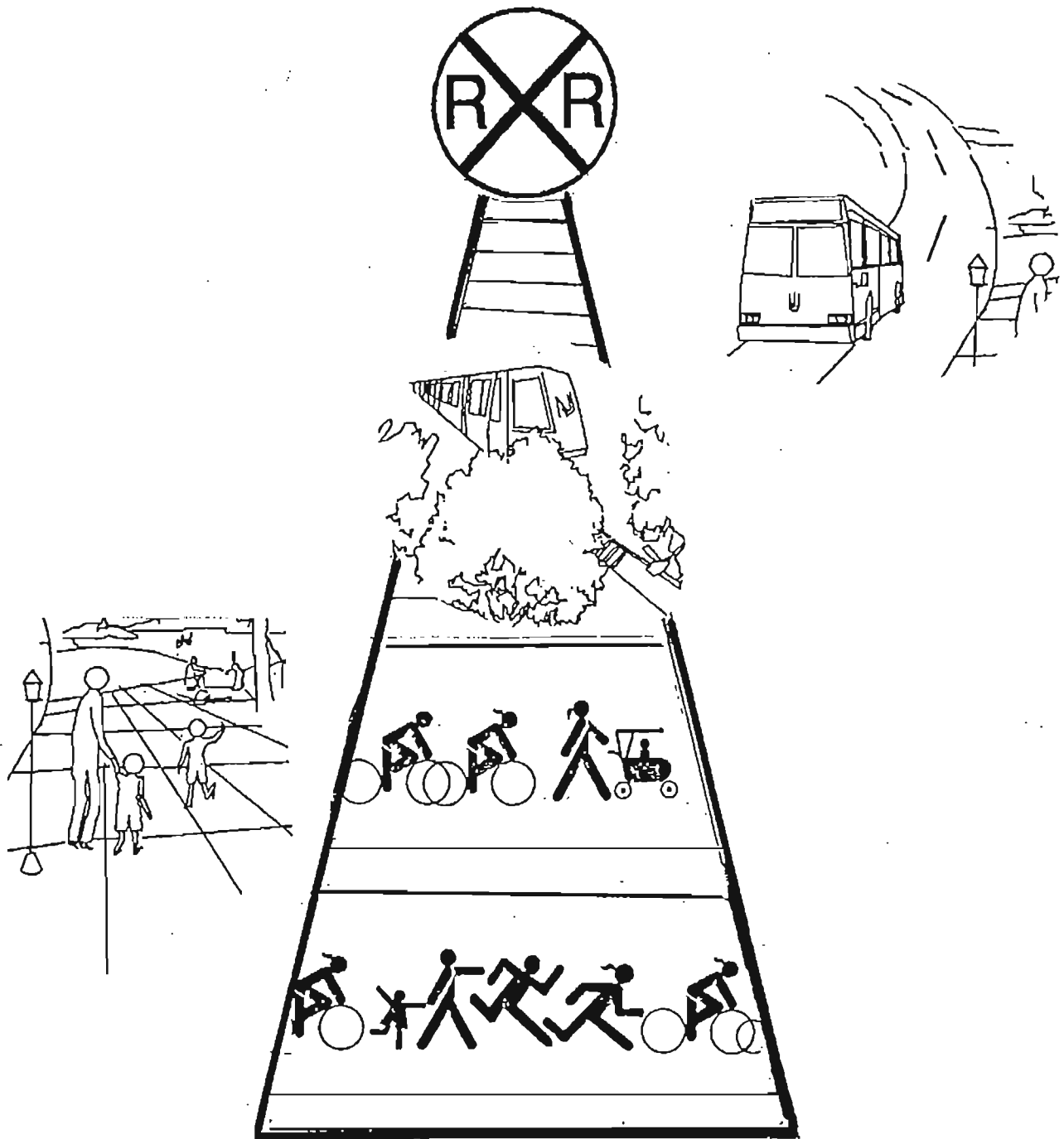


*PRESERVING
RAIL RIGHTS OF WAY
IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY*



MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
TRANSPORTATION DIVISION
AUGUST 1997

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1.0 Introduction

The Middlesex County Department of Planning has contracted with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to complete a study on "Preserving Rail as part of the FY 1997 Subregional Transportation Planning Program for Middlesex County".

This Study examines abandoned and active rail rights-of-way and nearby properties in the County where opportunities may exist for alternative uses, or for expansion of current use. The study reviews many abandonments which have occurred and the uses that have arisen in their place. It also examines the status of proposals involving reuse of these lines.

The potential for use as greenways is also examined in relationship to the adopted Middlesex County Open Space Recreation Plan. The future impact of the CONRAIL CSX/ NORFOLK SOUTHERN Merger is examined with some comment on its impact on Middlesex County. Finally, opportunities and proposals for new and expanded uses are presented. These include opportunities for new passenger rail services acceptable to nearby communities. New use of rail sidings to the New Jersey Turnpike Exit 8A distribution area; proposals under the Railroad Preservation Bond Act of 1989; Terminal Railroad upgrade including a short line at Raritan Center; and future ferry landings proposed for South Amboy, Perth Amboy, Edison, and Carteret. The study concludes with some suggested actions for Middlesex County.

1.1 **Background**

Middlesex County has a rich history of development which flourished during the railroad era in America. Middlesex County has had much of its growth centered around rail lines which constituted the main infrastructure in the late 19th and 20th century. These rail lines proceeded from the river and canal era of the 18th and early 19th centuries and preceded the automobile and highway era of the mid and late 20th century. In recent decades some rail lines in Middlesex County have fallen into disuse and are presently in transition at various stages of abandonment. This study looks at Middlesex County rail lines and rights of way from the point of view that future growth and development opportunities have and will continue to arise from abandoned rail lines and their nearby properties.

These represent key opportunities that can shape the future of the physical environment of Middlesex County. This study will present some possible proposals that can be explored for abandoned rail lines in Middlesex County.

1.2 Pre-1976 Conrail Jurisdictions and Historical Perspective

The Middlesex County Rail Infrastructure is illustrated in [Figure 1](#), relative to commuter service and freight rail. This infrastructure was greatly affected by two acts of government intervention during the 1970s:

- AMTRAK was created in 1971, with the assumption that long-haul commuter service could be profitable in corridors that were densely populated - in this case, the Northeast Corridor, which flanks the Atlantic Coastline from Boston to New York, and through Middlesex County before pushing on toward Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.
- Conrail (short for Consolidated Railways) combined the six major railroads of the northeast in 1976. These lines had been going bankrupt in the early 1970s, and the Federal Government saw the need to consolidate them because they served as the backbone of the economy - our economic lifeline relative to freight movement.

[Figure 2](#) shows the various rail jurisdictions which were in existence before 1976, and reorganized under Conrail. Although Conrail owns most of the rail infrastructure in Middlesex County, many of these lines are still referred to by their former names and branches:

These rail lines ran through the following towns:

- Central Railroad of New Jersey runs through Middlesex Borough, and Dunellen also Carteret and Woodbridge.
- Durham Transportation is a Short Line Railroad in Edison, Raritan Center.
- Lehigh Valley Railroad in Middlesex, Piscataway, South Plainfield, Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge, and Perth Amboy.
- New York and Long Branch Railroad runs through Carteret, Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, South Amboy, Sayreville, Old Bridge.
- Penn Central Railroad runs through Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, Edison, Metuchen, Highland Park, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, South Brunswick, Plainsboro.
- Raritan River Railroad runs through New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Milltown, East Brunswick, South River, Sayreville, South Amboy.
- Reading Railroad runs through Middlesex, Piscataway, South Plainfield, Edison, Metuchen, Woodbridge.

Prior to 1976 when Conrail came into existence, six mainline railroads ran in Middlesex County: the Central New Jersey Railroad, Lehigh Valley Railroad, New York and Long Branch Railroad, Penn Central Railroad, Raritan River Railroad, and Reading Railroad [See Figure 2]. The railroads that were to become part of the Conrail system are rooted in Middlesex County history. The original incarnations of these rail lines follow:

- **Camden and Amboy Railroad.** Middlesex County has the distinction of having the first railroad in New Jersey (and one of the first in the nation) to traverse the whole length of its area. The Camden and Amboy Railroad (chartered in 1830) first operated horse-powered trains, running from Bordentown through Hightstown to South Amboy in December 1832. In September 1833, steam engines began pulling trains over the line; the first of these was known as the "John Bull". In 1871 the old Camden and Amboy line became a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The last passenger service over this line took place on October 22, 1959, when a single-car train made its final trip from Jamesburg, through Helmetta, Outcalt, Spotswood, and Old Bridge, to South Amboy.
- **New Jersey Railroad (Pennsylvania Mainline).** The main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad (later, the Penn Central) through New Brunswick was first known as the New Jersey Railroad. This line was chartered in 1832 and began service in 1838. This line remains an important passenger corridor for not only the County, but the entire Northeast Corridor, from Boston to Washington, DC.
- **Freehold and Jamesburg Agricultural Railroad.** The old Freehold and Jamesburg Agricultural Railroad, chartered in 1851, carried passengers and freight from Jamesburg, through Englishtown to Freehold. It was later absorbed by the Pennsylvania Railroad and its final passenger service took place in May of 1962.
- **Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad.** The predecessor of the Jersey Central was the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad, chartered in 1831. Its mainline, which passed through Middlesex Borough and Dunellen at the extreme northwest corner of the County, began service in 1840. Passenger service lives on in this corridor, along NJ Transit's Raritan Valley Line.
- **New York and Long Branch Railroad.** The New York and Long Branch Railroad was operated by both the Jersey Central and the Penn Central. This line began in Newark and passed through Perth Amboy and South Amboy en route to Bay Head. Passenger service remains in operation along the southern expanse of this railroad, south of Perth Amboy, where the NJ Transit North Jersey Coast Line switches from the former Penn Central (Perth Amboy - Woodbridge Division) tracks to the north.
- **Lehigh Valley Railroad.** The Lehigh Valley Railroad operated two lines in the county: its mainline through South Plainfield and northward toward Union County, and a branch from South Plainfield, through Metuchen and Fords, to the Arthur Kill waterfront in Perth Amboy.

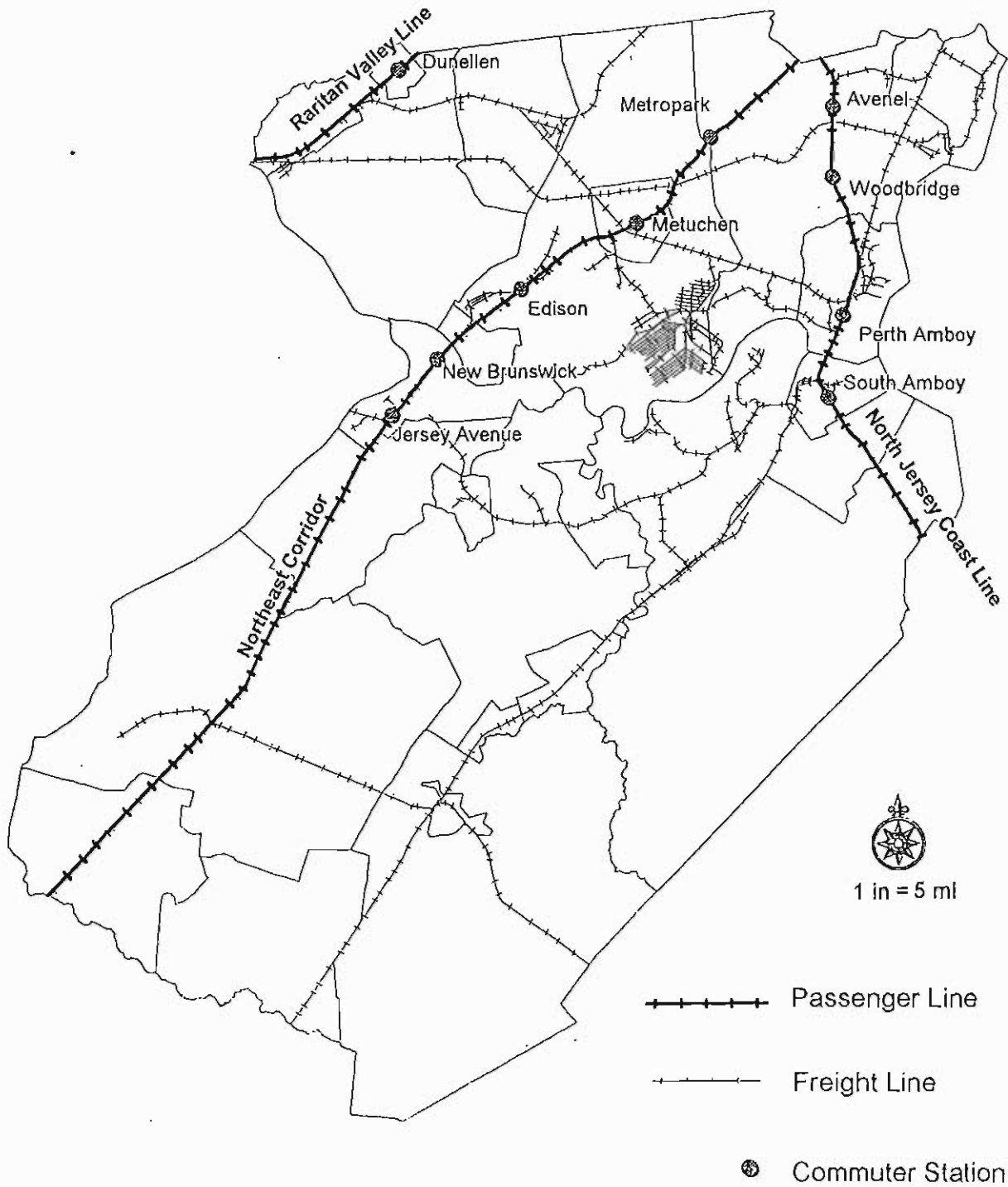
- **Reading Railroad.** The Reading Railroad operated freight service through Middlesex County, with a branch from Bound Brook, through Piscataway, Metuchen, and Woodbridge to Port Reading. The Port Reading Terminal along the Arthur Kill waterfront remains the site of expansive freight railyards to this day.
- **Raritan River Railroad.** The former Raritan River Railroad, approximately fifteen miles in length, is located entirely in Middlesex County. It operated intra-county service from South Amboy to New Brunswick. This railroad was chartered in 1888, and its trackage was completed by 1890. Passenger service over this line ceased operation in 1938. This railroad was absorbed by Conrail in 1980.

Source: *History of Middlesex County*, prepared by Dr. Richard Durnin, County Historian and member of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

Figure 1.

Middlesex County Rail Infrastructure

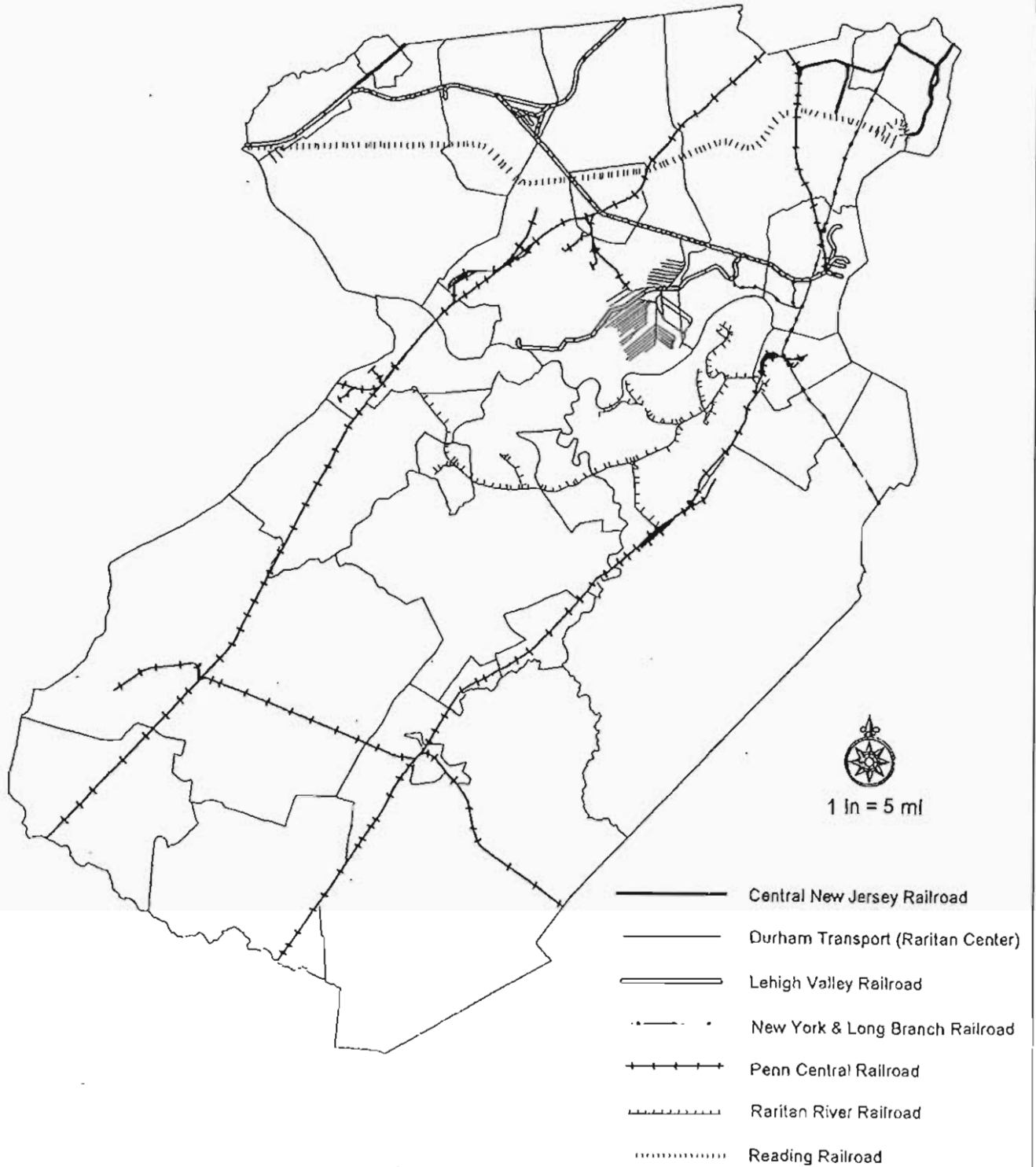
Passenger and Freight Lines



Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and Hagstrom Atlas of Middlesex County, 1976.

Figure 2.

Middlesex County Rail Infrastructure Pre-CONRAIL Jurisdictions



Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and Hagstrom Atlas of Middlesex County, 1976.

1.3 **Rail Commuter Lines**

NJ TRANSIT currently runs scheduled commuter rail service on three lines through Middlesex County:

- The Northeast Corridor Line

The Northeast Corridor Line, connecting New York and Trenton, runs northeast/southwest through Middlesex County with stops at Metropark (Iselin), Metuchen, Edison, downtown New Brunswick and at Jersey Avenue in New Brunswick.

- The North Jersey Coast Line

Jersey Coast Line extends from New York/Newark south through Union, Middlesex and Monmouth Counties to the northern border of Ocean County at Bay Head. As depicted on Figure 1, rail stations in Middlesex County along this line include Avenel, Woodbridge, Perth Amboy and South Amboy.

- The Raritan Valley Line

The Raritan Valley Line traverses through the extreme northwestern corner of Middlesex County and has one station stop in Dunellen.

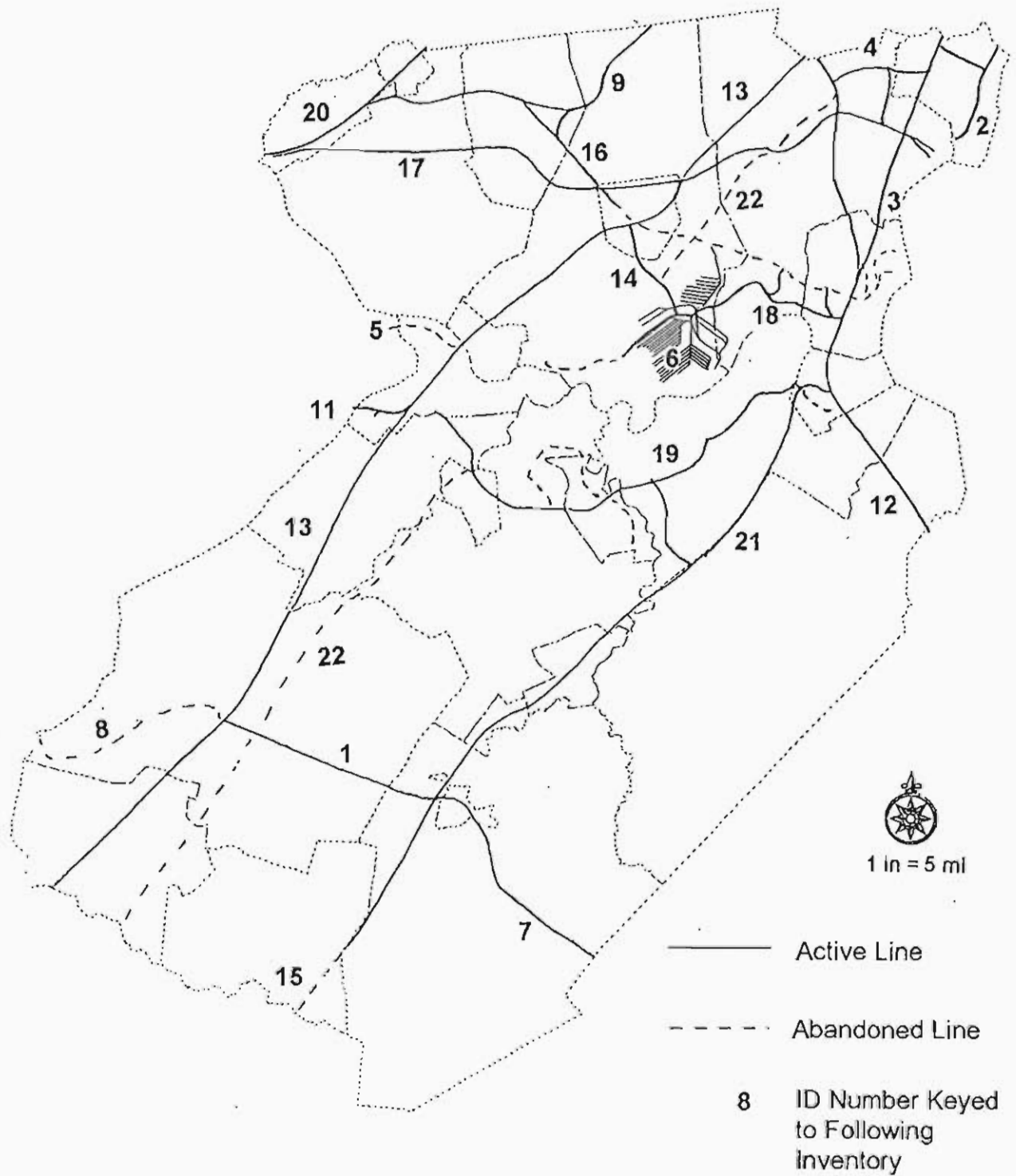
Refer back to Figure 1 to see how the commuter lines relate to the entire rail infrastructure in Middlesex County.

1.4 **Active Freight Lines**

Middlesex County's rail infrastructure includes many active freight lines that fall under Conrail's jurisdiction. Shortline freight service is also provided in the Raritan Center vicinity by Durham Transport. Figure 3 shows the distinctions between active and abandoned rail lines throughout the County. This map is keyed to an inventory of railroad lines in the County, relative to ownership and jurisdictional issues as well as the status of service along these lines see Table 1. However, under the proposed Conrail CSX/Norfolk Southern merger, a new configuration of rail service may emerge.

Figure 3.

Middlesex County Rail Infrastructure Active & Abandoned Rail Lines



Source: *New Jersey Statewide Rail Right-of-Way Study: Towards a Framework for Planning and Preservation*, prepared by NJ Transit, 1996.

Table 1.

**Inventory of Known Active and Abandoned
Rail Rights-of-Way
in Middlesex County, 1996**

ID No.	Railroad Line Name	Present Owner	Location From (North & West)	Location To (South & East)	Status	Comments
1	Amboy Secondary	Conrail	Monmouth Junction	Jamesburg	Active	Active freight service in the Interchange 8A vicinity
2	Chemical Coast	Conrail	Oak Island	Woodbridge Interlocking	Active	Active freight service along Arthur Kill Sound Shore
3	CNJ Perth Amboy & Elizabeth Branch	Conrail	Elizabeth	Perth Amboy	Active	Active freight service on north/south spine roughly paralleling the New Jersey Turnpike
4	CNJ Reformatory Branch	Conrail	Woodbridge	Reformatory Siding	Active	Access via new switch on Port Reading Secondary
5	Delaware & Raritan Canal Railroad		New Brunswick	Trenton	Abandoned -1936	Heavily urbanized in some sections, trail development in others
6	Durham Transport		Raritan Center		Active	Active freight service on trackage within Raritan Center
7	Freehold Secondary	Conrail	Jamesburg	Freehold	Active	Active freight service southeastward from Jamesburg
8	Kingston Branch	Conrail	Kingston	Monmouth Junction	Abandoned	Abandoned from Northeast Corridor to Delaware & Raritan Canal at Kingston
9	Lehigh Valley	Conrail	Alpha Junction	Hunter (Newark)	Active	Active freight service through northwestern tier of Middlesex County
10	Manville Branch	Conrail	Manville	Port Reading	Abandoned	Whereabouts unknown
11	Millstone Branch	AMTRAK/ Conrail	Clyde	New Brunswick	Active	First two miles are active, but track no longer reaches Clyde
12	North Jersey Coast Line	NJ Transit	Rahway	Red Bank	Active	Active commuter rail service
13	Northeast Corridor	AMTRAK	New York City	Trenton	Active	Backbone of passenger rail service in New Jersey
14	PC Bonhamtown Branch	Conrail	Metuchen	Nixon/Bonhamtown	Active	Active freight service to Ford Plant vicinity
15	PC Camden & Amboy		Cranbury	Windsor	Abandoned	Junction of US-130 and NJ-33 obliterated section
16	Perth Amboy Branch	Conrail	South Plainfield	Perth Amboy	Part Active	Active at South Plainfield; abandoned east of Stelton station

Table 1 (Continued).

ID No.	Railroad Line Name	Present Owner	Location From (North & West)	Location To (South & East)	Status	Comments
17	Port Reading Secondary	Conrail	Bound Brook	Port Reading	Active	Active freight service along east/west corridor through northern tier of Middlesex County
18	Raritan Industrial	Conrail	Raritan Center	Perth Amboy	Part Active	Local freight service (proposed for abandonment immediately west of Raritan Center)
19	Raritan River Railroad	Conrail	New Brunswick	Raritan Junction	Part Active	Segments in South Amboy and the East Brunswick/South River industrial areas abandoned
20	Raritan Valley Line	NJ Transit	High Bridge	NEC Hunter Connection	Active	Active commuter rail service
21	South Amboy Secondary	Conrail	South Amboy Interlocking	Cranbury	Active	This section of the ROW has (unused) catenary over the track
22	Trenton Fast Line (Elizabeth & Trenton Railroad)	Public Service Electric & Gas	Milltown	Trenton	Abandoned - 1936	Now contains PSE&G heavy power lines (also section further north, paralleling US-1 through Edison and veering toward Chemical Coast in Woodbridge)

Source: *New Jersey Statewide Rail Right-of-Way Study: Towards a Framework for Planning and Preservation*, prepared by NJ Transit, 1996.

1.5 Freight Lines Proposed for Abandonment or Already Abandoned

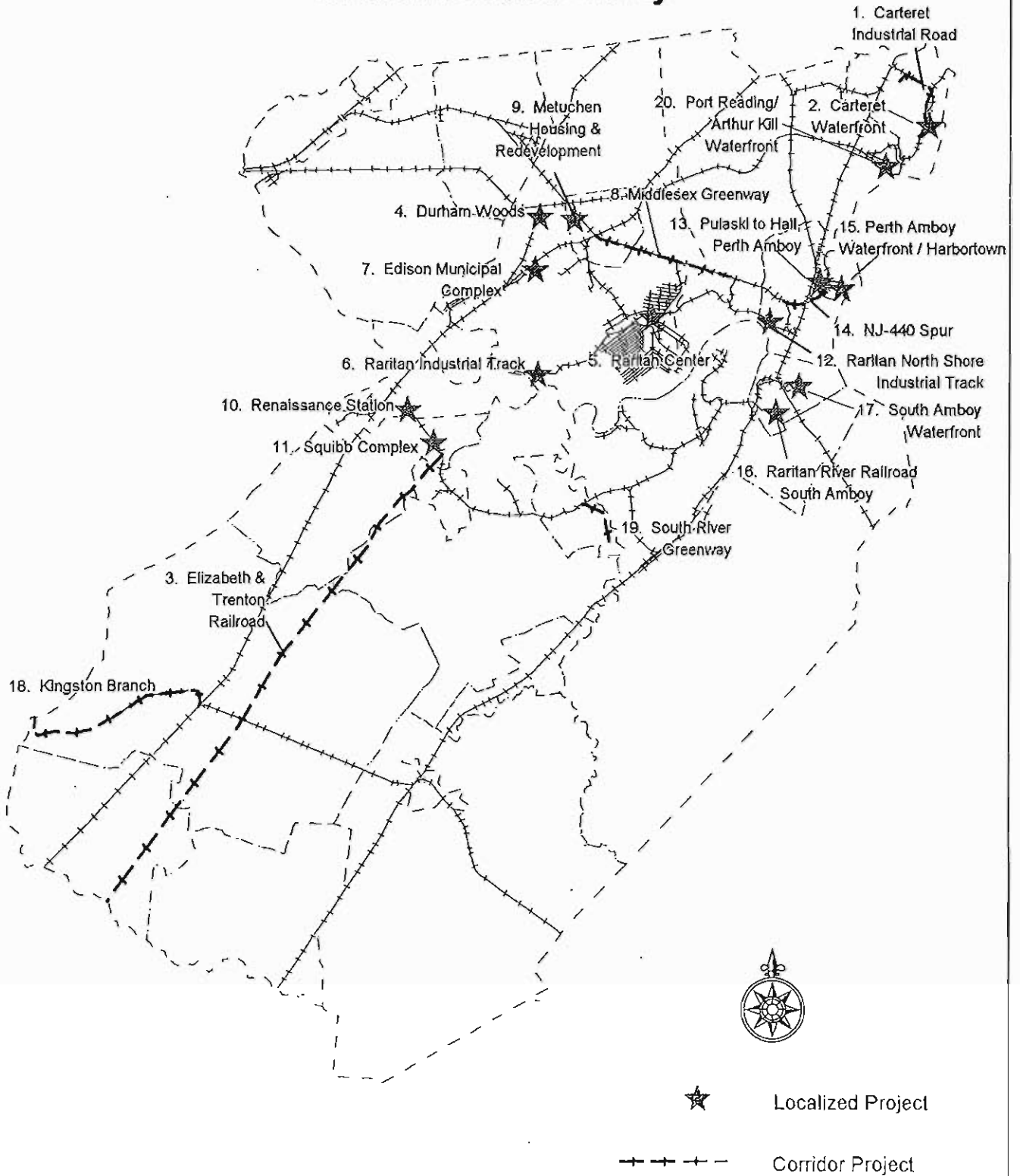
Many rail lines in Middlesex County have either been abandoned or are proposed for abandonment. Figure 4 shows rail segments which have either been abandoned or are proposed for abandonment and are identified by the name of the project and the type of reuse of the facility.

2.0 Active and Proposed Reuses of Abandoned Railroad Rights of Way in Middlesex County

Numerous examples of the reuse of abandoned railroad rights of way in Middlesex County are described in this chapter. A map (Figure 4) shows each of 20 examples of rail right-of-way uses and reuses.

Figure 4.

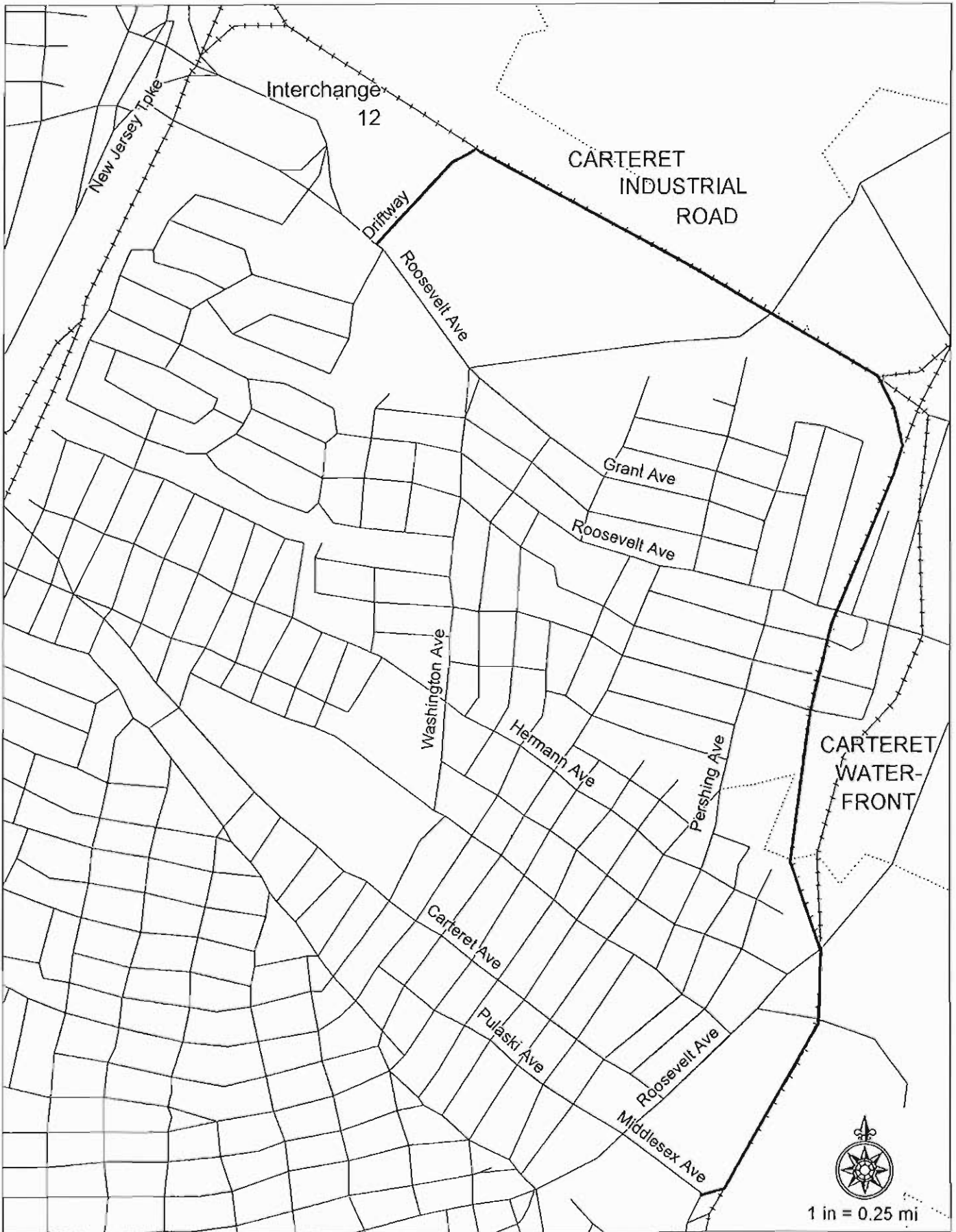
Active, In-Construction, and Proposed Reuse of Abandoned Railroad Rights-of-Way in Middlesex County



2.1 Carteret Industrial Road

The Borough of Carteret in the 1980's completed the Carteret Industrial Road constructed over the Conrail right of way of the Central Railroad of N.J. abandoned rail line. In response to high volumes of truck traffic routed on Roosevelt Avenue, a main shopping and residential street with neighborhood schools and children, the Mayor, Council and people of Carteret petitioned the Governor and State D.O.T. for design and construction of a bypass road to remove the trucks. A truck route was built which provides access to the industrial sites on the waterfront from the New Jersey Turnpike Exit 12 to Middlesex Avenue. (See Figure 5).

Figure 5. Carteret Industrial Road, Carteret

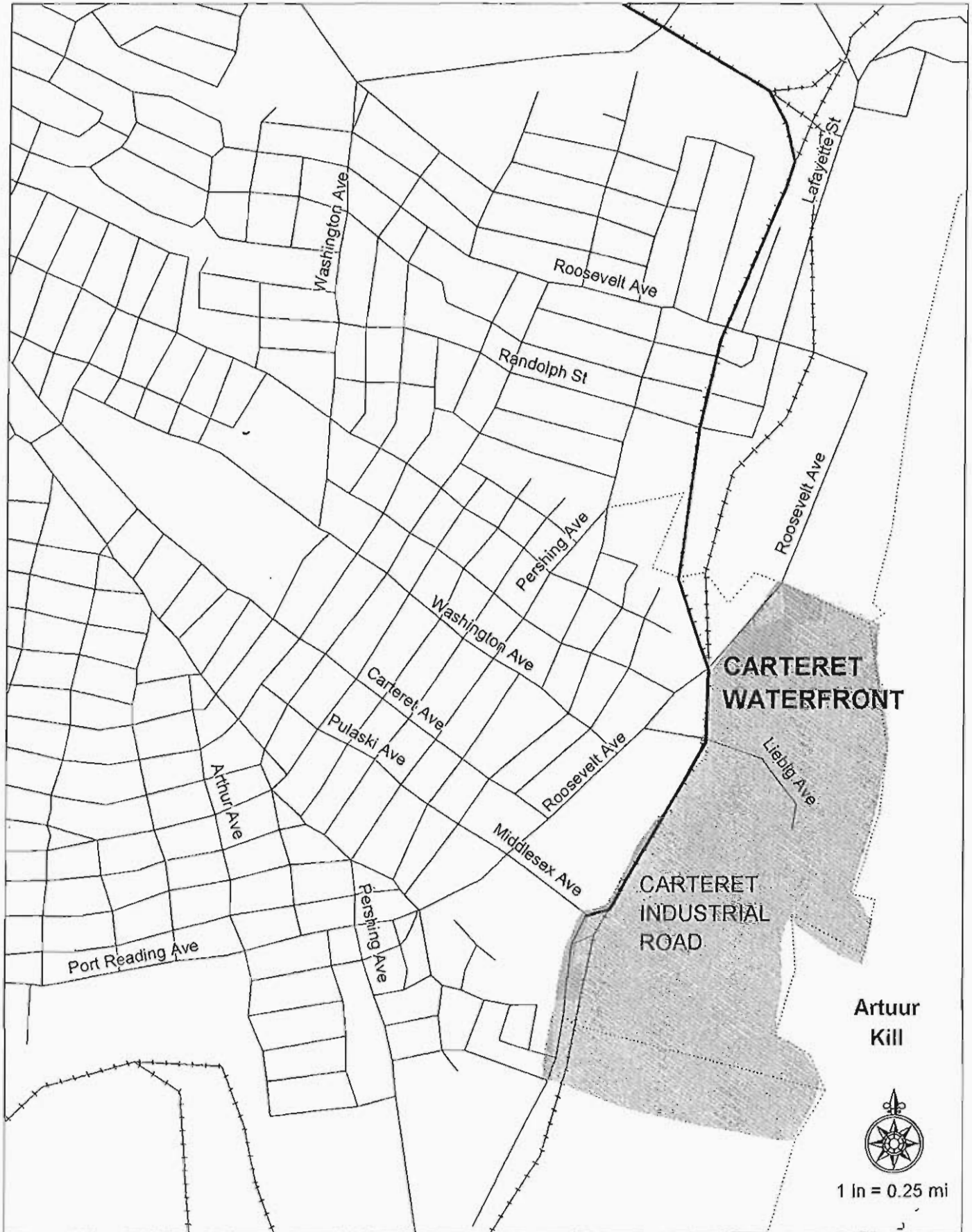


2.2 **Carteret Waterfront**

The Carteret Waterfront is served by rail over the old Central Railroad of New Jersey tracks which are active to American Oil, General Transportation (GTAX), FMC and Reichold Chemical which are regular customers. Many of the rail tracks which formerly served U.S. Metals Refining Co. And I.T. Williams Lumber Co. As shown on Figure 6 have been removed and replaced by warehouses with truck access and no rail sidings. Rail would be available if a marine terminal were constructed. The Arthur Kill has a 30 foot ship channel past Port Carteret and a marine terminal has been proposed although no investors or developers have committed to the proposed port facility.

Carteret also abandoned the Terminal Avenue branch of the CNJ Railroad, which was reused as part of the Chrome Urban Renewal area, which allowed for public housing called Roosevelt Village and Manor.

Figure 6. Carteret Waterfront, Carteret



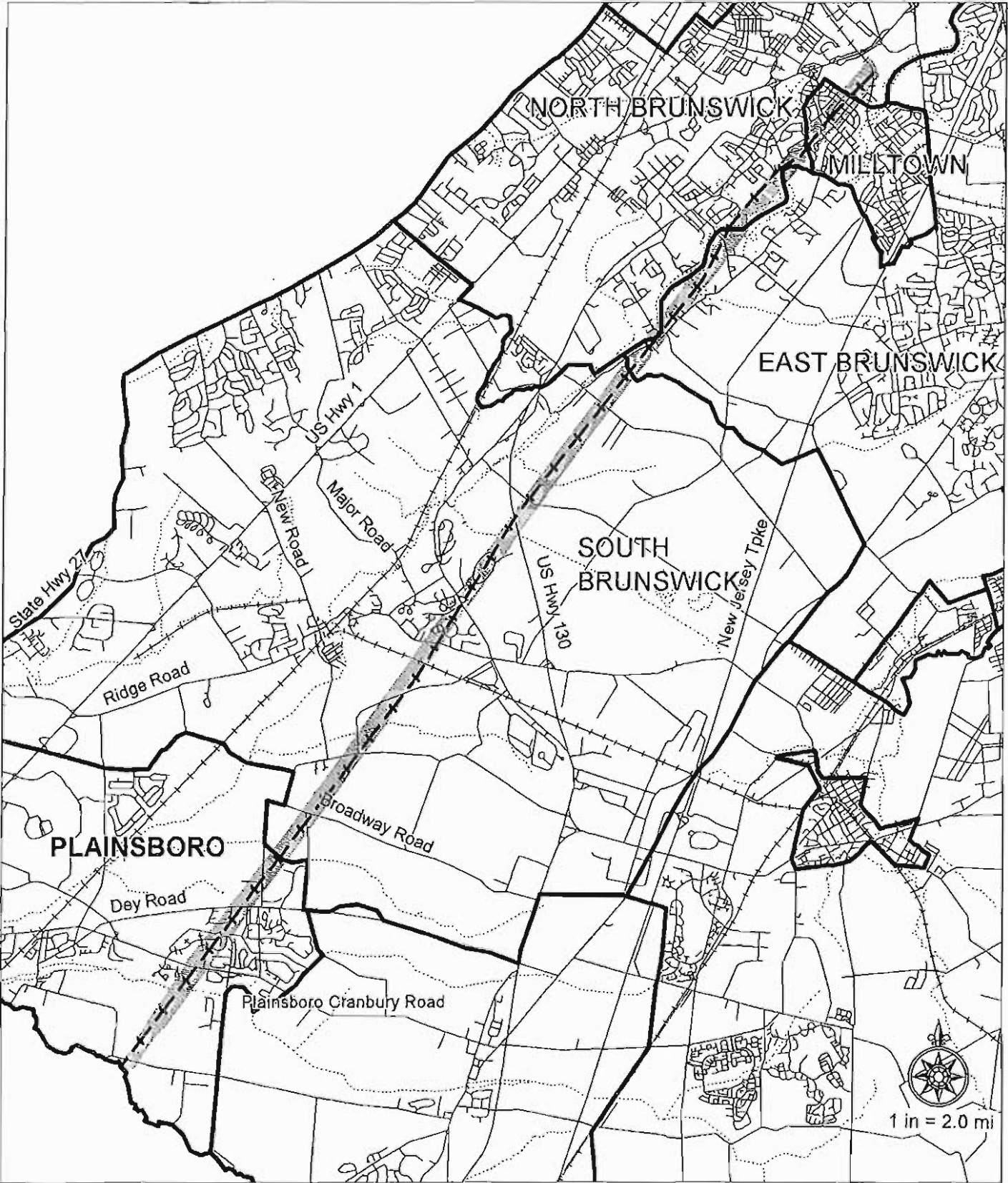
2.3 North Brunswick, Milltown, East Brunswick, Plainsboro, Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad

The 23.4 mile Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad was abandoned in 1939 and its 100 foot right of way use converted to carry electric transmission lines for PSE&G. A 1980 N.J.D.O.T. report on bikeway potential states that this right of way exhibits possibilities for further conversion to a bikeway. The route which connects the Trenton area with New Brunswick will provide a non motorized alternative to U.S. Route 1 through Middlesex County from East Brunswick, Milltown, North Brunswick, South Brunswick, and Plainsboro. (See Figure 7).

NJDOT has funded the U.S. Route 1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Plan to improve conditions for bicycling and walking within the corridor from Woodbridge to Trenton. The plan, being developed by the RBA Group and Greenways Inc. focuses on specific improvements such as bike lanes, sidewalks, greenways and other access improvements at feasible locations.

The PSE&G power line right of way over the abandoned Elizabeth and Trenton railroad provides such feasible locations through Edison and Woodbridge between Menlo Park and Woodbridge Center shopping Centers as well as its entire length.

Figure 7. Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad Corridor
East Brunswick, Milltown, North Brunswick,
Plainsboro, and South Brunswick



2.4 Edison, Durham Woods Apartments, Reading Road

Developer Sam Halpern used the abandoned Reading Rail Spur which crossed under Route I-287 in Edison as the access road from New Durham Road, Edison to Durham Woods, a major apartment complex. (See Figure 8, Picture 1 and 2).

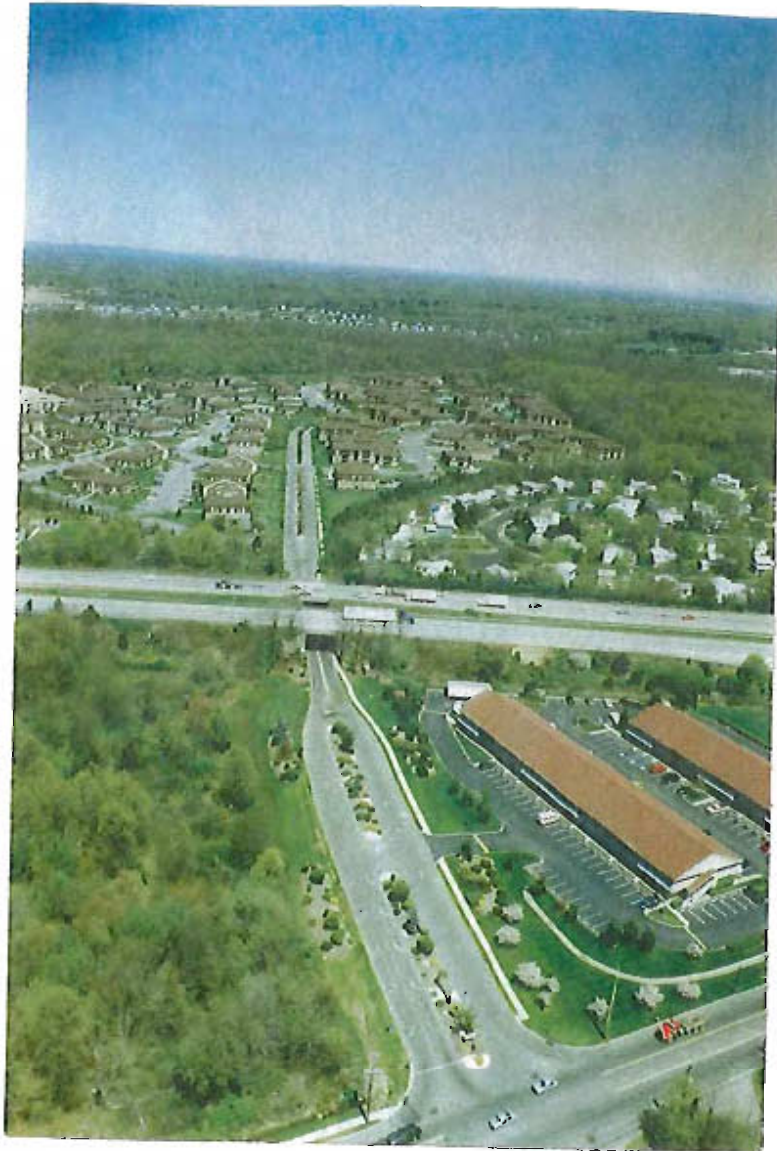


Figure 8 - Picture 1

Reading Road over former Reading Railroad Right-of-Way under I-287 to New Durham Road from Durham Woods Apartment

Figure 8. Durham Woods Apartments, Reading Road, Edison

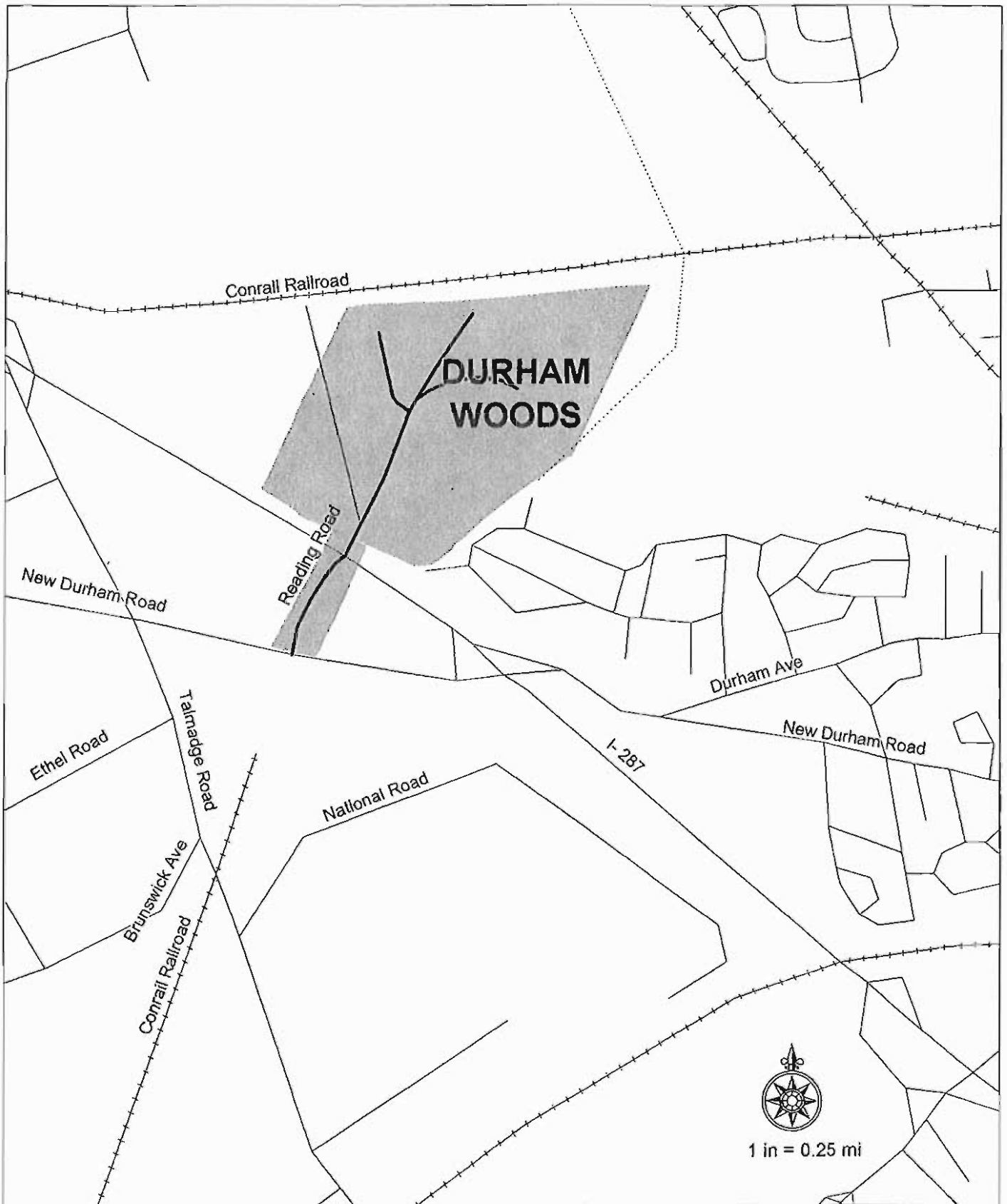




Figure 8 - Picture 2

Edison, I-287 Over Abandoned Rail Right-of-Way Reading Road, at Red Roof Inn on New Durham Road, Talmadge Village Upper Left, Reading Railroad Line Upper Right Above Talmadge Village

2.5 Edison, Raritan Center Industrial Park, (15 Miles of Track serving Durham Transportation)

Durham Transportation operates a short line railroad on 15 miles of track in Raritan Center Industrial Park. Durham handles 1,500 carloads each year and serves businesses in and around Raritan Center. (See Figure 9 and Pictures 1-6).



Figure 9 - Picture 1

Edison - Jughandle at Main Street off Woodbridge Avenue County Route 514. Raritan Center/Raritan River in background. Lehigh Valley Durham Transportation Shortline Railroad in center

Figure 9. Raritan Center Industrial Park, Edison

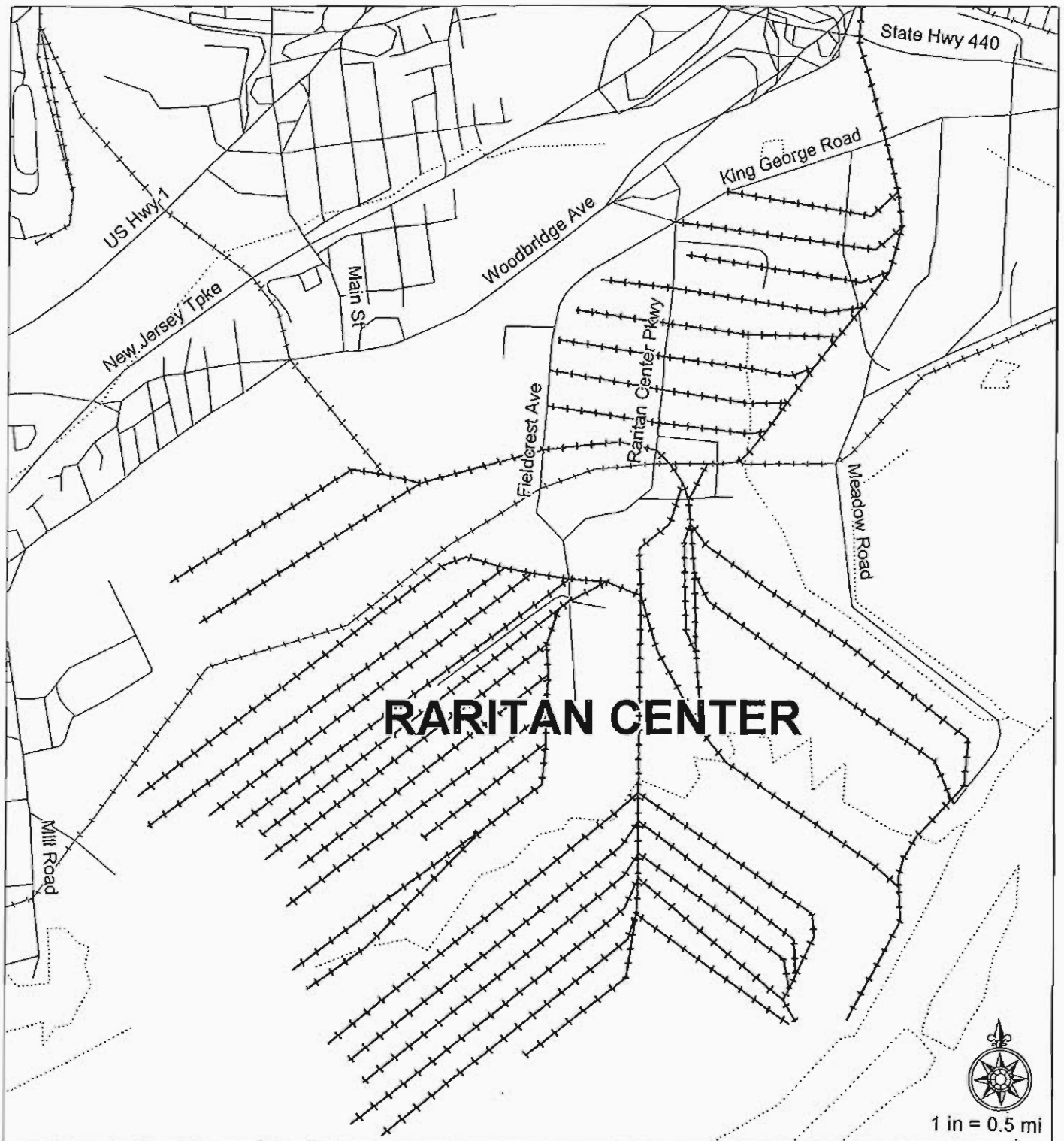




Figure 9 - Picture 2

Middlesex County College Baseball/Tennis Facilities Split by Raritan Industrial Track in Foreground. Raritan Center Industrial Park in Background in Upper Right



Figure 9 - Picture 3

Edison - Raritan Center Industrial Park served by Raritan Industrial Track



Figure 9 - Picture 4

Edison - Raritan Center, Lehigh Valley Railroad, Center, between Macy's on Left and UPS on Right. Industrial Road Railroad Crossing with Raritan River and Bridges in Background

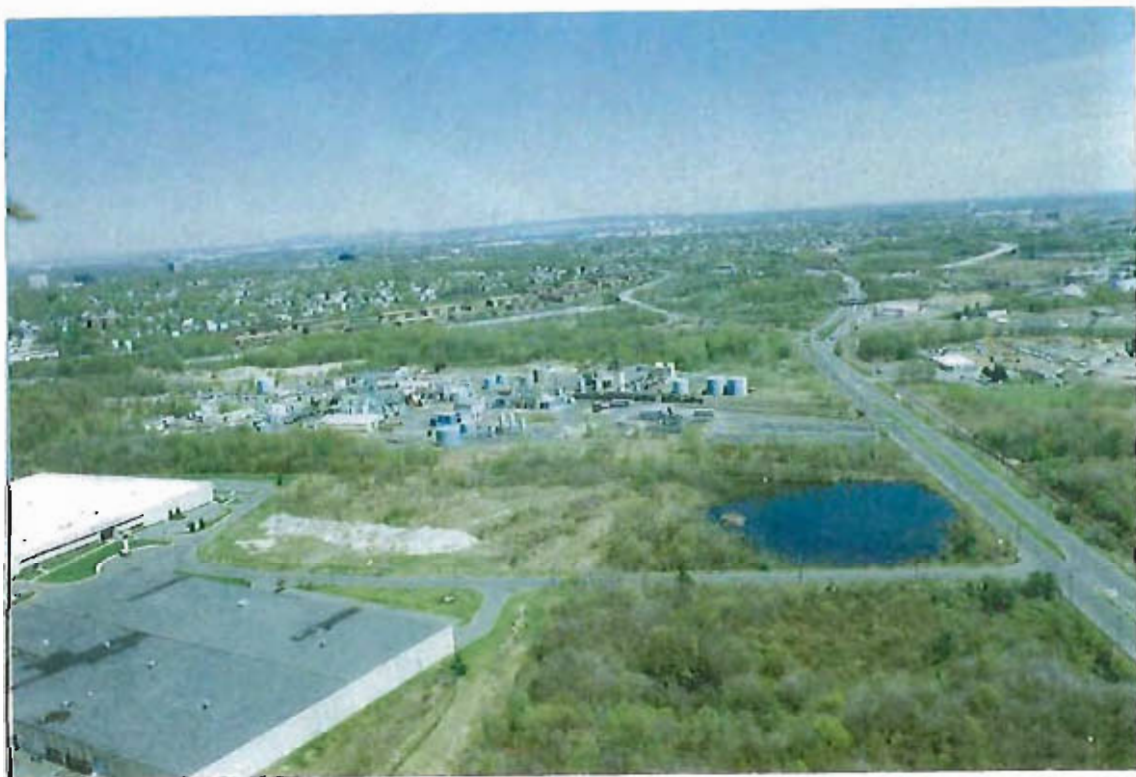


Figure 9 - Picture 5

Edison - Hatco Chemical on Left off Industrial Highway to Right and King Georges Post Road on Left with I-440 in Background

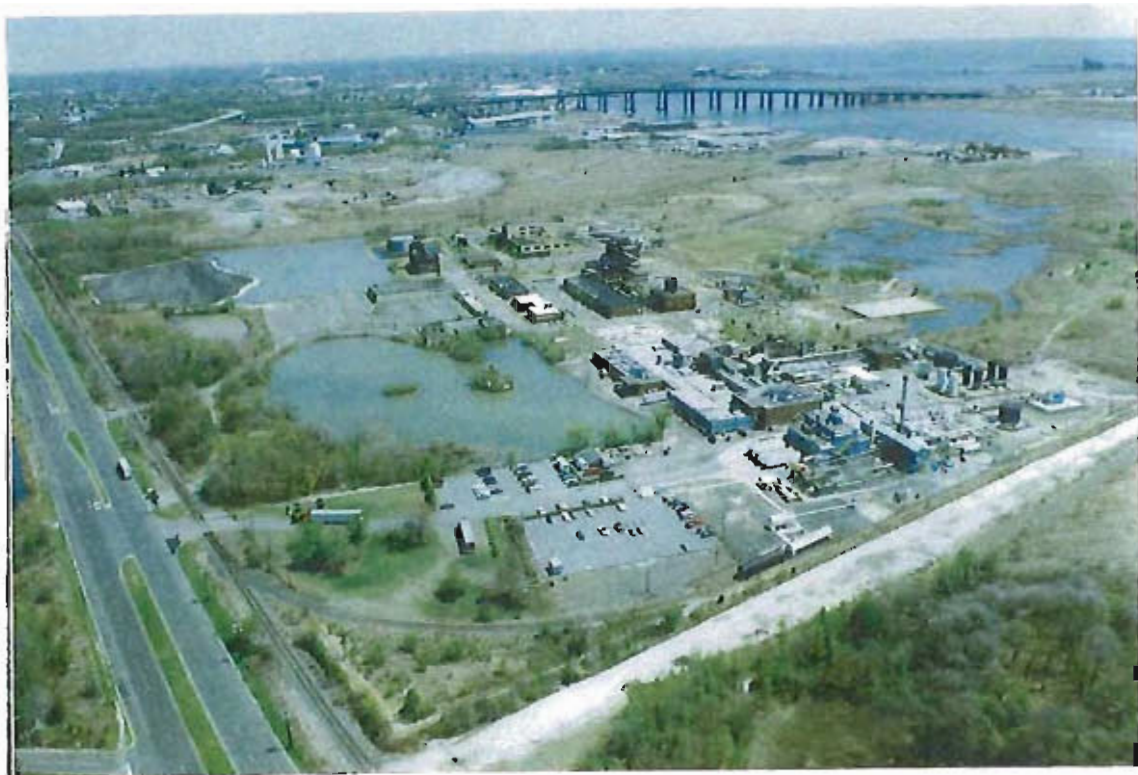


Figure 9 - Picture 6

Edison - Chemical Company on Industrial Highway. Lehigh Valley Railroad Durham Transportation on Right, with Raritan River and Bridges in Background

2.6 Edison Raritan Industrial Track

From milepost 25.0 to 26.4 a 1.4 mile stretch of track was proposed for abandonment in 1995 by Conrail. The use of the land along the affected track in a light industrial zone is undetermined. Conrail after removing the rails for scrap steel has considered the sale of this right of way. (See Figure 10 and Pictures 1-5).

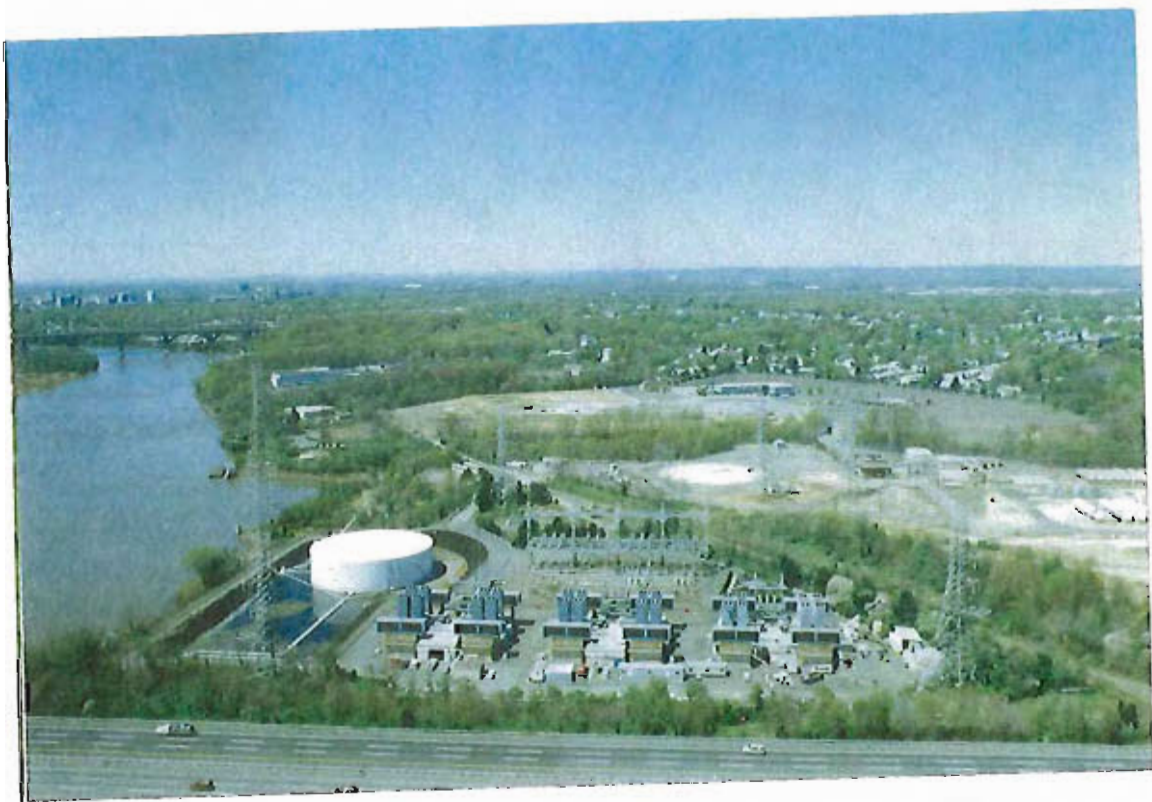


Figure 10 - Picture 1

Edison - PSE & G Power Plant along Raritan River, Left, NJ Turnpike, bottom, and Raritan Industrial Track Diagonal Right Lower Corner to Left Center. PSE & G Training Facility Center Right

Figure 10. Raritan Industrial Track, Edison

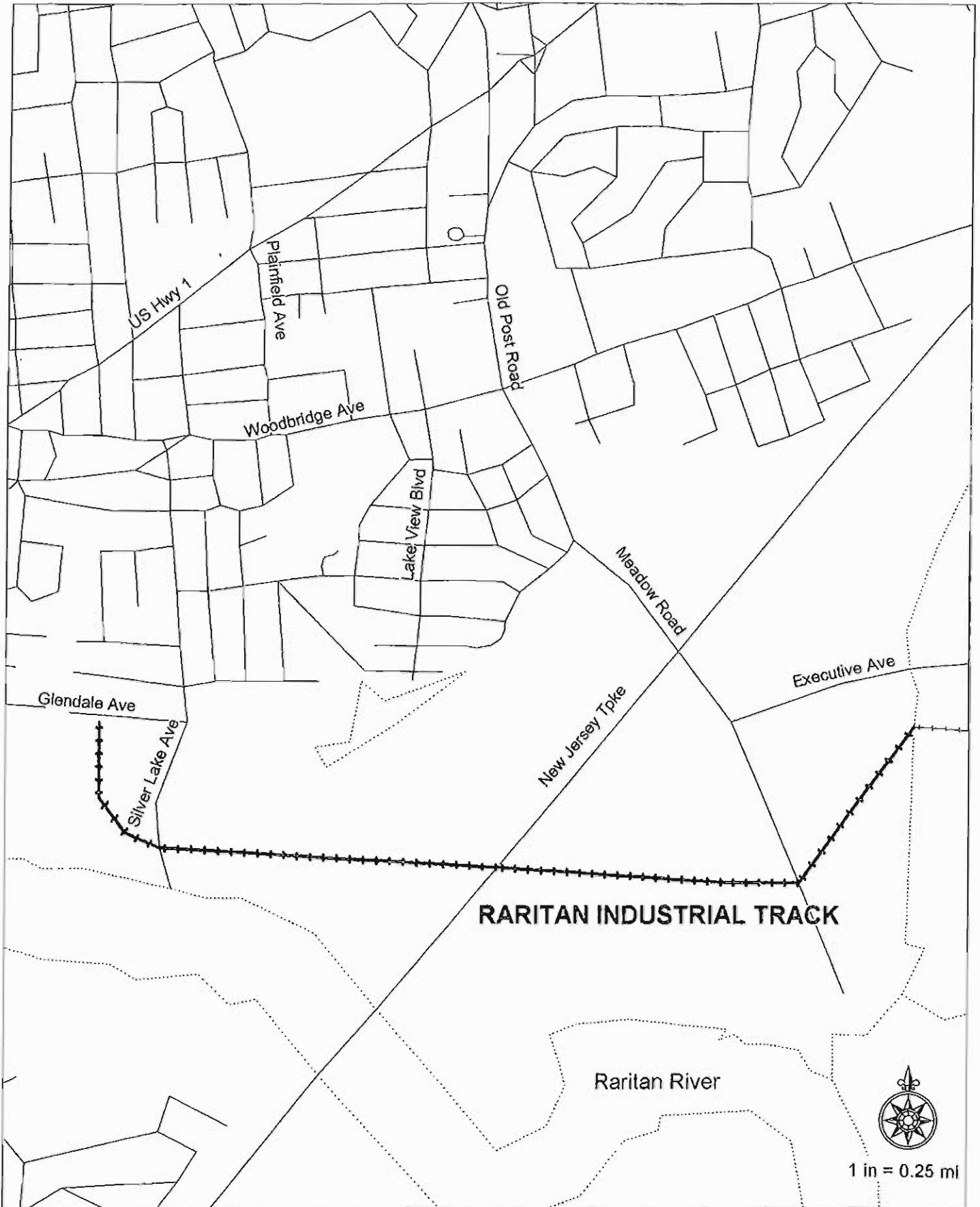




Figure 10 - Picture 2

Edison - Raritan Industrial Track Under the NJ Turnpike
Between PSE & G Gas Power Plant Left and PSE & G
Training Facility Right Along Raritan River

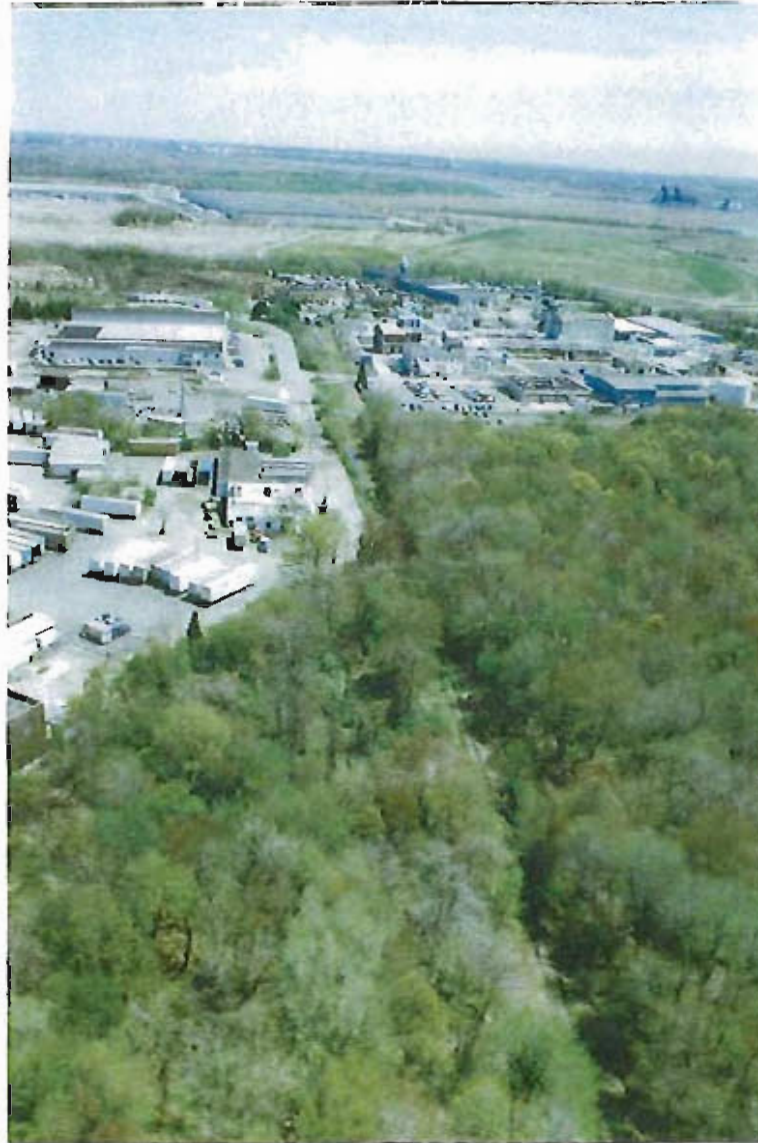


Figure 10 - Picture 3

Edison - Akzo Chemical Plant, on Meadow Road, Upper Right, Raritan Industrial Track in Foreground, Proposed For Abandonment



Figure 10 - Picture 4

Edison - Heller Industrial Looking Toward Mill Road at end of Raritan Industrial Track where Abandonment starts



Figure 10 - Picture 5

Start of Raritan Industrial Track Abandonment

2.7 Edison, Municipal Complex and Park

The Township of Edison, which had outgrown its municipal building on Plainfield Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue in Nixon, purchased abandoned rail property known as the loop along the Northeast Corridor tracks. The reuse of track occurred in the 1980's and provided an excellent opportunity for Edison to construct a large municipal complex with ample parking and an adjacent municipal park with tennis courts. (See Figure 11 and Pictures 1 and 2).



Figure 11 - Picture 1

Edison - Edison Municipal Complex in Center Below Baseball Fields and Northeast Corridor Main Line in Abandoned Right-of-Way called the Loop

Figure 11. Edison Municipal Complex, Edison

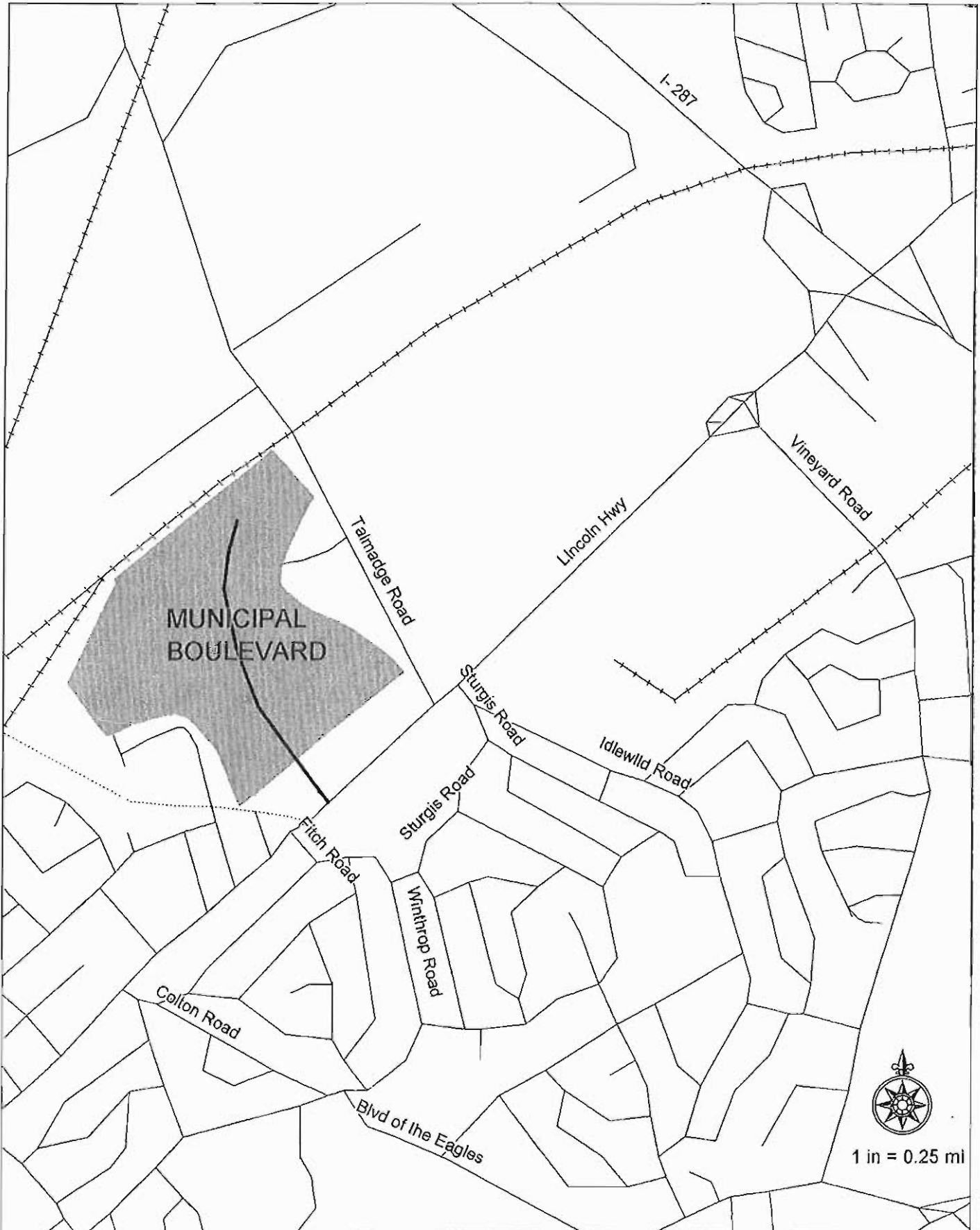




Figure 11 - Picture 2

Edison - Edison Municipal Park South of Municipal Building
Along Northeast Corridor Line

2.8 Middlesex Greenway Metuchen-Edison-Woodbridge

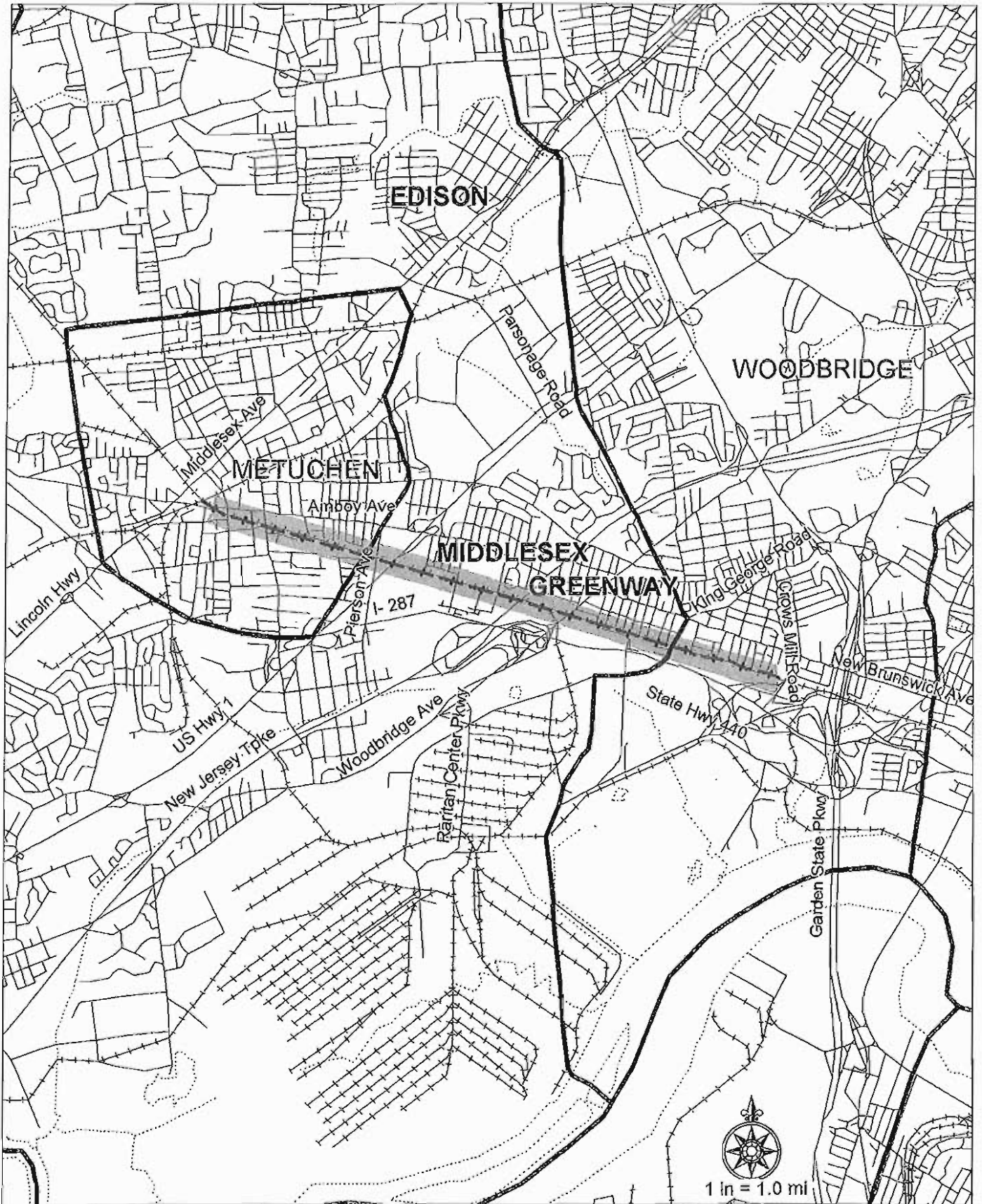
The Middlesex Greenway Coalition has proposed to convert to a recreation trail, a 3.5 mile rail segment of the Perth Amboy secondary line of the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad through Metuchen-Edison-Woodbridge to Raritan Station. (See Figure 12 and Pictures 1-10).



Figure 12 - Picture 1

Metuchen - Amboy Avenue/Lake Avenue Intersection, and Lake Avenue Bridge over Lehigh Valley Line, with Route 27, Essex Avenue joining Lake Avenue from left, Northeast Corridor Bridge over Route 27, Lake Avenue Upper Right

**Figure 12. Middlesex Greenway -
Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge**



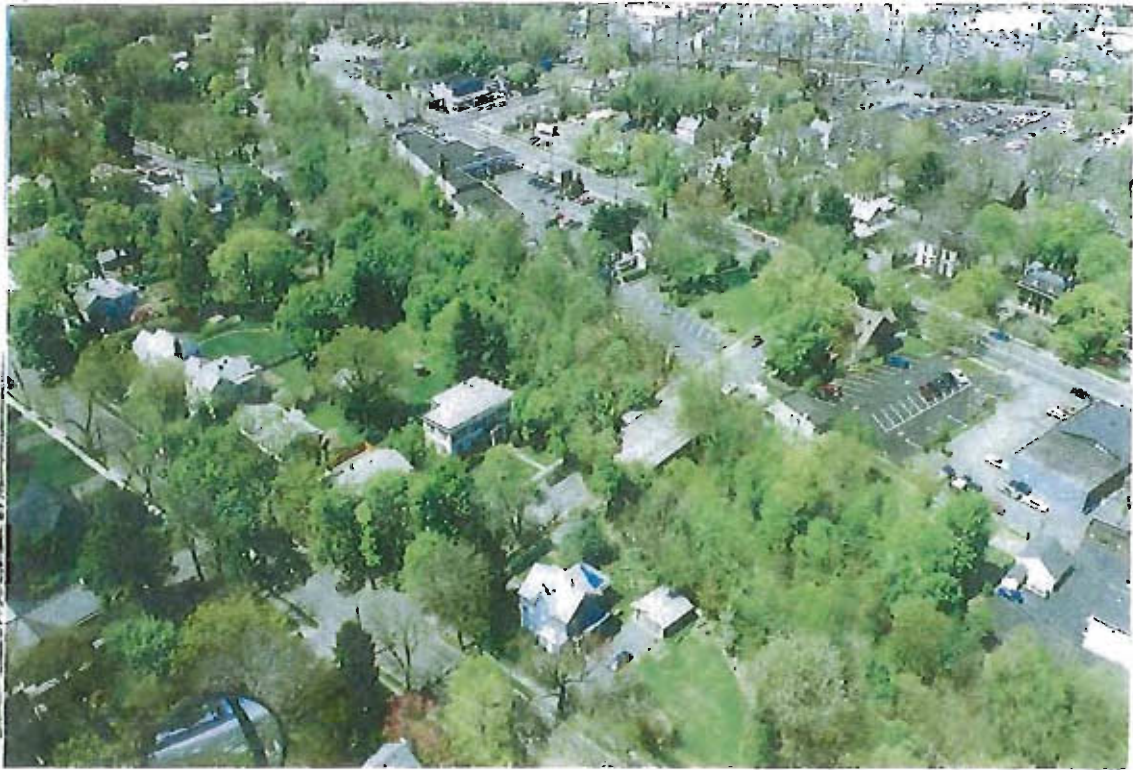


Figure 12 - Picture 2

Metuchen - Graham Avenue Bridge over Lehigh Valley Railroad, Center, Northeast Corridor Line Upper Right, Amboy Avenue/Lake Avenue Intersection, Top Center



Figure 12 - Picture 3

Metuchen - Main Street Bridge over Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way Center, Amboy Avenue/Main Street Intersection at Forum Theater Upper Right



Figure 12 - Picture 4

Edison - Lehigh Valley Railroad, Perth Amboy Ranch under Route 1 Bridge, Lower Center, Tano Mall Right Center, Pierson Avenue, Bridge over Proposed Middlesex Greenway Upper Middle, Left

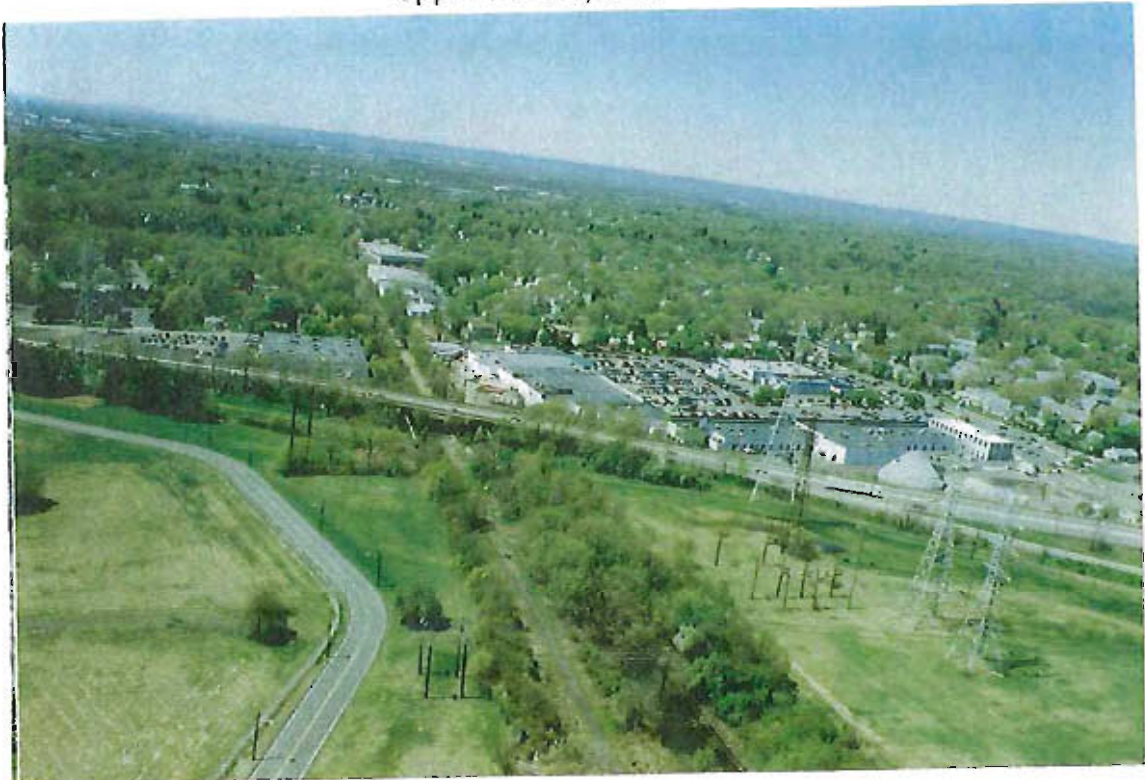


Figure 12 - Picture 5

Edison - Route 1 Bridge over Middlesex Greenway, Abandoned Perth Amboy Secondary of Lehigh Valley Railroad Right-of-Way. Tano Mall and Amboy Center Right. Foreground is PSE & G Transmission Lines over the Elizabeth to Trenton Railroad Abandoned Right-of-Way



Figure 12 - Picture 6

Edison - Perth Amboy Branch of Lehigh Valley Railroad Crossing Woodbridge Avenue (County Route 514), Center, NJ Turnpike Bridge over Lehigh Valley Perth Amboy Branch Upper Left, Proposed for Middlesex Greenway



Figure 12 - Picture 7

Closeup Greenway under NJ Turnpike

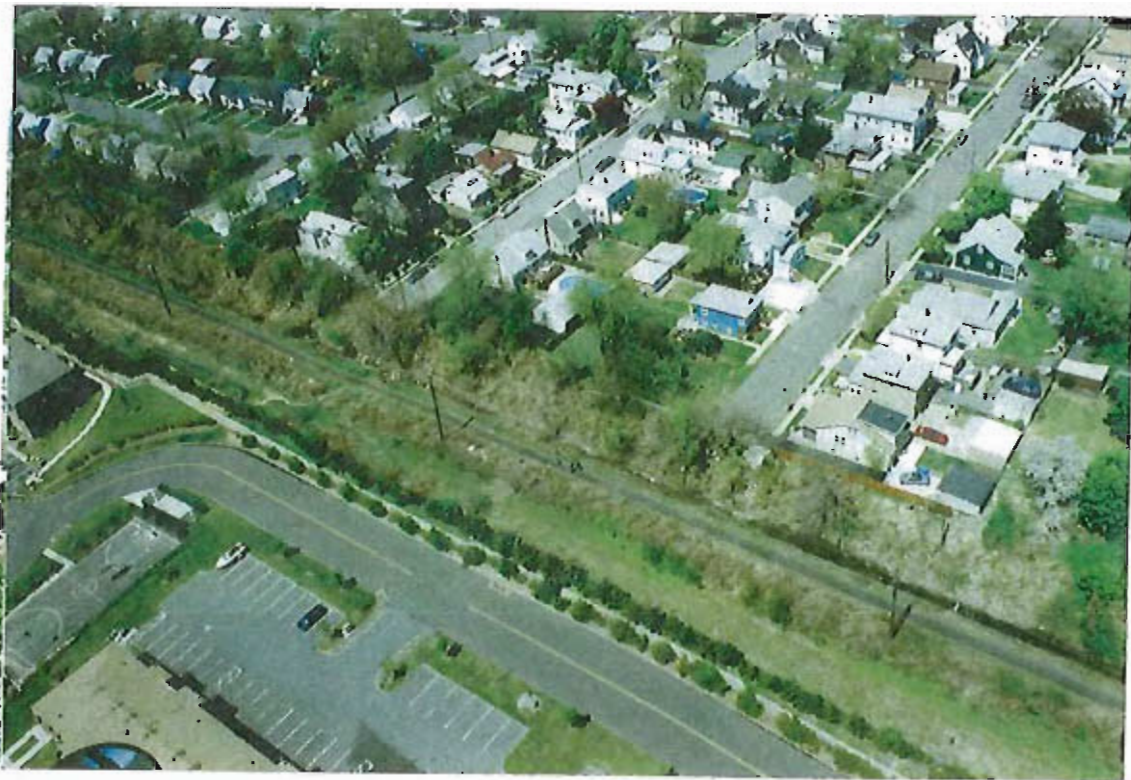


Figure 12 - Picture 8

Edison - Crows Mill Road Apartments Lower Left and Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way (Middlesex Greenway) Running through Center from Lower Right to Upper Left



Figure 12 - Picture 9

Metuchen - Amboy Avenue/Lake Avenue Intersection, and Lake Avenue Bridge over Lehigh Valley Line, with Route 27, Essex Avenue joining Lake Avenue from left, Northeast Corridor Bridge over Route 27, Lake Avenue Upper Right.



Figure 12 - Picture 10

Woodbridge - Junction of Lehigh Valley Raritan Industrial Line Lower Left and Perth Amboy Branch, Parallel to William Street, Hopelawn Cemetery, Top Right

2.9 Metuchen Redevelopment and Housing Area Northwest Quadrant

Conrail has proposed to abandon the Lehigh Valley Rail right of way from the northeast Corridor to the Metuchen line through the Northwest quadrant. The Metuchen Housing Redevelopment Plan proposed to develop housing sites along the right of way and to extend Jersey Avenue to Forrest Avenue over abandoned rail property to improve truck access from Durham Avenue to the Industrial zone. (See Figure 13 and Pictures 1-5).



Figure 13 - Picture 1

Metuchen - Northeast Corridor Line Bottom Bridge over Lehigh Valley Lower Right, Middlesex Avenue Crossing Lehigh Valley Railroad at Former Oakite Plant, Durham Avenue Crossing Lehigh Valley Railroad Upper Left Center, Middlesex Avenue/Central Avenue Intersection Right Side

Figure 13. Metuchen Housing and Redevelopment, Metuchen

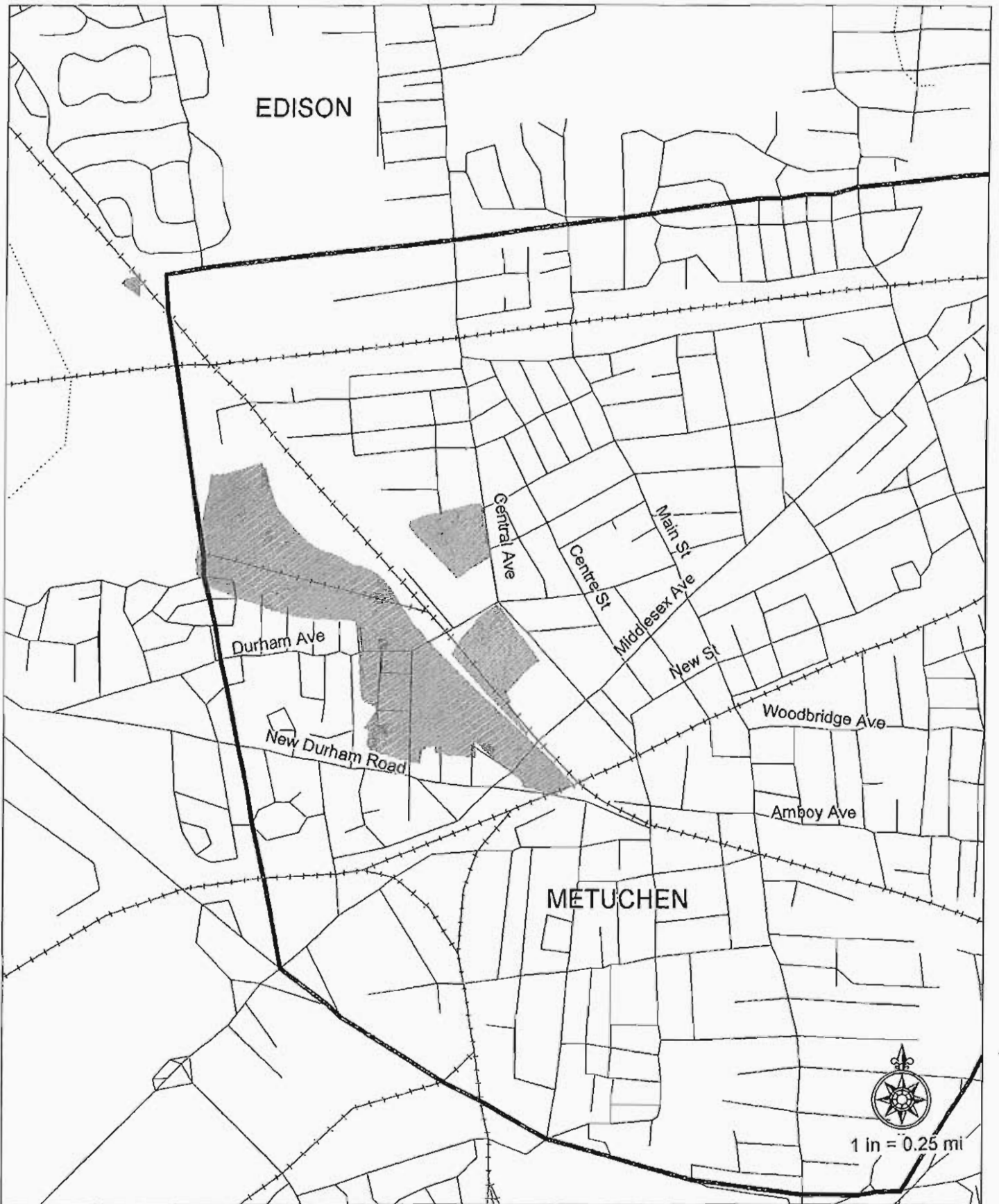




Figure 13 - Picture 2

Metuchen - Middlesex Avenue Crossing Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way at former Oakite Plant, New Durham Road Intersection with Middlesex Avenue on Left, Durham Avenue Upper Middle and Central Avenue Right Upper Corner



Figure 13 - Picture 3

Metuchen - Reconstructed Durham Avenue Crossing Two Tracks of Lehigh Valley Railroad, Jersey Avenue runs Parallel to Tracks and T-Intersection, Right Center, with Durham Avenue



Figure 13 - Picture 4

Metuchen - Durham Avenue former Crossing with Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way. Road way reconstructed and tracks removed Central Avenue on right



Figure 13 - Picture 5

Metuchen - Lehigh Valley Railroad Perth Amboy Branch
Looking Toward Northwest Edison and South Plainfield,
Jersey Avenue Proposed Extension along Lehigh Valley
Right-of-Way

2.10 New Brunswick Renaissance Station

Renaissance Station, New Brunswick, provides a good example of the successful redesign and reuse of an abandoned railyard which formerly anchored the Raritan River Railroad at Sanford Street near Georges Road in New Brunswick. A townhouse development was constructed on streets which used the rail bed and extended to the reuse of a former factory for senior housing next to a church and neighborhood. The effect produced a specific measurable, result of a renewal which improved the quality of life in New Brunswick and achieved the reversal of flight and deterioration. (See Figure 14 and Pictures 1-3).



Figure 14 - Picture 1

New Brunswick - Entrance to Renaissance Station off Sanford Street Looking Down Renaissance Lane with St. Mary's Senior Citizen Apartments on Right

Figure 14. Renaissance Station, New Brunswick

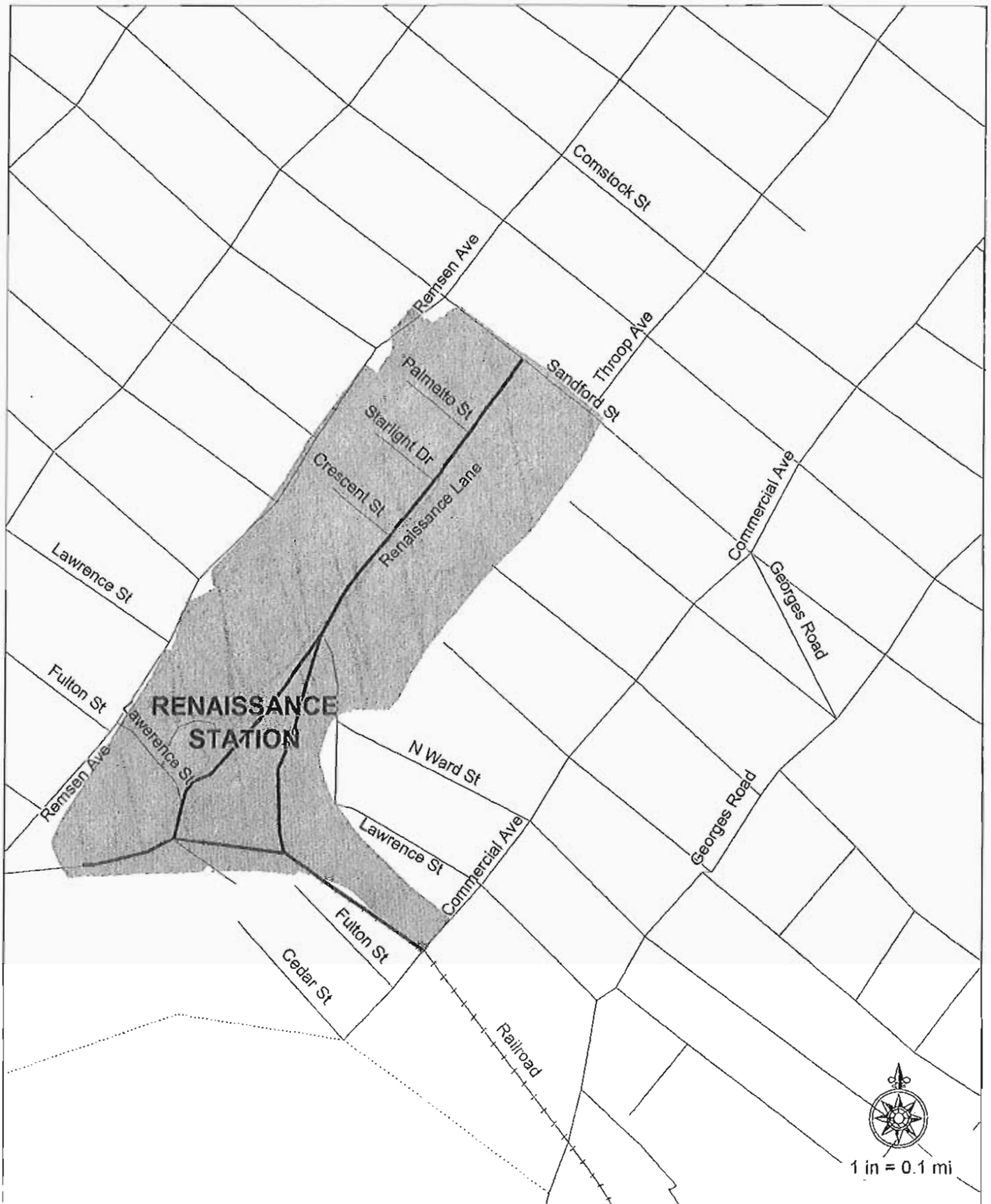




Figure 14 - Picture 2

New Brunswick - Renaissance Station Development Looking Down Renaissance Lane and Remsen Avenue, St. Mary's Apartments, Center Left

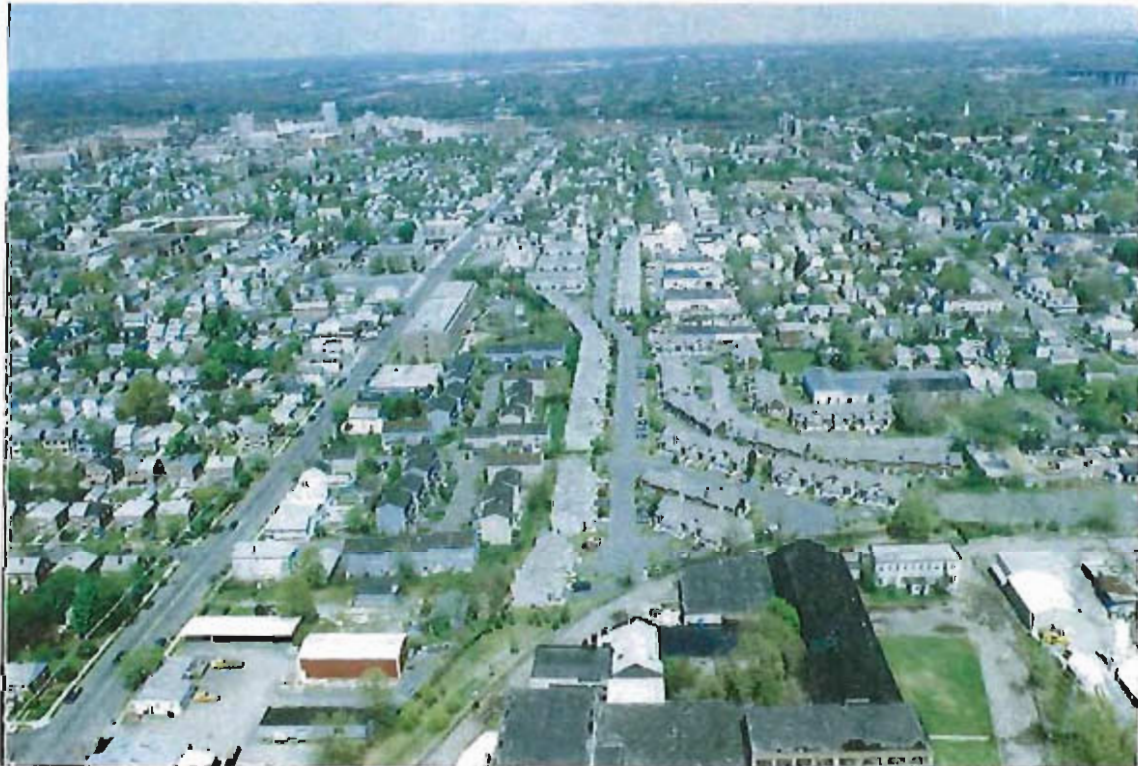


Figure 14 - Picture 3

New Brunswick - Renaissance Station with New Brunswick Downtown in Background Upper Left

2.11 New Brunswick, Squibb Plant

The rail access on the Raritan River Railroad to the New Brunswick Bristol Meyers Squibb Plant is proposed for improvement and a portion of the abandoned rail right of way is proposed for reuse for a truck access road to the facility off Georges Road. (See Figure 15 and Pictures 1-3).

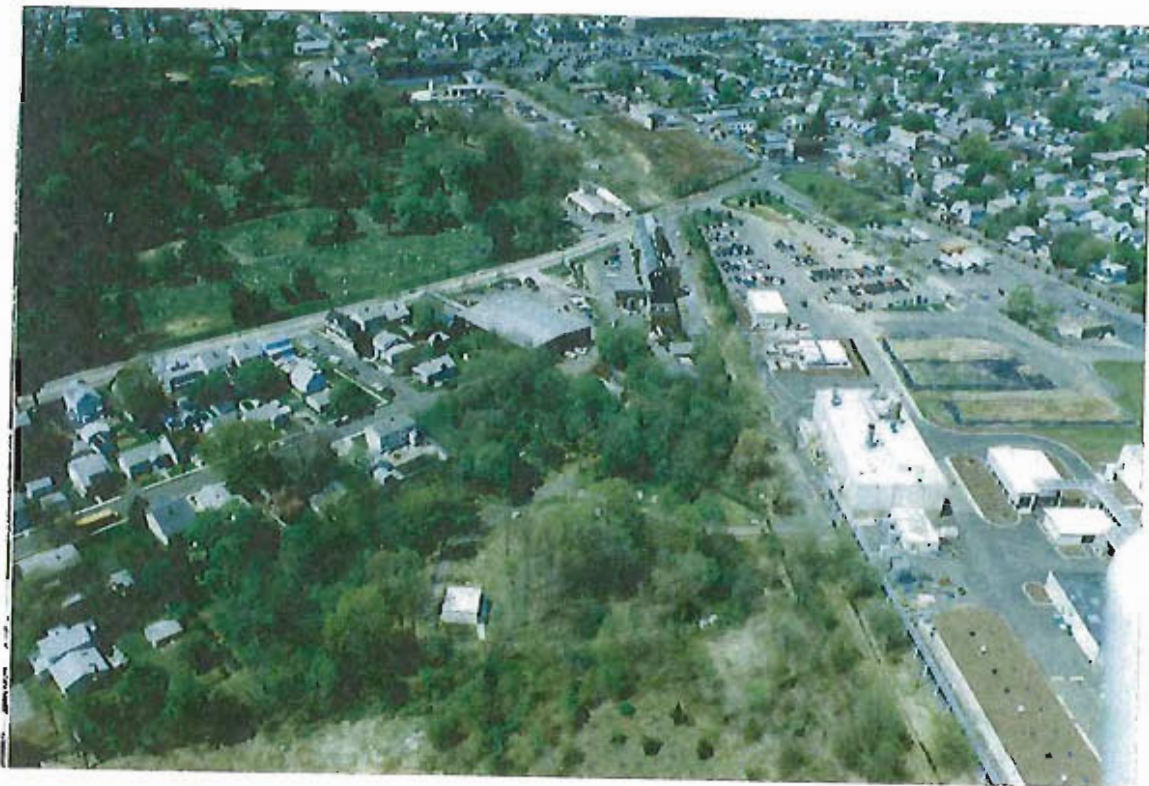


Figure 15 - Picture 1

New Brunswick - Bristol Meyers Squibb Plant Lower Right,
Raritan River Railroad Line at Crossing of Georges Road

Figure 15. Squibb Complex, New Brunswick



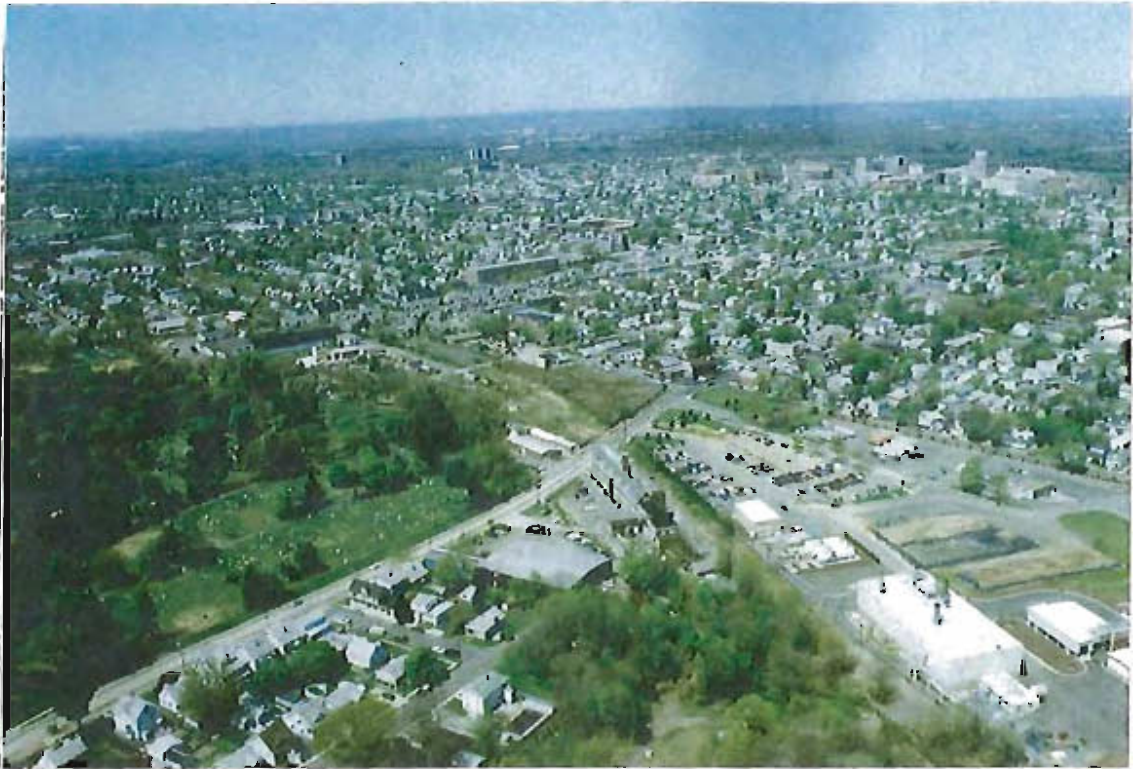


Figure 15 - Picture 2

New Brunswick - Bristol Meyers Squibb Plant Lower Right,
Raritan River Railroad Line at Crossing of Georges Road,
City of New Brunswick in Background



Figure 15 - Picture 3

New Brunswick - Bristol Meyers Squibb Lower Right,
Raritan River Railroad Line at Crossing of Georges Road,
City of New Brunswick in Background

2.12 Perth Amboy Raritan North Shore Industrial Track

Co. Steel Corporation of Perth Amboy has proposed an access road over the Raritan North Shore Industrial Track which has been proposed for abandonment. The truck access to the steel plant would run from the Hess access road along Route 35 under the Route 35 Victory Bridge over the rail right of way to the Co. Steel site. (See Figure 16 and Pictures 1-5).



Figure 16 - Picture 1

Perth Amboy - Route 35 and Bridge in Foreground at Hess Property, Looking Along Raritan North Shore Industrial Railroad Right-of-Way Leading to Co. Steel Plant in Center. Celotex Plant Lower Left Center

Figure 16. Raritan North Shore Industrial Track, Perth Amboy

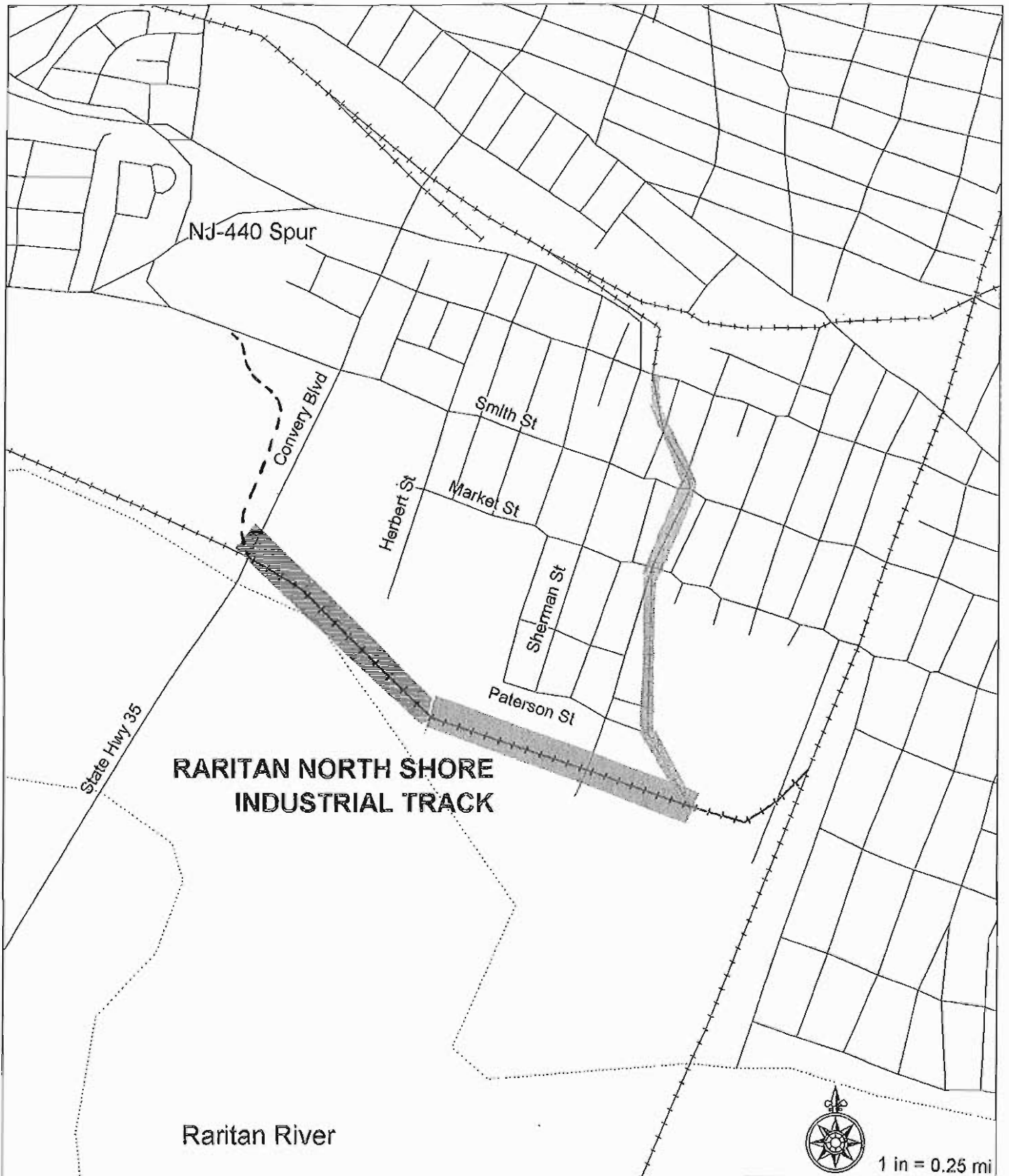




Figure 16 - Picture 2

Perth Amboy - Co Steel Plant Center, Raritan Bay Background, Raritan River, Right and Raritan North Shore Industrial Track Right-of-Way Leading to Plant Along River North Jersey Coast Line and Bridge Behind Co Steel Plant

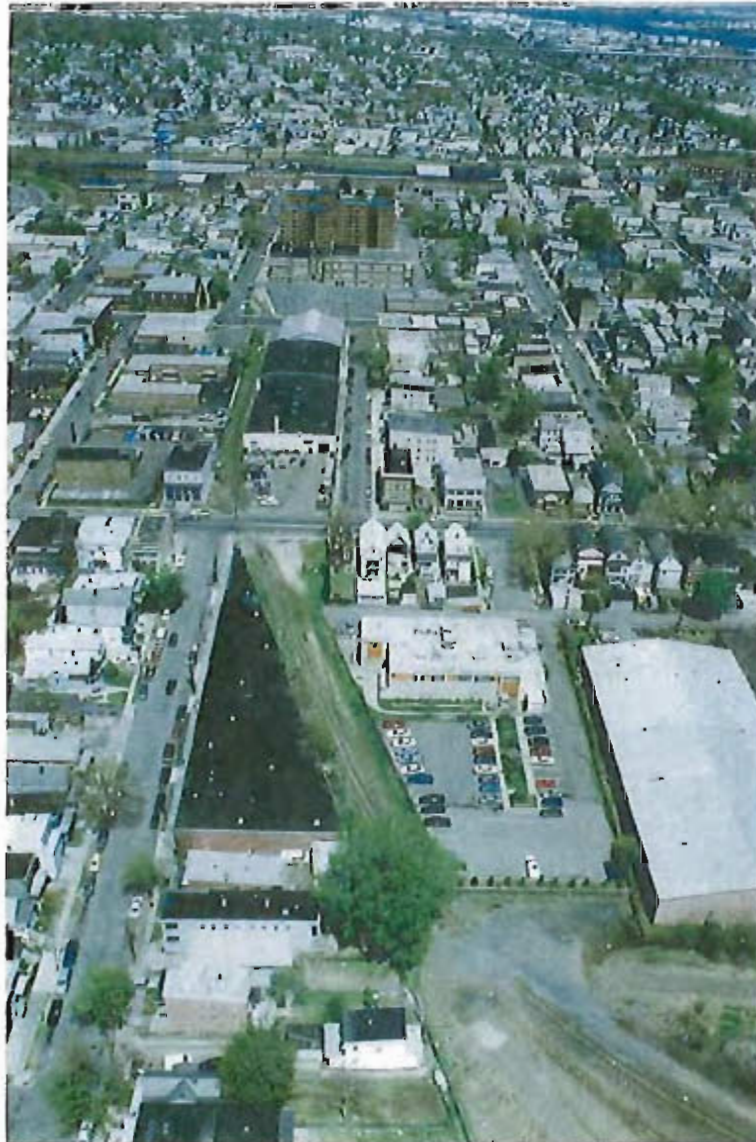


Figure 16 - Picture 3

Perth Amboy - Fifty Foot Right-of-Way Visible to Right of Wedge Shaped Building on Raritan North Shore Industrial Spur of Lehigh Valley Railroad Line Proposed for Abandonment



Figure 16 - Picture 4

Perth Amboy - End of 440 Spur at Fayette Street, to Right of Senior Citizen Housing Tower Left Side

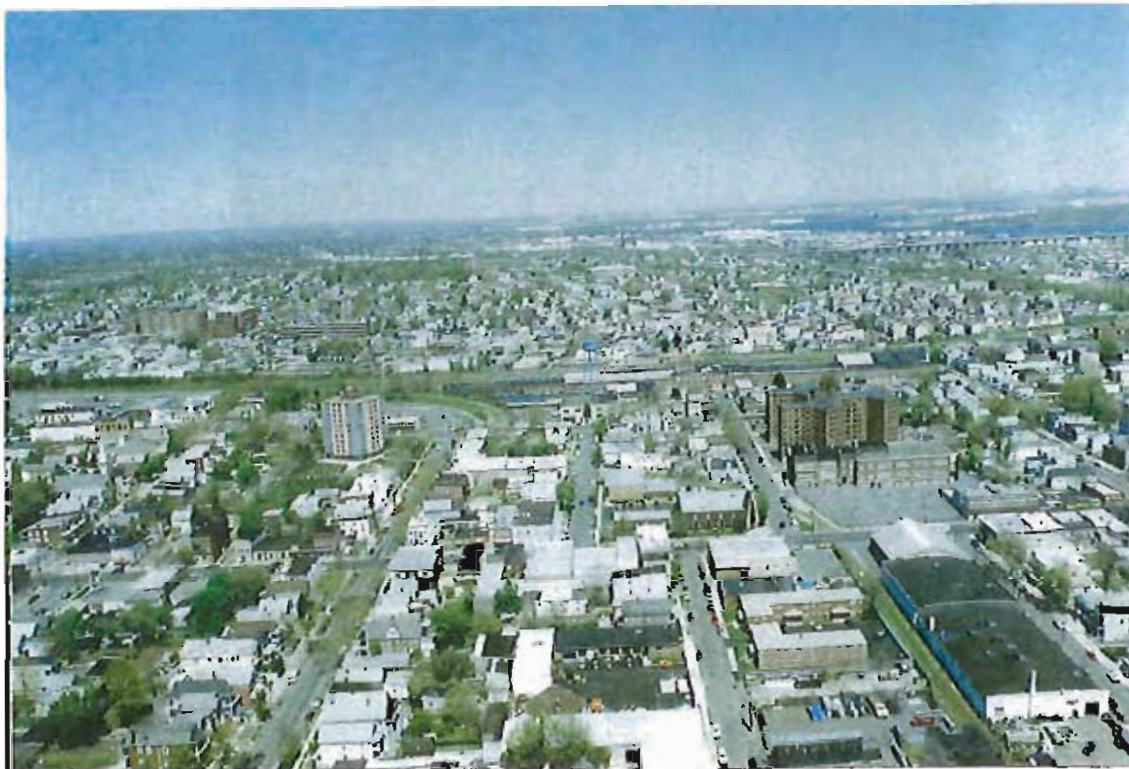


Figure 16 - Picture 5

Perth Amboy - End of 440 Spur Center

2.13 Perth Amboy Rail Abandonment from Hall Avenue to Pulaski Avenue

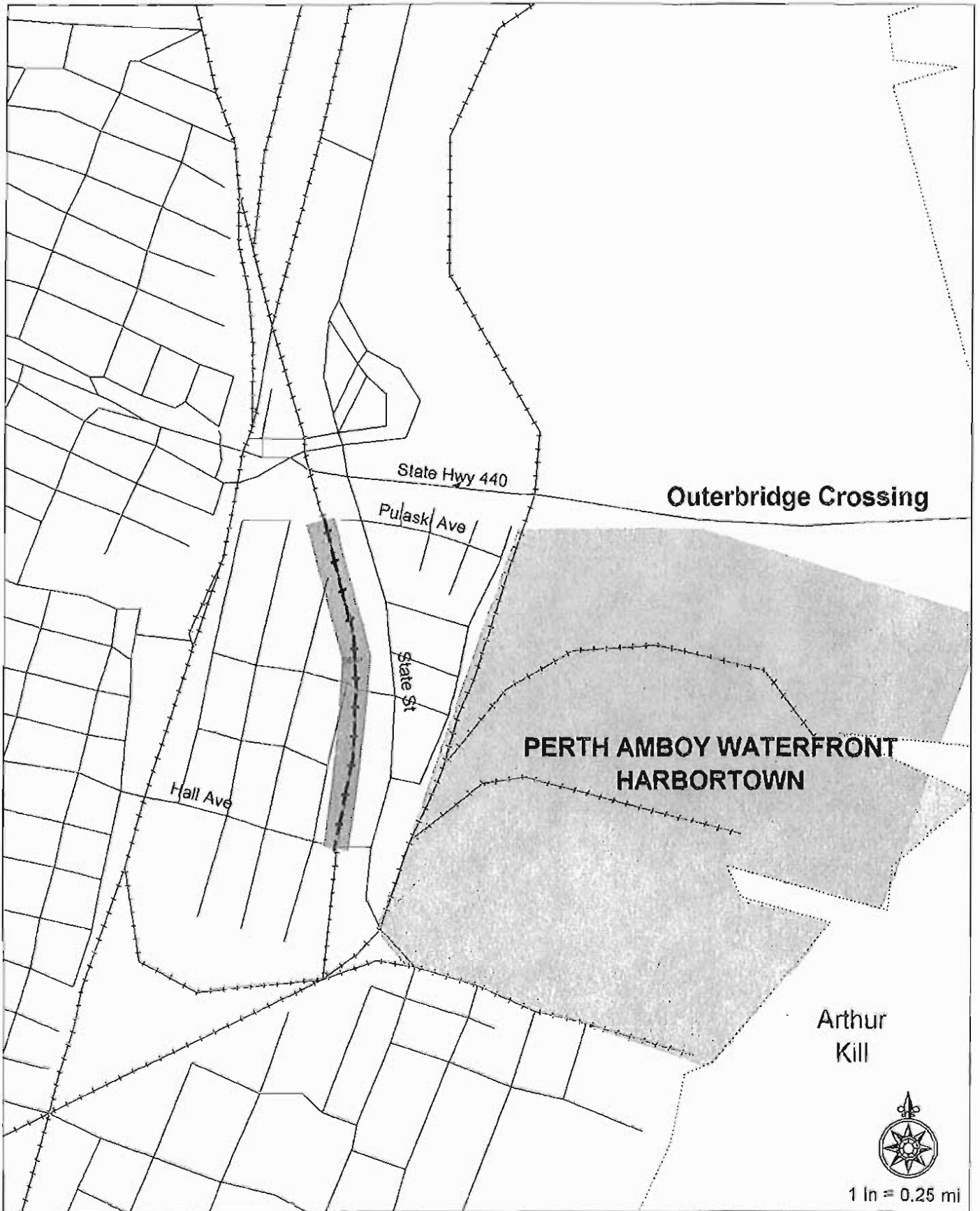
Perth Amboy has received title to a piece of abandoned rail property from Hall Avenue to Pulaski Avenue for the purpose of recreational use. (See Figure 17 and Picture 1).



Figure 17 - Picture 1

Perth Amboy - Looking Down State Street Approach to Perth Amboy, on Left Center is Harbortown Site with Rail Tracks Going Over Rail Bridge and 90 Degree Turn/Jog in State Street Parallel to State Street on Right Behind the Row of Homes and Stores is an Abandoned Rail Spur which the City has Title to for Recreational Purposes

Figure 17. Perth Amboy Waterfront / Harbortown, and Pulaski Avenue to Hall Avenue Corridor, Perth Amboy



2.14 Perth Amboy The Route 440 Extension over the Rail Spur of the Amboy Secondary line of the Old Lehigh Valley Railroad

The Perth Amboy Development Program proposed by American City Corporation proposed access over the extended Route 440 Extension, which would provide access to New Brunswick Avenue and Washington Street leading to State Street and the Harbor Town housing sites on the Arthur Kill. (See Figure 18 and Pictures 1-6).



Figure 18 - Picture 1

Perth Amboy - Foreground is Old Lehigh Valley Railroad Proposed 440 Spur Extension Leading to Harbortown Site Before Goethals Bridge over Arthur Kill in Cleared Area in Front of Oil Tanks and Bridge

Figure 18. NJ-440 Spur, Perth Amboy

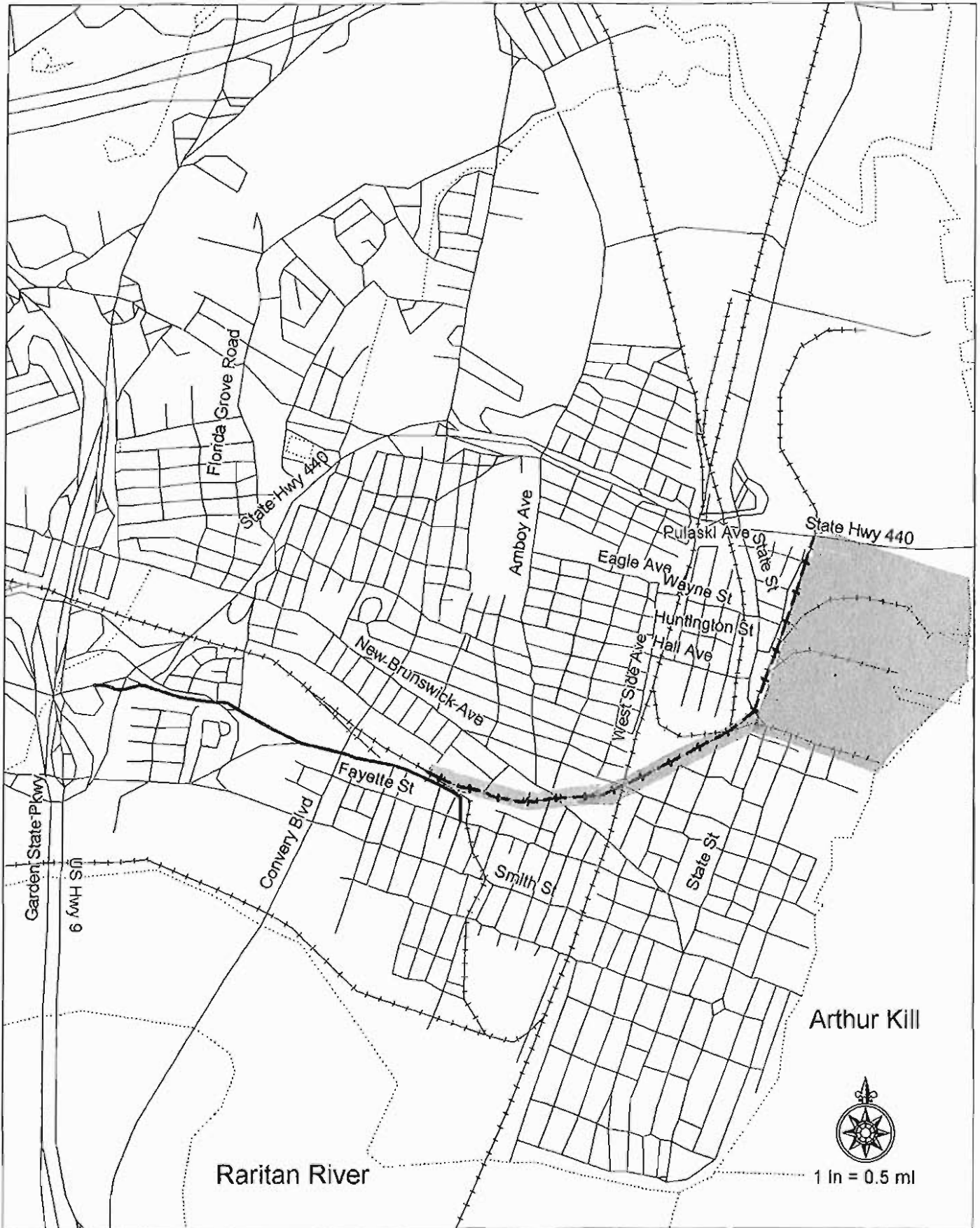




Figure 18 - Picture 2

Perth Amboy - End of 440 Spur Lower Right Over Lehigh Valley Rail Right-of-Way Alongside Remaining Track with Right-of-Way of Proposed Extension in Center



Figure 18 - Picture 3

Perth Amboy - End of 440 Spur in Center, Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way and Track Proposed for 440 Extension over New Brunswick Avenue Bridge Lower Center



Figure 18 - Picture 4

Perth Amboy - End of 440 Spur Top Center Lehigh Valley Single Track and Right-of-Way of Proposed 440 Extension from 440 to New Brunswick Avenue and Between New Brunswick Avenue and Washington Street



Figure 18 - Picture 5

Perth Amboy - Lehigh Valley Single Track from New Brunswick Avenue Upper Center to Washington Street over the North Jersey Coast Line and Lehigh Valley Line Bridge over the North Jersey Coast Line

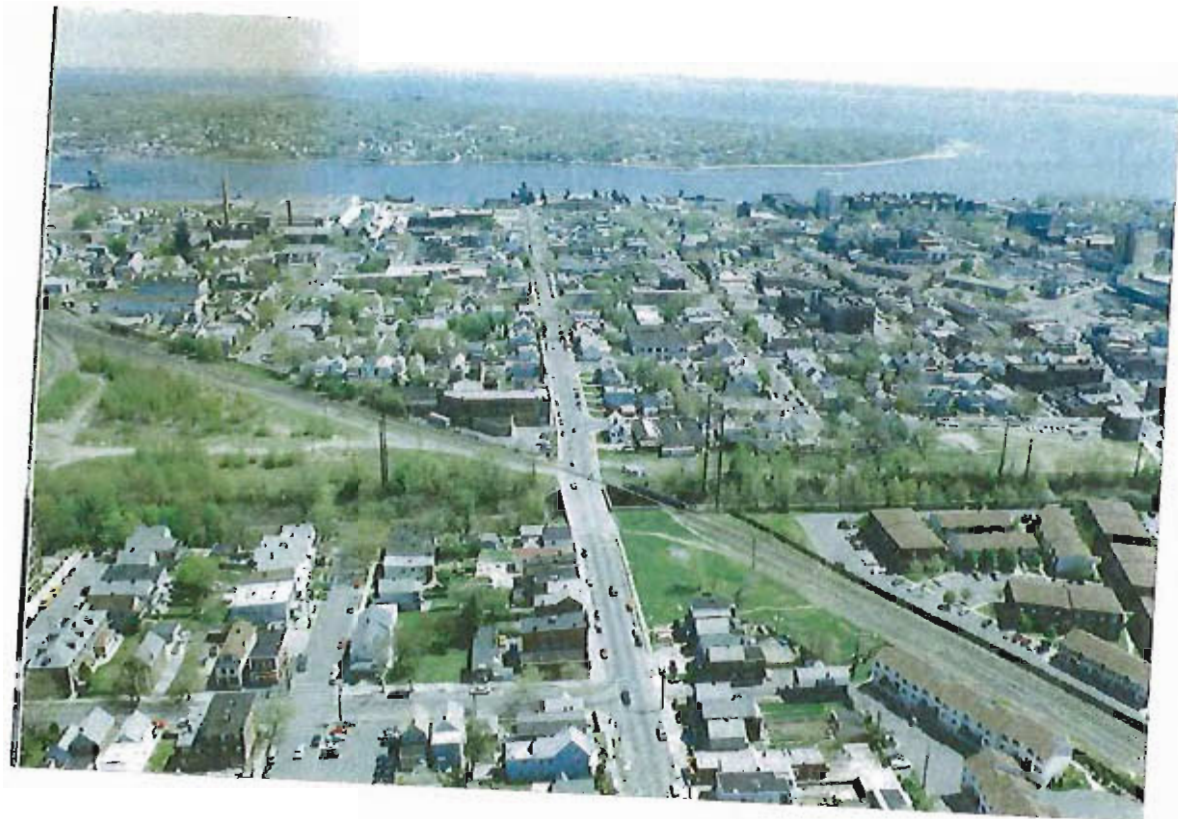


Figure 18 - Picture 6

Perth Amboy - Looking Down Washington Street to the Arthur Kill and Staten Island with the Lehigh Valley Right-of-Way and Proposed 440 Extension Crossing Washington Street in the Center Running from Lower Right to Upper Left

2.15 Perth Amboy, Waterfront, Harbortown

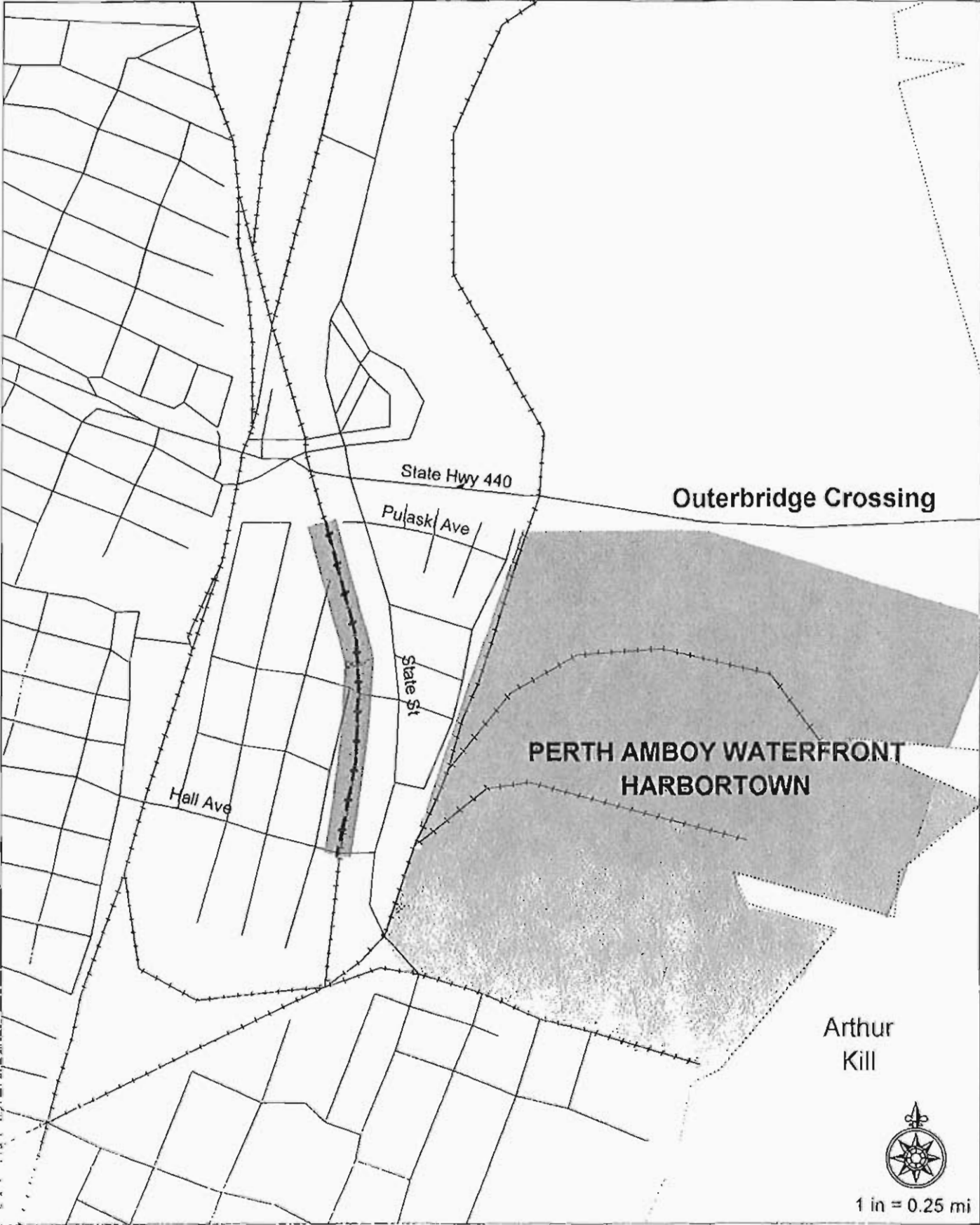
The Perth Amboy Redevelopment Plan has proposed a project called Harbortown which is under construction by developer Sam Halpern. The site was formerly the old Union Carbide Facility which closed in 1953. (See Figure 19 and Picture 1).



Figure 19 - Picture 1

Perth Amboy - Harbortown Housing Development Site on Reclaimed Rail Yards of Former Industrial Site. Arthur Kill, and Staten Island Top Left

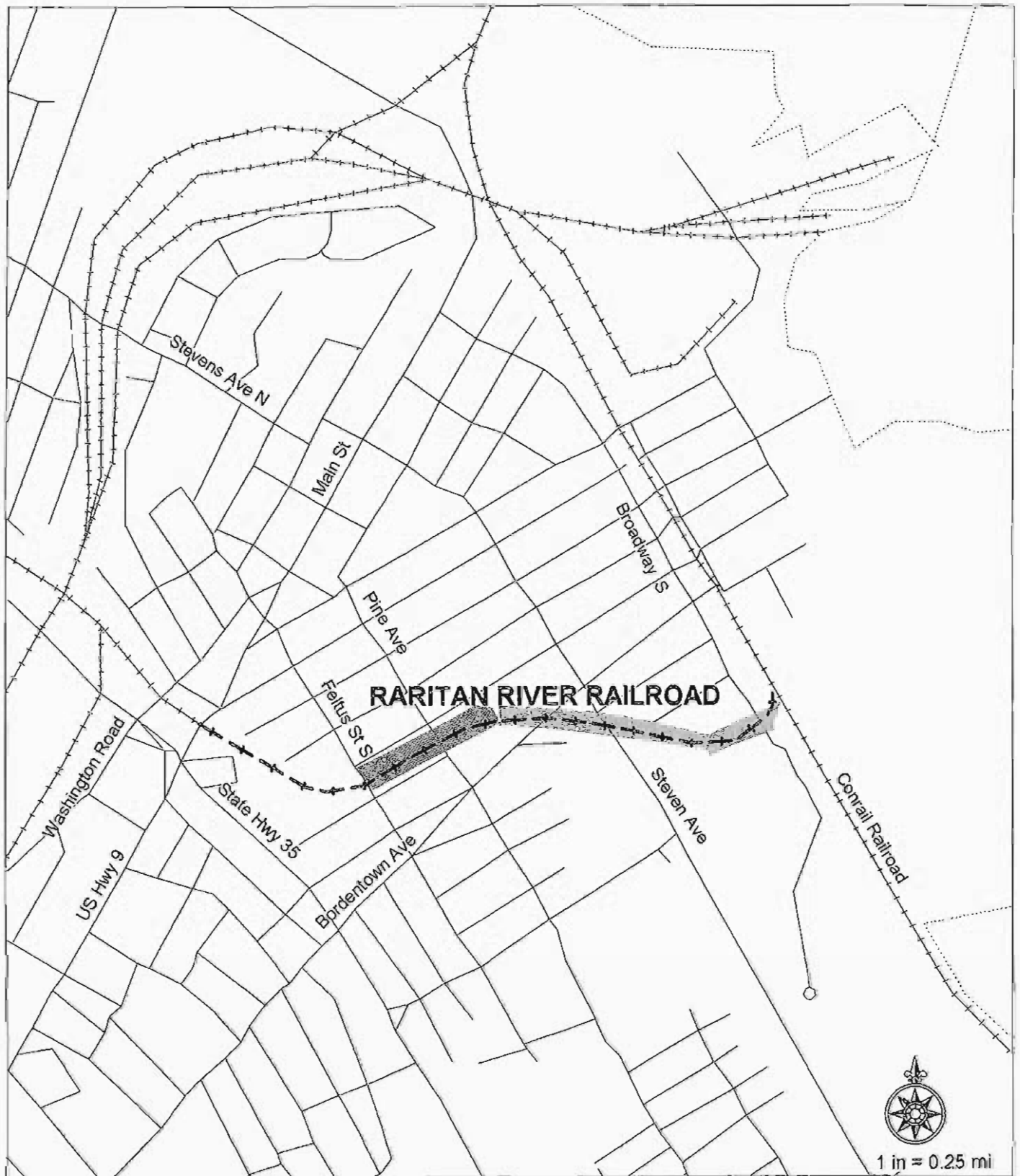
Figure 19. Perth Amboy Waterfront/Harbortown, and Pulaski Avenue to Hall Avenue Corridor, Perth Amboy



2.16 South Amboy, Abandoned Raritan River Railroad from North Jersey Coastline to Stevens Avenue to Feltus Street

The Conrail segment of the Raritan River Railroad from the North Jersey Coast Line to Stevens Street has been abandoned and purchased by NJ TRANSIT for use in passenger operations. The section from Stevens Avenue to Feltus Street was abandoned when N.J.D.O.T replaced the North Pine Avenue overpass with an at grade intersection and removed the rail section. (See Figure 20).

Figure 20. Raritan River Railroad, South Amboy



2.17 South Amboy, Waterfront

The abandoned coal yards have now no track and are being considered as a possible ferry site. (See Figure 21 and Pictures 1-4).



Figure 21 - Picture 1

South Amboy - Roadway to Proposed Ferry Landing
Abandoned Rail Line

Figure 21. South Amboy Waterfront, South Amboy

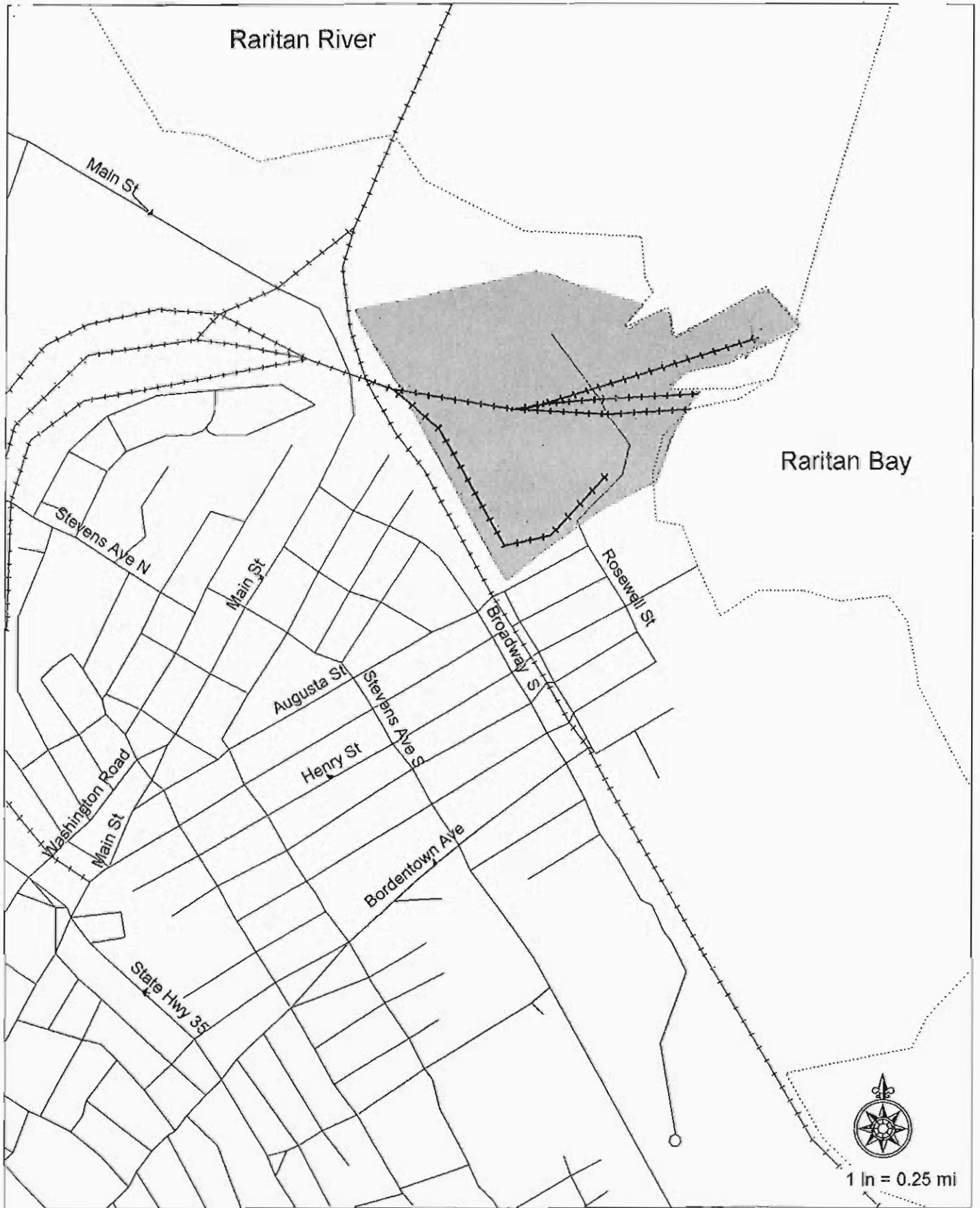




Figure 21 - Picture 2

South Amboy - Roadway to Proposed Ferry Landing Over Abandoned Rail Line



Figure 21 - Picture 3

South Amboy - End of Roadway to Proposed Ferry Landing, (Abandoned Rail Line)



Figure 21 - Picture 4

South Amboy - Proposed Landing at End of Abandoned Rail Line

2.18 South Brunswick, Kingston Branch from Route 1 to D&R Canal

The South Brunswick Master Plan recommends that a bikeway/walkway trail be given priority in the plan implementation on the Kingston Branch from Route 1 to the D&R Canal over the abandoned Conrail right of way.

The D&R Canal State Park preserves the canal right of way and parallel railroad, now a trail, through South Brunswick, Franklin Township and South Bound Brook to Route 18 in New Brunswick. Here the rail right of way and canal was converted to the Route 18 alignment along the Rutgers, Johnson and Johnson River frontage to Boyd Park, and is preserved at the start of the canal locks near the Rutgers boat house. (See Figure 22 and Pictures 1-7).



Figure 22 - Picture 1

South Brunswick - Foreground Kingston Branch Abandoned Right-of-Way from Northeast Corridor, Center Left to Right

Figure 22. Kingston Branch, South Brunswick

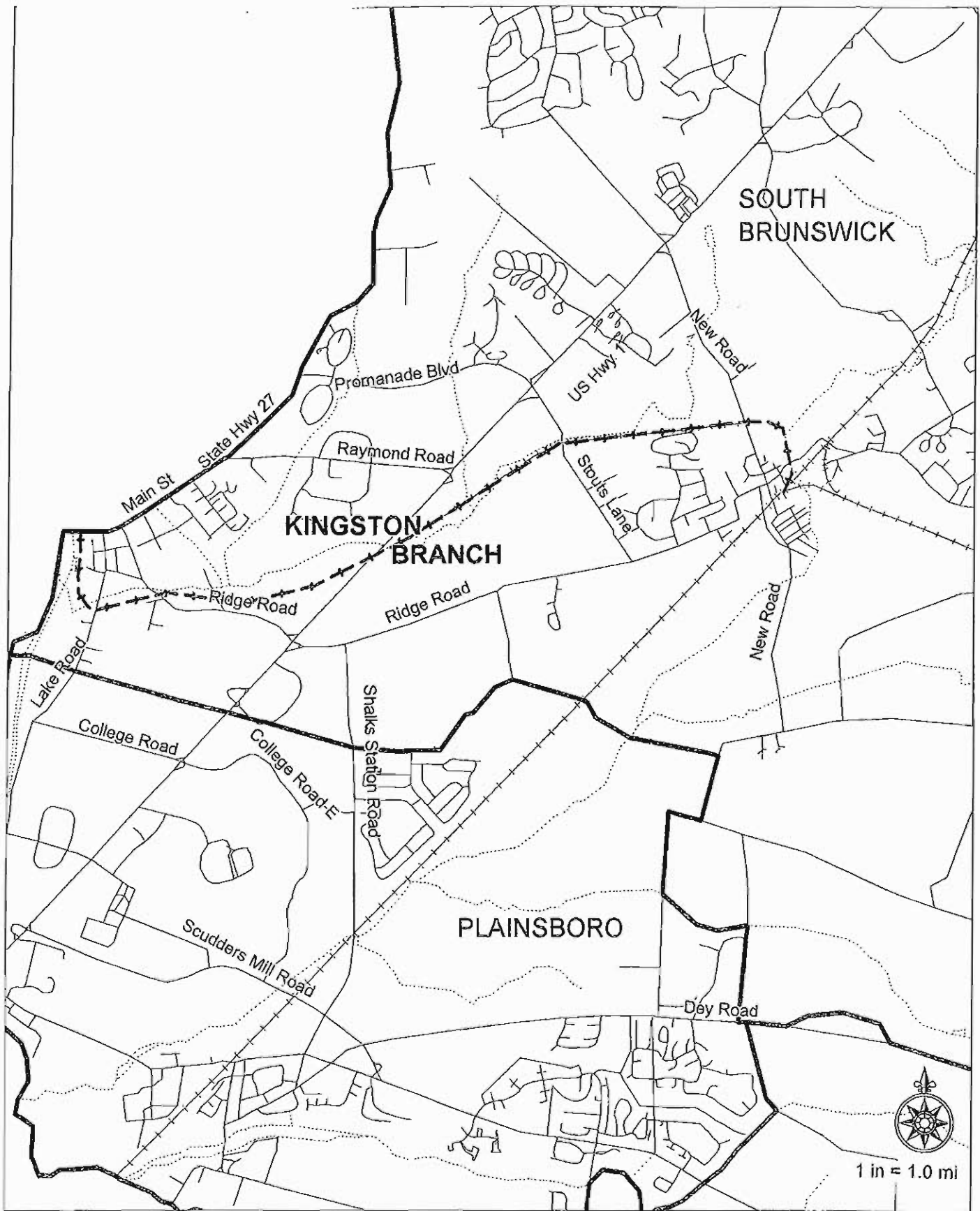




Figure 22 - Picture 2

South Brunswick - Kingston Branch Abandoned Line
Between Northeast Corridor Line and Route 1



Figure 22 - Picture 3

South Brunswick - Kingston Branch Proposed Greenway
Crossing Route 1 Dow Jones Driveway Left Center and
Marriott Residence Inn Center



Figure 22 - Picture 4

South Amboy - Kingston Branch Proposed Greenway at Route 1



Figure 22 - Picture 5

South Brunswick - Kingston Branch, Greenway, Village of Kingston, Right Center

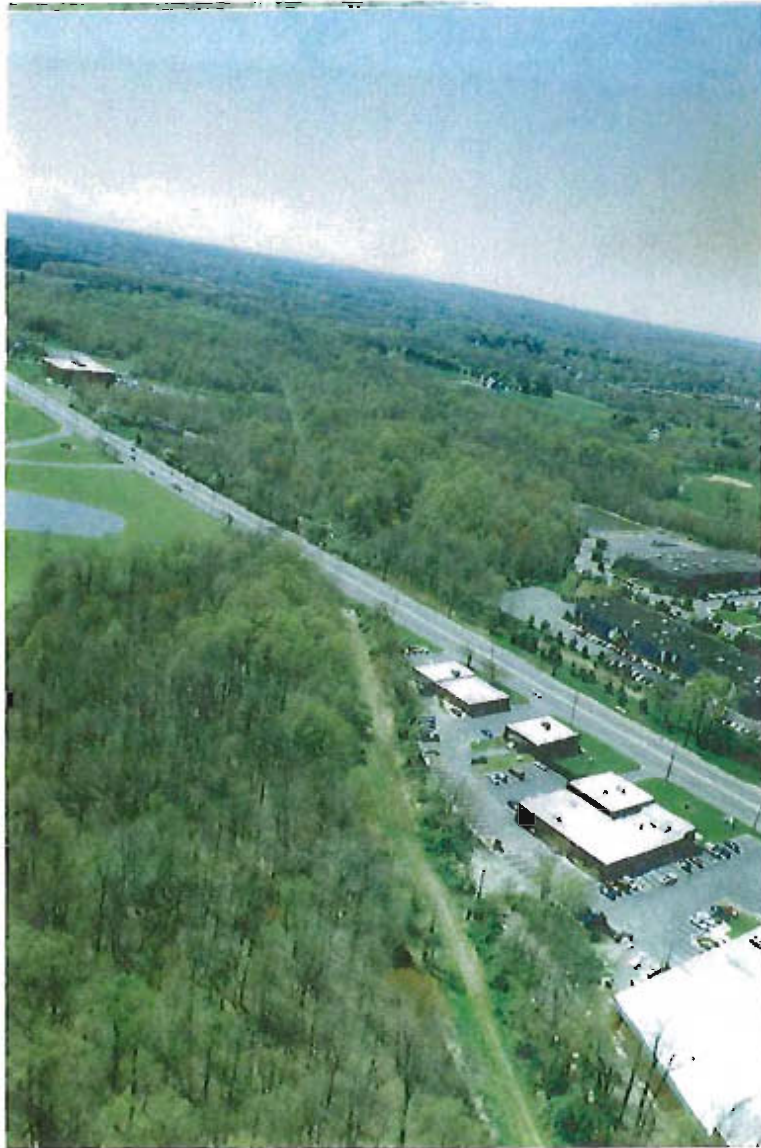


Figure 22 - Picture 6

South Brunswick - Kingston Branch Greenway Leading Through Former Princeton Nurseries



Figure 22 - Picture 7

South Brunswick - Kingston Branch Greenway Connecting to Delaware and Raritan Canal, Towpath Lower Left Along Millstone River/Carnegie Lake

2.19 South River, Raritan River Railroad Spur for Proposed Greenway

The Borough of South River has proposed that a spur of the Raritan River Railroad be reused as a trail or/bikeway along the bank of the South River. The abandoned spur had been purchased by a local trucking company which then closed a land swap deal with the Borough to facilitate the trail/recreation project. (See Figure 23 and Pictures 1-3).

A spur of the Raritan River Railroad has been abandoned which went from the Veterans Bridge and bent around in a horseshoe shape through the South River North End Industrial Park, Edgeboro Road, across Route 18 through Loehmann's Plaza and across Tices Lane and Harts Lane in the Washington Heights section of East Brunswick.

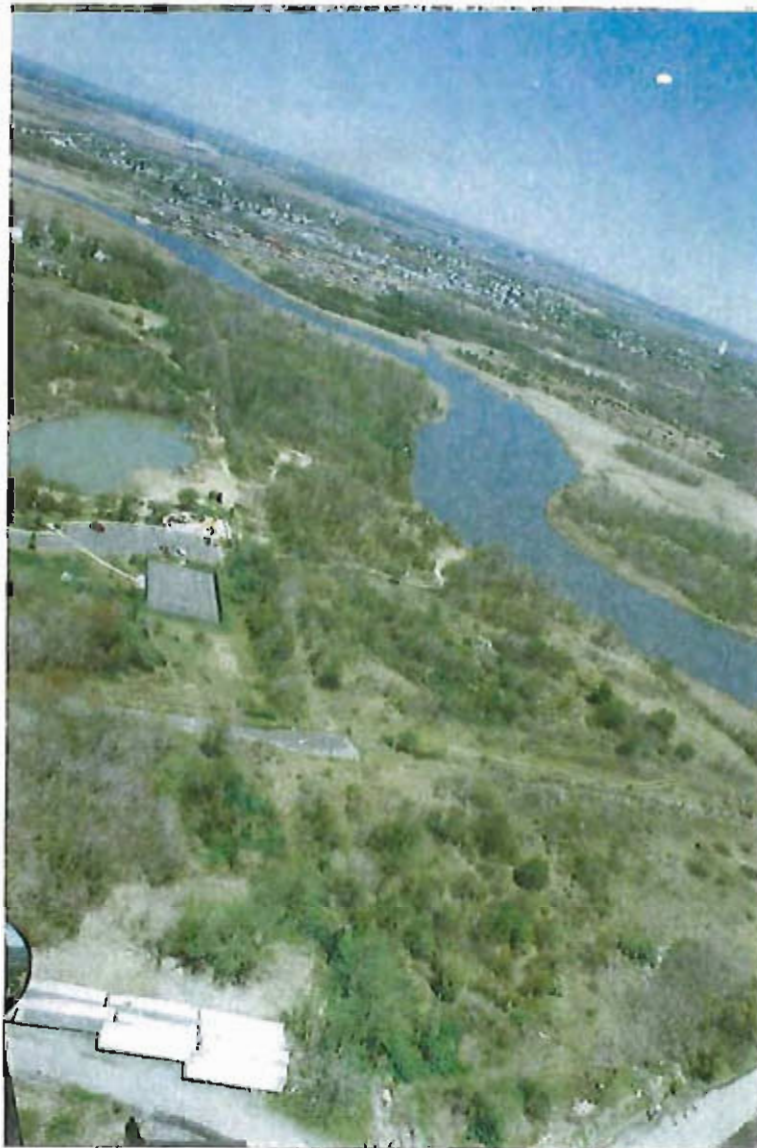


Figure 23 - Picture 1

South River - Greenway End of Spur if Raritan River Railroad

Figure 23. South River Greenway, South River





Figure 23 - Picture 2

South River - Greenway Along Abandoned Spur of Raritan River Railway, Center South River in Background



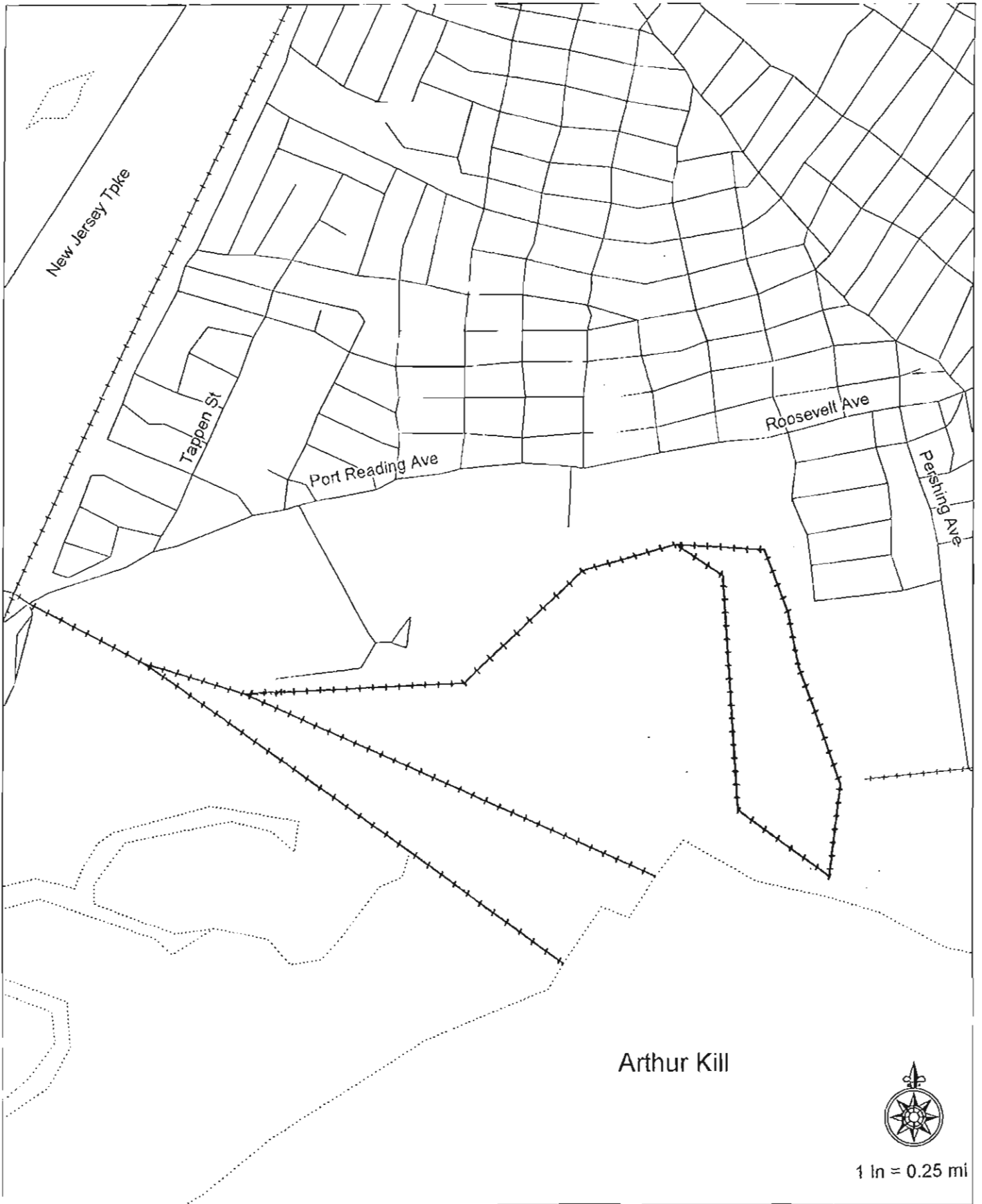
Figure 23 - Picture 3

South Amboy - Marina Lower Left, South River Greenway Abandoned Spur of Raritan River Railway Center

2.20 Woodbridge, Port Reading - Redevelopment Tract On Arthur Kill Waterfront

The Woodbridge Port Reading - Arthur Kill section has been proposed for redevelopment on the former railyard used for coal storage at the PSE&G generating plant. The Port Reading Terminus at the Arthur Kill exists as a clear potential for marine and rail intermodal linkage. The extension of the Carteret Industrial road would be important to improving circulation and truck access from Exit 12 of the N.J. Turnpike. (See Figure 24).

Figure 24. Port Reading / Arthur Kill Waterfront, Woodbridge



3.0 Potential Greenways Along Rail Rights-Of-Way

3.1 Preliminary Greenway Recommendations

The Adopted Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan of 1995 called for a major public commitment over the next fifteen years to acquire and develop additional land for public recreation use and to conserve important environmental and cultural features in Middlesex County. This initiative includes greenway facilities some of which follow established railroad rights of way. The County plan proposes that 7,000 acres be added to the now existing 5,101 acres by the year 2010. Relative to the reuse potential of the County's rail corridors, the plan suggests the development of a greenway trail system for walking, bicycling, hiking and horseback riding. An inventory of major remaining open space areas in Middlesex County was compiled which included 37,334 acres of remaining undeveloped land. These are locations which are not now dedicated to public open space. Of those sites, 15, 874 acres are upland acreage; that is to say, not wetlands. Rail rights of way proposed for abandonment make up a small portion of this inventory particularly in Carteret, Woodbridge, and South Plainfield.

The proposed greenway system portion of the Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan presupposes a number of abandonments along segments of various rail rights of way. Implementation of a greenway network will require land acquisition or easements. The use of greenways for active recreation will require land management and maintenance.

Rail rights of way proposed for abandonment offer an opportunity for implementing the expansion program of the Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan. The listing of the Plan's preliminary greenway recommendations as they relate to rail facilities in Middlesex County include:

- The Metuchen to Perth Amboy Greenway trail system along the Conrail Perth Amboy Branch abandoned rail right of way from Metuchen to Perth Amboy. (Figure 24, Ref. #5). Issues to consider include nearby heavily developed areas, access limitations in industrialized areas, and depressed segments of the right of way and bridge/overpass requiring structural analysis, storm water control, and feasibility assessment for monitoring and maintenance.
- South Plainfield to Metuchen Greenway along the Conrail Perth Amboy Branch; Bound Brook and Dismal Swamp area in South Plainfield, Edison and Metuchen. This would serve as an extension of the Perth Amboy to Metuchen greenway and trail linkage with the County's Spring Lake Park. (Figure 24, Ref. #7). Issues to consider include the fact that the rail right of way is still actively used, and that the nearby heavily developed area at the northern part of South Plainfield poses some access limitation.
- Edison to Port Reading Greenway along Conrail, Port Reading Branch right of way from Edison through Metuchen and Woodbridge to the Arthur Kill at Port Reading. This would consist of a trail system linking municipal and

county parks to the Arthur Kill Waterfront. (Figure 24, Ref. #2). Issues to consider: existing railway is still in use for freight service; long term viability of the railway contingent on commercial/residential redevelopment of the Port Reading area; access limitations in industrial area; depressed segments of rights of way and bridges/overpasses require structural analysis, storm water control and monitoring and maintenance feasibility assessment.

- South Plainfield to Scotch Plains Greenway along Conrail Lehigh Valley Rail right of way from South Plainfield through North Edison to the Scotch Plains boundary. This trail development would involve linking the proposed Bound Brook Greenway at Middlesex County's Spring Lake Park to the existing Ashbrook Reservation in Union County. (See Figure 24, Ref. #8). Issues to consider include the fact that the existing railway is still in use for freight service; the long term development of the greenway depends on the intensity of use of the railway. Also, the feasibility of developing a greenway parallel to the railway needs to be examined in regard to safety considerations. Furthermore, coordination with Union County is required in regard to the connection with the Ashbrook Reservation.

In addition to these facilities, the potential for greenways along rail rights of way in other Middlesex County areas include:

- Dismal Swamp/Bound Brook affecting the Port Reading Secondary rail line in South Plainfield, Metuchen, and Edison;
- Kingston Branch/Heathcote Brook affecting the Kingston Branch in South Brunswick;
- Manalapan Brook affecting the Freehold Secondary in Monroe; and the
- Middlesex Borough to Spring Lake affecting the Perth Amboy Branch in South Plainfield, Edison and Metuchen. (See Figure 24, Ref. #1, 3, 4, and 6).
- South River Greenway Plan although not in the County Open Space plan has become a potential project for inclusion.

3.2 Greenways proposed from Abandoned Rail Rights of Way

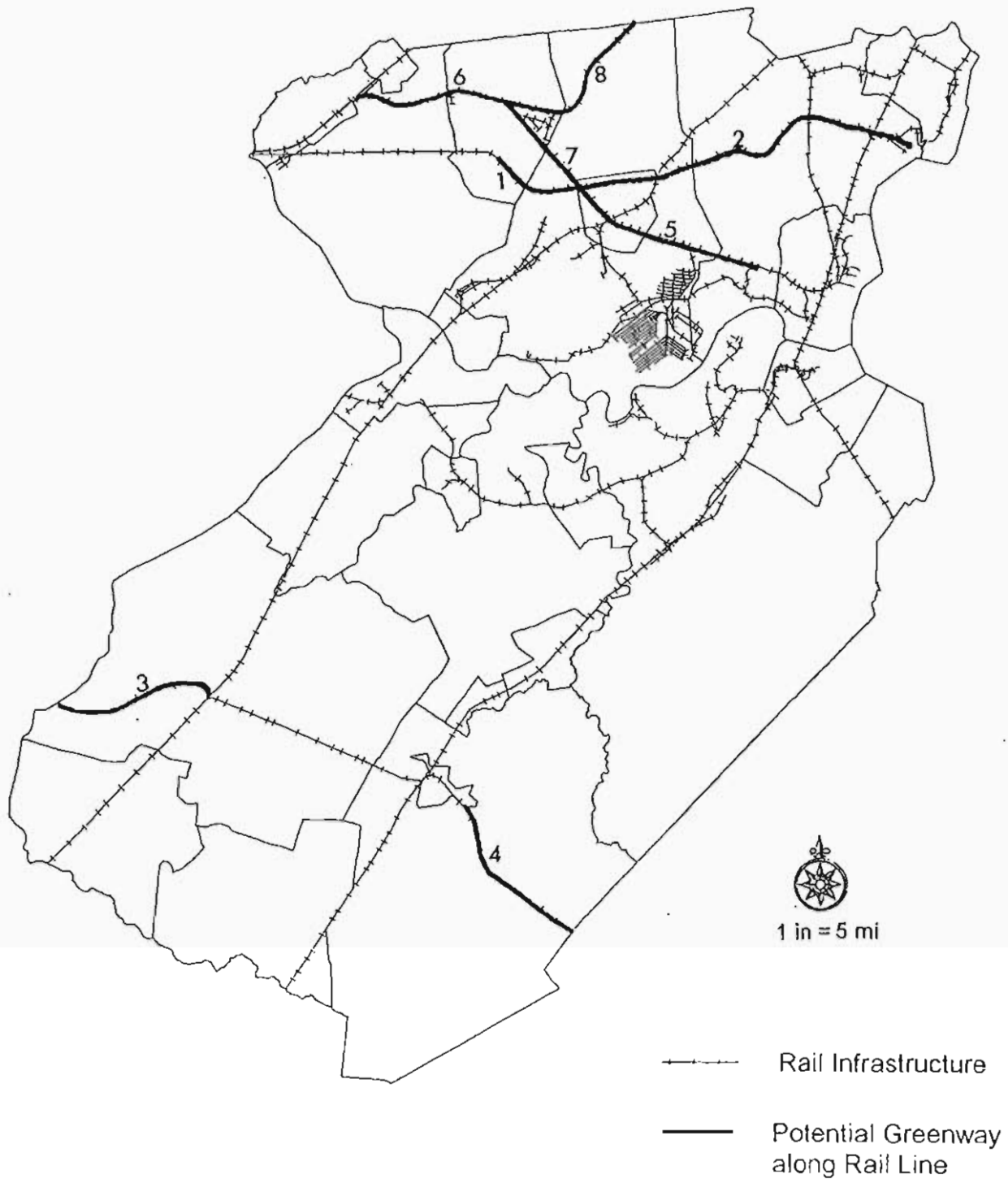
The Middlesex County proposed greenways were generated from the idea that the future use of rail lines in the County will continue a long term decline and become abandoned. As manufacturing industries which produced car loadings in the past have relocated or shut down in Middlesex County some of the railroads running through Middlesex County have ceased to function and have in some cases been abandoned. In a two decade reversal of that trend since the 1976 Conrail reorganization, some other railroads in Middlesex County have become healthier and continue to be active.

Conrail has been a success along the New Jersey ports which have led the U.S. East Coast in an expanded era of international trade. Rail has made a comeback, and many of the rail rights of way remain active, and their future is looking bright.

In particular the greenway proposals refer to unique, special features which depend on the abandonment of additional rail lines. These segments are listed Table 2 and shown on Figure 25.

Figure 25

Potential Greenways along Rail Rights-of-Way in Middlesex County



Source: *Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Middlesex County Planning Board, 1995.

Potential Greenways along Rail Rights-of-Way in Middlesex County

ID No.	Name of Greenway	Municipality	Rail Line Affected	Rail Line Usage		Bounds of Right-of-Way for Potential Greenway Reuse
				Owner	Status of Affected Stretch	
1	Dismal Swamp/Bound Brook	South Plainfield, Metuchen, Edison	Port Reading Secondary	Conrail	Active	from Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield, through northern Metuchen to Roosevelt Park in Edison
2	Edison to Port Reading	Edison, Woodbridge	Port Reading Secondary	Conrail	Active	from Roosevelt Park in Edison through Woodbridge to the Arthur Kill waterfront in Port Reading
3	Kingston Branch/Heathcote Brook	South Brunswick	Kingston Branch	Conrail	Abandoned	from the D & R Canal State Park in Kingston, parallel to Heathcote Brook to the Kingston Lane vicinity of Monmouth Junction
93 4	Manalapan Brook	Monroe	Freehold Secondary	Conrail	Active	from Thompson County Park in Monroe along the Manalapan Brook to the County Line at Tracy
5	Metuchen to Perth Amboy	Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge	Perth Amboy Branch	Conrail	Abandoned	from Stelton Station at Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen, through Edison, to Crows Mill Road in Fords/Keasbey
6	Middlesex Borough to Spring Lake	Middlesex, Piscataway, South Plainfield	Lehigh Valley	Conrail	Active	from South Avenue in Middlesex Borough, along Bound Brook in New Market, to Spring Lake Park and Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield
7	South Plainfield to Metuchen	South Plainfield, Edison, Metuchen	Perth Amboy Branch	Conrail	Active	from Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield, paralleling Metuchen Road into Edison, to Stelton Station at Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen
8	South Plainfield to Scotch Plains	South Plainfield, Edison	Lehigh Valley	Conrail	Active	from Spring Lake Park and Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield through the Oak Tree and Potters sections of North Edison, to the County Line at Scotch Plains

Source: *Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Middlesex County Planning Board, 1995.

4.0 Conrail/CSX Norfolk/Southern Merger

4.1 Conrail CSX/Norfolk Southern Merger and Middlesex County

The Conrail CSX/Norfolk Southern merger has been filed with the Surface Transportation Board in June 1997 and will be under review for one year. The end result of the merger is to create access to New Jersey and the Northeast coast for both CSX and Norfolk Southern rail systems by removing Conrail as a third east coast system. Both CSX and Norfolk and Southern systems extend to the Eastern half of the United States. The position of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Region in the middle of the northeast ports provides a locational advantage as a hub for distributing international trade shipments. The impact of the merger has been estimated to create a major growth in intermodal freight and particularly marine to rail shipping. The port enhancement projects currently underway include dredging, streamlined freight technology, larger ships and shipments. It has been estimated that ships with 4 to 4.5 thousand twenty foot equivalence units (TEU's) (two units make a 40 foot trailer truck) are carried on today's ships and new mega ships will increase capacity to 6 to 8 thousand units (TEU's). It is estimated that jobs could increase from 160 thousand to 320 thousand.

Middlesex County will benefit by its proximity to the rail/marine port facilities which facilitate access to the jobs that are created. The volume of rail freight over rail lines passing through Middlesex County will increase and some port sites along the Arthur Kill in Carteret may benefit from marine terminal investment. Perth Amboy and Woodbridge also have potential marine terminal sites. These projects may impact freight movement for warehousing operations notably at Raritan Center in Edison and at Interchange 8-A in South Brunswick. Ownership of rail rights of way at various stages of abandonment under Conrail will now be transferred under the merger, to CSX and Norfolk Southern. The decision to abandon segments of lines will be reviewed by new management committed to the future of each of the new rail roads. Whereas, Conrail had as its policy, the operation of a core/trunk line operation fed by shortline railroads branching from the trunk lines, the new owners will reassess their systems generated by the new thinking of their owners. Norfolk Southern has already considered anticipated increase in Middlesex, Piscataway, South Plainfield and Edison over the Lehigh Valley line.

Joint passenger and freight service is another concurrent activity prevalent in Middlesex County notably on the Northeast Corridor Line. This was also a proposed alternative in the Middlesex-Ocean-Monmouth study. There are active freight rail rights of way which are being proposed for the restoration of passenger service.

4.2 Strategic Design Principles

With regard to the Conrail/CSX/Norfolk Southern Merger the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) adopted a resolution on February 4, 1997 which expresses distinct principles which are as follows:

- Ensure Competitive Access - Direct competitive rail access of two or more major carriers (Class I) to seaports and intermodal terminals;
- Accommodate Passenger Rail - Co-development of intercity commuter and freight services should be ensured where shared trackage is necessary;
- Effective competitive access to national markets should be available for short line railroads;
- Enhance rail system capacity and intermodal effectiveness.

This merger will involve the integration of three major rail lines into two with an added connection to rail lines from Canada.

5.0 Opportunities & Proposals For New & Expanded Transportation Uses

There have been proposals for new or expanded uses along active rail lines. Some of these are 1) adding/expanding passenger service; 2) adding rail sidings to serve large warehousing facilities such as in South Brunswick around Exit 8A of N.J. Turnpike; and to warehouses in Raritan Center; 3) rehabing track; and use for a ferry landings at coastal locations.

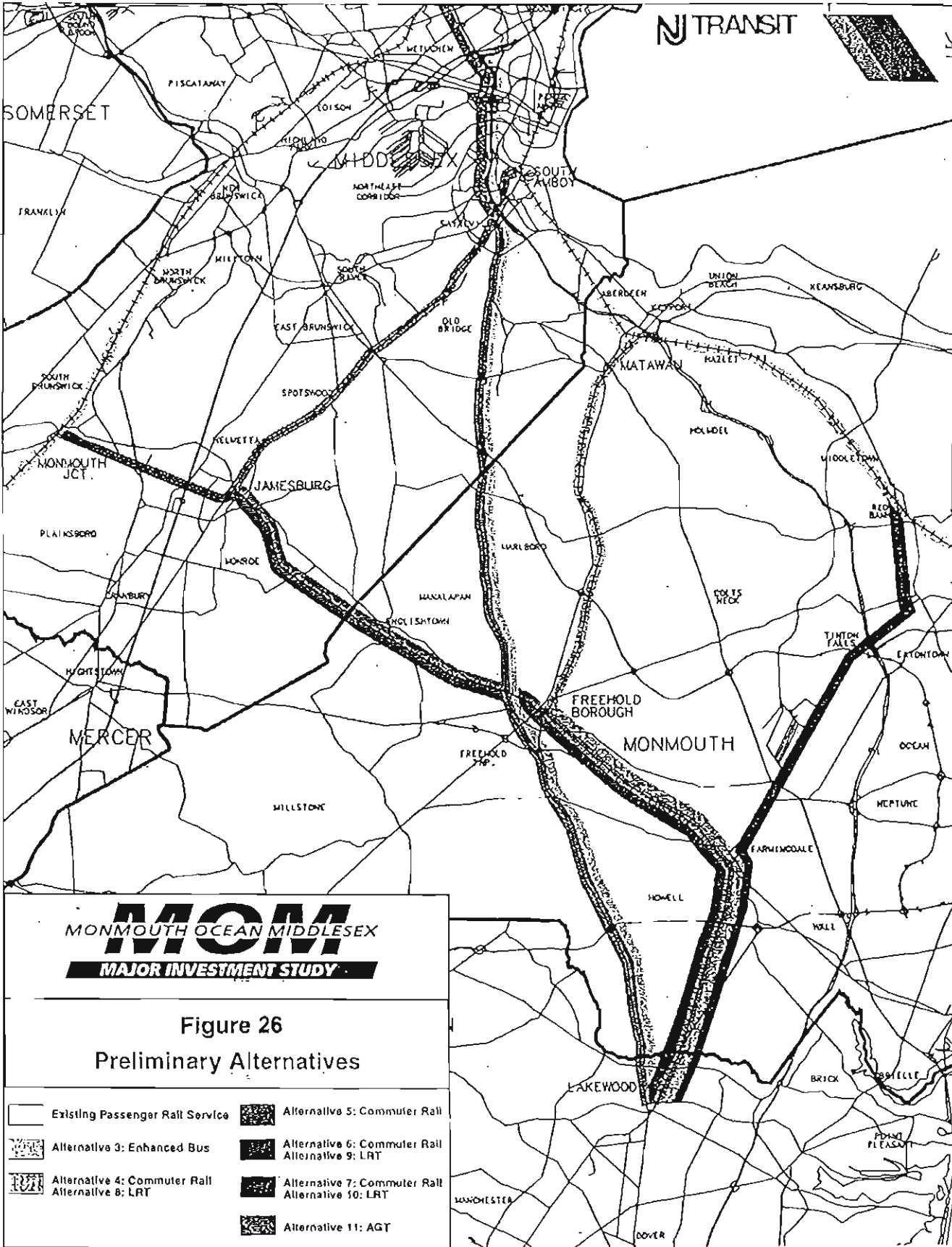
5.1 Middlesex Ocean Monmouth (M.O.M.) Study

Alternatives involving new and expanded passenger rail services in Middlesex County were examined as part of the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) Transit Alternatives Study. Two alternatives involving expansion of commuter rail services in Middlesex were strongly opposed by the affected communities. One included the commuter Rail South Amboy-Jamesburg-Freehold-Lakewood alternative. This envisioned the restoration of diesel commuter rail service from the junction of the North Jersey Coast Line and the Amboy secondary line in South Amboy to the proposed Lakewood Transportation Center via Jamesburg, Freehold and Farmingdale.

The other proposal included the commuter rail Monmouth Junction - Jamesburg-Freehold-Lakewood alternative. This alternative envisions restoration of diesel commuter rail service from Monmouth Junction on the Northeast Corridor to the proposed Lakewood Transportation Center via Jamesburg, Freehold Borough, and Farmingdale. Passengers would transfer at Monmouth Junction or South Brunswick for Princeton Junction, Trenton, and points south; while passengers with destinations in New Brunswick, Metropark, and Newark would proceed without a transfer. Passengers bound for New York would transfer at Monmouth Junction or South Brunswick or at Newark.

Because of the local opposition and cost factors associated with rail alternatives, the study recommended the "Enhanced Bus Alternative" along the Route 9 Corridor. This alternative includes bus and roadway related improvements designed to decrease travel time for bus passengers and increase the reliability of scheduled commuter bus service along the Route 9 Corridor and at the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike connection.

(Figure 26 illustrates the various alternatives considered under the MOM Study.



5.2 New Use Rail Sidings to N.J. Turnpike Exit 8-A Distribution Area

The South Brunswick Master Plan proposes and has zoned for 25 million square feet of warehouses and distribution facilities the N.J. Turnpike around Exit 8A. In recent years a new Conrail branch line with sidings was constructed to serve the rapidly developing distribution industry in the Exit 8A area of the N.J. Turnpike providing a competitive alternative to trucks. Such alternatives should be evaluated in conjunction with the past enhancements projects being implemented by the Port Authority of NY & NJ and in conjunction with CSX/Norfolk Southern merger impact. These projects are likely to have a significant impact on freight movement and warehousing districts in the Port Region. Funding rail extensions/sidings using congestion management air quality funds is possible given that 1,000 rail cars removes 4,000 trucks from the highway.

5.3 Railroad Preservation Bond Act of 1989

The Railroad Preservation Bond Act of 1989 was attached to the Bridge Rehabilitation referendum approved by the voters. The N.J.D.O.T. State Rail Plan makes the point that in the past 25 years well over 500 miles of rail lines have been abandoned and less than 200 miles remain in tact as transportation corridors. Most have been sold off on a piecemeal basis, property by property. The mission of N.J.D.O.T. and NJ TRANSIT to preserve those vulnerable properties which could serve some future transportation use is a strategic design which needs support. For example, Middlesex County supported a proposal by the railroad Right of Way Preservation Committee to purchase a right of way on the Raritan River Railroad in South Amboy from Stevens Avenue to Broadway because the segment could serve some future transportation use.

The possibility of replenishing the Railroad Preservation Bond Act to accommodate future needs is an idea worth pursuing.

5.4 Terminal Railroad Upgrade

Durham Transportation Inc., a shortline railroad in Middlesex County, provides switching and terminal railroad service at Raritan Station, and sites in Federal Business Centers (Raritan Center) in Edison. The railroad serves 9 customers over 15 miles of track and handles 1,500 car loadings per year.

The track needs to be rehabilitated and a request by Vesuvio Foods for a siding to its warehouse has been made and not fulfilled.

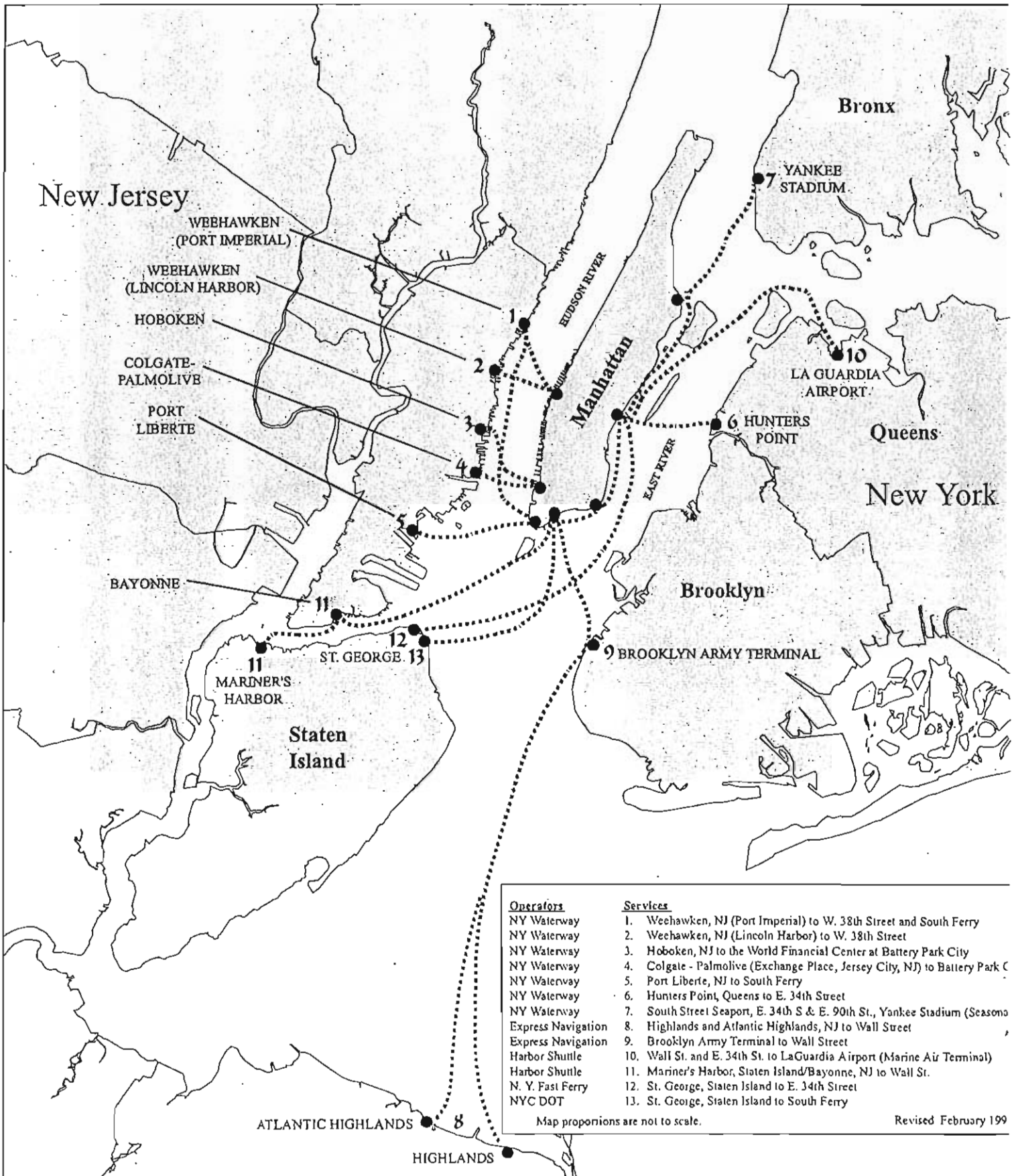
5.5 Future Ferry Landings, South Amboy, Perth Amboy, Edison, and Carteret

Ferry landings are other future transportation uses which have been proposed. These would take advantage of abandoned rail lines in such coastal communities as South Amboy, Perth Amboy, Edison and Carteret to provide access roads and terminals at the waterfront.

The Port of New York and New Jersey completed a feasibility study for ferry service between Middlesex County, Staten Island, and Manhattan. Maps on Figure 27 and 28 of existing ferry routes and proposed routes show that ferry service to Middlesex County may reach a threshold where private operators will consider potential Middlesex County sites. Some of those sites are on abandoned rail properties.

Figure 27

FERRY ROUTE MAP



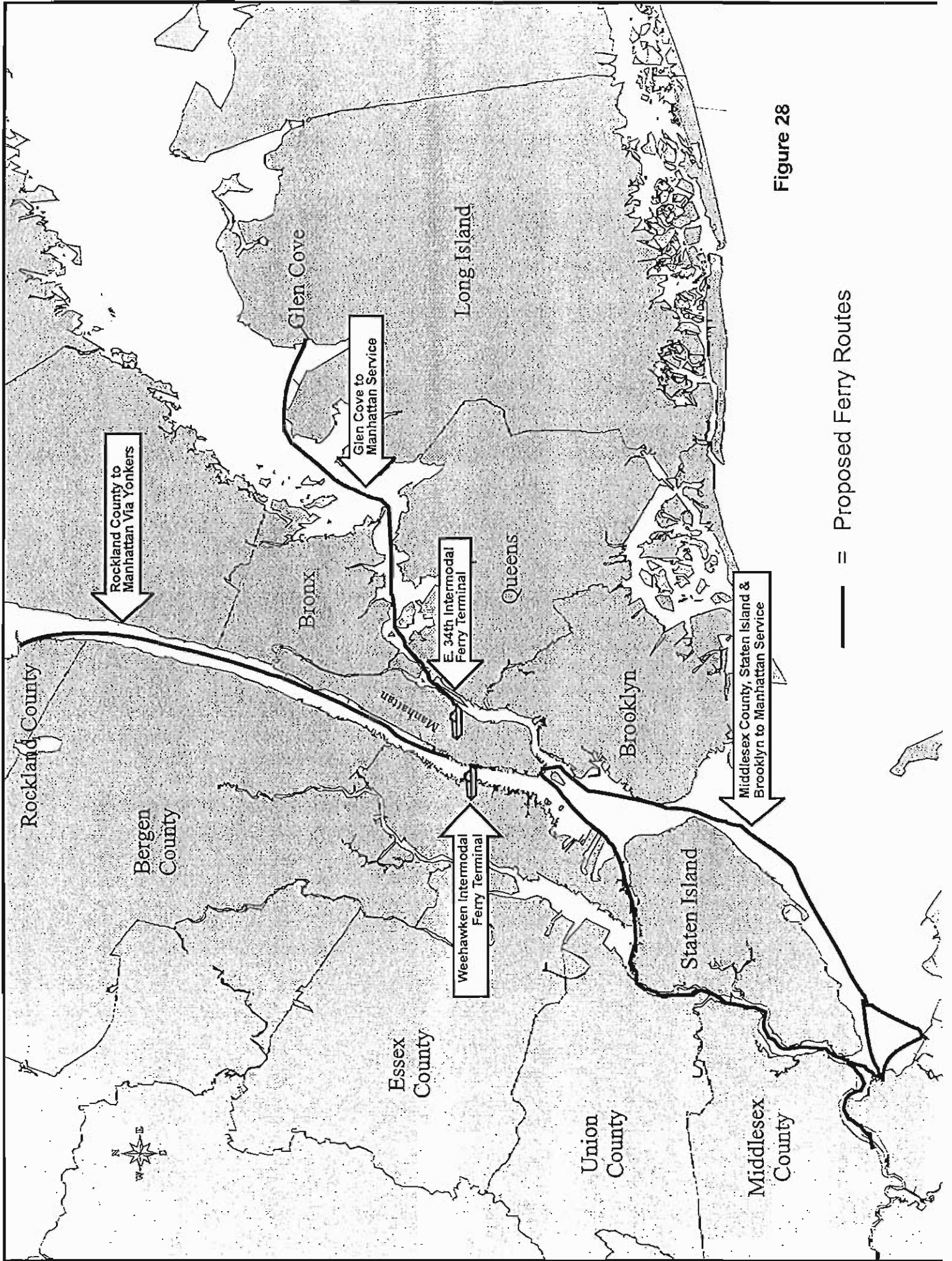


Figure 28

5.6 Light Rail Passenger Services via Conversion Vehicles

There are existing rail facilities which go through older population centers in Middlesex County which could provide opportunities for alternative and/or expanded transportation services. Such services which could be further explored include the use of light rail service via vehicles with conversion capabilities to operate both on rail and roadways which are known as "road railers". Such technology is already in service notably with rail maintenance vehicles which travel both on rails and roadways.

With the increasing levels of peak hour congestion along our major roadways, future possibilities for greater utilization of dedication rights-of-way for expanded transportation uses are worth exploring further in collaboration with the affected operators of such services and the respective jurisdictions.

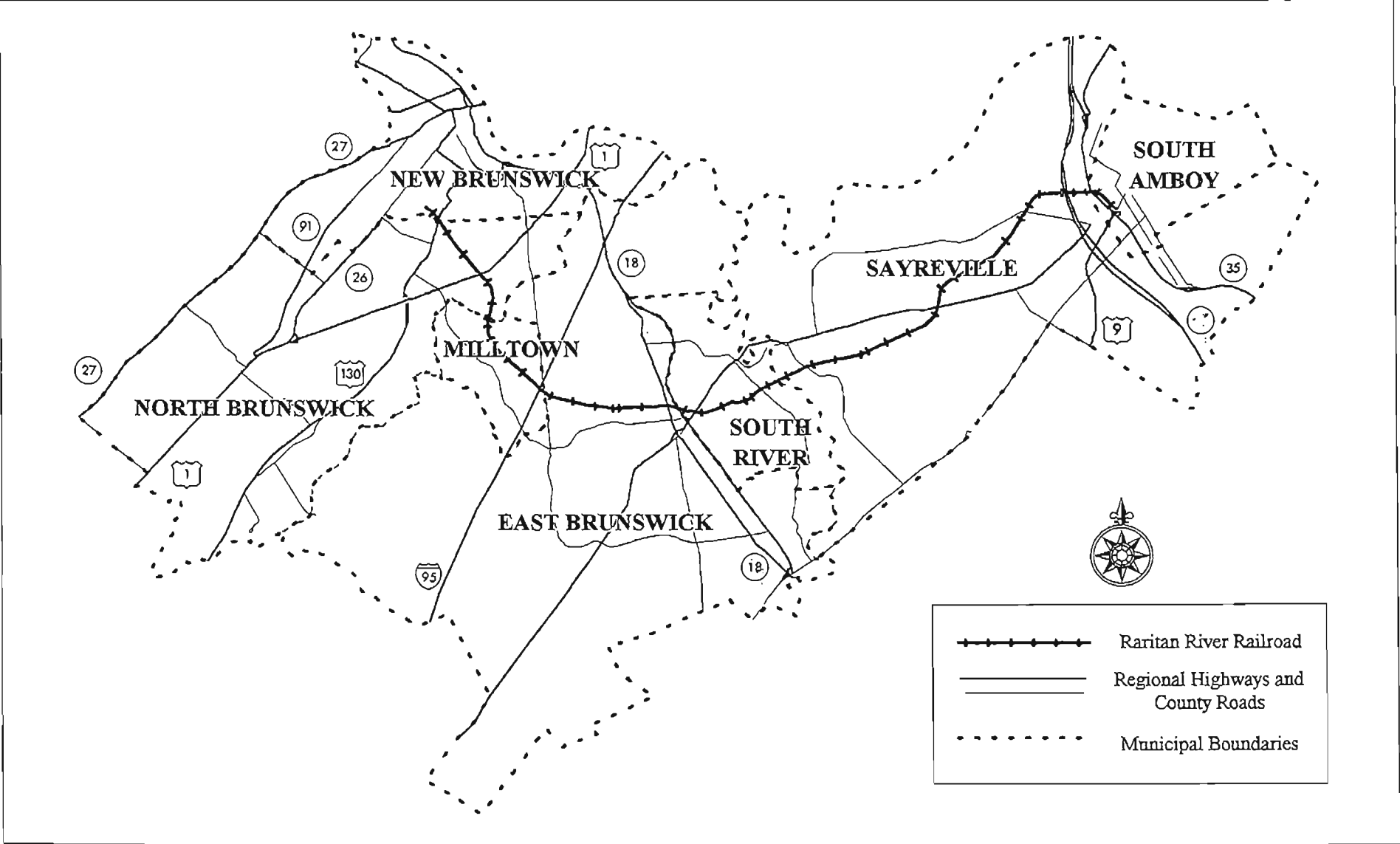
Community concerns in Middlesex County have been expressed regarding the presence of commuter rail service associated with certain alternatives of the Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (M.O.M.) Study that was done by NJ Transit. In light of these concerns, the proposals for light rail passenger service via conversion bus like vehicles that are being made in this study for further investigation would need to be done with all the appropriate mitigating measures that would minimize any perceived adverse impacts on the affected areas in terms of safety, noise, etc. This would include the use of available future technological means, where possible, in order to make these proposals acceptable to the host communities.

On this basis the following rail lines may merit future investigation on their feasibility for accommodating a light rail and/or busway type of passenger service.

5.61 Raritan River Railroad, South Amboy, Sayreville, South River, East Brunswick, Milltown, North Brunswick New Brunswick

This corridor could address some of the east-west travel needs in the central area of the County providing a transit way that would link the City of South Amboy and the City of New Brunswick. This could also provide a viable commuter travel alternative to the heavily used Route 18 Corridor. (See Figure 29).

**Figure 29 Raritan River Railroad Corridor,
New Brunswick to South Amboy**



5.62 Lehigh Valley-Bonhamtown Branch Line, Metuchen Northeast Corridor Station, Raritan Center, and Perth Amboy North Jersey Coast Line

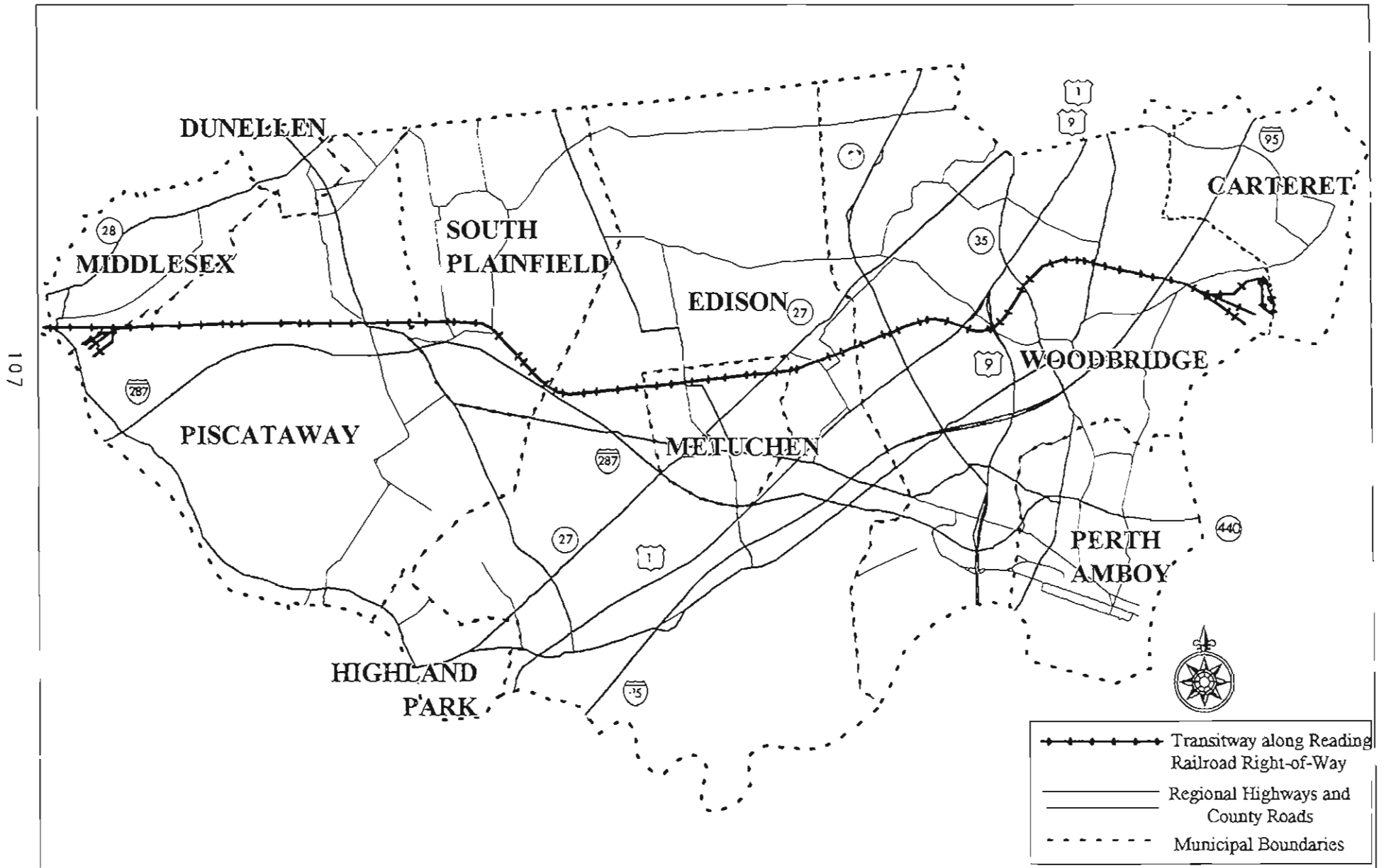
This corridor could provide a transit way linking Raritan Center and the Northeast Corridor Line at Metuchen and the North Jersey Coast Line at Perth Amboy. Also, it would provide a direct rail linkage between these two rail corridors within Middlesex County. (See Figure 30).

5.63 Northern Middlesex County East-West Transit Way, Woodbridge, Edison, Metuchen, South Plainfield, Piscataway, Middlesex to Somerset County

The potential for a direct northern Middlesex County east-west transit rail right-of-way exists between the Port Reading section of Woodbridge and Somerset County via the Reading Railroad. Areas served would include Woodbridge Shopping Center, Menlo Park Shopping Center, Metropark Station, Durham Woods Apartments, Middlesex Mall and Route 287 Corridor employers in Piscataway and South Plainfield area.

A light rail-roadway conversion transit vehicle or road railer along this rail corridor could provide a travel alternative to using the heavily congested Route 287-Route 440 Corridor during peak hours and thereby reducing traffic congestion. (See Figure 31).

**Figure 31 Northern Middlesex County East-West Transitway,
Middlesex Borough to Woodbridge**



6.0 Conclusion

The preservation of rail rights-of-way in Middlesex County provides new and innovative opportunities for expanding or modifying the use of these rights-of-way for various other purposes. This study has identified some of the major transportation and non transportation reuses of abandoned railroad rights-of-way in the County that have either been implemented or that have been proposed over the years. It has also discussed recommendations for potential greenways along rail rights-of-way which are consistent with the Adopted Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan, and addressed the matter of the Conrail/CSX/Norfolk Southern Merger and its impact on our region. Finally, this study has examined future opportunities and proposals for expanded transportation uses including the use of innovative technologies that maximize the utilization of the rail infrastructure in the County and enhance the intermodal use of our transportation system inclusive of rail, road, and ferry facilities.

While these recommendations are subject to further analysis and study they provide new alternatives for better utilization of our rail infrastructure and for a more integrated and connected transportation system in Middlesex County.