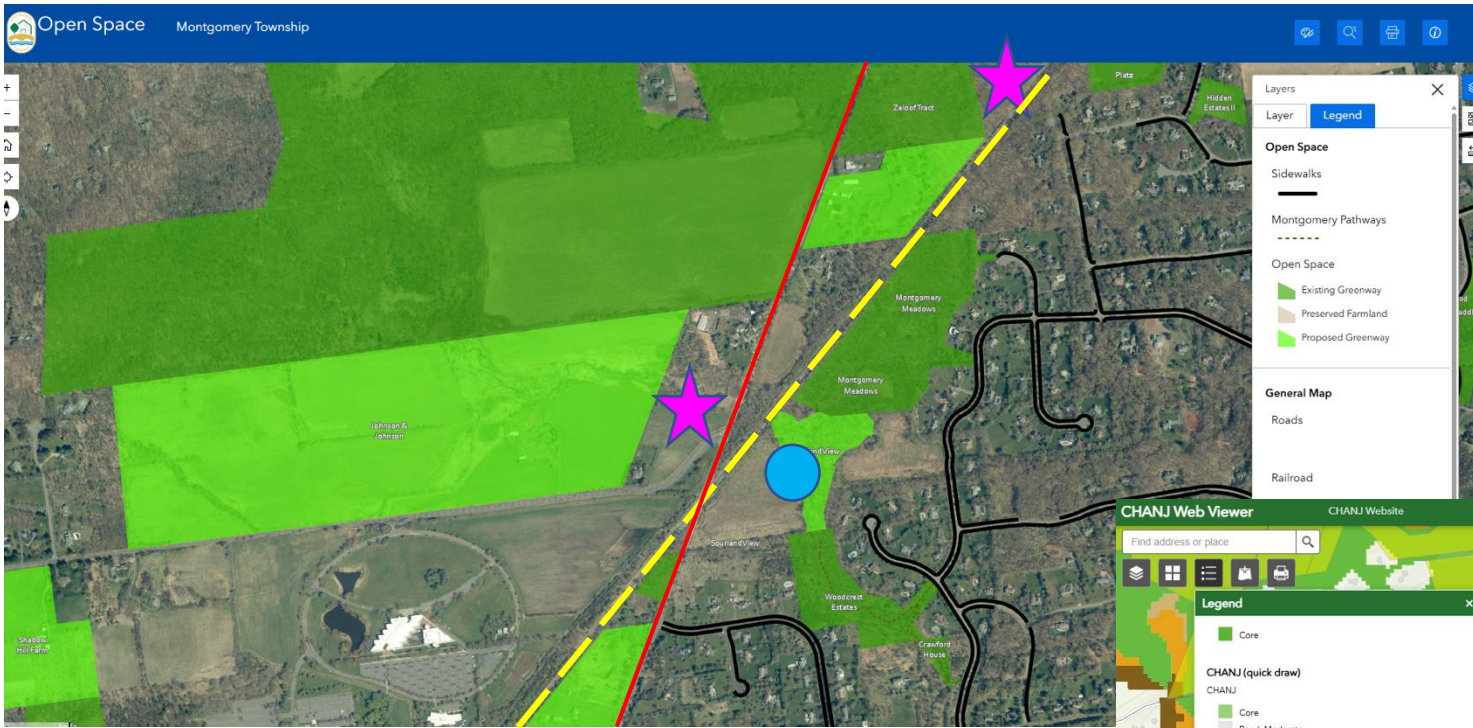
- Offer of donation via development process
- Adjacent to other preserved lands



Guidelines in practice – example #3

- Rock Brook Greenway
- Rock Brook reclassified as C-1 stream (2020)





Guidelines in practice – examples 4, 5 & 6

- Expansion of Twp, Co efforts
- Future open space dedication (Planning Board approval)



Questions?

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