

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared for

MONROE COMMUNITY GARDEN INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND AND RESTROOM FACILITY

BLOCK 4 – LOTS 6.01 & 6.02

124 APPLGARTH ROAD

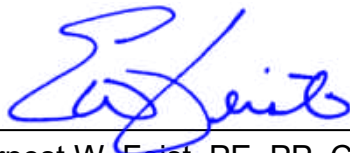
MONROE TOWNSHIP

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY 08831

January 18, 2024



481 Spotswood Englishtown Road
Monroe Township, New Jersey 08831



Ernest W. Feist, PE, PP, CME

1. Description of the Proposed Project

Monroe Township proposes to construct a Completely Inclusive Playground in compliance with the DCA's adopted regulations for Jake's Law as well as an ADA compliant restroom facility. A parking lot expansion is proposed and well as an interconnecting walkway to an adjacent medium density residential community to the south.

The site is located at 124 Applegarth Road in Monroe Township, Middlesex County, NJ, also known as Lots 6.01 and 6.02 in Block 4 on tax map sheet 5. (Attachment 1). The parcel is 16.48 acres in area with frontage on Applegarth Road. A photo location map is provided as Attachment 2. The site was previously a homestead and cultivated field until it was given to the Township as part of a multi-use development project.

In 2015 and 2016, the Township constructed the Monroe Community Garden on the northerly portion of the site along with a small parking lot and entrance drive off Applegarth Road. The site is serviced by public water and sewer.

Attachment 3 is a preliminary conceptual plan depicting the existing community garden and the proposed improvements.

2. Description of the Environment

a. Vegetation

The project area is a mix of grass areas, cultivated fields, shrubs and wooded areas. The proposed improvements have been located to minimize the impact on the wooded areas. The parking lot expansion has been sited in the grass portion of the project area and the Inclusive Playground and ADA restroom are sited in and adjacent to the wooded portion.

b. Wildlife, including State and Federal Threatened and Endangered Species

The site accommodates a variety of general suburban wildlife species. Potential mammal species found on or near the site include white tail deer, small rodent species, grey squirrels, raccoons, and opossums. Potential bird species found in the area include waterfowl such as ducks and Canada geese and hawk species. Additionally, various migratory birds can be seen during different seasons. NJGeoWeb GIS database does not identify the site as habitat for any threatened or endangered species.

c. **Geology, Topography and Soils**

The topography of the Monroe Community Garden site gently slopes downward from south to north toward the Millstone River. There are no steep slope areas on the site. Bedrock geology for the entire site is Englishtown Formation, USDA soil survey classifies the soils on site as ThgB – Tinton loamy sand, 0 – 5 percent slopes. The soils are well drained.

d. **Water Resources/Hydrology**

The northerly property line of the site follows the centerline of the Millstone River and a 100-foot D&RCC Stream Corridor Buffer Conservation Easement (Middlesex County Deed Book 19150, Page 334) incumbers a portion of the site. All proposed improvements will be outside the filed conservation easement.

e. **Historic/Archeological Resources**

The project site was previously a homestead and cultivated field until it was given to the Township as part of a multi-use development project. No historical or archaeological areas have been identified on the site or the surrounding vicinity. No degradation of unique or irreplaceable land types or resources will occur because of this project.

f. **Transportation/Access to Site**

The existing Community Garden and the proposed Inclusive Playground are accessible by car using Applegarth Road (County Route 619) and the existing driveway. The proposed plan will include pedestrian (walking) access from the

extension of an existing sidewalk network that terminates just shy of the southerly property line. (Woodrose Way)

g. Adjacent Land Uses/Description of Surrounding Neighborhood

To the south of the site is a mixed use of medium density multifamily residential and commercial/retail operations. To the north, east and west are single family residences, agricultural fields and wooded areas.

3. Environmental Impact Analysis of Proposed Action

The project will be designed and constructed in compliance with current NJDOT stormwater management rules; no environmentally sensitive areas will be disturbed; tree clearing will be minimized to a small area to accommodate the inclusive playground equipment and a tree replacement plan will be part of the project.

4. Alternative to the Proposed Action

Monroe Township completed an updated Master Plan in October of 2022, the Open Space Element, which includes recommendations for Parks and Recreation, targets the Monroe Township Community Garden for an active recreation area and additional parking. This recommendation was the result of extensive public input siting the need for these facilities in the southwest quadrant of the Township. Given the proximity to existing medium density residential development, ownership by the Township and the existing improvements to the site, no other locations would provide a cost effect and convenient alternative. The “do nothing alternative” would limit the residents of the southwest quadrant adequate access to recreational facilities.

5. Mitigating Measures

To mitigate the small number of trees that will be cleared to accommodate the improvements, a greater quantity and more diverse species of new trees will be planted as part of the project. Additionally, a buffer of arborvitae will be provided around the parking area.

All proposed improvements will be outside the environmentally sensitive areas associated with the Millstone River corridor.

6. Author and Qualifications

Curriculum vitae for the primary author of this Environmental Impact Statement follows:

Ernest W. Feist, PE, PP, CME, CPWM

Professional Experience

Owner & President (1997 to present), Center State Engineering, 481 Spotswood-Englishtown Road, Monroe Township, NJ

Owner and President of Center State Engineering (formerly Feist Engineering). A full-service civil engineering and construction management firm specializing in municipal and governmental engineering, planning, surveying and construction administration.

Municipal Engineer (1997 to Present)

Serves as Municipal Engineer & Planner in Spotswood and as Planner in Helmetta Served as Director of Engineering, Director of Public Works and Director of Municipal Disaster Control, Township Engineer, and Planning Board Engineer for the Township of Monroe, Middlesex County, NJ. Served as City Engineer, Planning and Zoning Engineer/Planner for City of Perth Amboy. Zoning Board Engineer for Tinton Falls.

Vice President (1992 to 1997), RC Engineering & Management Associates, Inc., Monroe Township, NJ

Working and managing partner of RC Engineering & Management Associates, Inc. A full-service engineering and construction management firm specializing in municipal and governmental engineering, planning and administration.

Project Engineer, (1990 to 1992), Carr Engineering Associates, Perth Amboy, NJ

Project Engineer responsible for the design and construction supervision of civil and electrical engineering projects. Including: site plans, environmental assessments, electrical systems, water systems, storm water drainage systems and recreational facilities. Position also includes the drafting and implementation of zoning and planning ordinances for municipalities.

Education

Bachelor of Engineering, June 1986, Stevens Institute of Technology

Major: Engineering

Bachelor of Science, June 1980, Ramapo College of New Jersey

Major: Biological Sciences

Professional Licenses

Licensed Professional Engineer, New Jersey

Licensed Professional Planner, New Jersey

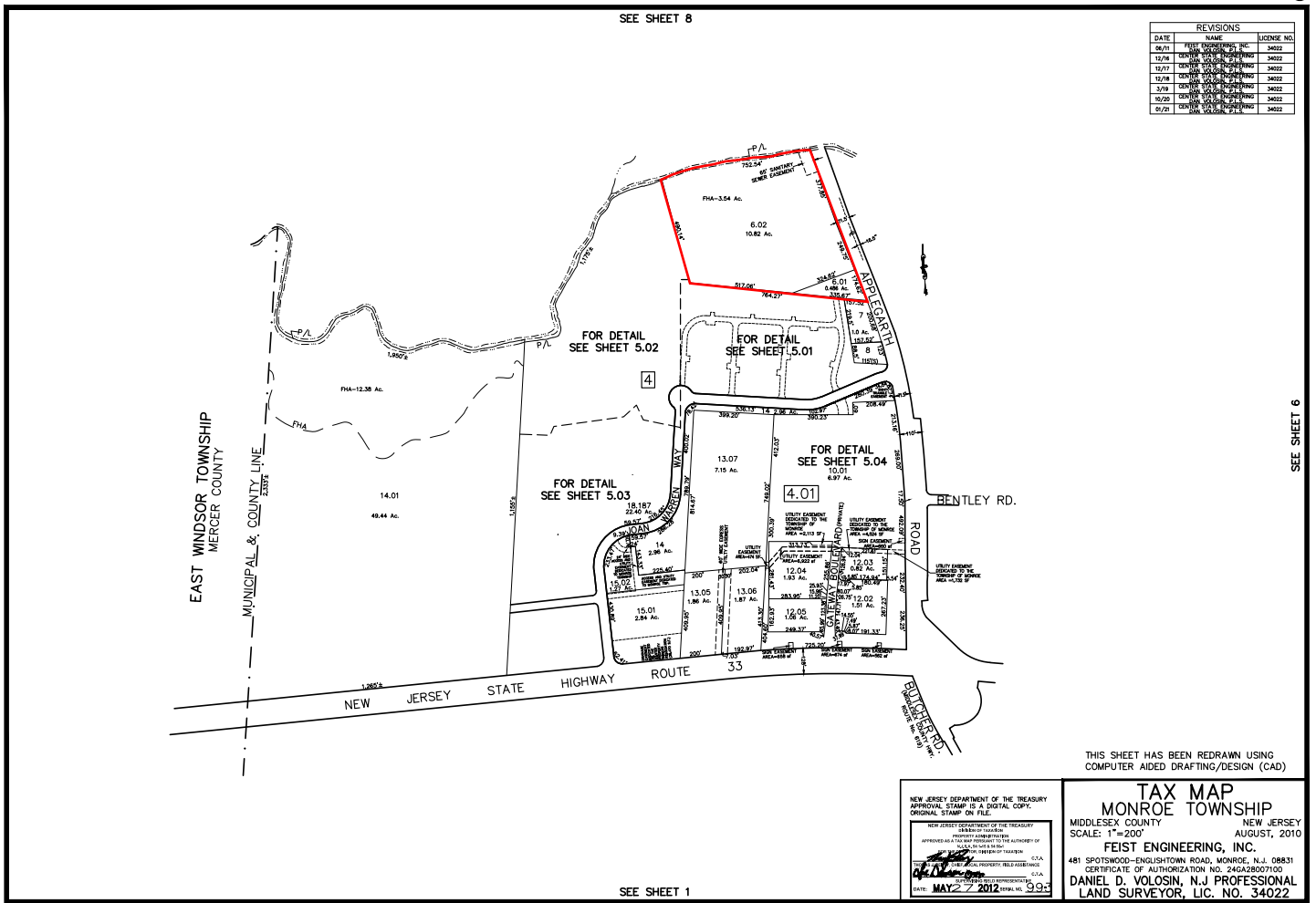
Certified Municipal Engineer, New Jersey

Certified Public Works Manager, New Jersey

Professional Societies

Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, National Society of Professional Engineers and New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers

7. Attachments

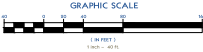
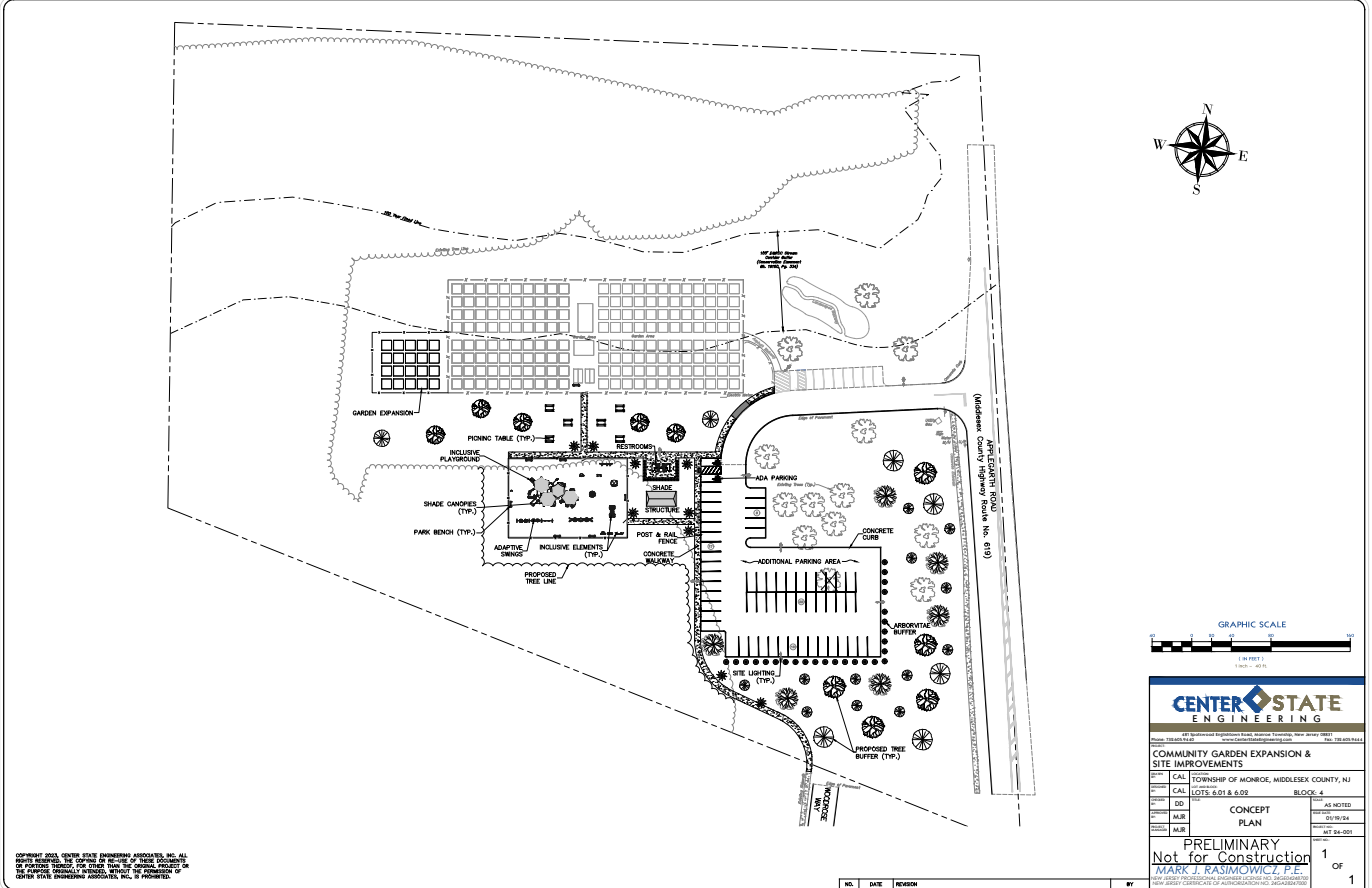


Attachment 1 - Tax Map Sheet 5



Attachment 2 - Aerial Photograph

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COMMUNITY GARDEN EXPANSION & SITE IMPROVEMENTS			
DATE	CAL	TOWNSHIP OF MONROE, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NJ	
PROJECT	CAL	LOTS 6.01 & 6.02, BLOCK 4	
DESIGNER	SAJR	CONCEPT PLAN	AS NOTED
DATE	SAJR	REVISION	DATE
			10/24/2023
			10/24/2023
			10/24/2023
PRELIMINARY Not for Construction MARK J. RASIMOWICZ, P.E. <small>PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER, LICENSE NO. 35328</small>			1 OF 1

Attachment 3 - Conceptual Plan