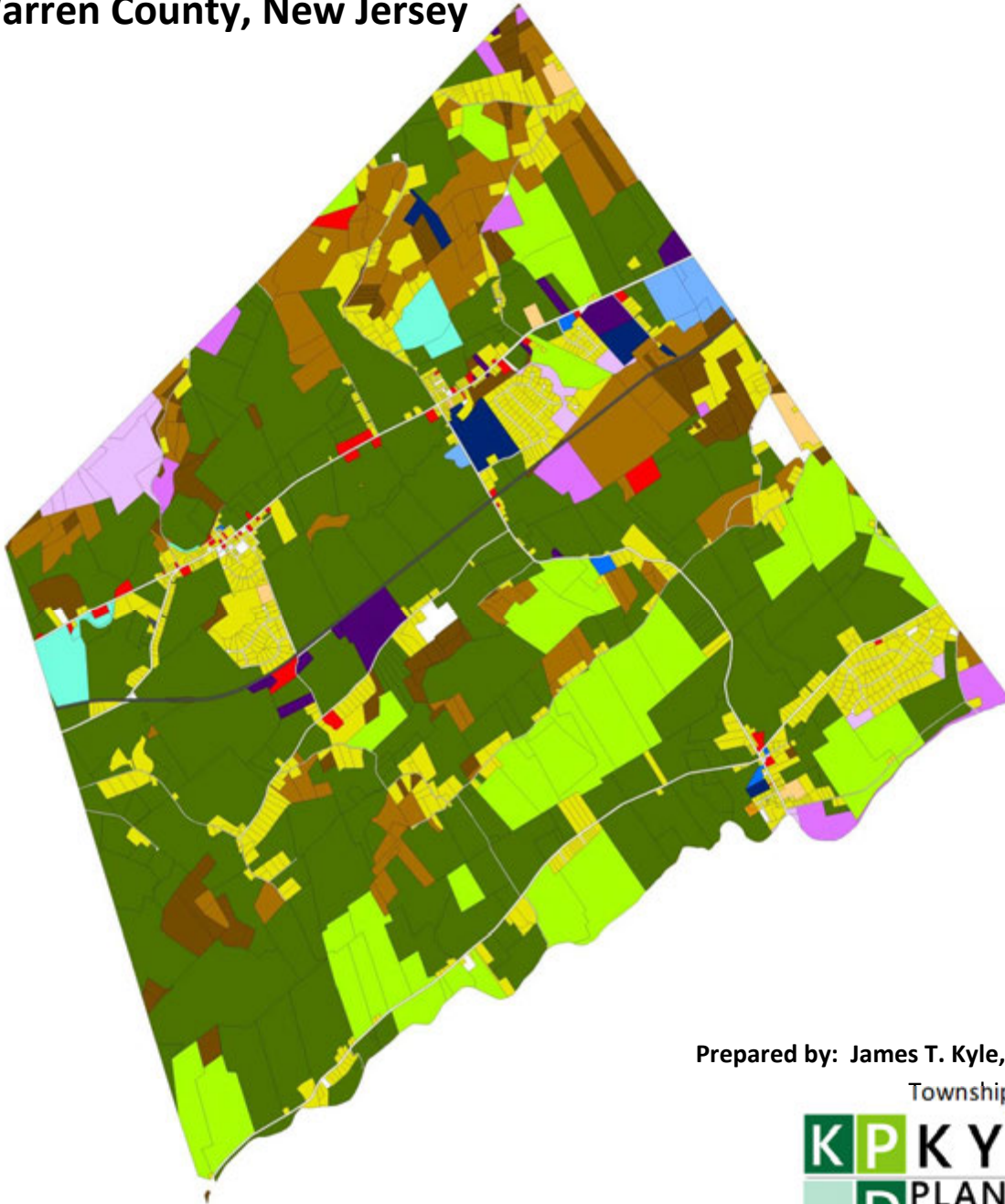


Land Use Inventory

Franklin Township

Warren County, New Jersey



Prepared by: James T. Kyle, PP/AICP
Township Planner



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Deputy Mayor, Mike Toretta
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OCTOBER 3, 2012

The original of this document was signed and sealed
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Prepared by:

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Introduction

Over the last two years, Franklin Township has been engaged in the process of Plan Conformance with the New Jersey Highlands Council and its staff. As part of Franklin's implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan, the Highlands Council provided grant funding for a number of activities, including among other things a comprehensive land use inventory.

While much has changed in the Township over the last 15 years the one thing that has remained a constant is the dominance of agriculture in the landscape. An overwhelming majority (65.5%) of lands continue in active agriculture and 75% are currently under farmland assessment, including wooded lots in property tax class 3B. With 45 parcels permanently preserved under the farmland preservation program, just over 2,000 acres is assured to forever remain dedicated to some form of agricultural activity. Not only does farming represent the livelihood of a number of Township residents, it represents the face of Franklin and thing that people identify with most here. Whether they have lived here all their lives, or just moved here recently, it is likely the reason people have stayed here or the reason they have come here.

Planning studies and initiatives are always dependent on base data to inform their process. Land use and changes in land use represent a critical indicator of either success or failure and can measure progress (or lack thereof) for a variety of initiatives. And while Franklin petitioned the Council for conformance for the Preservation Area only, it is important to understand the use of land for planning activities related to farmland preservation, woodland and stream corridor preservation, redevelopment and future physical planning that will occur Township-wide. In particular, data gathered in this study will support efforts to identify redevelopment opportunities along the Route 57 corridor in both the Planning and Preservation Areas. It will also provide baseline data and indicators that will inform farmland and open space preservation efforts, with an update to the Farmland Preservation Plan currently being prepared with funding also provided by the Highlands Council.

Methodology

This inventory documents land use for the year 2012 based on parcel and tax data, review of aerial photo mapping and field inspection of properties to verify current use. In most cases, property class information resident in tax databases alone provides an excellent indicator of use. But with the availability of ownership information, the typical breakdown of land use by property class was expanded to differentiate between municipal, county, state and non-profit owned properties. In addition, aerial photography and open space information available from the New Jersey Office of Information Technology and the Highlands Council was utilized to identify preserved farmland and to classify farm assessed properties as either farmland or woodland. Aerial photography also provided a basis for identifying vacant properties (property tax class 1) that were entirely wooded. Table 1 details property class designations utilized in New Jersey tax data and their corresponding category, which provided at least an initial basis for classifying land use.

Table 1 – New Jersey Property Class Designations and Categories

Property Class Designation	Category
1	Vacant Land
2	Residential (4 families or less)
3A	Farm (Regular)
3B	Farm (Qualified)
4A	Commercial
4B	Industrial
4C	Apartment/Cooperative
5A	Class I Railroad
5B	Class II Railroad
6A	Personal Property Telephone
6B	Machinery, Apparatus or Equipment
15A	Exempt Public School
15B	Exempt Other School
15C	Exempt Public
15D	Exempt Charitable
15E	Exempt Cemetery
15F	Exempt Miscellaneous

Utilizing ArcMap 10.1 geographic information system (GIS) software from ESRI and data from the New Jersey Office of Information Technology, all properties within the Township were reviewed and analyzed and in some cases field inspected to verify current use. Table 2 below outlines the land use classes developed and applied. Following Table 2 is a detailed description of each class and any considerations or assumptions utilized during the classification process.

Table 2 – Land Use Classes

Vacant	Residential
Commercial	Industrial
Cemetery	Church
Railroad/Utility	Public Facilities
School	Farmland
Preserved Farmland	Municipal Open Space
County Open Space	State Open Space
Other Open Space	Right-of-way
Woodland – Farm Assessed	Woodland - Vacant

Vacant – includes land designated as property class 1 in the tax database but only lands that are not entirely wooded or farmland assessed.

Residential – includes land designated as property class 2 or 4C (apartment) and in certain cases may include lands designated as property class 3A, 3B or 15F when a residential structure was identified on the property.

Commercial – includes land designated as property class 4A and in certain cases may include lands designated as 3B when a commercial operation such as a retail garden center was identified on the property and constituted the only use of the property.

Industrial – includes land designated as property class 4B and in certain cases may include lands designated as 3B when a manufacturing operation was identified on the property.

Cemetery – includes lands designated as property class 15E.

Church – includes lands designated as property class 15D and in some cases 15B if adjacent to and clearly part of lands designated as property class 15D.

Railroad/Utility – includes lands designated as property class 5A or 5B or those lands that clearly contain railroad facilities based on review of aerial photography or field observation.

Public Facilities – includes lands that could be designated as property class 15C but that service a typical public facilities function such as a municipal building, library or garage.

School – includes lands designated as property class 15A, but includes both local and county schools.

Farmland – includes lands designated as property class 3B, but that is clearly utilized for farming based on review of aerial photography or field inspection. If a portion of the property is actively farmed it is classified as farmland even if the majority of the property may be woodland.

Preserved farmland – includes lands designated as property class 3B and identified as permanently preserved or subject to an easement that prohibits development for residential or commercial non-farm use.

Municipal, County, State or Other Open Space – includes lands designated as property class 15C based on the owner of record being one of three levels of government or a non-profit group. In some cases lands designated as property class 1 were also included, where the land is not further developable and owned and maintained by a homeowner's association as common open space resulting from subdivision and development of land.

Right-of-way – includes lands designated as property class 1 where a public or private roadway is clearly present based on review of aerial photography or field inspection.

Woodland – Farm Assessed – includes lands that are designated property class 3B where the entire parcel is wooded.

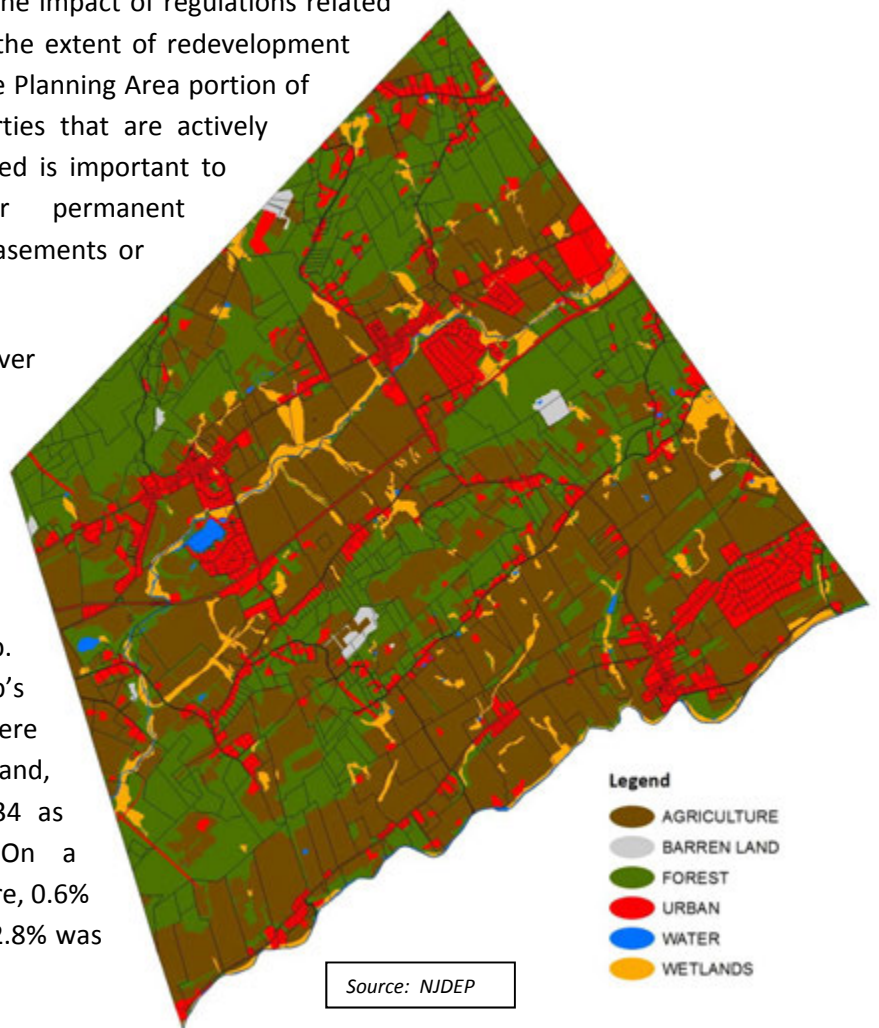
Woodland – Vacant – includes lands that are designated property class 1 where the entire parcel is wooded.

While there are other land use classification schemes that could have been utilized, including the American Planning Association's Land Based Classification Standards (LBCS) and the United States Geological Survey's Anderson Classification scheme, these were both deemed inappropriate for this exercise as either too broad (LBCS and Anderson Level I) or too detailed (Anderson Level II) to be effective in conveying the current land use picture in Franklin. The modified land use classification scheme applied in this case is broad enough to allow users to easily discern general land use patterns yet detailed enough to provide data useful for other external studies.

Land Use vs. Land Cover

For this exercise it is important to identify the difference between land use and land cover. Land use refers simply to the activity being undertaken on a piece of property while land cover refers to what is physically on it. As an example, a property that contains a single family dwelling could be classified as a residential land use, but if entirely wooded its land cover classification would be forest. This study in some ways presents a combination of these two distinctions based on the future planning efforts the data will inform. In the Highlands Preservation Area portion of the Township, identification of forested properties is important in predicting the impact of regulations related to future development, in particular the extent of redevelopment that may occur along Route 57. In the Planning Area portion of Franklin, identifying farmland properties that are actively farmed as opposed to entirely wooded is important to targeting future properties for permanent preservation through development easements or outright purchase.

The most recent land use/land cover classification data available from the New Jersey Department of Environmental protection was generated from 2007 aerial photography. The figure at right shows the Anderson Level I classification for Franklin Township. For the year 2007, of the Township's total of 15,051 acres, 7,002 acres were classified as agriculture, 93 as barren land, 5,173 as forest, 1,925 as urban, 134 as water and 724 as wetlands. On a percentage basis, 46.5% was agriculture, 0.6% was barren land, 34.4% was forest, 12.8% was



urban, 0.9% was water and 4.8% was wetlands.

With land use/land cover data available at regular intervals (every five to seven years) change in land use can readily be analyzed. Comparing change in land use/land cover from 2002 to 2007, a decrease in land devoted to agriculture and barren land gave way to an increase in urban land cover. Given the large amount of land devoted to agriculture in the Township, this amounts to only a 1.7% decrease overall. This trend should be expected to continue into the future, as additional lands will be converted to non-agricultural uses such as residential or energy generation facilities.

Table 3 – Land Use/Land Cover Change 2002-2007

Land Cover	2002 Acres	2002%	2007 Acres	2007%	Difference Acres	% Change
Agriculture	7,121.84	47.3%	7,002.39	46.6%	-119.45	-1.7%
Barren Land	148.34	1.0%	92.72	0.6%	-55.62	-37.5%
Forest	5,233.86	34.8%	5,173.21	34.5%	-60.65	-1.2%
Urban	1,693.26	11.3%	1,924.69	12.8%	231.43	13.7%
Water	123.78	0.8%	133.64	0.9%	9.86	8.0%
Wetlands	730.05	4.9%	724.47	4.8%	-5.58	-0.8%
	15,051.13		15,051.12			

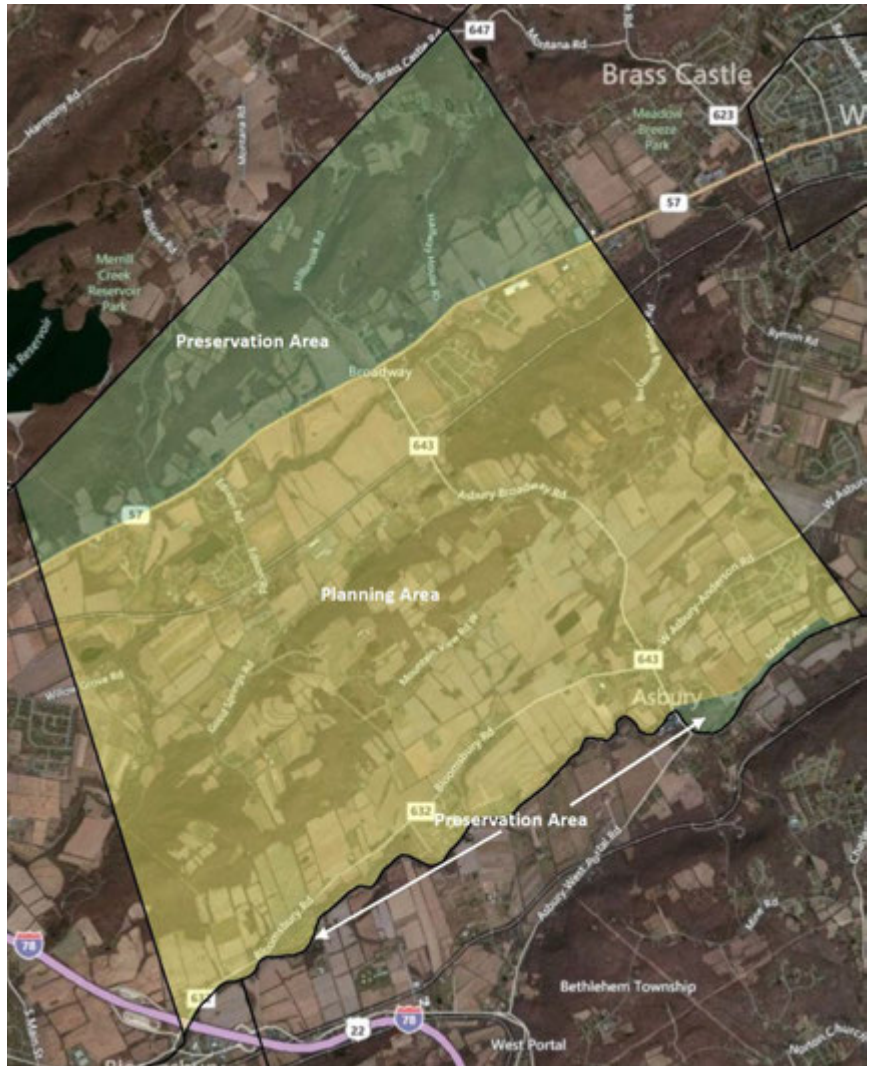
In some ways, land use/land cover data provides a better indicator of land use change over time, as the data is more detailed and classifies the true areal extent of a use on a property. This is due to the fact that multiple land uses/covers can be identified on a single parcel, as data is compiled irrespective of ownership or political boundaries. As this land use inventory is updated in the future, new land use/land cover data should be presented and analyzed to provide a more complete picture of land use change in the Township.

2012 Land Use Statistics

According to the most recent data available, Franklin Township has 1,695 parcels that cover just over 14,753 acres, not including right-of-way for roads. The largest individual parcel is approximately 234 acres in size and the mean parcel size is 8.7 acres. For purposes of summarizing findings of the land use inventory, statistics are presented for the Highlands Preservation Area, the Highlands Planning Area and the Township as a whole.

Preservation Area Land Use Characteristics

The Highlands Preservation Area covers approximately 3,763 acres in both the northern and southern portions of the Township. In the northern portion of Franklin, the Preservation area encompasses all lands north of Route 57. In the southern portion, it encompasses two small areas immediately adjacent to the Musconetcong River. The first is southeast of Asbury and is bound by Asbury-Broadway Road (CR 643) to the west, Maple Avenue to the north, the Musconetcong River to the south and Valley Road to the east. The second is south of Bloomsbury Road (CR 632) extending from Route 78 to a point 0.7 miles west of Wolverton Road. This area includes the Musconetcong River itself and some small portions of its banks. The figure at right shows the location of both the Preservation Area and Planning Area as described.



Sources: Bing Maps Aerial (c) 2010 Microsoft Corporation and its data suppliers, NJ Office of Information Technology, Office of Geographic Information

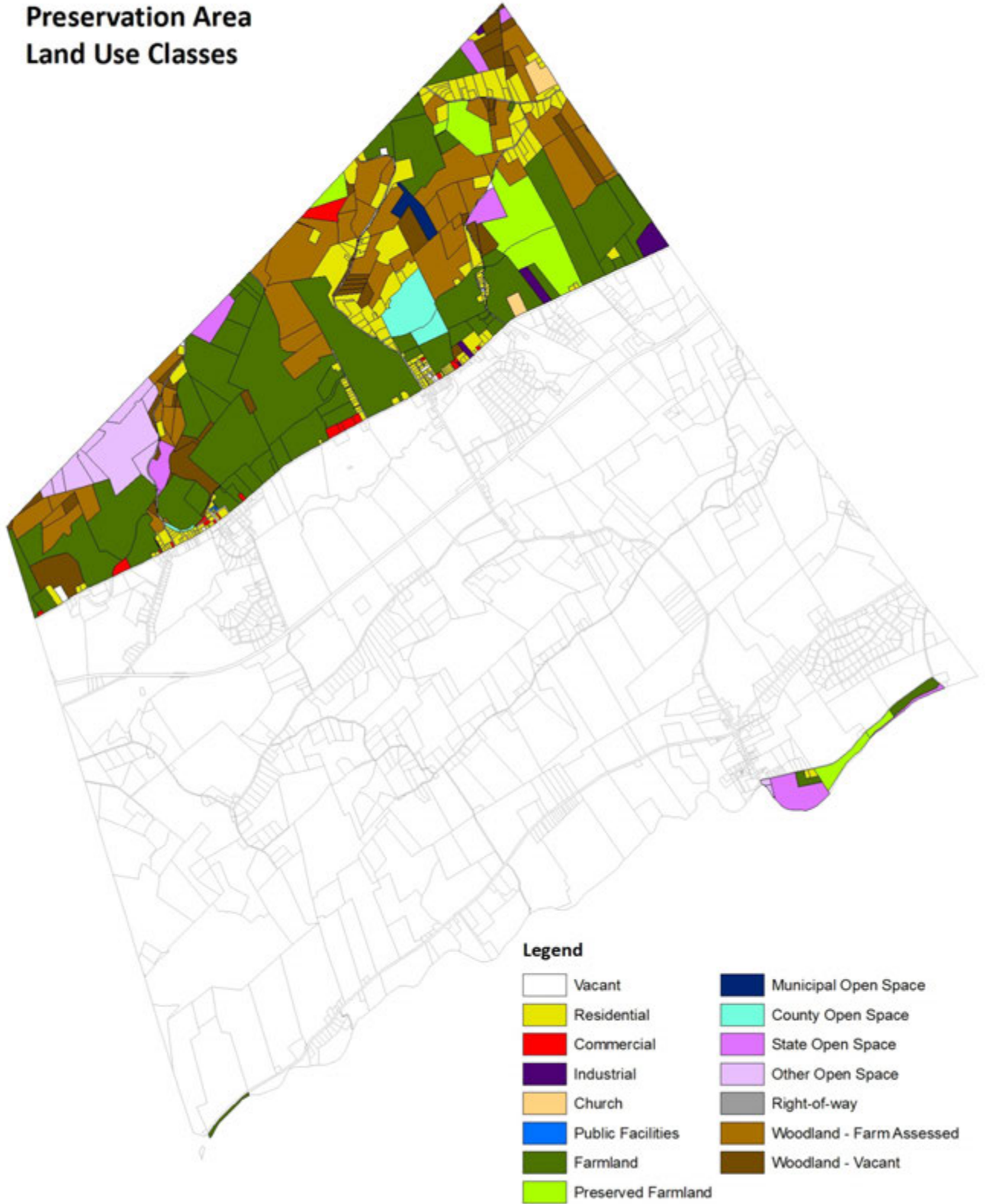
The Preservation Area contains a total of 449 parcels covering approximately 3,708 acres with a mean parcel size of 8.3 acres. The dominant land use is farmland (both preserved and not preserved), which comprises nearly half of the entire area at 48.5% or 1,799 acres.

Table 4 on the following page details the number of parcels and percentage of total land area each land use class covers in the Preservation Area portion of the Township. The map on the following page details the land use characteristics of parcels within the Preservation Area.

Table 4 – Preservation Area Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Class	# Parcels	Total Area	%
Church	3	23.94	0.6%
Commercial	20	35.81	1.0%
County Open Space	3	79.03	2.1%
Farmland	60	1,562.33	42.1%
Industrial	5	31.02	0.8%
Municipal Open Space	1	21.94	0.6%
Other Open Space	11	170.26	4.6%
Preserved Farmland	7	237.03	6.4%
Public Facilities	2	0.66	0.0%
Residential	217	387.52	10.4%
Right-of-way	1	0.77	0.0%
State Open Space	9	121.91	3.3%
Vacant	11	8.44	0.2%
Woodland - Farm Assessed	46	790.33	21.3%
Woodland - Vacant	53	237.89	6.4%
	449	3,708.88	100.0%

Preservation Area Land Use Classes



Source: NJ Office of Information Technology, Office of Geographic Information

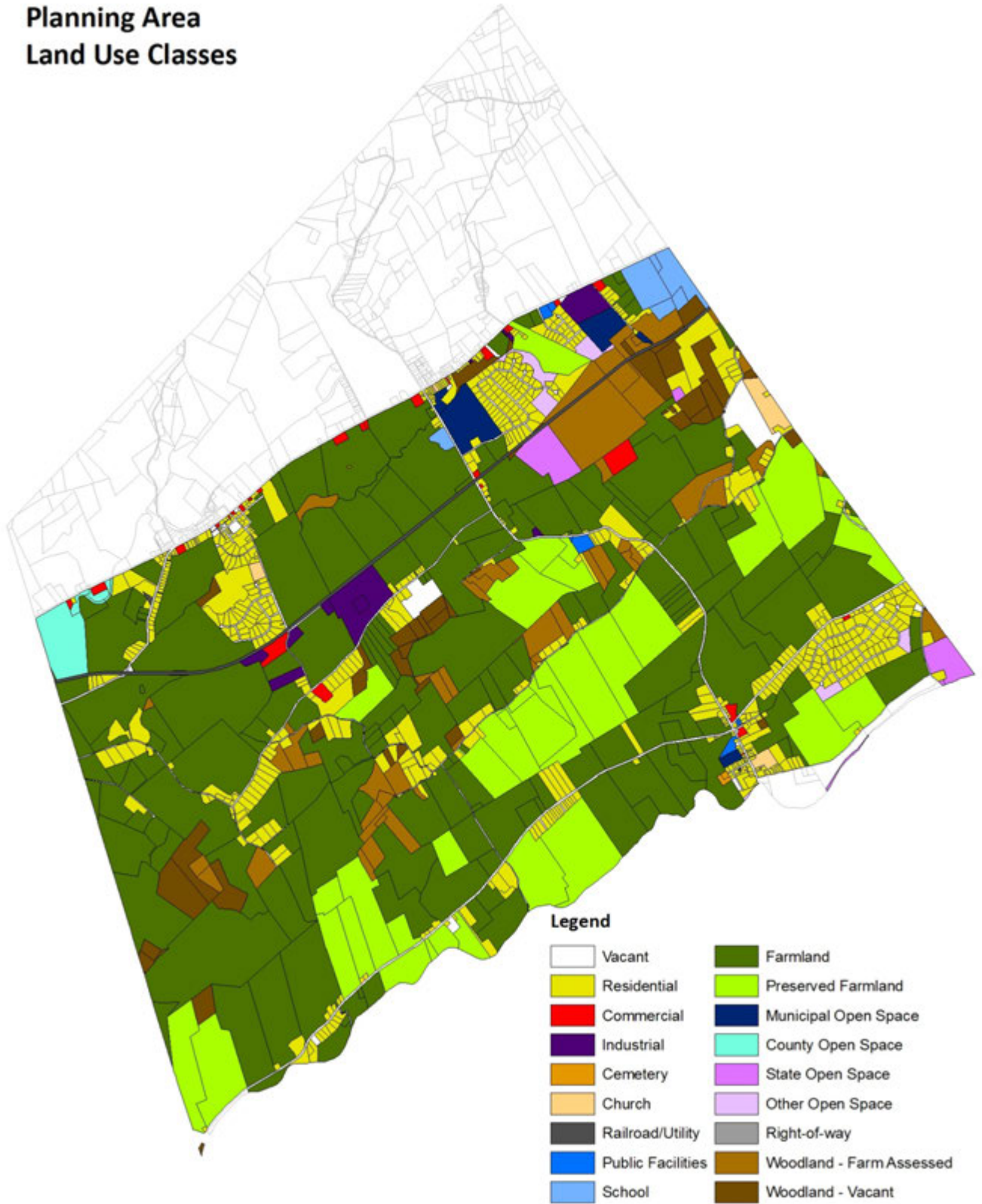
Planning Area Land Use Characteristics

The Planning Area within Franklin Township contains a total of 1,246 parcels covering approximately 11,044 acres. The dominant land use class is farmland (both preserved and not preserved), which accounts for 71.2% of the Planning Area. Table 5 below details the number of parcels and percentage of total land area each land use class covers in the Planning Area portion of the Township. The map on the following page details the land use characteristics of parcels within the Preservation Area.

Table 5 – Planning Area Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Class	# Parcels	Total Area	%
Cemetery	3	3.2	0.0%
Church	5	42.95	0.4%
Commercial	39	68.14	0.6%
County Open Space	7	88.45	0.8%
Farmland	190	6,048.38	54.8%
Industrial	14	126.18	1.1%
Municipal Open Space	5	103.73	0.9%
Other Open Space	6	51.84	0.5%
Preserved Farmland	38	1,813.16	16.4%
Public Facilities	8	17.94	0.2%
Railroad/Utility	2	61.78	0.6%
Residential	786	1,332.69	12.1%
Right-of-way	2	0.20	0.0%
School	6	96.92	0.9%
State Open Space	5	96.36	0.9%
Vacant	28	90.90	0.8%
Woodland - Farm Assessed	52	620.46	5.6%
Woodland - Vacant	50	381.20	3.5%
	1,246	11,044.48	100.0%

Planning Area Land Use Classes



Source: NJ Office of Information Technology, Office of Geographic Information

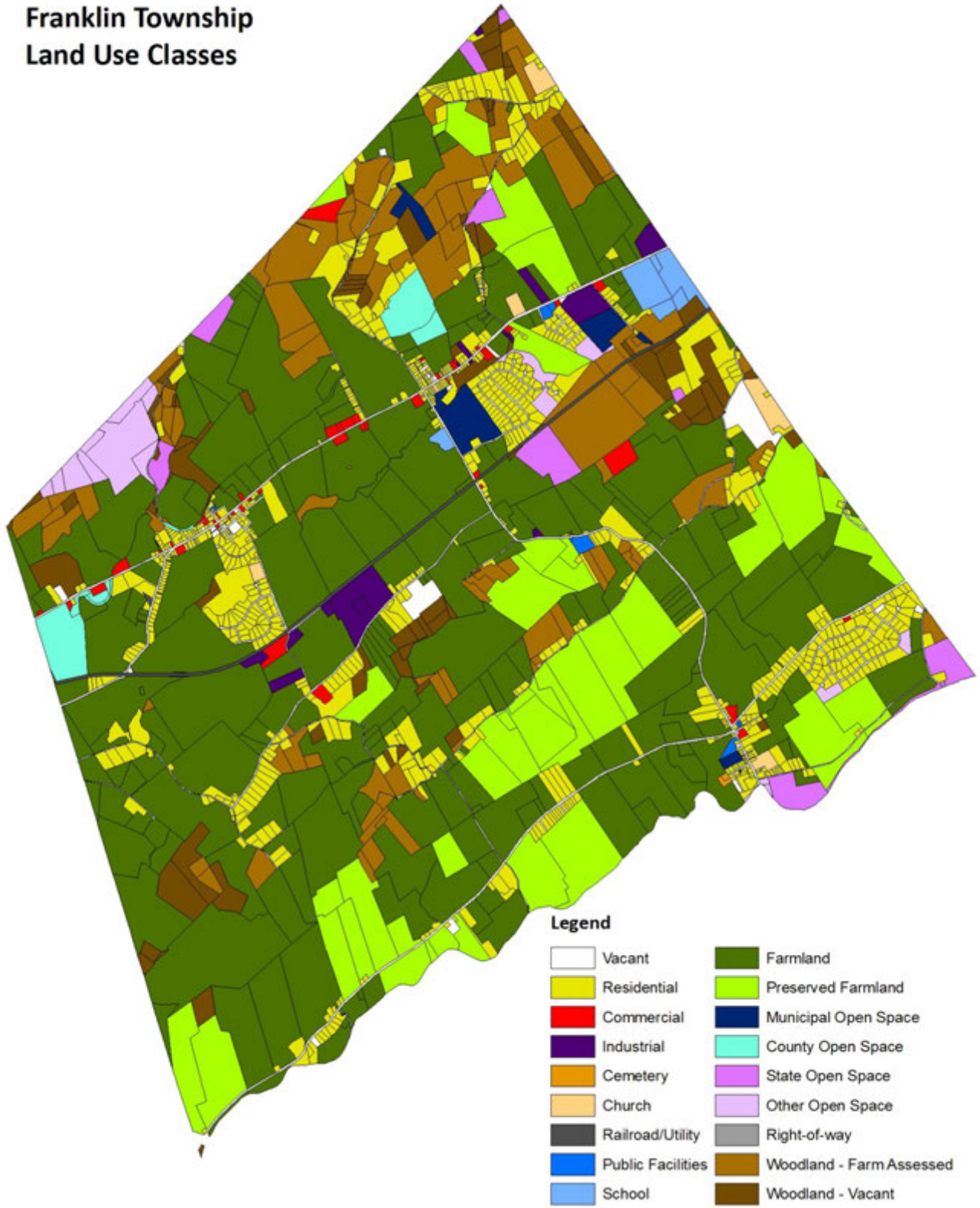
Franklin Township Land Use Characteristics

Overall Franklin Township contains a total of 1,695 parcels covering approximately 14,753 acres. The dominant land use class is farmland (both preserved and not preserved), which accounts for 65.5% of the Township. Table 6 below details the number of parcels and percentage of total land area each land use class covering all of Franklin. The map on the following page details the land use characteristics of parcels within the Township as a whole.

Table 6 – Planning Area Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Class	# Parcels	Total Area	%
Cemetery	3	3.2	0.0%
Church	8	66.89	0.5%
Commercial	59	103.94	0.7%
County Open Space	10	167.48	1.1%
Farmland	250	7,610.71	51.6%
Industrial	19	157.19	1.1%
Municipal Open Space	6	125.67	0.9%
Other Open Space	17	222.10	1.5%
Preserved Farmland	45	2,050.19	13.9%
Public Facilities	10	18.60	0.1%
Railroad/Utility	2	61.78	0.4%
Residential	1,003	1,720.21	11.7%
Right-of-way	3	0.97	0.0%
School	6	96.62	0.7%
State Open Space	14	218.27	1.5%
Vacant	39	99.33	0.7%
Woodland - Farm Assessed	98	1,410.80	9.6%
Woodland - Vacant	103	619.09	4.2%
	1,695	14,753.04	100.0%

Franklin Township Land Use Classes



Source: NJ Office of Information Technology, Office of Geographic Information