

Environmental Report
For
Rotary Community Park
Transition Area Waiver & General Permit 2
Township of Lower, Cape May County, New Jersey
November 2023



Prepared by:

**DEBLASIO &
ASSOCIATES**
CONSULTING ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Marc DeBlasio". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Marc DeBlasio, P.E., License #: 41599

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Rotary Park site currently contains a playground and parking area. Part of the existing playground exists inside the surrounding wetlands buffer and partially outside the wetlands buffer. A Letter of Interpretation was issued for the surrounding wetlands on July 17, 2023 which confirmed our findings. This application has been prepared so that Lower Township can renovate the portion of the playground that exists within the wetlands buffer. It is believed the playground was constructed prior to the institution of the NJ Freshwater Wetlands Act. However, the exact date of construction cannot be confirmed. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, Lower Township is seeking a Transition Area Waiver to renovate the portion of the playground within the wetlands buffer.

Lower Township is also seeking to install a public bathroom to service the patrons of the playground. Utilities are required to be installed in the wetlands buffer area to service the bathroom. A General Permit 2 for underground utilities is required and is included within this application.

Lower Township is revitalizing this site as part of their capital improvement program. The existing playground is run down, underutilized and in need of improvements. The site is located on Bayshore Road, a busy arterial road that runs through the Township. The central proximity of the site lends itself to being accessible and with improvements, the site will serve as a prominent civic space for the community.

The Transition Area Waiver, which is an averaging plan, proposes to shift the wetlands boundary to place the existing playground outside the wetlands transition area and include neighboring forest in the wetlands transition area. The overall environmental impact of the proposed averaging plan will be minimal as the proposed transition area will be reconfigured to include forested area and will remove impervious surfaces and the playground from the wetlands buffer.

WETLANDS TRANSITION AREA WAIVER COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

- The total square footage of the standard transition area within Block 410.01 Lot 48 is 82,410 S.F.
- The transition area will be reduced by 11,650 S.F. and increased by 11,650 S.F. There shall be no loss of transition area to the surrounding wetland.
- The site is in a municipality with swamp pink. The proposed activity will not result in any direct or indirect adverse impacts to swamp pink or its documented habitat.
- The site is not located in a municipality with bog turtles.

The proposed Transition Area Averaging Plan complies with all the requirements set forth in NJAC 7:7A-8.2. Specifically, the proposed averaging plan does the following:

- Does not reduce the overall total square footage of the transition area.
- The proposed transition area will continue to serve the purposes set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:7A-3.3.
- Does not reduce any portion of the transition area to less than 75 feet wide.
- Does not compensate for a transition area reduction by increasing the width of any portion of the transition area to more than 225 feet.
- Does not propose any adverse impacts to the transition area identified in N.J.A.C. 7:8A-8.2.(d)

GENERAL PERMIT COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The proposed utility work will comply with N.J.A.C. 7:7A-7.2. in the following ways:

- The total area of disturbance will be less than 0.5 acres. The total proposed disturbed area is 0.084 acres.
- The trenches will be restored as per N.J.A.C. 7:7A-7.2(c). The proposed trench restoration details are shown on the site plan.
- There will be no permanently maintained clearing. All proposed utilities are underground.
- The trench will be of minimum width to comply with the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration safety standards for excavations. The trench will be a maximum of 4 feet.
- Temporary disturbance, such as temporary construction clearing or temporary storage of dirt or equipment, is the minimum size necessary for compliance with local ordinances. The trenches will be backfilled as much as possible with the original excavated material.
- All trenches shall be restored at the original elevation. All trenches will match the surrounding grades.
- All manholes and siphons for the sewer line will be placed outside wetlands.
- All pipes laid through the wetlands transition area shall:
 - Be sealed to prevent leaking and infiltration.
 - Designed so as not to form or provide a conduit for groundwater to be discharged or drained from the wetland.
 - Placed entirely beneath the pre-existing ground elevation to allow free passage of surface and ground water.

The proposed General Permit for underground utilities complies with all the requirements set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:7A-5.7. in the following ways:

- All activities proposed under this general permit are associated with the proposed playground restoration at Rotary Park and are not for the purpose of eliminating or harming a natural resource.
- The regulated activity is not in the proximity of a public water supply intake.
- The proposed activities will not destroy, jeopardize, or adversely modify a present or documented habitat for threatened or endangered species; and shall not jeopardize the continued existence of any local population of a threatened or endangered species. The proposed utility work will be minimal and not result in a permanent clearing.
- The proposed activities are not located within a component of a state or federal wild and scenic river system.
- The proposed activities don't affect any heritage listed properties.
- There will be no discharge of dredge material from the proposed activities. All trenches will be open cut.
- Any structure or fill shall be maintained as specified in the construction plans.
- The proposed activities do not violate the Flood Hazard Area Control Act.
- The proposed activities are not considered a "major development" according to N.J.A.C. 7:8-1.2.
- The applicant will use an acceptable disposal site for all excavated material. The majority of excavated material will be used as backfill in the trenches and any excess will be hauled off-site to an acceptable disposal site.
- No riprap is proposed as part of the proposed activities.
- The general permit is not subject to the Department's Water Quality Management Planning rules at N.J.A.C. 7:15.
- No sediment will be introduced into any streams from the proposed activities.
- The proposed activities will not take place in a vernal habitat or in a transition area adjacent to a vernal habitat.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site is currently utilized as a children's playground. The site is mostly cleared and contains a mixture of pervious and impervious surfaces. The proposed area to be removed from the compensation area contains pre-existing playground equipment. The compensation area to be added to the buffer zone is forested and is 100% pervious surface.

ANALYSIS OF ANY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

Temporary Impacts

The potential environmental impacts that might occur temporarily from the proposed activity is disturbance to the area surrounding the wetlands during construction. This will be mitigated through the use of silt fences to contain the disturbed area and ensure that any construction activity occurs outside the wetlands buffer.

Long-Term Impacts

The proposed averaging plan proposes to shift the wetlands boundary to place the existing playground and impervious surfaces outside the wetlands buffer area. Neighboring forest is proposed to be included in the wetlands transition area as compensation. The proposed project results in a net environmental benefit as a more appropriate buffer area as defined in N.J.A.C. 7:7A-3.3. will be provided in lieu of built environment not conducive to supporting local fauna dependent on the wetlands.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The following potential alternatives have been analyzed:

1. Don't develop the site.
2. Develop the site outside the existing transition area.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE 1. – DON'T DEVELOP THE SITE

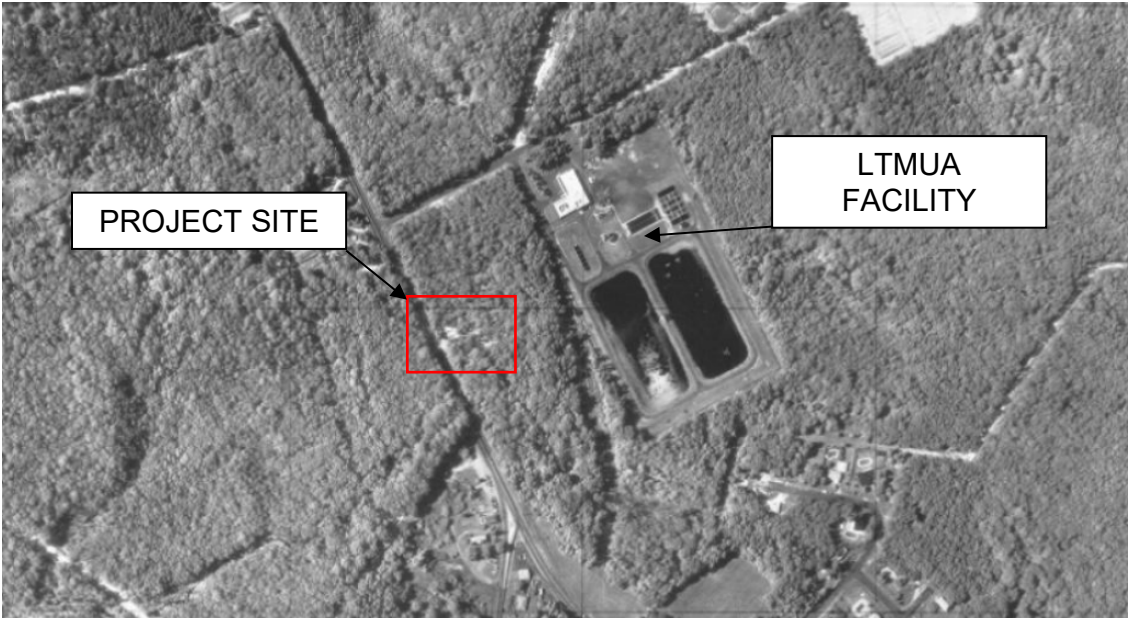
This site could remain undeveloped; however, there is an existing portion of the playground and impervious surface within the current wetlands buffer zone. Moving the wetlands buffer to encompass neighboring forested area as proposed in this application will advance the objectives set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:7A-3.3.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE 2. - ONLY DEVELOP THE SITE OUTSIDE THE WETLANDS BUFFER ZONE

The site could only be developed outside the wetlands transition area. This would still result in the existing portion of the playground and impervious surface remaining within the current wetlands buffer zone. Moving the wetlands buffer to encompass neighboring forested area as proposed in this application will advance the objective set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:7A-3.3.

PROPERTY HISTORY

The property was formerly owned by the neighboring Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (LTMUA). The playground is estimated to have been installed in the late 1980's. The site was formerly managed by the LTMUA until Lower Township took ownership of the property via a subdivision in early 2023 in order to stop the facility falling into disrepair and to renovate the playground for community use. The site originally began to be developed in the 1980's as shown in the images below.



Source: NJ 1977 Tidelands Basemaps



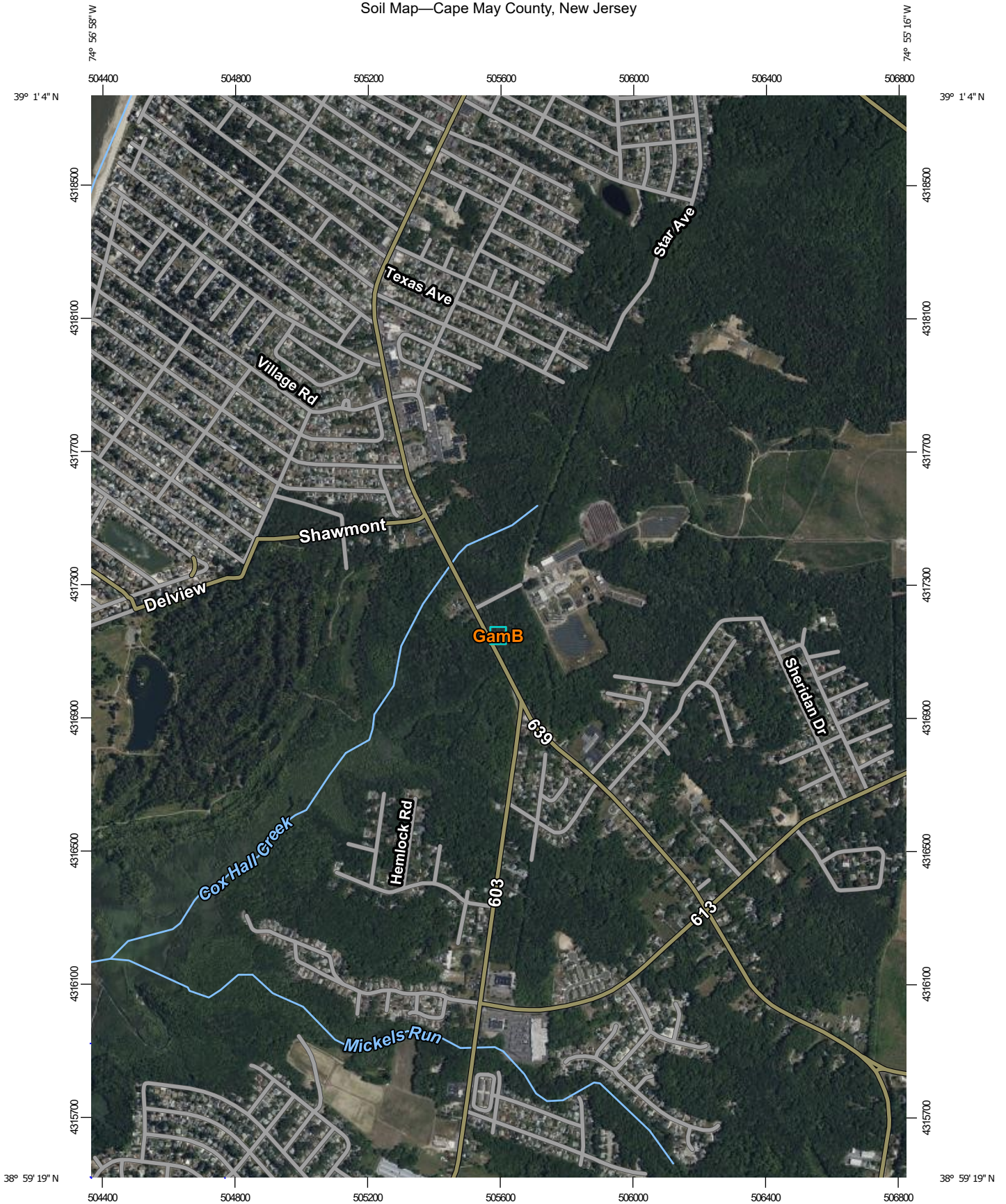
Source: NJ 1980's Infrared Imagery

SUMMARY

In summary, the proposed project will have minimal short-term and long-term environmental impacts. The proposed averaging plan will remove an existing developed area out of the wetlands buffer and replace it with forested area. This will result in an overall net ecological benefit to the wetlands. Furthermore, the proposed utility lines will result in a minimal disturbance to the site and the proper measures will be implemented to mitigate any negative impact on the wetlands during construction.

Site Maps

Soil Map—Cape May County, New Jersey



Map Scale: 1:15,800 if printed on A portrait (8.5" x 11") sheet.



0 200 400 800 1200 Meters

0 500 1000 2000 3000 Feet

Map projection: Web Mercator Corner coordinates: WGS84 Edge tics: UTM Zone 18N WGS84



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Web Soil Survey
National Cooperative Soil Survey

11/1/2023
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MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)

 Area of Interest (AOI)

Soils

 Soil Map Unit Polygons

 Soil Map Unit Lines

 Soil Map Unit Points

Special Point Features



Blowout



Borrow Pit



Clay Spot



Closed Depression



Gravel Pit



Gravelly Spot



Landfill



Lava Flow



Marsh or swamp



Mine or Quarry



Miscellaneous Water



Perennial Water



Rock Outcrop



Saline Spot



Sandy Spot



Severely Eroded Spot



Sinkhole



Slide or Slip



Sodic Spot



Spoil Area



Stony Spot



Very Stony Spot



Wet Spot



Other



Special Line Features

Water Features



Streams and Canals

Transportation



Rails



Interstate Highways



US Routes



Major Roads



Local Roads

Background



Aerial Photography

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:24,000.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Web Soil Survey URL:

Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Cape May County, New Jersey

Survey Area Data: Version 19, Aug 28, 2023

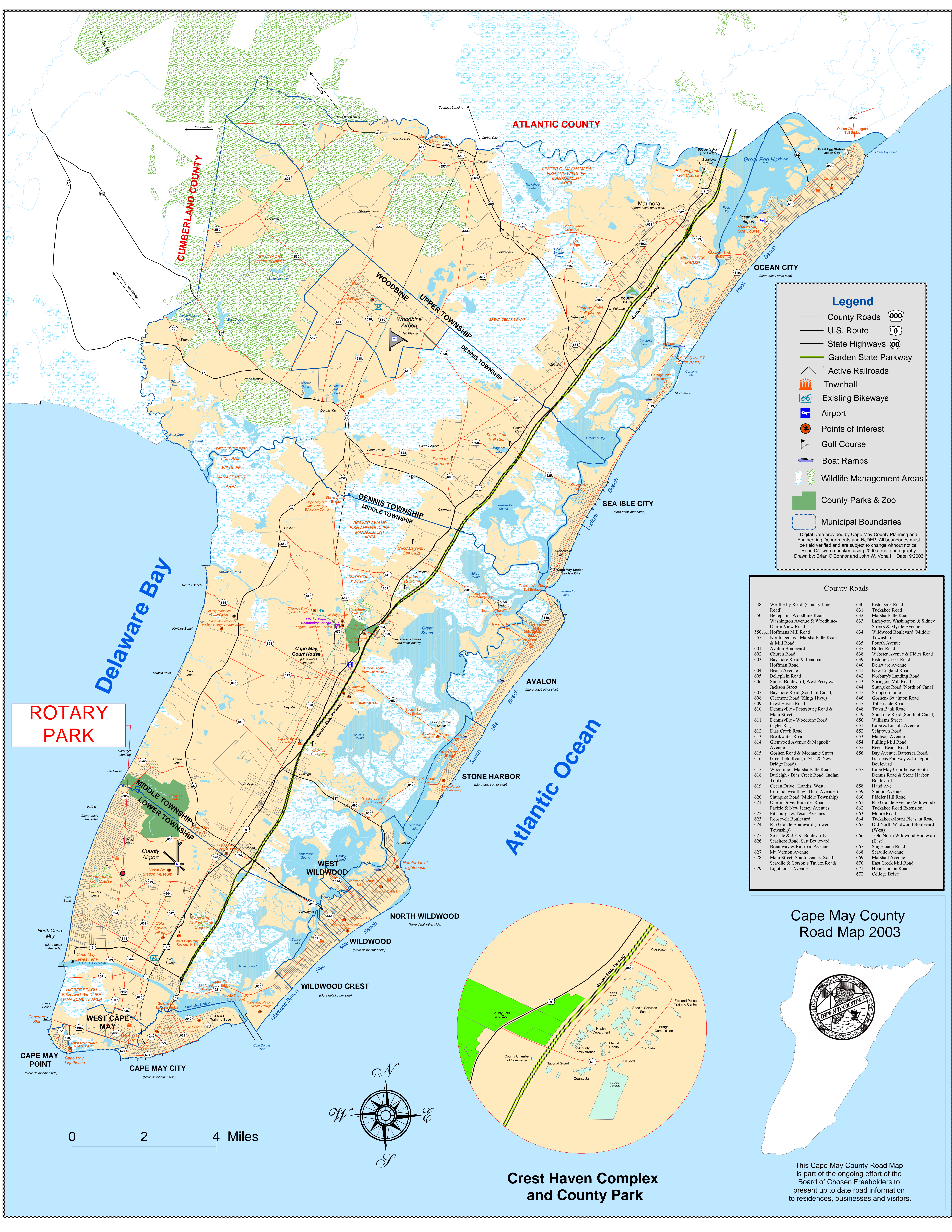
Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Data not available.

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
GamB	Galloway loamy sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes	0.6	100.0%
Totals for Area of Interest		0.6	100.0%



Legend

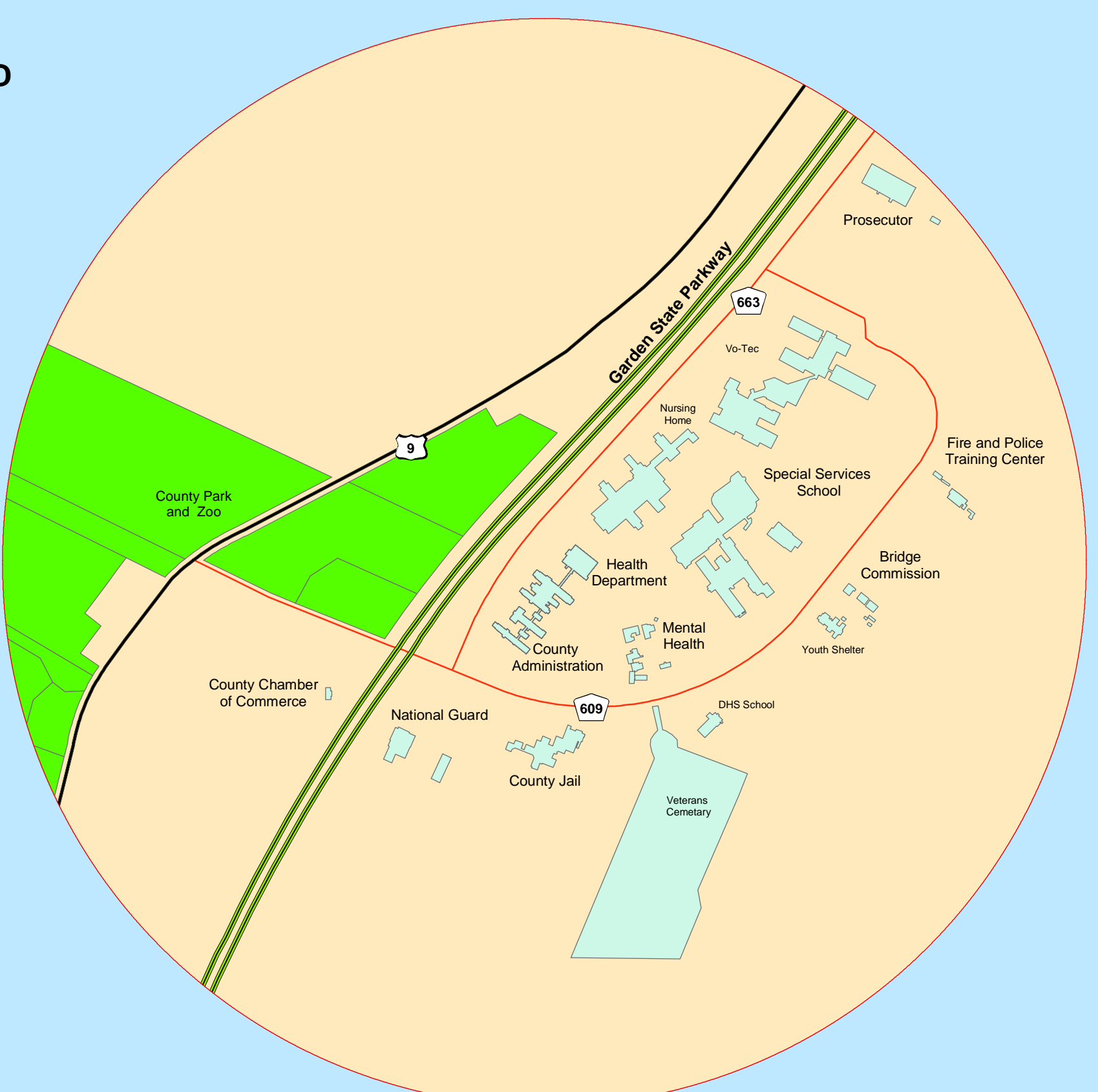
- County Roads **000**
- U.S. Route **0**
- State Highways **00**
- Garden State Parkway
- Active Railroads
- Townhall
- Existing Bikeways
- Airport
- Points of Interest
- Golf Course
- Boat Ramps
- Wildlife Management Areas
- County Parks & Zoo
- Municipal Boundaries

Digital Data provided by Cape May County Planning and Engineering Departments and NJDEP. All boundaries must be field verified and are subject to change without notice. Road C/L were checked using 2000 aerial photography. Drawn by: Brian O'Connor and John W. Vona II Date: 9/2003

County Roads

548	Weatherly Road (County Line Road)	630	Fish Dock Road
550	Belleplain - Woodbine Road	631	Tuckahoe Road
555	North Dennis - Marshville Road & Mill Road	632	Marshville Road
601	Avalon Boulevard	633	Lafayette, Washington & Sidney Streets & Myrtle Avenue
602	Church Road	634	Wildwood Boulevard (Middle Township)
603	Bayshore Road & Jonathan Hoffman Road	635	Fourth Avenue
604	Beach Avenue	637	Butter Road
605	Belleplain Road	638	Webster Avenue & Fidler Road
606	Sunset Boulevard, West Perry & Jackson Street	639	Fishing Creek Road
607	Bayshore Road (South of Canal)	640	Delaware Avenue
608	Clermont Road (Kings Hwy.)	641	New England Road
609	Crest Haven Road	642	Norbury's Landing Road
610	Dennisville - Petersburg Road & Main Street	643	Springers Mill Road
611	Dennisville - Woodbine Road (Tyler Rd.)	644	Shunpike Road (North of Canal)
612	Dias Creek Road	645	Stimpson Lane
613	Breakwater Road	646	Goshen - Swainton Road
614	Glenwood Avenue & Magnolia Avenue	647	Tabernacle Road
615	Goshen Road & Mechanic Street	648	Town Bank Road
616	Greenfield Road, Tyler & New Bridge Road	649	Shunpike Road (South of Canal)
617	Woodbine - Marshville Road	650	Williams Street
618	Burleigh - Dias Creek Road (Indian Trail)	651	Cape & Lincoln Avenue
619	Ocean Drive (Lands, West, Commonwealth & Third Avenues)	652	Seignton Road
620	Shunpike Road (Middle Township)	653	Madison Avenue
621	Ocean Drive, Rambler Road, Pacific & New Jersey Avenues	654	Fulling Mill Road
622	Pittsburgh & Texas Avenues	655	Reeds Beach Road
623	Roosevelt Boulevard	656	Bay Avenue, Battersea Road, Gardens Parkway & Longport Boulevard
624	Rio Grande Boulevard (Lower Township)	657	Cape May Courthouse-South Dennis Road & Stone Harbor Boulevard
625	Sun Isle & J.F.K. Boulevards	658	Hand Ave
626	Seashore Road, Satt Boulevard, Broadway & Railroad Avenue	659	Station Avenue
627	Mt. Vernon Avenue	660	Fidler Hill Road
628	Main Street, South Dennis, South Seaville & Corson's Tavern Roads	661	Rio Grande Avenue (Wildwood)
629	Lighthouse Avenue	662	Tuckahoe Road Extension
		663	Moore Road
		664	Tuckahoe-Mount Pleasant Road
		665	Old North Wildwood Boulevard (West)
		666	Old North Wildwood Boulevard (East)
		667	Stagecoach Road
		668	Seaville Avenue
		669	Marshall Avenue
		670	East Creek Mill Road
		671	Hope Corson Road
		672	College Drive

ROTARY PARK



Crest Haven Complex and County Park

Cape May County Road Map 2003

This Cape May County Road Map is part of the ongoing effort of the Board of Chosen Freeholders to present up to date road information to residences, businesses and visitors.

