

# Project Narrative Outline

## Factor 1: Open Space Needs

### A. Community Served

#### 1. Population Size & Density

The Township of Riverside is a heavily populated municipality that sits at the confluence of Rancocas Creek and the Delaware River. It is almost entirely built out, with 92% of usable land developed. While residents have access to sections of the Rancocas Greenway, local athletic fields, and a one-square-block community park at the center of town, there is only one remaining significant area of natural forest growth. If development pressures in nearby towns are an indication, this approximately 4-acre parcel at South Fairview and Whittaker Streets may be susceptible to future purchase for development without open space protection.

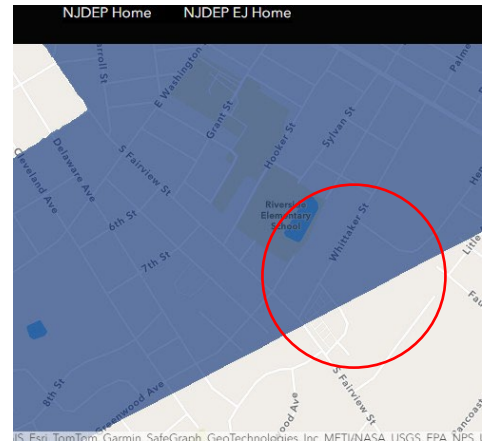
#### 2. ACS/OBC

The Riverdel Woodlands parcel, which Riverside seeks to purchase with the support of the Green Acres Acquisition program, is identified by NJDEP as within an Overburdened Community Subject to Adverse Cumulative Stressors (ACS/OBC). NJDEP identifies the block group as subject to the stressor categories of concentrated areas of air pollution, mobile sources of air pollution, contaminated sites, potential public health impacts, density/proximity stressors, and social determinants of health.

NJDEP identifies Riverside as a highly and densely populated municipality.

Population size	8,017
Density	5,401.5 per square mile

Source: [US Census data](#)



NJDEP EJ map

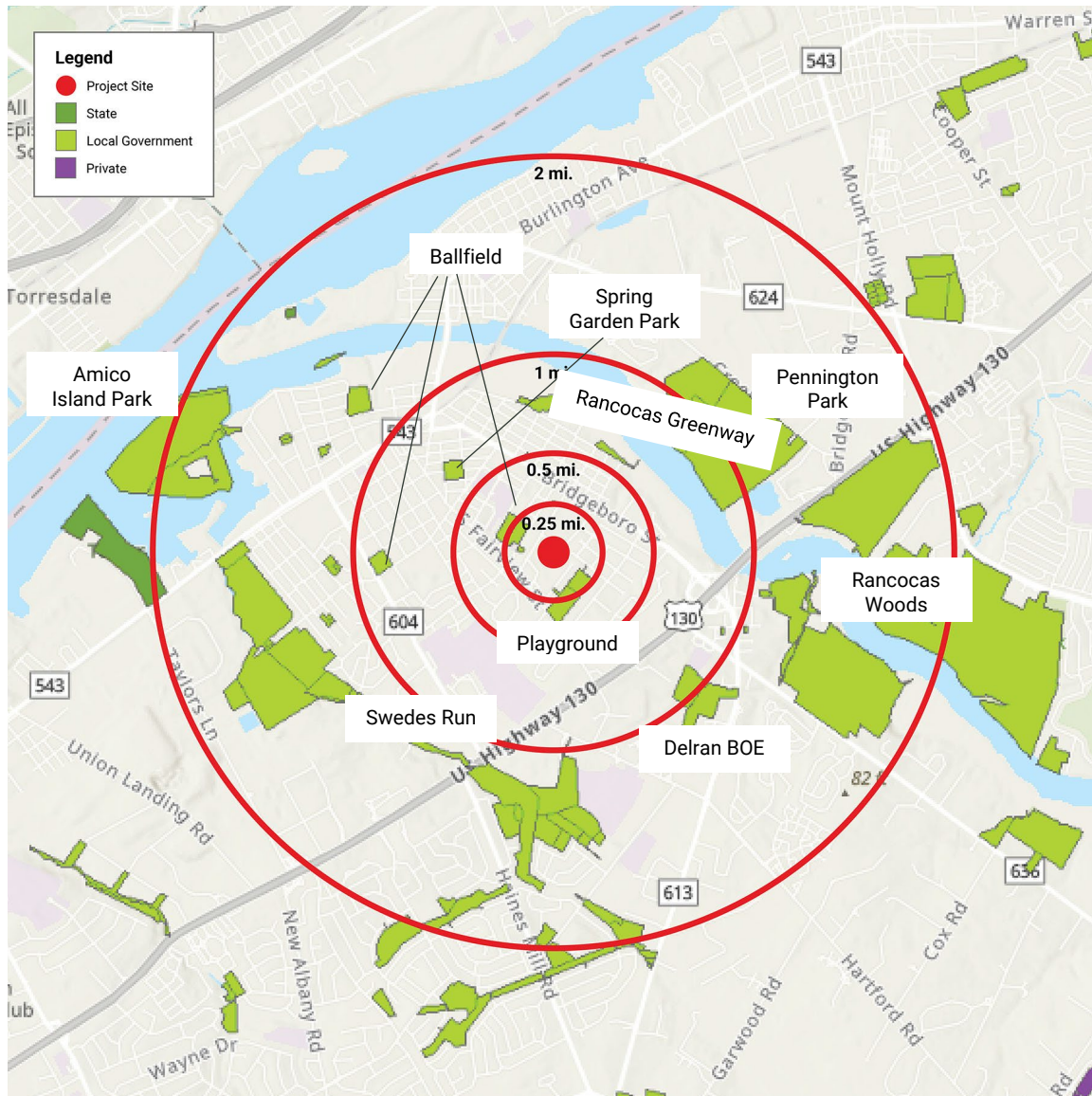
### B. Meeting Community Recreation & Conservation Needs

#### 1. Other Open Space

Acquisition of the Riverdel Woodlands tract presents a unique opportunity to preserve the only remaining sizable natural forested area in Riverside. The purchase is timely due to the cooperation of a willing seller who is supportive of NJDEP's Green Acres preservation goals. An additional factor is Riverside's coordination of this Green Acres application with plans by neighboring Delran Township to purchase an adjacent tract using Open Space Tax funds. A Riverside Green Acres acquisition combined with a Delran Open Space purchase would create one large tract of preserved open space.

The Riverdel Woodlands parcel in Riverside is a densely forested area that is within approximately one-tenth of a mile of the Bob Kenney Field athletic complex and a similar distance to the Faunce Street playground in the opposite direction.

This acquisition addresses an open space deficit in that Riverside is almost entirely built out, with no other existing opportunity to preserve additional open space. By purchasing this land with the assistance of NJDEP's Green Acres program, Riverside reserves it for potential future passive recreational use, particularly in light of its proximity to a path through the Faunce Street playground parcel.



### Geographic Reach

The geographic reach, as measured by the benefits of forested open space, is regional when factoring the benefit of trees to mitigate air pollution, the stress reduction benefits of experiencing a natural environment, and the preservation of habitats. The neighborhood and municipality benefits are realized through higher property values for neighborhood homes in direct proximity to natural areas and the overall amount of open space in the municipality, a quality-of-life benefit for the entire township.

### 3. Unique Features

Unique features include Riverside’s coordination with Delran to accomplish preservation of a total of approximately 8 acres of open space in an otherwise developed area. The primary owner of the parcel also owns adjacent forested land in Delran. The two municipalities are working together to preserve the forest, which straddles municipal boundaries.



This acquisition is particularly important when considering that, approximately one-half mile away off of Route 130 in Delran, 14.6 acres of forest were cleared for development in the fall of 2025 to accommodate a [240-unit apartment complex](#). The Riverdel Woodlands parcel provides some refuge for wildlife displaced by this housing development.

## **Factor 2: Environmental Protection & Climate Mitigation and Resilience**

### ***A. Land of Sufficient Size/Location***

#### **1. Critical Wildlife Habitat**

The Riverdel Woodlands parcel is not designated on NJDEP's Landscape Project map. However, the site is less than a quarter mile from a "state threatened" area identified on the NJDEP GIS/GeoWeb Landscape Project layer as an artificial lake adjacent to Riverside Elementary School. The Landscape Project identifies black-crowned night heron as state threatened and great blue heron as special concern. Riverdel Woodlands provides a habitat for these species to roost.

#### **2. State or Regional Plans**

While the Riverdel Woodlands parcel is not directly identified on a state or regional master plan, the Riverside Township municipal plan is an endorsed plan within the NJ State Plan (pg. 287., pdf pg. 320 or 393) and eligible for priority assistance.

Fairview Street is mentioned in the Riverside 2022 Master Plan Reexam as bicycle route where traffic safety is a concern (pg. 20). This suggests that the woodlands parcel may be appropriate for future consideration to site a bicycle or pedestrian trail, which would provide a route for cyclists away from vehicular traffic.

#### **3. Public Recreation Addition/Link**

There is the potential for a future link to trail network through development of the Faunce Street Playground path that can provide a link to the Riverdel Woodlands and on to Bob Kenney field.

#### **4. Regional Open Space/Conservation Initiatives**

The project supports regional open space and conservation initiatives through Riverside's cooperation with neighboring Delran to coordinate the Green Acres acquisition with Delran's Open Space Tax purchase of adjacent property to create one large forested tract. This would support Delran's goal of becoming a sustainable community with a network of pedestrian walkways and bicycle trails [Delran Plan Endorsement pg. 10, pdf pg. 12 of 26]

#### **5. Endangered/Threatened Habitat**

As noted above, the parcel is not designated as a habitat according to the NJDEP Landscape Project. However, its proximity to a state-designated threatened area suggests that it provides refuge to two bird species, the black-crowned night heron, designated as state-threatened, and the great blue heron, designated as of special concern.

### ***B. Greenways and Water Resource Protection Projects Size/Location***

#### **1. Integral Link With Conservation Initiative**

Acquisition of this parcel coordinates with Delran's conservation initiative as described above to preserve a parcel contiguous to Riverside's which would altogether preserve more than eight acres of forested area.

#### **2. Water resource protection**

The parcel is part of the Rancocas Creek watershed, which feeds the Delaware River, where drinking water is sourced for much of the region via an American Water intake just south of Riverside. The Riverdel Woodlands forest supports watershed protection through its role as a filter, regulating water flow, preventing erosion, and recharging groundwater. These activities reduce pollutants, stabilize streamflows and minimize drought impacts.

#### **3. Significant Natural Flood Protection**

While the parcel is not in a flood plain, the preservation of the Riverdel Woodlands will contribute to flood protection through the water source protection methods stated above. These benefits can help to prevent future run-off.

#### **4. Buffer Between Natural Resource & Development**

N/A

The parcel itself is a natural resource and is a buffer between the existing residential community and the Dollar General shopping center.

#### **5. Protect Waterbodies**

N/A



### **C. Support for Climate Mitigation & Resilience**

#### **1. Preservation of Significant Forested Area**

Approximately 4 acres of wooded area will be preserved.

The preservation of the parcel is significant for the opportunity to preserve one of the last remaining natural forested areas in the township while also coordinating with neighboring Delran's Open Space Tax purchase to create a large forested area straddling both communities. This effort also maintains and preserves existing open space in a watershed that is being impacted by other development, including the large apartment complex planned nearby, as noted above.

#### **2. Preservation of Flood-Prone Areas**

N/A

#### **3. Removal of impervious surface**

N/A

### **Factor 3: Historic Resource Preservation-N/A**

The Riverdel Woodlands parcel is approximately one mile from Riverside's historic downtown area and is not related to any assets of local, statewide or national significance; historic properties, districts, or historic preservation or rehab efforts. The area is not identified in New Jersey's 2023-2028 Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan.

The Preliminary Assessment will contribute any additional information about the site that is not currently documented.

### **Factor 4: Public Support & Engagement/Planning**

#### **A. Public Support & Engagement**

##### **1. Letter of Support**

Attached letters of support:

- Riverside Board of Education
- XXX (others pending)
- XXX
- XXX
- XXX
- XXX
- XXX

##### **2. Documentation of Public Engagement**

A public engagement survey was promoted beginning the week of January 26. Announcements were made on Facebook and on the township website, as documented below. Flyers were also distributed in the vestibule at town hall and administration building and at the Riverside Public Library. The survey link was also provided to the Riverside School District for distribution to families via email.

The survey is available at <https://form.jotform.com/253564642271155>

#### **B. Planning**

##### **Public Engagement**

The township has widely distributed a survey to capture public engagement, as described above. The acquisition was also discussed at public meetings throughout 2025.

##### **Public Recreation Benefits**

The parcel will remain accessible to the public. The public engagement survey included questions to gauge interest in future uses for passive recreation, such as trails and an educational component. This provides the groundwork for future passive recreation at the site. Riverside is also actively coordinating plans to improve trail connections with Delran and considering how the Riverdel Woodlands can play a role in future connectivity.

##### **Environmental Justice**

The project site is designated as an Overburdened Community Subject to Adverse Cumulative Stressors as identified by NJDEP.



Residents are 61.7% White (alone), 9% Black or African American (alone), 2.7% Asian (alone), 21.6% Hispanic, with the remaining 5% comprised of individuals of two or more races. 18.8 % of residents are living in poverty with a median household income of \$69,494, and 23.5% of residents are living without health insurance. In Riverside, 21% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared to the state average of 42.3%.

## **Factor 5: Project Quality**

### ***A. Accessibility***

#### **1. Site Location**

- a. The site is within a residential neighborhood
- b. Riverside is served by the NJ Transit 419 bus route and the River Line light rail. Both the bus route and rail station are located along River Road, about one mile from the parcel. The NJ Transit 409 bus route stops at Route 130 and Fairview Street in Delran, about a half-mile walk from the parcel.
- c. The site is accessible by walking or biking along township roads and sidewalks.
- d. The purchase will create new public open space.

### ***B. Recreation Potential***

While the density of the forest would not be suitable for an outdoor recreation facility, the township will consider developing a future trail connecting Delran to the Burlington County Trail network and Rancocas Greenway Trail. The parcel also may be suitable for passive recreation, such as bird watching and environmental education.

Riverside is exploring environmental interpretation opportunities, including suggestions from the public contributed through the public engagement survey for the project.

### ***C. Expanded Water Access***

N/A

### ***D. Cost Effectiveness***

#### **1. Lower Cost of Land**

While the land will be purchased at the appraised value, Riverside's partnership with Delran to preserve adjacent forested parcels represents a cost savings by timing Delran's purchases with Riverside's Green Acres funding pursuit. Considering development pressures in southwestern Burlington County, it is likely that the value of the Riverdel Woodlands parcel will increase over time, escalating the appraised value in future years.

The adjacent forested area in Delran Township will be preserved through purchase by the township using Municipal Open Space Tax funds. Coordinating Riverside's Green Acres application with Delran's planned purchase preserves a tract totaling approximately eight acres in an area where nearby development pressure is documented. This includes the recent clearing of 14.6 acres of forest for an apartment complex a half mile from the Riverdel parcel and ten acres cleared three-quarters of a mile from Riverdel to accommodate a new affordable housing project.

#### **2. Future O&M**

Operations and maintenance costs are minimal. The Township public works department will conduct periodic cleaning and removal of fallen tree debris as necessary.

#### **3. Development Approvals**

None

#### **4. Public Funds**

Riverside will contribute \$250,000 as the required 50% cost share for this project. Capital funds will be used.

## **Factor 6: Project Priorities**

### **1. Tourism Potential – N/A**

### **2. Trails/Paths**

While the land will be purchased as open space, there is potential for a future bike/pedestrian path if desired.

### **3. Community Garden- N/A**



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#### **4. Likelihood or Threat of Private Development**

The current owner is supportive of the Green Acres program and has offered the property to preserve the township's last remaining natural forested area. Without this support, the land would likely experience development pressure similar to surrounding communities where open space has been replaced with high-density residential housing, as described above.

Contributing to this threat is the existing right-of-way access to the lots being purchased. These "paper streets" increase the likelihood of potential for development.

#### **5. Reclamation of Brownfield**

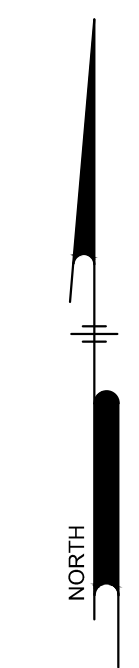
N/A

#### **6. Amended Development Regulations**

N/A

#### **Factor 7: First-Time Applicant**

N/A

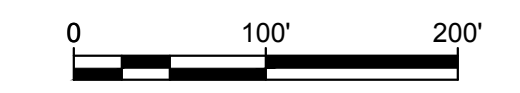


**PROJECT REFERENCE MAP CHECKLIST:**

1. PROJECT NAME AND LOCATION
2. BLOCK AND LOT NUMBERS AND MUNICIPALITY(IES) IN WHICH THE ACQUISITION IS LOCATED
3. CURRENT OWNER(S) OF RECORD (ALSO INDICATE ADJACENT LOTS UNDER THE SAME OWNERSHIP)
4. AREA GIVEN IN ACREAGE OR SQUARE FEET
5. DIMENSIONS OF EACH LOT MARKED ON EACH PERIMETER BOUNDARY
6. IMPROVEMENTS SHOWN IN APPROXIMATE LOCATION ON PARCEL
7. ACQUISITION AREA - IF ONLY A PORTION OF THE PARCEL IS PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION, THE BOUNDARIES AND SIZE OF BOTH THE PROPOSED PORTION AND THE REMAINING AREA SHOULD BE NOTED
8. NORTH ARROW AND SCALE OF MAP. THE MAP SCALE SHOULD BE PROPORTIONAL TO THE SIZE OF THE SITE TO ALLOW AN APPRAISER TO PREPARE AN ACCURATE APPRAISAL
9. IF LOCATED IN THE HIGHLANDS, INDICATE WHETHER SITE IS IN THE PLANNING AREA OR PRESERVATION AREA
10. INDICATE IF PURCHASE WILL BE FEE OR EASEMENT
11. LOCATION AND AREA OF ALL KNOWN EXISTING EASEMENTS, ROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY, ENCROACHMENTS, DUNE AND BEACH AREAS, AND SIMILAR FEATURES, WITH THE SOURCE OF SUCH INFORMATION SHOWN
12. LOCATION AND AREA OF ALL STREAMS, RIVERS, WATERBODIES, AND ASSOCIATED BUFFERS. ANY WATERBODY CLASSIFIED AS CATEGORY ONE PURSUANT TO N.J.A.C. 7.9B, AND THE ASSOCIATED SPECIAL WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION AREA ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO N.J.A.C. 7.8, MUST BE SHOWN AND LABELED
13. LOCATION AND AREA OF TIDELAND-CLAIMED AREAS, AVAILABLE FROM THE BUREAU OF GIS, AS DETERMINED FROM NEW JERSEY TIDELANDS CLAIMS MAPS, CONVEYANCE OVERLAYS, AND ATLAS SHEETS
14. LOCATION AND AREA OF FLOODPLAIN, AS SHOWN ON THE NEW JERSEY STATE FLOOD HAZARD AREA MAPS PREPARED UNDER THE FLOOD HAZARD AREA CONTROL ACT, N.J.S.A. 58:16A50 ET SEQ. AND AVAILABLE FROM THE DEP OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION, BUREAU OF DAM SAFETY AND FLOOD CONTROL OR AS DETERMINED FROM OTHER STATE OR FEDERAL MAPPING OR FROM A SITE DELINEATION
15. LOCATION AND AREA OF COASTAL WETLANDS AS SHOWN ON MAPS PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE WETLANDS ACT OF 1970, N.J.S.A. 13:9A1 ET SEQ. AND THE BUREAU OF GIS
16. LOCATION AND AREA OF FRESHWATER WETLANDS, AS DETERMINED FROM NJDEP-ISSUED LETTER OF INTERPRETATION (LOI) OR NJ-GEOWEB
17. FOR EASEMENT PROJECTS: DEPICTIONS OF THE PROPOSED EASEMENT TERMS, IF APPLICABLE - I.E., DELINEATION OF ANY LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC ACCESS AREA; THE BOUNDARY OF A NON-SEVERABLE EXCEPTION AROUND EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS ON SITE. THESE DELINEATIONS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY ESTABLISHED, AS ANY CHANGES TO THE AREAS LATER IN THE ACQUISITION PROCESS MAY NECESSITATE AN APPRAISAL UPDATE AND SIGNIFICANT DELAYS.

**NOTES:**

1. PROJECT NAME AND LOCATION:  
- RIVERDEL WOODLANDS  
WHITTAKER AVENUE  
RIVERSIDE, NJ 08075
2. BLOCK AND LOT NUMBERS AND MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH THE ACQUISITION IS LOCATED:  
- BLOCK 2601  
LOTS 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10  
RIVERSIDE TOWNSHIP, BURLINGTON COUNTY, NJ 08075  
TOTAL ESTIMATED ACREAGE: 2.9 ACRES ±  
- BLOCK 2602  
LOTS 1, 2  
RIVERSIDE TOWNSHIP, BURLINGTON COUNTY, NJ 08075  
TOTAL ESTIMATED ACREAGE: 1.13 ACRES ±
3. THERE ARE NO IDENTIFIED STREAMS, RIVERS, WATERBODIES, OR BUFFERS ON THESE PROPERTIES.
4. THERE ARE NO KNOWN WETLANDS AND THE PROPERTIES ARE NOT WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN.



**PENNONI ASSOCIATES INC.**  
 NJ COA: GA26033300  
 515 Grove Street, Suite 1B  
 Haddon Heights, NJ 08035  
 T 856.547.0505 F 856.547.9174

ALL DIMENSIONS MUST BE VERIFIED BY CONTRACTOR AND OWNER MUST BE NOTIFIED OF ANY DISCREPANCIES BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH WORK

**FY2026 NJDEP GREEN ACRES ACQUISITION GRANT APPLICATION**  
 BLOCK 2601, LOTS 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 AND BLOCK 2602, LOTS 1, 2  
 RIVERSIDE TOWNSHIP, BURLINGTON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**PROJECT REFERENCE MAP - RIVERDEL WOODLAND**  
 RIVERSIDE TOWNSHIP  
 P.O. BOX 188  
 RIVERSIDE, NJ 08075

NO.	DATE	REVISIONS	BY

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PROJECT	RSTPX25001
DATE	2026-1-27
DRAWING SCALE	1"=100'
DRAWN BY	GP
APPROVED BY	KS

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 PLOTTED: 1/27/2026 2:45 PM BY: Gaurav Purohit PLOTTSTYLE: Pennoni\_V25.dwg