

4.18 Land Use, Zoning and Consistency with Local Plans

4.18.1 Introduction

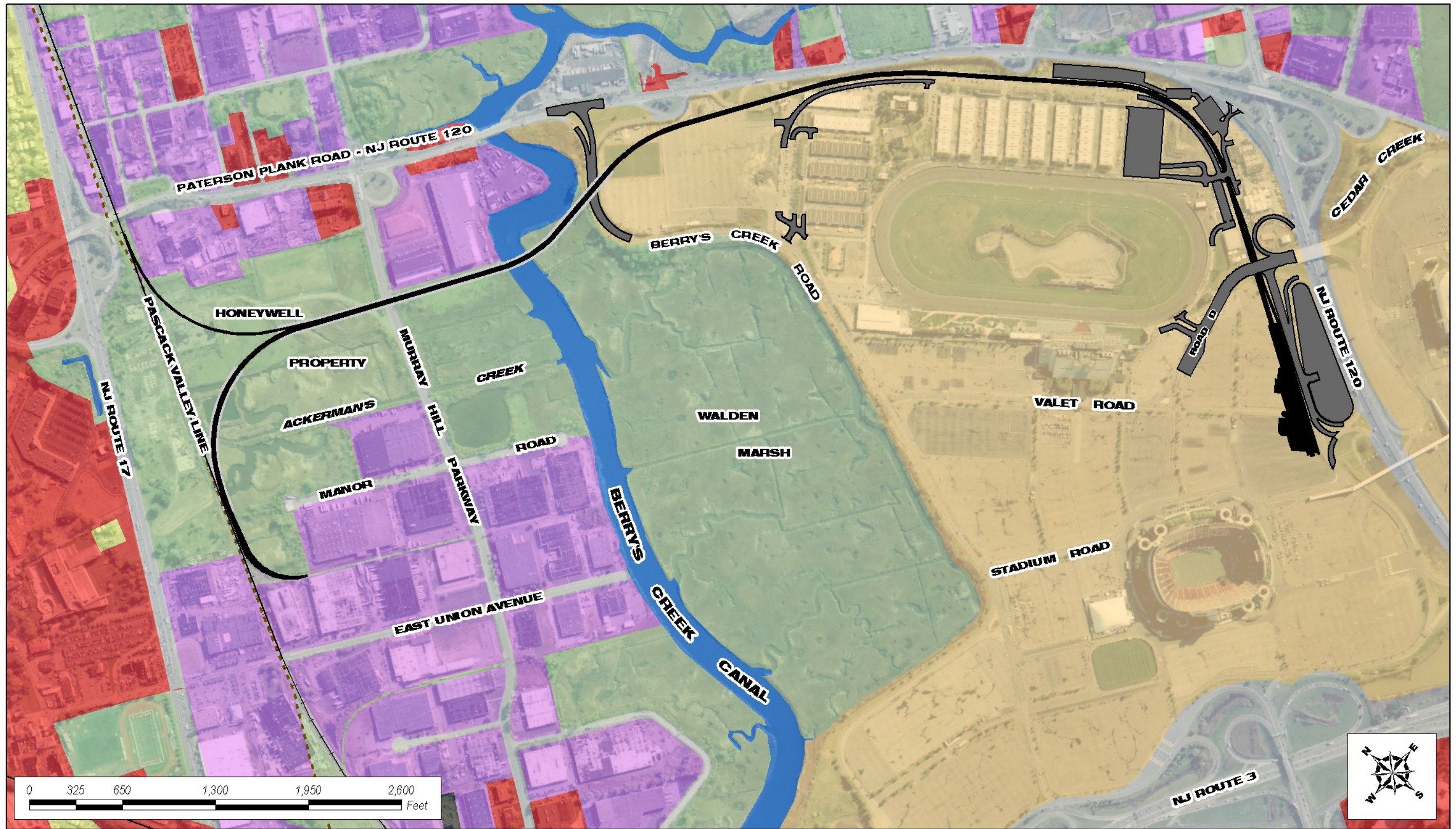
Land use refers to the activity that is occurring on land and within the structures that occupy it. Types of uses include residential, commercial, industrial, community facilities/institutional, vacant or undeveloped land and parkland/open space. An analysis of land use patterns characterizes the uses and development trends in the area that may be impacted by the proposed project. This analysis is then used to determine whether the proposed project is compatible with or may impact those conditions. Data collection for the land use analysis included a block-by-block land use survey of the parcels contained within the study area which contains all property to be utilized for the proposed passenger rail alignment, station area and roadway improvements. This field investigation was supplemented by the utilization of aerial photography. The study area, located in the Boroughs of East Rutherford and Rutherford, is generally defined by the NJ TRANSIT Pascack Valley Line on the northwest, Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) on the northeast, State Route 3 on the southwest, and State Route 120 on the southeast (Figure 4.18-1). In addition, parcels located just outside of the study area, including portions of the Borough of Carlstadt were analyzed to ensure the area's overall compatibility with the proposed project.

Zoning regulations establish standards and requirements used to guide and control development within particular jurisdictions. Regulatory controls include permitted uses, building density, coverage and open space standards, setbacks, structure heights and parking requirements. Located within the state legislatively mandated HMD, property located within the study area, as well as just beyond its borders, is under the regulatory jurisdiction of the NJMC. The NJMC's land use authority in this area supercedes similar powers typically granted to local municipalities through the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S. 40:55D). Planning guidance documents prepared and adopted by local, regional and state bodies have been reviewed. As part of this analysis of land use and regulatory standards the proposed project's overall consistency with local plans will be presented.

4.18.2 Existing Conditions

4.18.2.1 *Land Use*





While the study area is comprised of a wide range of land uses, several use, density and development trends are evident, as shown in Figure 4.18-1. Major sports and entertainment facilities, light industrial, warehousing and commercial uses, as well as undeveloped land represent the predominate uses located in the area. In addition, several transportation-related uses that occupy significant amounts of land are situated in the study area and its neighboring areas.








Source: Landuse mapping by NJMC 2003 and NJDEP 1995-97 (updated) Photo Date: May 2004

Edwards Kelcey

LEGEND

-  Proposed Railroad and Station (viaduct along grey border)
-  Proposed Roadway Improvements
-  Existing Railroad
-  NJMC Boundary

LANDUSE

-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL / RETAIL
-  INDUSTRIAL / COMMERCIAL
-  TRANSPORTATION / COMMUNICATION
-  RECREATIONAL LAND
-  VACANT LAND
-  WATER



MEADOWLANDS RAILROAD AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FIGURE 4.18-1
LAND USE
April 2005

The eastern portion of the study area is completely utilized for sports and entertainment purposes. The Meadowlands Sports Complex, owned and operated by NJSEA, includes Giants Stadium, the Continental Airlines Arena and the Meadowlands Racetrack. Located in the southeastern portion of the study area, Giants Stadium is an open-air stadium utilized for major sporting and entertainment events. Two athletic practice fields are situated just west of the stadium. North of Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands Racetrack occupies a large portion of the Meadowlands Sports Complex site southwest of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and northwest of NJ Route 120. The racetrack facilities include a one-mile, oval track, a clubhouse and grandstand building, 16 barns situated in paddocks areas and 7 dormitories. A number of maintenance and storage structures are located east of the racetrack. Northwest of the racetrack facilities the complex contains a surface parking lot used for employee parking and an athletic practice facility. The remainder of the property situated east of West Perimeter Road is utilized for large, surface parking lots that are used by attendees of the events held at the complex's facilities and a series of internal roadways. The Continental Airlines Arena and additional surface parking lots and roadways comprise the easternmost portion of the Meadowlands Sports Complex that is situated just east of the study area.

A large portion of the study area west of the Meadowlands Sports Complex is comprised of large, one-story structures containing light industrial, warehouse / distribution and office uses. These uses occupy properties west of Berry's Creek, between Ackermans Creek to the north and NJ Route 3 to the south. As shown in Figure 4.18-1, this industrial / office park type development pattern lines Murray Hill Parkway, East Union Avenue, Madison Circle Drive, Manor, Whelan and Branca Roads in the Borough of East Rutherford, as well as Veterans Boulevard and Borough Street in the Borough of Rutherford. A contaminated, vacant industrial property, formerly utilized by Universal Oil Products, Inc. and now owned by Honeywell International Incorporated, is located between the Pascack Valley Line rail right-of-way and Murray Hill Parkway, just north of the light industrial and office development. Similar light industrial, warehouse / distribution and office land uses generally predominate the developed parcels north of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120), between Washington Avenue to the east and NJ Route 17 to the west. These uses are primarily proximate to NJ Route 17, Gotham Parkway and Washington Avenue, as well as the roadways that branch from them.

A mix of uses, including commercial, industrial, warehouse / distribution, communications and undeveloped land lines Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120). Proceeding eastward from NJ Route 17 to Murray Hill Parkway, the southern frontage of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) is comprised of parcels utilized by a scientific and industrial gas business, a restaurant, a marble and granite fabrication structure, an auto-dealership vehicle storage lot and a motel. A newly constructed office and warehouse complex, auto-related uses and a waste carting business occupy property located between Murray Hill Parkway and Berry's Creek. Vacant land and the Meadowlands Sports Complex line the southern edge of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) east of Berry's Creek to NJ Route 120. Just beyond the boundary of the study area, the northern frontage of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) between NJ Route 17 and 20th Street contains several light industrial and warehouse / distribution structures, a hotel, a restaurant, a night club and a vacant industrial building. The roadway's northern frontage from 20th Street to Berry's Creek is comprised of a vacant garage, an auto-repair structure and an adult entertainment club. Continuing east of Berry's Creek to Gotham Parkway parcels are utilized for auto- and truck-

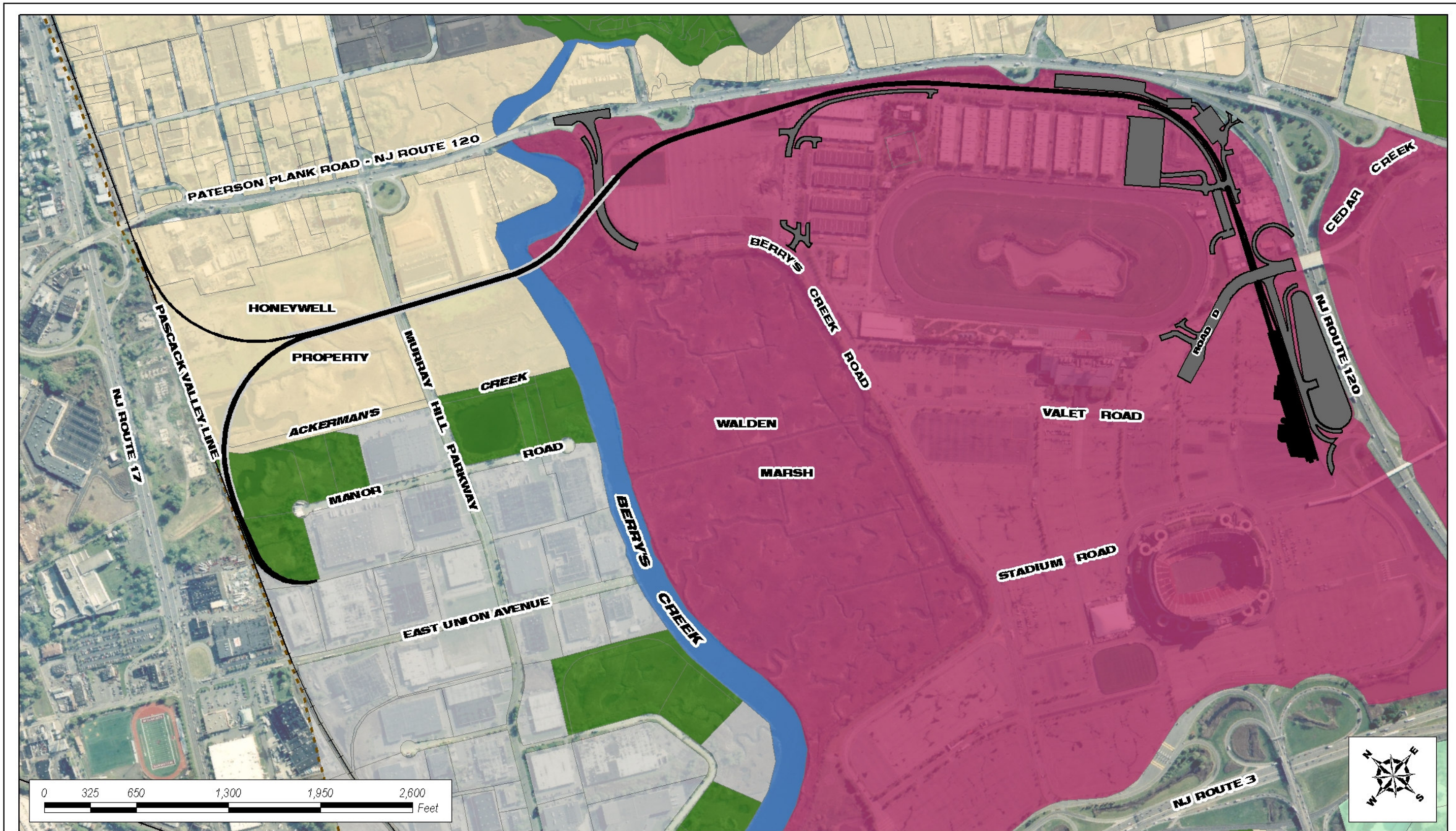
repair uses, a freight distribution center, a radio transmission building with several antennas, a bank, as well as a small parcel of land containing temporary structures which are occupied by residents. East of the National Priority List (Superfund) mitigation property located at the intersection of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and Gotham Parkway, the uses fronting the roadway are varied and include a freight distribution facility, a chemical company with a portion of the property used to store barrels, light industrial uses, a radio transmission building with antennas, office buildings and a hotel.

Undeveloped open space and wetland areas comprise a significant portion of the study area and property within close proximity of its borders. As shown in Figure 4.18-1, these areas include property located within close proximity of Berry's Creek, Peach Island Creek and Berry's Creek Canal, land north of the uses fronting Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) in the Borough of Carlstadt, as well as areas west of the Hackensack River that are traversed by the New Jersey Turnpike (Interstate 95) western spur.

Just beyond the northwestern boundary of the study area, a mix of uses line NJ Route 17, which generally runs parallel to the Pascack Valley Line right-of-way. These uses include mid-rise office buildings, highway-commercial, auto-related, and light industrial uses, restaurants and athletic fields. South of the study area, two (2) hotels, a mid-rise office building, NJDOT facilities, a radio transmission building with antennas and open space constitute the land uses located near the interchange of NJ Routes 3 and 120.

4.18.2.2 Zoning

Since the study area is contained within the HMD all parcels under investigation are subject to the land use and bulk development regulations set forth in the *District Zoning Regulations* adopted by the NJMC in early 2004. As shown in Figure 4.18-2, the parcels are contained within five zoning districts created with distinct purpose and intent for the future use and development of the properties. These districts include the Sports and Exposition (SE), Light Industrial A (LI-A) and Environmental Conservation (EC) Zones, as well as Zone I of the Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan and the Mixed Use Commercial Development zone of the Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan. The Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan, adopted in 2004 establishes zoning regulations for parcels proximate to Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120), between the NJ TRANSIT Pascack Valley Line right-of-way to the west and Michele Place to the east that were determined to be in need of redevelopment. Similarly, the Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan was most recently amended in 2001 and creates zoning controls for property generally located between the NJ TRANSIT Bergen County Line and Veterans Boulevard. As stated in N.J.A.C. 19:4-3.9, the zoning regulations established by the adoption of redevelopment plans supercede all other applicable regulations in the subchapter.



Source: NJMC Zoning Map
Photo Date: May 2004

Edwards
Kelcey

LEGEND

- Proposed Railroad and Station (viaduct along grey border)
- Proposed Roadway Improvements
- Existing Railroad
- NJMC Boundary

HACKENSACK MEADOWLANDS DISTRICT ZONING

- Redevelopment Area (RA-2 Paterson Plank Road)
- Light Industrial A (LI-A)
- Light Industrial B (LI-B)
- Environmental Conservation (EC)
- Sports and Exposition (SE)
- Water (W)



MEADOWLANDS RAILROAD AND
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FIGURE 4.18-2
ZONING
April 2005

All parcels comprising the study area east of Berry's Creek, as well as those properties bordered by NJ Route 120 to the northwest, Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) to the northeast, NJ Route 3 to the southwest and the NJ Turnpike western spur to the southeast are contained in the Sports and Exposition (SE) zoning district. This zoning district is intended to provide for major spectator sporting and exposition uses and related uses under the jurisdiction of the NJSEA. Any property owned by and under the jurisdiction of the NJSEA in this zone is exempt from NJMC regulations. Parcels not owned by the NJSEA are required to adhere to the regulations set forth in the Environmental Conservation (EC) zoning district.

The portion of the study area west of Berry's Creek is comprised of properties that are contained in the Light Industrial A (LI-A) and Environmental Conservation (EC) zoning districts (Figure 4.18-2). Parcels located in this area are also contained in Zone I of the Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan and the Mixed Use Commercial Development zone of the Highland Cross Redevelopment Area.

Light Industrial A (LI-A) districts regulate the use and development of parcels generally fronting Murray Hill Parkway, Manor, Whelan and Branca Roads, East Union Avenue and Madison Circle Drive, in the Borough of East Rutherford, as well as Veterans Boulevard and Borough Street in the Borough of Rutherford. This zoning district is intended to accommodate a wide range of industrial, warehouse / distribution, commercial and business uses on large lots with minimum detrimental environmental effects. Uses that are permitted in the LI-A district include warehouse / distribution facilities that may include accessory retail space, light industrial, office, research and development, wholesale, automobile related, and self-storage uses. Institutional, parks and recreation and public utility uses are also permitted in the zoning district. Parcels contained in the LI-A zone require a three-acre minimum lot area and permit a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.5 with lot coverage not to exceed 60 percent.

The Environmental Conservation (EC) zoning district is designed to preserve and enhance the ecological values of wetlands, open water and adjacent upland areas that act as buffers between these resources and neighboring developable parcels. These districts contain parcels lining Berry's, Ackermans and Peach Island Creeks. The EC zoning district permits existing public utility equipment, scientific and educational experimentation in regard to wetland ecology, wetland enhancement, restoration or creation, wildlife habitat creation and public access to water features. By special exception, uses may include communication and electric transmission towers and marinas. No bulk regulations are listed for the EC district.

As shown in Figure 4.18-2, parcels located along Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) in the northern portion of the study area are contained in Zone I of the Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan. As stated above, regulations set forth in the redevelopment plan supercede those use and bulk controls established in previous zoning ordinances. Due to its proximity to NJ Route 17 and the Pascack Valley Line, Zone I is intended to serve as the gateway to the rest of the redevelopment area and the Meadowlands Sports Complex to the east. The mixed-use zone, which extends to the northern side of Paterson Plank Road, (NJ Route 120) permits uses including civic and cultural facilities, theaters, retail establishments, personal services, restaurants, professional, business and medical offices, hotels and motels, warehouses, and research and development facilities. Public and privately-owned parks open to the public,

wetland enhancement, restoration or creation areas, as well as transit stations are permitted in Zone I.

Similar to the Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan, the land use regulations and development standards contained in the Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan are used to control future development in the western portion of the study area. As shown in Figure 4.18-2, the Highland Cross Redevelopment Area represents a minimal portion of the Hackensack Meadowlands District located just south of the NJ TRANSIT Bergen County Line and along the District's western boundary in the Borough of Rutherford. Pursuant to the Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan, which also includes parcels located in and under the jurisdiction of the Borough of Rutherford, the entire area is contained in a Mixed Use Commercial Development zone. This zone permits office facilities, scientific research and development businesses, hotels, restaurants, child care centers and governmental uses. Accessory retail uses, indoor recreation / health clubs, light public utilities, helistops and satellite antennas are permitted by special exception in the NJMC portion of the redevelopment area and as a conditional use in the segment of the redevelopment area situated in the Borough of Rutherford. Bulk regulations including minimum lot areas of three acres, 50 percent maximum lot coverage, maximum permitted floor area ratios of 0.75 for office facilities and maximum number of hotel rooms permitted are listed in the plan. Numerous development standards also pertaining to circulation, parking, loading, landscaping, utility connections and signage are set forth in the plan.

4.18.2.3 Consistency with Local Plans

Introduction

As part of the Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and Development Act (N.J.S.A. 13:17-1 *et seq.*) of 1969, the New Jersey State legislature created the Hackensack Meadowlands District (HMD) to guide future development and protect the resources of the 30.4 square-mile area. The Act also established the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC) to oversee the realization of these objectives by granting the regional agency the authority to prepare and adopt planning documents including a master plan and redevelopment studies, as well as codify and enforce zoning regulations. In 2001, the HMDC was renamed the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC).

The planning and zoning powers typically conferred by the state to local municipalities in the State of New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law of 1975, N.J.S. 40:55D-1 *et seq.* (MLUL) are superseded by the authority granted to the NJMC over parcels located in the HMD. Therefore, since all parcels contained in the project study area are contained in the HMD, the NJMC maintains planning and regulatory jurisdiction over the use and development of these properties. Coordination between the NJMC and the local municipalities is ongoing.

Similarly, pursuant to the State Planning Act of 1985, the New Jersey State Planning Commission recognizes the statutory jurisdiction of the NJMC and relies upon the NJMC's plans and regulations to implement the goals, objectives and policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) over the lands contained in the HMD. Since the State Planning

Commission and the SDRP do not include the HMD in its jurisdiction, the state planning process calls for cooperation between the NJMC, its constituent counties and municipalities and the state.

New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Master Plan

The NJMC adopted a comprehensive master plan in 2004. The planning and development guidance document discusses historic conditions and emerging patterns, as well as the future plan for the Hackensack Meadowlands District and strategies for implementing plan goals and objectives. The master plan discusses strategies to achieve district-wide objectives related to the natural environment, economic development, transportation, housing, community facilities and historic resources. The master plan discusses numerous transportation system strategies including the promotion of vehicular free-flow and the encouragement of the use of transit through an integrated transit and multi-modal transportation system.

In addition, the planning document identifies 18 “Planning Areas” that comprise all of the parcels of the HMD. These areas are also displayed on the Land Use Plan and provide the basis of the zoning regulations used to guide future land use patterns and development trends in the HMD. The project study area is contained in the Berry’s Creek Preserve, Employment Center, Paterson Plank Corridor and Sports and Entertainment Planning Areas.

Meadowlands Mobility 2030

As a technical study accompanying the master plan, Meadowlands Mobility 2030 discusses existing transportation conditions in the HMD and identifies future roadway, rail, freight and pedestrian needs. The guidance document, which was released in 2004, is intended to complement the NJMC master plan and zoning regulations. Meadowlands Mobility 2030 describes numerous transportation projects at different stages of planning, design, review and construction and with various levels of available funding. Several projects located in the study area include:

- Phase I – Rail Service to the Meadowlands: creation of rail spur from NJ TRANSIT’s Pascack Valley Line to station located in the immediate vicinity of Meadowlands Sports Complex facilities;
- Phase II – Rail Service to the Meadowlands: creation of rail segment running between NJ TRANSIT’s Bergen County Line and the station proposed in Phase I;
- Hudson Bergen Light Rail Network – Meadowlands Sports Complex Extension: various concepts have been presented by several elected officials in the region that would link the HBLR system to the Meadowlands Sports Complex;
- Additional Rail Stations: new rail stations at the Meadowlands Sports Complex and at a location in the vicinity of Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and NJ Route 17;
- Widening of Paterson Plank Road in Carlstadt/East Rutherford: proposes widening the existing roadway from four to six lanes;
- Reconfiguration of NJ Routes 120 and 3 Interchange; and,
- Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and Washington Avenue Improvements: aimed at improving linkages between Paterson Plank Road, Washington Avenue and the New Jersey Turnpike access ramps.

In addition, the technical report discusses goals and recommendations for relieving congestion in the region and proposes several proactive mechanisms to fund transportation projects throughout the HMD.

Paterson Plank Road Redevelopment Plan

In 2004, the NJMC adopted and later amended by resolution a redevelopment plan for parcels generally lining Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120), between the Pascack Valley Line to the west and Michele Place to the east in the Boroughs of Carlstadt and East Rutherford. The plan is intended to promote economic revitalization of the area, create a visual enhancement to the western gateway of the Meadowlands Sports Complex, improve the roadway system of the area and in particular Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120), as well as return brownfields and superfund sites to active use. In doing so, the future redevelopment of the area pursuant to the plan would provide for a retail entertainment destination for the region that is complementary to the uses existing and proposed at the Meadowlands Sports Complex, as well as generate significant new tax ratables and improve the visual character of the corridor.

In addition to becoming the land use plan for the area, the redevelopment plan contains land use regulations and standards that have superceded existing zoning regulations. The redevelopment area is comprised of four zones (one zone is divided into two “sub-zones”) that permit the following types of uses:

- Zone I: Mixed use developments that provide commercial opportunities other than big box and super center retail facilities;
- Zone II: Warehouse, light industrial and commercial recreational uses;
- Zone III: Open space and passive recreation uses;
- Zone IV(a): Hotels and restaurants; and,
- Zone IV(b): Hotels, restaurants and light industrial that would be compatible with the redevelopment area.

A series of different lot area, bulk, density and design requirements and standards for each zone and the redevelopment area as a whole are contained in the plan.

Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan

The Highland Cross Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (former name of New Jersey Meadowlands Commission) in 1998 and later amended in 2001. This redevelopment plan, which was prepared in coordination with the Borough of Rutherford, is intended to guide development and establish regulations for an area that has been declared an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to the guidance set forth in the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). This redevelopment area is generally located between the NJ TRANSIT Bergen County Line to the east within the HMD and Veterans Boulevard in both the Borough of Rutherford and the HMD.

In addition to becoming the land use plan for the area, the redevelopment plan contains land use regulations and standards that have superceded existing zoning regulations. The redevelopment area is comprised of one Mixed Use Commercial Development zone that permits office facilities, scientific research and development businesses, hotels, restaurants, child care centers and

governmental uses. A series of lot area, bulk, density and design requirements and standards for the redevelopment area are contained in the plan.

4.18.3 Impacts

As discussed in Section 4.16.1, land use conditions in the study area and its adjacent areas are generally characterized by a mix of uses that make it unique to the northeastern portion of New Jersey. With no residential development which usually typifies this portion of the state, the study area contains a large, regional sports and entertainment complex, light industrial, warehouse and office park type developments, minimal commercial areas and vast amounts of undeveloped land comprised primarily of wetlands. Resulting from factors such as proximity to economic centers and significant regional transportation resources, the demand for developable land in northern New Jersey has helped shape current and future development trends in the area. With little vacant, developable land remaining in the study area and its adjacent areas, development must occur on an infill basis or through private and/or public redevelopment measures which would result in vacant land and older structures being replaced with new buildings or the adaptive reuse of structures to modify the interior space and potentially the use of existing buildings.

Zoning within the study area primarily reflects existing development patterns found in the area. The densely developed character of the area reduces the likelihood of potential large-scale zoning changes. Only delineated redevelopment areas codified in the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Zoning Regulations and shown on the Hackensack Meadowlands District Zoning Map represent areas where potential land use and development characteristics would change.

4.18.3.1 Land Use

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no substantial land use impacts are to be expected. With the exception of a number of redevelopment efforts that have been approved or proposed in the area, development would occur as minor infill projects that are not expected to considerably alter land use patterns in the study area, by the year 2007.

As approved, the proposed 4.96 million square foot Meadowlands Xanadu Redevelopment Project would occupy much of the land currently utilized for surface parking at the Continental Airlines Area site in 2007. The parcel located east of NJ Route 120 and just beyond the study area will be comprised of 2.2 million square feet of entertainment / retail space including a 6,000 – 8,000 seat athletic stadium, 1.76 million square feet of office space in four structures, a 520 room, 500,000 square foot hotel, and 500,000 square feet of common space that will be constructed around the existing arena structure. The construction of six parking decks containing a total of 12,500 spaces would replace the surface parking displaced as a result of the redevelopment. Roadway improvements to upgrade access to and from the uses that are located at the proposed Meadowlands Xanadu Redevelopment Project would include a new ramp from eastbound NJ Route 3 to northbound NJ Route 120 that require the acquisition of a portion of an adjacent parcel, the reconfiguration of a driveway leading from NJ Route 120 to the proposed

Meadowlands Xanadu Redevelopment Project site and other improvements that are expected to occur within existing rights-of-way. The extent of construction of this mixed-use development would require the minor alteration of wetlands and landscaped upland areas.

Although this major redevelopment would result in an increased development density, the uses contained on the site would be consistent with similar uses located in the study area and in adjacent areas. The entertainment / retail portion of the proposed Meadowlands Xanadu Redevelopment Project would be consistent with the other sports and entertainment uses located elsewhere on the Meadowlands Sports Complex site. The hotel is similar to facilities lining both Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and NJ Route 3. While they would be larger structures, the four office buildings provide uses that are located throughout the study area and just beyond its borders along NJ Routes 3 and 17.

Other redevelopment efforts within the study area, including those proposed in the Paterson Plank Road and Highland Cross redevelopment areas, would not result in significant impacts to land use or development patterns if development occurs by 2007. These redevelopment plans call for uses and development strategies that would be compatible to neighboring areas.

Preferred Alternative

Under the Preferred Alternative, a new 2.3-mile rail alignment would run southeast from NJ TRANSIT's Pascack Valley Line and terminate at a new rail station centrally located between Giants Stadium, the Continental Airlines Arena and the Meadowlands Racetrack on Meadowlands Sports Complex property. The proposed project requires new trackwork, viaducts and a major new rail station.

The Preferred Alternative calls for an at-grade, two-track "Wye" connection from the Pascack Valley Line. The easterly "Wye" connection would be located on a contaminated, vacant industrial parcel located south of uses lining Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120). The proposed alignment would rise on a viaduct to cross above Murray Hill Parkway. This viaduct would continue to the southeast through wetlands located west and east of Berry's Creek and over the Plaza A access / service roadway before returning to grade just north of the Meadowlands Racetrack paddocks area. The proposed rail alignment would run at-grade in an area situated between the racetrack paddocks area and Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) until it begins to curve southwest near the Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120) and NJ Route 120 interchange. The proposed rail alignment would terminate at a new station centrally located between the three major facilities contained on the Meadowlands Sports Complex and currently utilized for surface parking. The proposed station includes three tracks, side and center island high-level platforms, a station building with a maximum capacity for 800 riders and two pedestrian bridges with stairs and elevators to provide riders access to the center island platform. A promenade area situated between the new station and the stadium area would be created. All construction related to the proposed project east of Berry's Creek is contained on NJSEA property, including a minimal amount of the rail viaduct that would traverse over the Walden Marsh wetlands area. Security fencing would line either side of the proposed rail right-of-way east of the Plaza A access / service roadway.

Under the Preferred Alternative, the two-track rail alignment would traverse two privately owned parcels west of Berry's Creek. This would require the acquisition, lease or creation of an easement for the portions of land necessary to construct the proposed project.

In addition, several roadway improvements would be constructed under the Preferred Alternative. The at-grade alignment of the Plaza A access / service roadway would be modified to bring the road to a new signaled intersection at Paterson Plank Road (NJ Route 120). The portion of the roadway currently used to exit the complex would be vacated. A number of internal roadways would be required as a result of the construction of the proposed rail station. The North Connector Road, located south of the Meadowlands Racetrack would be elevated to allow for the clearance necessary to pass trains below the structure. This improvement would lead to the relocation of Plaza B to an area further west of its current location. Access roadways connecting to the North Connector Road would be modified to allow them to reach the new grade. Several existing roadway linkages would be vacated as a result.

A replacement surface parking area with approximately 500 spaces would be constructed in the area proximate to the new internal roadways located between the proposed station area and NJ Route 120. This parking lot would replace parking displaced by the construction of the proposed project. Pedestrian bridges would permit individuals to safely pass over the proposed rail line.

No substantial effects are expected to occur to land use and land use patterns under the preferred alternative. The addition of passenger rail service and the reconfiguration of numerous access roadways, are not expected to change land use or land development patterns within the mature, densely developed area. This is a result of restrictions on large-scale land development patterns, such as a lack of vacant, developable land, the NJMC's land use and redevelopment plans, and the NJMC zoning regulations that identify the locations of future land uses. These plans and regulations focus land uses in areas where compatible uses are present. When considering the established land use patterns that currently exist in this region, a substantial reshaping of use patterns is unlikely. Similar to the conditions discussed under the No-Action Condition, existing land use would only be altered by redevelopment and small-scale infill projects. As discussed in the previous section, the proposed Meadowlands Xanadu Redevelopment Project would significantly increase development density at the Continental Airlines Arena site that is located just east of the proposed station area. This mixed-use development would include uses that are generally compatible with those contained on parcels in the study area and adjacent areas.

Minimal land use changes and impacts would occur at specific locations along the rail alignment, as a result of the proposed project. Portions of several undeveloped parcels, which include wetlands areas, would be utilized for the two-track rail right-of-way under this proposed project. East of Walden Marsh the proposed project including the rail alignment and station, reconfigured roadway segments and relocated parking lot would be located on improved, vacant areas of the Meadowlands Sports Complex site. A majority of these areas is paved and are absent of structures. Therefore, with the exception of parking that would be relocated, no land uses would be displaced or altered.

Under the Preferred Alternative, any construction-related impacts would be temporary in nature. A roadway would be built adjacent to the proposed right-of-way through undeveloped parcels in

order to transport equipment and materials during the construction of the rail alignment. This roadway would run between the Pascack Valley Line and the western edge of the paved areas comprising the Meadowlands Sports Complex. At the completion of construction this temporary roadway would be returned to its previous condition.

Mitigation

With minimal significant land use impacts expected under the Preferred Alternative, mitigation efforts would focus on the use of wetlands areas and the displacement of parking. As discussed in Section 4.3, adverse impacts to wetlands areas would be mitigated through a wetland mitigation plan (see Section 4.2.3) that is currently being developed. Under this plan it is anticipated that the quantity of preservation area for mitigation would be greater than the quantity of the preservation area impacted by the proposed project, as discussed in detail in Section 4.2.3 on wetland mitigation. Furthermore, implementation of the proposed project would result in the displacement of parking spaces located south of the Meadowlands Racetrack. In order to maintain existing parking levels and guarantee no net loss, a replacement surface parking lot with approximately 500 spaces would be constructed east of the proposed rail station.

4.18.3.2 Zoning

No-Action Alternative

Zoning changes are not foreseen under the No-Action Alternative. Any alterations to the HMD zoning regulations and /or maps, as well as adopted redevelopment plans, are anticipated to be minor in scale.

Preferred Alternative

Similar to the No-Action Alternative, no changes to the zoning regulations, the zoning map or redevelopment plans utilized under the jurisdiction of the NJMC are expected under the Preferred Alternative. Any alterations to these regulations would be independent of this proposed project.

Mitigation

Since no adverse impacts to local zoning regulations would occur under this proposed project, no mitigation would be required.

4.18.3.3 Consistency with Local Plans

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the redevelopment and in-fill development that would have occurred in the study area and adjacent areas, by 2007, are expected to be consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations enumerated in local planning documents. In addition, the large scale, mixed-use redevelopment project that will be constructed on the Continental Airlines Arena site by 2007 is discussed in each of these documents.

Preferred Alternative

The construction of the proposed rail alignment between the NJ TRANSIT Pascack Valley Line and a new station centrally located between Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands Racetrack and the Continental Airlines Arena under the Preferred Alternative would be in keeping with goals, objectives and policies contained in several local plans prepared for utilization within the study area. There would be no inconsistency with planning and development guidance documents for the area.

The NJMC prepared and adopted Master Plan and the technical transportation study entitled *Meadowlands Mobility 2030* discuss the importance of bringing transit service to the area and specifically the Meadowlands Sports Complex. The *Meadowlands Mobility 2030* document lists several transit improvements that would assist in moving individuals efficiently through the region, including the proposed project considered the Preferred Alternative.

Mitigation

Since the Preferred Alternative would be consistent with local plans, no mitigation would be required.