

Memorandum

To: Bedminster Planning Board
From: Francis J. Banisch III, PP/AICP
Date: April 30, 2008
Re: Sidewalk Plan Master Plan Revisions

The following are revisions to the Master Plan to reflect the Planning Board's recommended sidewalk locations. Sidewalks are referenced in the plan in the background section (Sec. 1605) and in the Circulation Plan (Sec. 508-sidewalks and 509-bike/hike trail).

Since the I-287 ramp is no longer proposed by NJDOT, Figure 3 showing the ramp configuration is no longer appropriate and will be replaced.

"508 SIDEWALK PLAN

Sidewalks provide important linkages between population centers and activity areas. In Bedminster, the demand for improved pedestrian access is primarily oriented toward the easterly highway corridor area and designated village centers, where most of the services are found and where most of the residents live. Sidewalks along existing public roadways in the Township and the Bike Hike trail are depicted on Figure 4.

The 2003 Master Plan outlined a multi-phase sidewalk plan to improve pedestrian circulation designed to complete the essential connections within the village neighborhoods. Most of these improvements have been completed and the updated phasing plan reflects current priorities.

Phase 1:

- (1) Provide a sidewalk from Thosmore Road to River Road Park
- (2) Provide a sidewalk along Lamington Road from Route 202 at Hillside Avenue and Somerville Road to Dillon Library. (*funded and in design*)
- (3) Develop a new pedestrian and bicycle link along the west side of Route I-287 from Burnt Mills Road to River Road.

Phase 2:

- (1) Extend the sidewalk along the east side of Somerville Road from Bedminster School south to Miller Lane.
- (2) Complete the sidewalk connection along the north side of Burnt Mills Road between Kline's Mill Road and Hills Drive by constructing missing sections.
- (3) Extend sidewalk from Steeple Chase Lane to Lamington Road along Hillside Avenue.

While the streets at The Hills development are predominantly private roads and the Township has a limited ability to provide for sidewalk improvements in this development, the Planning Board believes that there is a compelling need for a more complete network of pedestrian walkways within The Hills development and, particularly, along Hills Drive. It is suggested that the Township use any and all of its powers, which may include bonding, local approvals, eminent domain, or other powers of the Township, to assist in providing a more complete pedestrian circulation network at The Hills and its environs.

Figure 4 illustrates the existing and proposed sidewalks, along with the Bike and Hike Trail.

509 BICYCLE PLAN

The Township, in its efforts to implement the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, declares its intention to promote the use of bicycles and pedestrian systems throughout the Township as an alternative means of travel.

In the 1993 Circulation Plan, the Planning Board recognized the importance of bicycling. It was determined to establish transportation policies and programs that improve connection between housing and employment, including pedestrian and bicycle paths. In addition, it recognized that “Black River Road is highly traveled as a bicycle route, and for this reason, it may be appropriate to provide additional signage related to bicycle travel, particularly caution signs at curves or other points of conflict, as well as reviewing the options for controlling traffic speeds through this roadway segment.” The Board continues to recognize this route as a recreational bicycle route and proposes that the Township place integrated traffic calming measures for motor vehicles and advisory/warning signs at the entry point to the area.

NJDOT in July 2000 adopted the following policy: “Bicycling and walking are viable and important travel modes and offer untapped potential for meeting transportation needs and providing recreational and health benefits. Provisions for bicycling and walking are important and necessary elements of comprehensive solutions to transportation problems and needs. Opportunities should be actively sought to address transportation needs and deficiencies through the provision of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. These modes can also supplement transit use and replace motor vehicle trips by serving short trips.”

In adopting this policy NJDOT has established guidelines and a number of funding programs to conduct and implement bicycling and pedestrian efforts of counties and municipalities. Bedminster Township has participated in this effort by establishing a comprehensive bike and hike trail to link the villages of Bedminster and Pluckemin, including the school, parks and other services. This effort is utilizing FY 2001 Transportation and Community and System Preservation funding.

Figure 4 shows the pedestrian and bicycle circulation system as it is proposed, and identifies the portion that is complete. In addition, the map identifies roads within Bedminster and Pluckemin that have been striped for bicycles.

To keep and maintain the rural and scenic character of Bedminster the Township should work with the County to establish a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. The Township should also utilize the assistance of the County in securing funding for bicycle related projects through its position on NJTPA.

The Township's Circulation Plan can also serve as a tool to secure Transportation Enhancement funding and its center designation for NJDOT's Local Aid for Centers of Place."

"1615 EXISTING AND PROPOSED SIDEWALKS AND BIKE-HIKE TRAIL

Field surveys first conducted during August and September of 1992 were updated during 2007 to confirm the extent of existing sidewalks and other public pedestrian thoroughfares within the Township. These are illustrated on the Bike-Hike Trail and Sidewalk System Map (Figure 4).

In general, improved sidewalks are found in and around the Village areas of Pluckemin and Bedminster. Other pedestrian ways include the Bike-Hike Trail, which incorporates the "Albert B. Winkler - Jacob Snyder Nature Trail". The existing portion of the Bike-Hike Trail extends from Main Street in Bedminster Village to the Bedminster Elementary School, and continues to the Miller Lane Recreation Area, The Pond and ultimately with River Road Park, via a new ADA-compliant pedestrian/bike overpass. Hacklebarney State Park is the site of a hunting area along Bedminster's northern boundary, and an informal trail system originates at the gravel parking area located on Hacklebarney Road. Other informal trails are also located on the River Road Green Acres tract, including fishing accessible to the North Branch shoreline.

The most extensive sidewalk network in the Township is found in Pluckemin. Concrete sidewalks here extend from Mount Prospect Road (at Stone Edge Road), along the north side of Washington Valley Road to Routes 202/206, and along the south side of Burnt Mills Road. Sidewalks also parallel both sides of Routes 202/206 from just south of the Pluckemin Inn and "The Village Shops" to the Burnt Mills/Washington Valley Road intersection. Additionally, a continuous sidewalk flanks the east side of Routes 202/206, between Route 78 and Washington Valley Road.

In Bedminster Village, a continuous concrete sidewalk extends from Far Hills to Hillside Avenue along both sides of Route 202, and short sidewalk segments flank the north side of Lamington Road, near its intersections with Hillside Avenue and Route 206.

The Hills

Sidewalks at The Hills generally connect dwelling units with off-street parking areas, and some provide interconnections to on-site recreation facilities. However, notably lacking from the pedestrian circulation system at The Hills is a continuous walkway network. No such network exists either along Hills Drive or as a continuous overall connection among the various neighborhoods.

Robertson Drive has sidewalks throughout most of its length, although they end in the vicinity of the large retention basin before reaching Schley Mountain Road. Sidewalks along Robertson are located on both sides of the road throughout this length and connect with sidewalk segments along Wynwood Drive, as well as a connection into Wood Duck Pond via Artillery Park Road. The Artillery Park Road sidewalk extends for approximately 500' along the area of existing development. The sidewalks along Robertson Road are also connected to sidewalks along Bradford Road. Bradford Road extends into Long Meadow, and a small sidewalk section is found on Long Meadow Road near a small open space area adjacent to Bradford Road. There are no sidewalks along Schley Mountain Road or Hills Drive except in the vicinity of the Village shops on Hills Drive.

A painted bike lane extends along Hills Drive from Washington Valley Road to just west of Robertson Drive.

Linkage Considerations

Sidewalks and other pedestrian connections can provide important linkages between and among population centers and activity areas. In Bedminster, the demand for improved pedestrian access is primarily oriented toward the easterly highway corridor area, where most of Township residents reside.

The rapid development at The Hills during the 1980's resulted in a major increase in population. Geographically, this growth was concentrated around the historic Village of Pluckemin. The location of roughly 80% of the Township's population in Bedminster Village and Pluckemin, an area of roughly three square miles, emphasizes the need to provide improved pedestrian circulation within and between the villages.

The area between Pluckemin and Bedminster poses a unique challenge in this regard. The major Township-owned open space preserves and the North Branch stream corridor bisect the State highways here, and these areas attract pedestrian movements. The need for improved pedestrian access to the Township's major public recreation and open space lands (River Road Park, "The Pond," Miller Lane) prompted the Township to devise a "bike and hike trail" to connect Bedminster Village to Robertson Drive in the Hills, and westward to River Road Park. This improved pedestrian linkage between the villages has been designed to navigate around the substantial impediments of the North Branch and dualized State highways throughout most of this area, and access movements to and from I-287, which complicate traffic flow. AT&T is a major local traffic generator, and the location of the AT&T ingress and egress driveways results in a seven-lane configuration of Routes 202/206 north of River Road.

I-287 also separates the villages, and the combination of the State and Interstate highways functionally separates the villages from one another and from the River Road parklands. The bike and hike trail links the villages and parklands with a safe and efficient pedestrian/bicycle connection through a multi-phased implementation plan.

Proposed sidewalk extensions in the village areas are shown on Figure 3A (Bedminster Village) and Figure 3B (Pluckemin Village), and call for the following additions to the system:

Bedminster Village

1. extend sidewalks along the east side of Hillside Avenue from Steeplechase Court to the existing sidewalks on Hillside, with a crosswalk at the old Town Hall
2. connect the asphalt sidewalk at Dillon Library with
 - a) the existing concrete sidewalk along Clucas Brook Road; and
 - b) the asphalt walkway to the office campus to the south
3. extend sidewalk southward along Somerville Road from Bedminster School to Miller Lane and along Miller Lane to the recreation fields

Pluckemin Village

1. construct missing sidewalks along the northern frontage of Burnt Mills Road, between Route 202/206 and Burger King
2. extend concrete sidewalk along the northern frontage of Burnt Mills Road, between I-287 and Kline's Mill Road

As noted above, Bike and Hike Trail improvements, illustrated on Figure 4, have been completed between Pluckemin and Bedminster.

The relocation of the Bedminster Elementary School altered the established walk-to-school route, and required school children to walk along Somerville Road in an area where no sidewalks existed. The irregular signalization at Route 202 and Hillside Road, which previously constituted a pedestrian safety hazard, has been corrected, and sidewalks were extended along the frontage of Somerville Road to the school.

The greatest pedestrian generator in the Township is The Hills development. However, the automobile-based design of this project and lack of sidewalks along Hills Drive and between most neighborhoods inhibit pedestrian movements and reinforces reliance on the automobile.

Bedminster Township is ill equipped to improve these conditions, given the private road status of most roads and association ownership and management of lands at The Hills. However, the Township should recognize the internal circulation needs at The Hills and promote policies designed to enhance future pedestrian circulation.

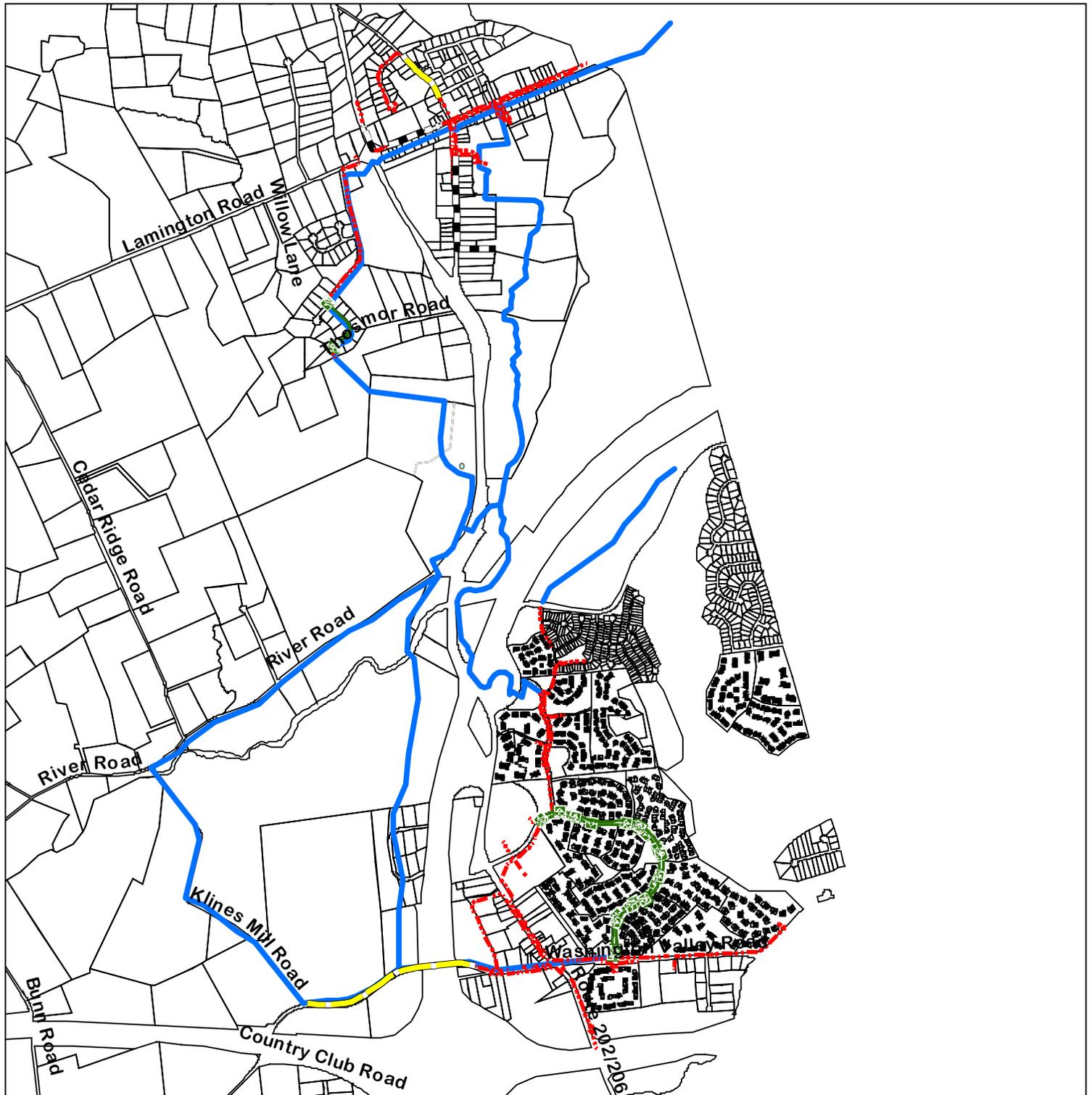
Bicycling ranked highly as a favored recreation activity of Township residents who responded to a survey conducted by the Recreation Committee in the summer of 2000. Jogging and hiking were also desired activities, and together with biking, these sport and recreational activities impose varying demands on a comprehensive system of walkways and bikeways for Bedminster.

Planning for future pedestrian circulation improvements must also respond to the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act, which seeks to remove or prevent impediments to free access by persons with disabilities. The bike and hike trail provides an accessible route of pedestrian and bike travel that provides a valuable connection between Bedminster and Pluckemin villages. It will dramatically improve convenience and safety, and promote non-vehicular travel.”

Sidewalk and Bicycle System Map

Township of Bedminster

May 2008



Legend

-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Proposed Sidewalk
-  Revised Proposed Sidewalk
-  Existing Striped Bike Lane
-  Bike-Hike_trail



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Data Sources:
American Associates
Ferriero Engineering
Banisch Associates, Inc.

This map was developed, in part, using digital data from American Associates, but this secondary product has not been verified by American Associates.



Library Detail

Hillside Ave

Main Street

Elm St.

202

206

Figure 3A
Bedminster Village
Existing and Proposed Sidewalks
 September 2007

Legend

- — Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Sidewalks
- - - Bedminster Township Boundary
- ⤴ Crosswalk



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This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

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 ASSOCIATES INC.
Planning and Design

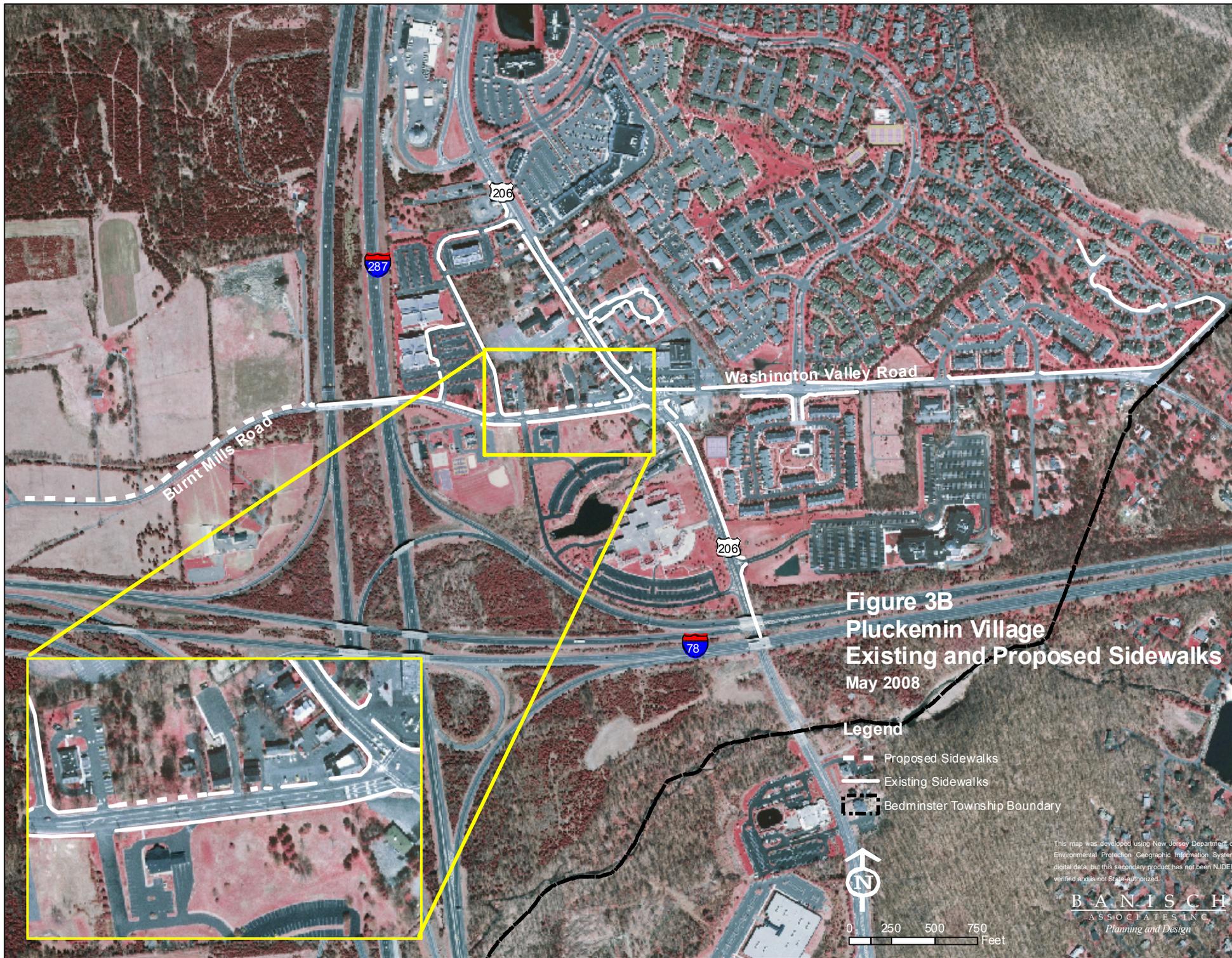


Figure 3B
Pluckemin Village
Existing and Proposed Sidewalks
 May 2008

- Legend**
- Proposed Sidewalks
 - Existing Sidewalks
 - Bedminster Township Boundary


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