

REPORT ON THE PROPOSED EXCHANGE OF
VACANT PRESERVED PROPERTY
BETWEEN
THE TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE EGG HARBOR
AND
THE COUNTY OF OCEAN
IN THE
TOWNSHIPS OF LITTLE EGG HARBOR,
COUNTY OF OCEAN

Block 109, Lots 46, 54, 99; Block 126, Lots 21, 24, 25, 26;
Block 269, Lots 3, 9; Block 326.201, Lots 63, 64;
Block 326.203, Lots 2-22
Little Egg Harbor Township
(Currently owned by LEHT)

Block 326, Lots 27, 27.01, 62; Block 326.33, Lot 46
(Currently owned by Ocean County)

Prepared by: Ocean County Planning Department
June 2022

STATUTORY REFERENCES

For the County Lands:

Under N.J.S.A 40A:12-16, the governing body of any county by resolution may exchange any lands owned by the county for other lands or rights or interests therein desired for the benefit of the general public.

RATIONALE FOR CONVEYANCE

The County of Ocean (“County”) and the Township of Little Egg Harbor (“LEHT) or (“Township”) propose to exchange approximately 42.01 acres of land owned by the County for approximately 86.082 acres of land owned by the Township of Little Egg Harbor. As detailed below, the County’s general objective for the proposed land exchange is to expand its holdings around various County owned Natural Lands Trust properties. The transfer to Little Egg Harbor Township would relieve the administrative burden of maintaining this property for Ocean County. For the Township, the transfer consolidates holdings into a desirable property that could be used by the Town for beneficial use of dredge material.

The specific parcels proposed to be exchanged are as follows:

Proposed land Exchange Between Little Egg Harbor Township and Ocean County							
Municipal	Block	Lot	Address	Current Owner	Proposed Owner	Acres to LEHT	Acres to County
LEHT	109	46	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		0.482
LEHT	109	54	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		0.321
LEHT	109	99	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		2.542
LEHT	126	21	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		10.5
LEHT	126	24	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		5.14
LEHT	126	25	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		11.25
LEHT	126	26	Parkers County Road	LEHT	County		5.58
LEHT	269	3	Giffordtown Lane	LEHT	County		21.89
LEHT	269	9	Giffordtown Lane	LEHT	County		24.3
LEHT	326.201	63	Radio Road	LEHT	County		0.172
LEHT	326.201	64	Radio Road	LEHT	County		0.23
LEHT	326.203	2-22	Radio Road	LEHT	County		3.675
						Total	86.082
LEHT	326	27	Playhouse Drive	County	LEHT	17.58	
LEHT	326	27.01	Playhouse Drive	County	LEHT	11.72	
LEHT	326	62	Playhouse Drive	County	LEHT	12.56	
LEHT	326.33	46	Playhouse Drive	County	LEHT	0.15	
					Total	42.01	

A general location map of the properties proposed to be exchanged is attached as Figure 1.

On both sides of the transaction, the lands proposed to be exchanged will remain as preserved open space after the exchange is completed.

Description of the Little Egg Harbor Tracts

The LEHT properties proposed for conveyance to the County consists of 86.082+/- acres of vacant land located in Little Egg Harbor Township off Parkers County Road, Giffordtown Lane and Radio Road. These non-contiguous tracts are comprised of thirty-two (32) individual vacant lots and have

been divided into three (3) Tracts. All of the properties are currently being utilized as open space and upon a completed transfer, will remain open space. There are no structures or developed recreational facilities on any of the LEHT properties.

The properties contained in each tract are as follows:

Tract 1	Oasis Estates	Block 126 Block 109	Lots 21, 24-26 Lots 46, 99
Tract 2	Tuckerton Lake/ Tip Seaman Park	Block 269	Lots 3, 9
Tract 3	Osborn Island	Block 326.201 Block 326.203	Lots 63, 64 Lots 2-22

The Little Egg Harbor Township properties were all acquired through prior tax lien foreclosures and have been under Township ownership for many years.

Tract 1, consisting of Block 126, Lots 21, 24, 25 & 26, and Block 109, Lots 46 & 99 contains approximately 35.816 acres of land all located within the Forested Area of the Pinelands. The parcels are all zoned R-3A (Residential) by Little Egg Harbor Township. This zone is intended for single family dwellings, churches or nonprofit clubs.

Tract 1 is made up of almost entirely uplands with low lying wetlands and a stream corridor (associated with Westecunk Creek). GIS aeriels reveal that Pinelands Forested Area Wetlands buffer impacts a considerable ratio of upland acreage in Tract 1.

Block 109 Lot 46 is adjacent to County owned open space. The parcel is approximately 0.482 acres. As indicated on Figure 3, the parcel is completely encumbered by Coniferous Wooded Wetlands.

As indicated on Figure 1, the Uriah Branch, a tributary of the Westecunk Creek, has a surface water classification of FW2-NT/SE1 (Freshwater non Pinelands Water, Non Trout) and runs through a portion of Tract 1 (Block 126, Lots 24, 25 & 26). All three of these parcels contain wetland complexes associated with the stream corridor.

Block 109, Lot 99 is approximately 2.542 acres. The parcel contains both Coniferous Forests and Mixed Forests with less than 50% Crown Closure. The mixed forests is made up of less than 50% deciduous trees. The Northern area of the parcel contains 0.17 acres of Coniferous Wooded Wetlands. The parcel is approximately 6.7% wetlands.

Block 126, Lot 21 is 10.5 acres and is directly adjacent to County owned open space. The parcel contains mixed forest (>50% Deciduous, 50% crown closure) and Coniferous forest (>50% crown closure). The North West corner of the property contains 0.12 acres of Coniferous Wooded Wetlands. A small section of Mixed Wooded Wetlands and Deciduous Scrub Wetlands extend onto the Southern portion of the property.

Block 126, Lot 24 is 5.14 acres of mixed forest, with less than 50% being Deciduous and having in between 0-50% crown closure. As indicated in Figure 3 the Uriah Branch (Tributary of the Westecunk Creek) runs directly through the property and the associated wetlands cover a

significant portion of the remaining property. The property also has a Company Easement on the east side of the parcel belonging to Atlantic City Electric. The wetlands surrounding the Uriah Branch consist of mixed scrub/shrub wetlands (Deciduous dominated), herbaceous wetlands & Deciduous Wooded Wetlands covering about 64.6 % of the parcel.

Block 126 Lot 26 is a 5.58 acre parcel. As seen on Figure 3 the parcel is almost entirely made up of deciduous wooded wetlands, with a small portion of Atlantic White Cedar wetlands extending onto the property. This parcel also contains a section of the Uriah Branch (Tributary of the Westecunk Creek). The uplands only make up 7.9% of the parcel and contain mixed forest (>50% coniferous >50% crown closure).

All six parcels are directly adjacent to Two County owned properties totaling approximately 119.02 acres. "Deerfield Estates" the smaller of the two properties, is 35.80 acres and was purchased on August 25, 2017. "Oasis Estates" totals 83.22 acres and was purchased on November 15, 2010. Both properties were purchased under the Natural Lands Trust Fund account and are being utilized as open space.

Tract 2 consists of Block 269, Lots 3 & 9 located in Little Egg Harbor Township. The two lots combine to be 46.19 acres of R5A zoned land. R5A zoning is intended to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of a maximum 221 townhouse and multi-family dwelling units affordable by low and moderate income households, families and individuals.

As indicated on Figure 7 the parcels are directly adjacent to the Pohatcong Lake, a 29.65 acre artificial lake. The lake branches off into two streams known as the Giffords Mill Branch & the Tuckerton Creek with surface water classifications of FW2-NT/SE1 (Giffords Mill Branch) & FW2-NTC1/SE1 (Tuckerton Creek). Both parcels contain wetland complexes associated with the lake and streams.

Block 269, Lot 3 is 21.89 acres. The property is almost entirely wet with about 91% being covered in Atlantic White Cedar wetlands. There is a small portion of mixed forest (>50% deciduous, >50% crown closure) extending onto the parcel. The South side of the property contains a stretch of the Gifford's Mill branch and the Eastern Boundary is directly adjacent to the Tuckerton Creek, a category 1 waterway.

Block 269, Lot 9 is an approximate 24.3 acre parcel and is the largest in Tract 2. The parcel contains a section of the Pohatcong Lake extending through the south side of the lot, with the Eastern boundary directly adjacent to another branch of the Pohatcong Lake. The rest of the property is completely covered in Atlantic White Cedar wetlands.

Tract 3 consists of Block 326.203, Lots 2-22 and Block 326.203, Lots 63 & 64. The tract is made up of almost entirely uplands, with a small portion of wetlands located on the eastern boundary. These lots all have frontage along Radio Rd. totaling approximately 1,775 feet. All of the lots are zoned R-100 in Little Egg Harbor Township. This zone is intended for agriculture activities, single family dwellings, churches & golf courses.

Block 326.201, Lots 63 & 64 are directly adjacent to one another and total approximately 0.402 acres. The two lots provide approximately 175.7 feet of frontage along Radio Rd. The parcels are entirely uplands composed of Coniferous Forest (>50% crown closure).

Block 326.203, Lots 2 – 22 are all directly adjacent and make up the remaining 1,599.3 feet of frontage along Radio Rd. Lots 4-22 are entirely made up of 100% Coniferous Forest (>50% crown closure). Each individual lot is approximately 0.175 acres. Block 326.203, Lot 2 is almost entirely Coniferous Wooded Wetlands. There is a small amount of Coniferous Brush/ Shrubland that extend onto the south side of the property. Block 326.203, Lot 3 is mostly Coniferous Brush/ Shrubland with the remaining acreage being Coniferous Wooded Wetlands.

All of the parcels in tract 3 are contiguous to a 46.68 acre County owned property (Block 326.201, Lot 65). This property, known as “Osborn Island” was purchased on March 2, 2010 under the Natural Lands Trust Fund and is being utilized as preserved open space.

Description of the County Tract

The County property consists of 42.01 +/- acres located in Little Egg Harbor Township. The tract is comprised of four individual lots: Block 326, Lots 27, 27.01 & 62 and Block 326.33, Lot 46. The tract is known locally as the Playhouse Drive property.

The property has a total of 1,346 feet of frontage along Burgee Drive South, Topsail Drive, Spinnaker Drive South & Playhouse Drive.

The County property was purchased in two separate transactions. Block 326, Lots 27, 27.01 & 62 were purchased from Jenkinson’s Pavilion, a private owner, on December 23, 1999. The purchase price of this piece was \$737,500.00. The second portion of the County tract (Block 326.33, Lot 46) was purchased from Ann McClenaghan, a private seller on December 9, 2016 for \$55,000.00. Both properties were funded solely through the Natural Lands Trust Fund. There are no structures or developed recreational facilities on any parcel.

The entirety of the County tract, approximately 42.01 acres are located within the Atlantic Coastal Landscape, defined by its barrier islands, beached, tidal salt marshes, rivers, bays and lagoons along New Jersey’s coastlines. The parcels are zoned WFD (Block 326, Lots 27, 27.01 & 62) and R-50 (Block 326.33, Lot 46). The R-50 zone is intended for single family homes, churches and no profit clubs on 5,000.00 Sq. ft. while the WFD zone (Waterfront Development Zone) is intended for marinas, boat sales and townhomes.

The County tract is almost entirely made up of wetland complexes associated with the Big Creek tributary and some uplands.

As indicated on Figure 11 the Big Creek tributary, a dredged lagoon with a surface classification of FW2-NT/SE1 (Freshwater, Non Pinelands Water, Non Trout, Saline Estuary) runs through the property.

Block 326, Lot 27 is approximately 17.58 acres and is the largest parcel included in the County tract. The parcel includes 80’ of frontage along Playhouse Drive. As shown on the NJDEP’s GeoWeb, the parcel is almost entirely wet consisting of Herbaceous and deciduous shrub/ shrub wetlands and has a saline marsh on the eastern boundary of the parcel. A dredged lagoon known as the Big Creek tributary runs through the property and acts as a divider between the wetlands and saline marsh. The only uplands on this parcel are an old field (<25% brush covered).

Block 326, Lot 27.01 is approximately 11.72 acres. This parcel provides 50' of frontage along Burgee Drive South. The property is 100% wet, containing another segment of the Big Creek tributary. The wetlands on this parcel are made up of Herbaceous Wetlands and small areas of Saline Marsh.

Block 326, Lot 62 is approximately 12.56 acres. The lot has an additional 1,168' of frontage along Topsail Drive, Spinnaker Drive South & Playhouse Drive. The western boundary of the parcel has built up urban land for housing as well as a small section of uplands consisting of mixed deciduous/ coniferous brush/ shrub land. The remaining acreage are made up of Saline Marsh areas, herbaceous wetlands and deciduous shrub/ shrub wetlands.

Block 326.33, Lot 46 is the smallest parcel in the County tract at approximately 0.15 acres. The property is entirely made up of built up land for residential, single unit, medium density development. The parcel provides an additional 48' of frontage along Burgee Drive South.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

For the County

Transfer of the Township tracts to the County would result in a net increase of 3.675 acres of preserved open space in Little Egg Harbor Township. The Township land included in Tract 2 would provide acreage adjacent to Tip Seaman County Park, and an additional access point on Gifford Town Lane. The land included in tract 3 would also provide approximately 1,775' of frontage along Radio Rd., buffering the adjacent County preserve from development and providing additional access points.

There are no known disadvantages to this transfer.

For the Township

The Township of Little Egg Harbor will receive 42.01 acres of County property known as Playhouse Drive. In the past the County has received several calls relating to management issues at the property. With the property being under Township ownership, local officials will be able to apply their own management practices to the property. This includes the beneficial reuse of dredge material for marsh restoration and improvement of the site for public access.

There are no known disadvantages to this transfer.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Assesment of Environmental Impact and Impact on Plants and Endangered and Non-Game Species

Tract 1

The NJDEP's GeoWeb mapping indicates that there are no endangered or threatened species on Tract 1. However, the GeoWeb indicates that there are many species of least concern on the property including the Barred Owl, Pinebarrens Treefrog, Black Crowned Night Heron, Little Blue Heron and Northern Pine Snake occupied habitat. Tract 1 is located in the Pinelands Landscape.

Tract 2

As shown on Figure 14, Tract 2 is also situated in the Pinelands Landscape. According to the NJDEP's GeoWeb mapping, there are no endangered or threatened species on tract 2, however multiple species of least concern can be found. These species include the Barred Owl, Pine Barrens Bluet, Red Shouldered Hawk, various species of Heron and Bluet, and Bald Eagle, which were removed from the Endangered Species list in August, 2007 and are still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Tract 3

Tract 3 mainly consists of frontage lots along Radio Rd. and accounts for only 4.077+/- acres included in the transfer. There are no known endangered or threatened species on the property. Although the parcels do not cover a significant amount of land, there can still be a few species of least concern found on the property according to the NJDEP's GeoWeb mapping. These species include the Cattle Egret and Eastern Box Turtle, where in some states are considered endangered.

The proposed land transfer would result in a net increase in uplands by approximately 4.88 acres of uplands and 27.94 acres of wetlands. The wetlands being conveyed to the County include approximately 45 acres of Atlantic White Cedar wetlands which provide tremendous benefits in offsetting the impacts of ground and surface water pollution.

Assessment of Recreational Impact

The County and Township of Little Egg Harbor do not anticipate any negative recreational impacts associated with the land exchange. As noted above, the properties on both sides of the exchange are being utilized as vacant open space, and do not have any recreational facilities on site. All of the properties involved in the proposed exchange will remain permanently preserved for recreation and conservation purposes, and will remain available to the public for access and use.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Valuation of Little Egg Harbor Tracts

As noted above, all of the Township owned parcels included in the exchange were acquired through tax foreclosure liens. The Township subject properties are comprised of three (3) different Tracts:

Tract 1	Oasis Estates	Block 126 Block 109	Lots 21, 24-26 Lots 46, 99
Tract 2	Tuckerton Lake/ Tip Seaman Park	Block 269	Lots 3, 9
Tract 3	Osborn Island	Block 326.201 Block 326.203	Lots 63, 64 Lots 2-22

The Township owned Tracts have a certified market value of \$880,000.00 (or \$10,222.81 per acre) as of September 24, 2021. The basis for this determination is set forth in the full appraisal report which can be found by clicking the following link: [[Appraisal Report Twp. Parcels](#)]

Valuation of County Tract

The County tract, locally known as Playhouse Drive was purchased in two separate parts. The first acquisition, which consisted of Block 326, Lots 27, 27.01 & 62, was completed on December 23, 1999. The parcels were purchased from Jenkinson's Pavilion, a private seller, for \$737,500.00.

The second part of the County tract, consisting of Block 326.33, Lot 46 was purchased as an extension of the already existing preserve. The parcel is approximately 0.15 acres and was acquired on December 9, 2016 for \$110,000.00. The property was purchased from Ann McClenaghan, a private seller.

The County owned Tract has a certified market value of \$900,000.00 (or \$21,423.47 per acre) as of September 20, 2021. The basis for this determination can be found by clicking the following link: [[Appraisal Report County Parcels](#)]

The County commissioned these appraisals and while the economic conveyance would be slightly in favor of Little Egg Harbor Township, the overall benefit to the County is substantial and equitable for the citizens and their communities.

FIGURES AND APPENDICES

Figure 1	General Location Map of Proposed Conveyance & Replacement Land
Figure 2	Land Use Map of Proposed Conveyance & Replacement Land
Figure 3	Tract 1: Map of Surface Waters and Wetlands
Figure 4	Tract 1: Map of Species Based Habitat
Figure 5	Tract 2: Map of Surface Waters & Wetlands
Figure 6	Tract 2: Map of Species Based Habitat
Figure 7	Tract 2: Aerial Imagery Map
Figure 8	Tract 3: Aerial Imagery Map
Figure 9	Tract 3: Map of Surface Waters & Wetlands
Figure 10	Tract 3: Map of Species Based Habitat
Figure 11	County Tract: Map of Surface Waters & Wetlands
Figure 12	County Tract: Aerial Imagery Map
Figure 13	County Tract: Map of Species Based Habitat
Figure 14	Landscape Map of Proposed Conveyance & Replacement Land
Appendix 1	September 2021 Integra Realty Resources Appraisals
Appendix 2	September 2021 Integra Realty Consultants Appraisals

PUBLIC HEARINGS

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:36 – 25.5 and N.J.S.A 40A:12-13 et.seq., public hearings on the proposed conveyances are scheduled as follows:

A public hearing on the proposed conveyance of both the County and Township Tracts will be held:

October 20, 2022 at 6:00 PM
Little Egg Harbor Township, Council Room
665 Radio Road
Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087

A public hearing on the proposed conveyance of the County Tract will be held:

November 3, 2022 at 6:00 PM
Ocean County Engineering Conference Room
129 Hooper Ave, 3rd Floor, Room 300
Toms River, NJ 08754

No members of the public attended either of the public hearings.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information, please contact:

For the County of Ocean:

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For Little Egg Harbor Township:

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DISTRIBUTION LIST

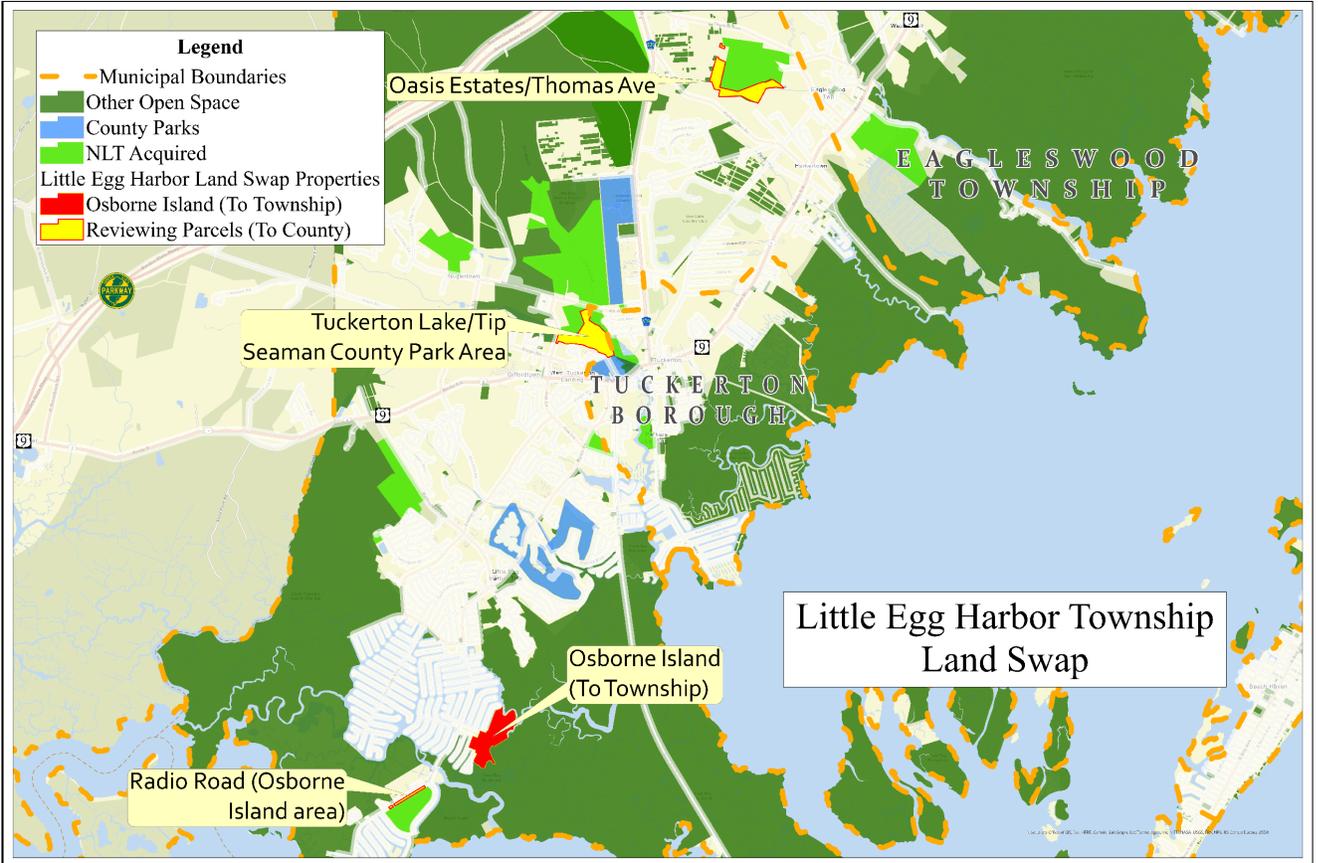
John Kehm, Jr., Mayor, Township of Little Egg Harbor

Kelly Lettera, Clerk, Township of Little Egg Harbor

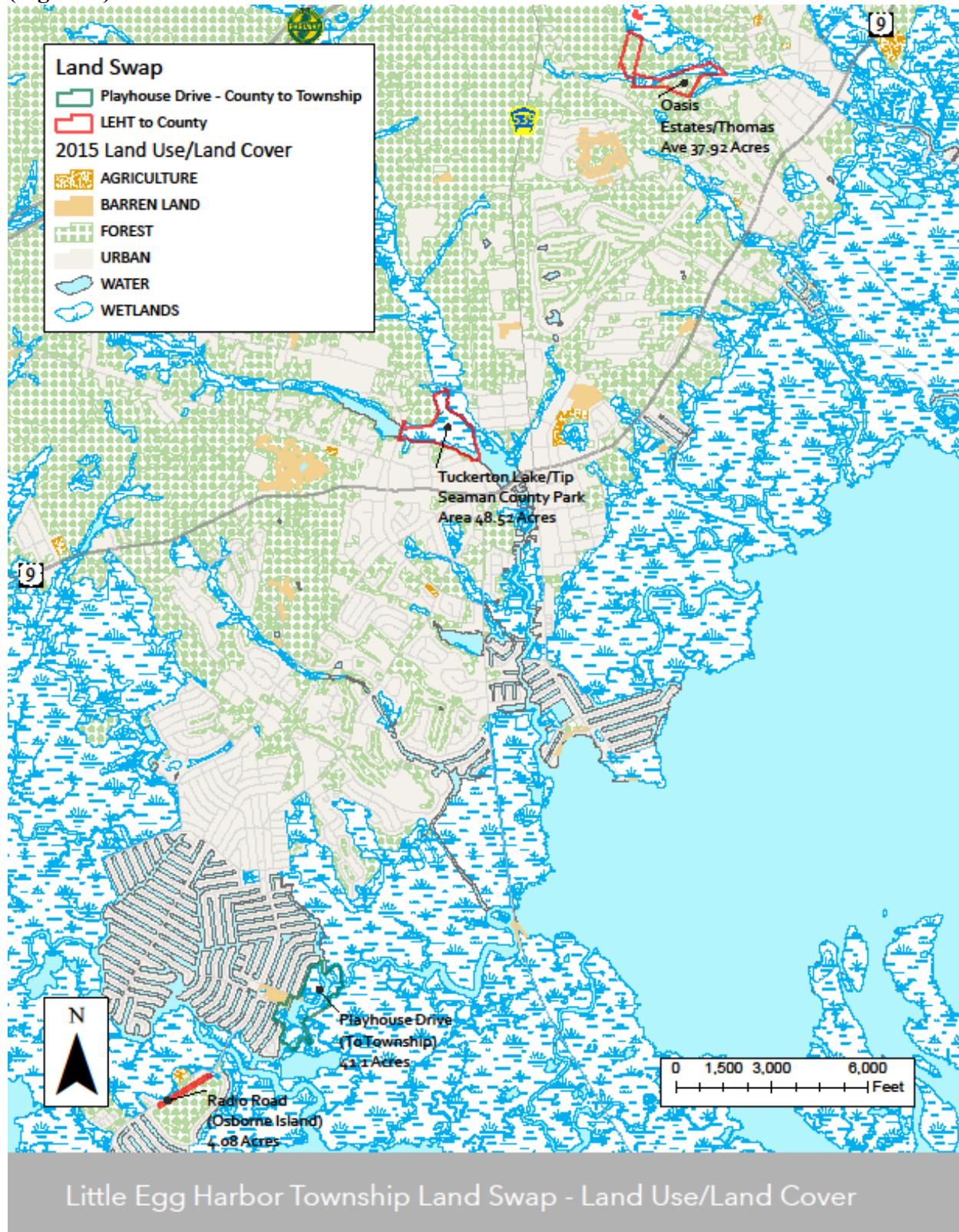
Scott M. Colabella, Clerk, County of Ocean

Michelle Gunther, Clerk of the Board, County of Ocean

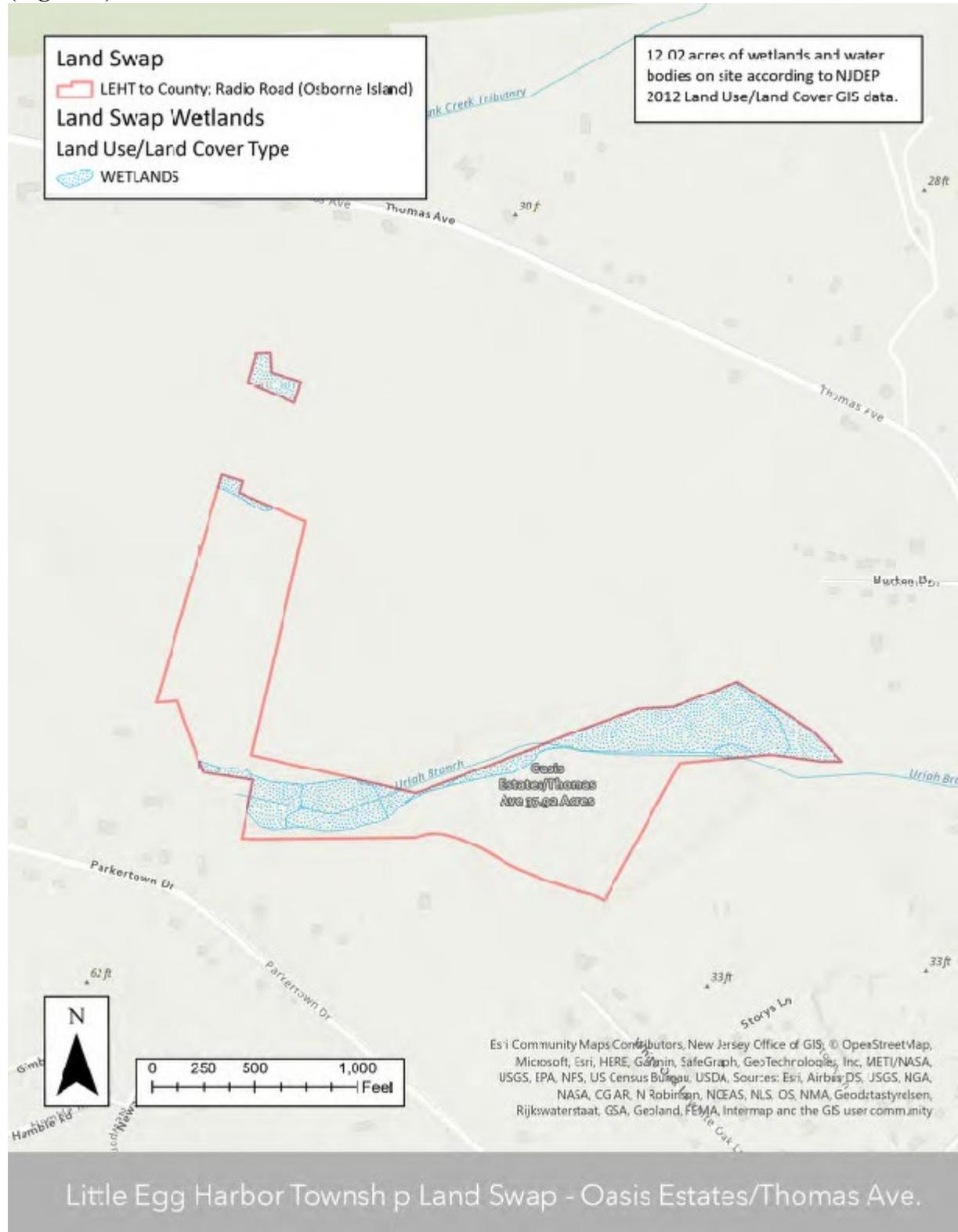
(Figure 1)



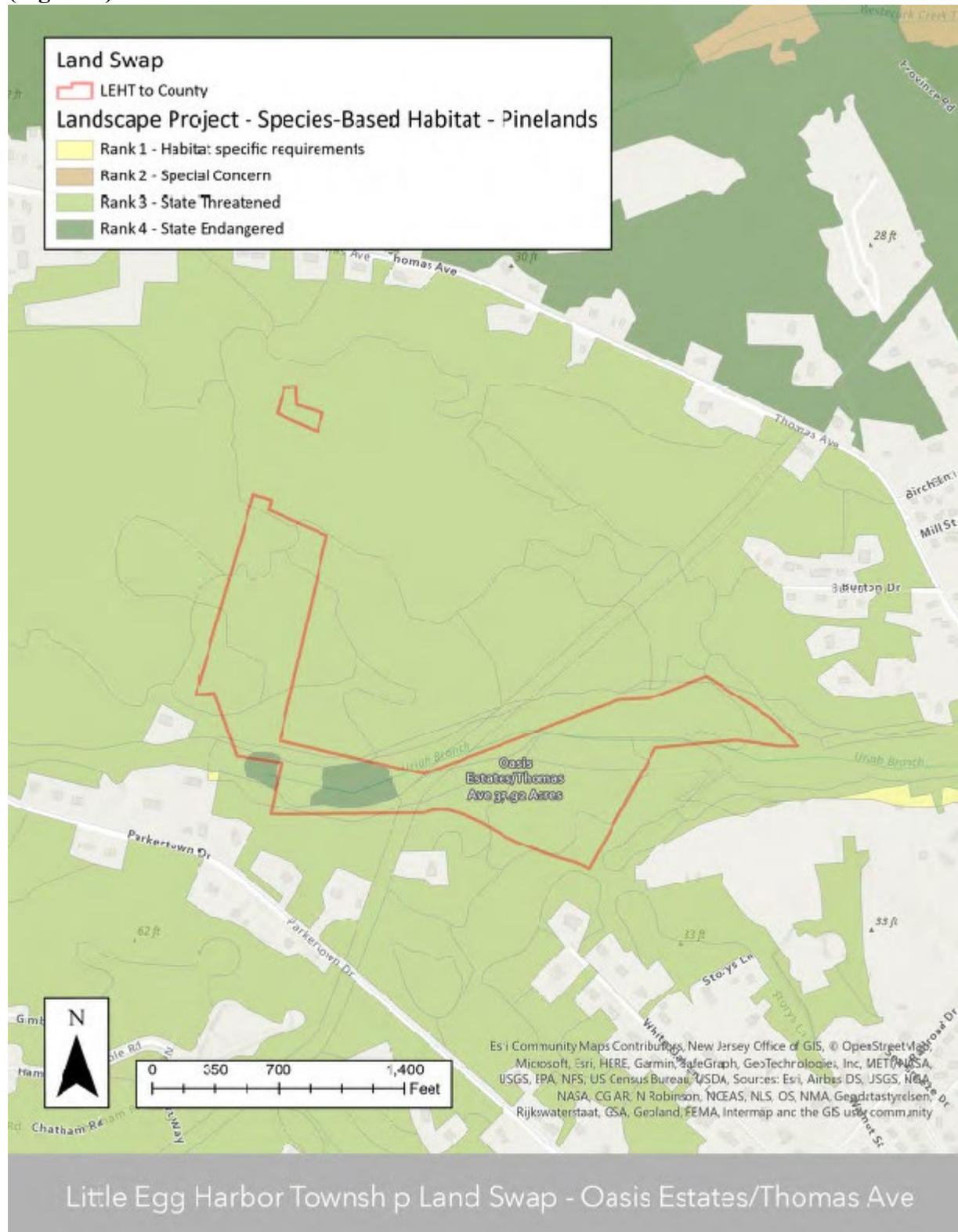
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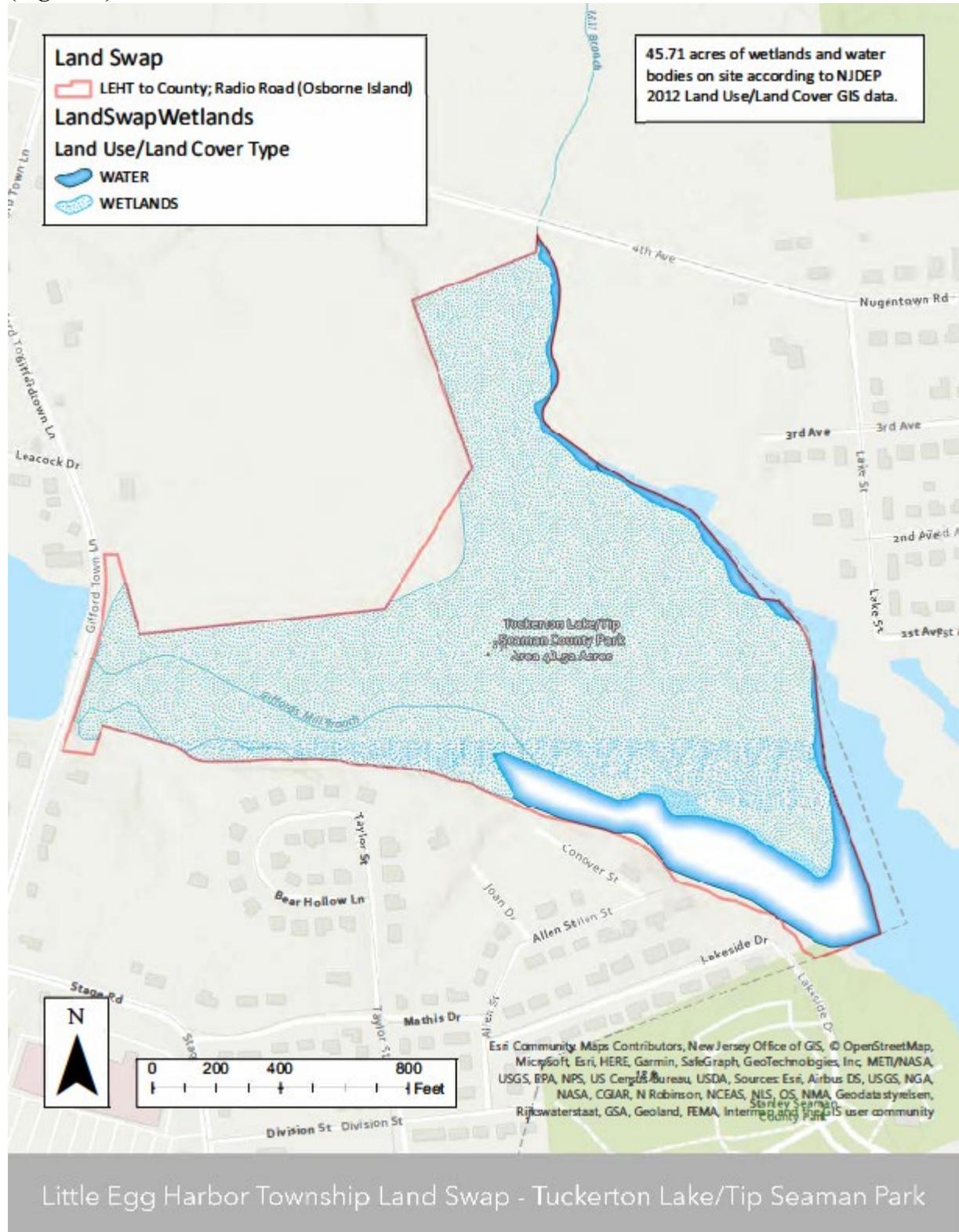
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(Figure 4)



(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)

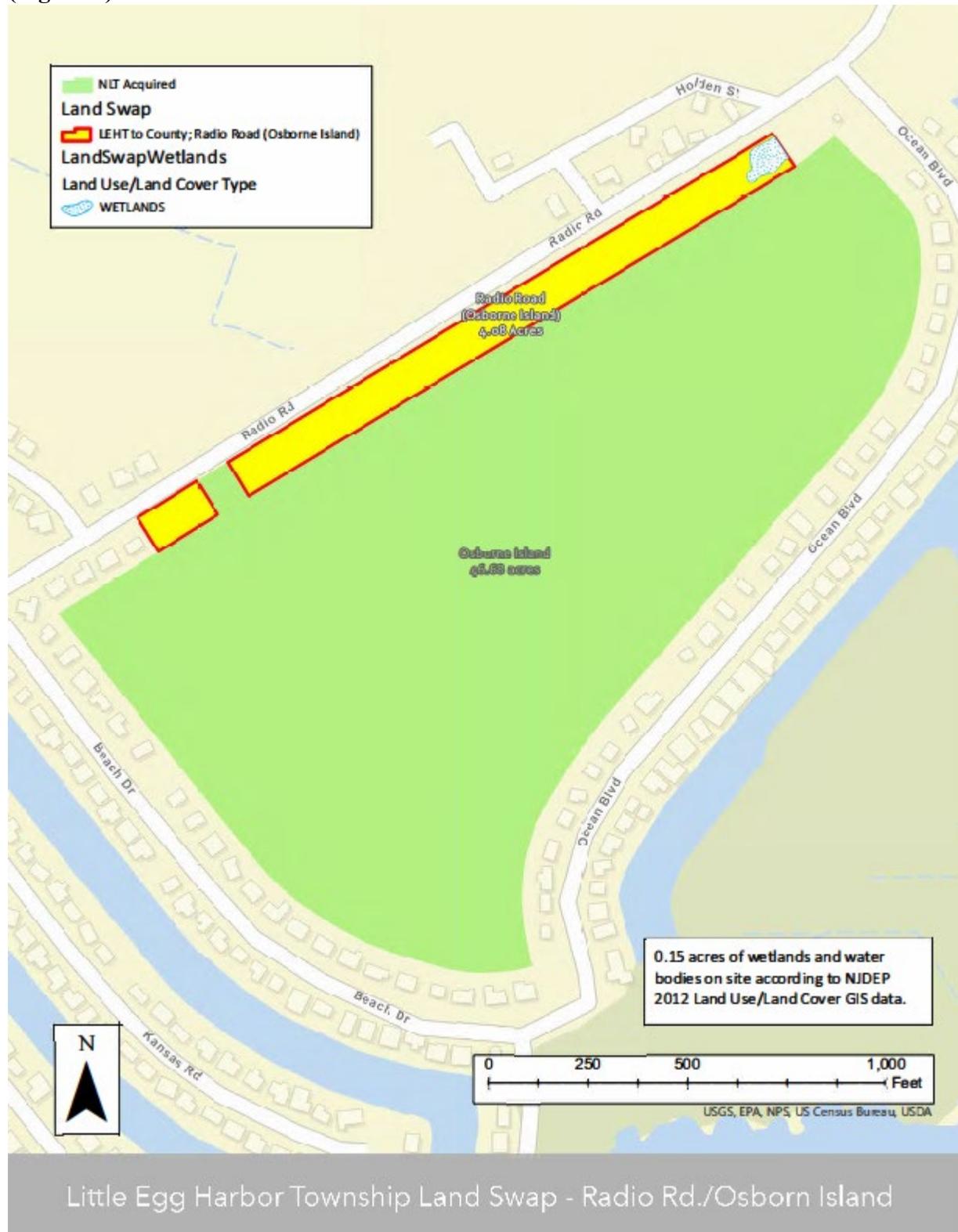


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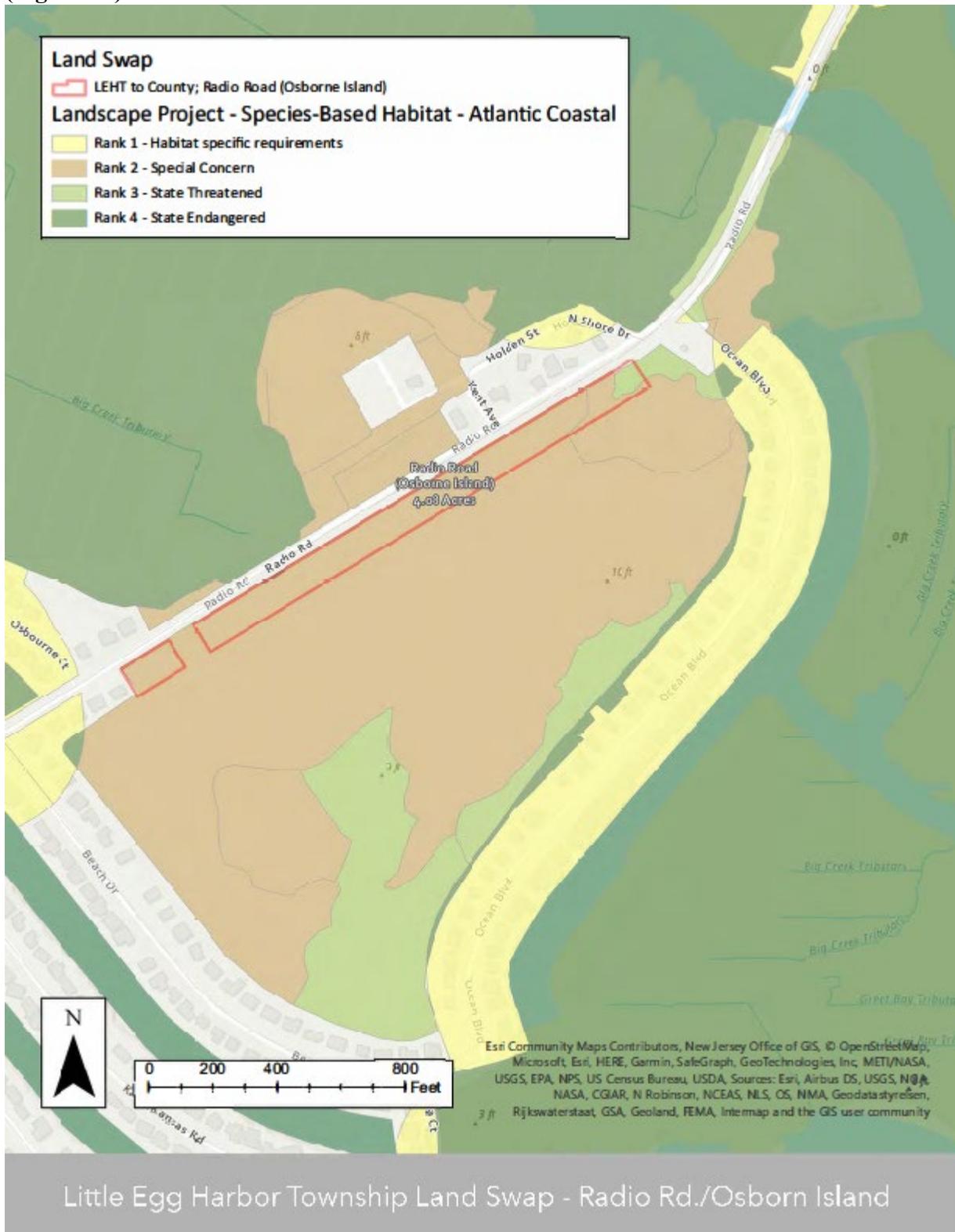


Little Egg Harbor Township Land Swap - Osborne Island Addition

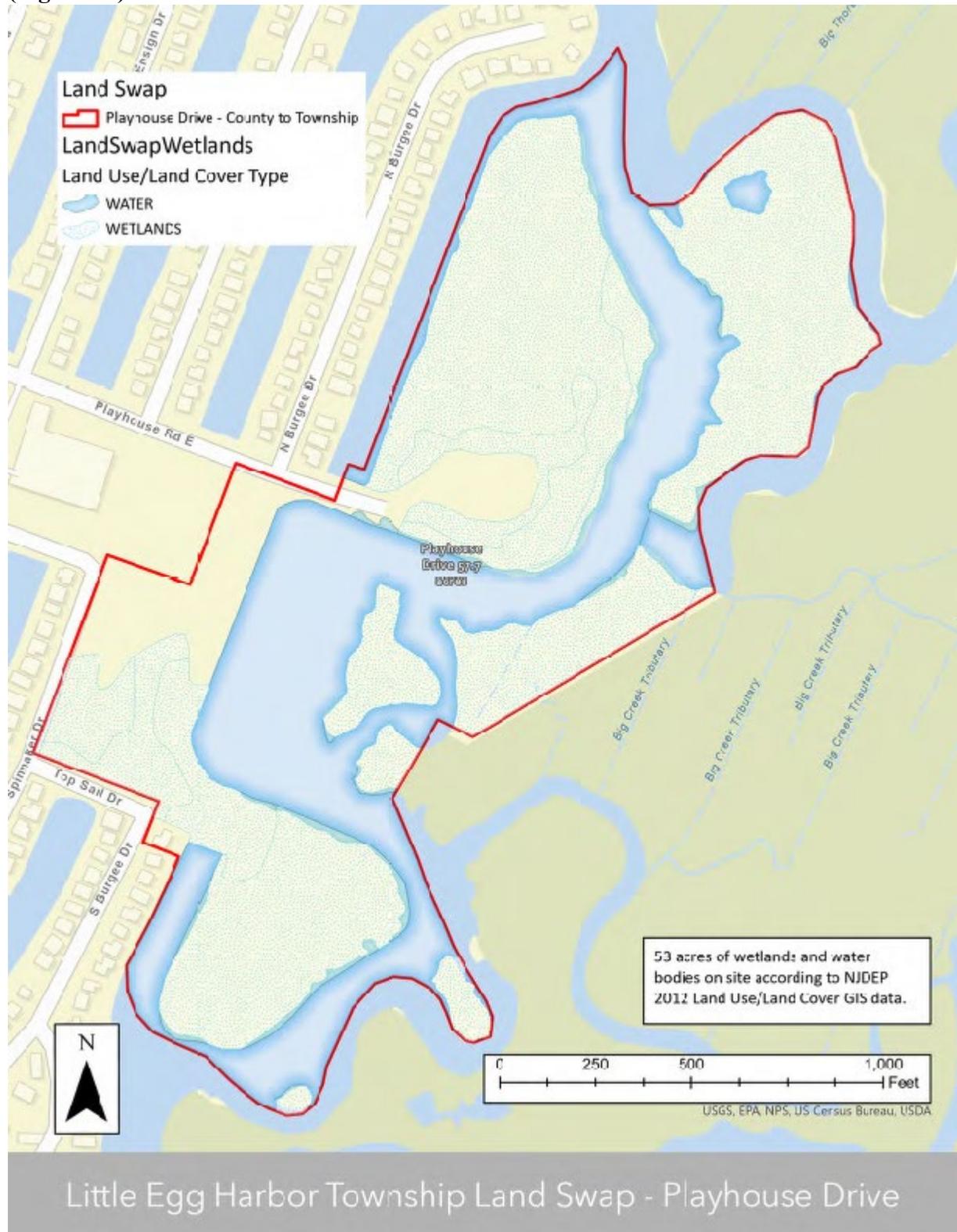
(Figure 9)



(Figure 10)



(Figure 11)



(Figure 12)



Little Egg Harbor Township Land Swap - Playhouse Drive

(Figure 13)



(Figure 14)

