

# BASE SURVEY FORM

Historic Sites #:

**Property Name:** Route 4 Greenbelt

**Street Address:** Street #: \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment #: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Low) (High) (Low) (High)

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_ Street Name: Mackay (State Route 4) Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: HWY

**County(s):** Bergen **Zip Code:** 07666

**Municipality(s):** Teaneck Township **Block(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Place Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Lot(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ownership:** Public; Private **U.S.G.S. Quad(s):** Hackensack, NJ;  
Yonkers, NY-NJ

**Description:** The Route 4 Greenbelt is a tree-lined, open space corridor bordering the Mackay Highway (State Route 4) through the Township of Teaneck. The Greenbelt focuses on publicly-owned parcels bordering the highway. Most are narrow strips that vary in width from 15 to 50 feet, but the Greenbelt also includes three Township parks (Kieliszek, South Gaylor, and Windsor) that border the highway, the discontinuous southwest section of Milton Votee Park, the Richard Rodda Community Center, the Lowell School, and Bergen County's Overpeck Park. Concrete sidewalks are located in several locations within the Greenbelt, primarily in Kieliszek and Gaylor Parks, and lighting is modern cobra head mounted on wood poles. Modern bus shelters are at several locations. Mature hardwood trees are the dominant planting material. Chain link fencing separates the Greenbelt from neighboring properties in many areas.

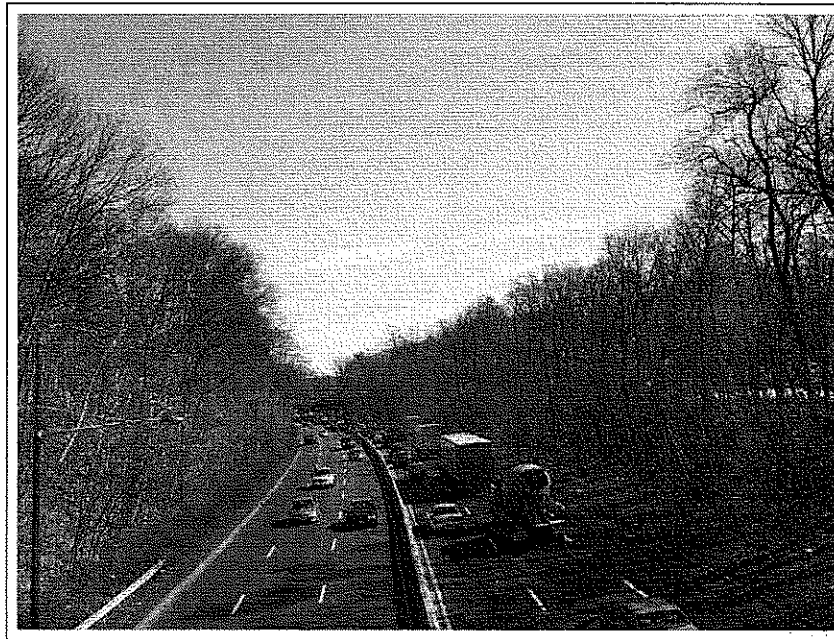
**Registration and Status Dates:** National Historic Landmark: \_\_\_\_\_ SHPO Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

National Register: \_\_\_\_\_ Local Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

New Jersey Register: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Determination of Eligibility: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Designation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Photograph:**



**Survey Name:** Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

**Surveyor:** Jennifer B. Leynes **Date:** March 2014

**Organization:** Richard Grubb & Associates

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**Location Map:**

*See Continuation Sheet*

**Site Map:**

*See Continuation Sheet*

**Bibliography/Sources:**

*See Continuation Sheet*

**Additional Information:**

The Teaneck Route 4 Greenbelt was included in the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey Update as 0260-D59. Identified in the report as a district incorporating all properties on Route 4 in Teaneck, the Greenbelt was recommended as eligible for the National Register (Brown 2007: Inv. 0260-D59).

More Research Needed?  Yes  No

**INTENSIVE LEVEL USE ONLY**

Attachments Included: \_\_\_\_\_ Building 1 Landscape \_\_\_\_\_ Farm  
\_\_\_\_\_ Bridge \_\_\_\_\_ Industry

Within Historic District?  Yes  No Historic District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Status:  Key-Contributing  Contributing  Non-Contributing

Associated Archaeological Site/Deposit?  Yes  No  
(Known or potential Sites – if yes, please describe briefly)

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## LANDSCAPE ATTACHMENT

Historic Sites #:

<b>Common Name:</b>	Route 4 Greenbelt		
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Route 4 Park Strips		
<b>Present Use:</b>	Recreational and Entertainment Activity: Passive recreation - outdoor		
<b>Historic Use:</b>	Recreational and Entertainment Activity: Passive recreation - outdoor		
<b>Construction Date:</b>	ca. 1933	<b>Source:</b>	Teaneck Township Council (1934)
<b>Alteration Date(s):</b>		<b>Source:</b>	
<b>Primary Landscape Architect/Designer:</b>			
<b>Type:</b>	City planning or civic design	<b>Physical Condition:</b>	Excellent
<b>Style:</b>		<b>Remaining Historic Fabric:</b>	High
<b>Acreage:</b>	224.6		
<b>Hardscape:</b>	Walkways, Poured Concrete; Walkway, Asphalt		
<b>Plantings:</b>	Mature Hardwoods		
<b>Other Features:</b>	Fences, Steel; Lighting, modern cobra head		

**Description:** *(Continued from Base Form.)*

Additional description of individual features within the project area follows.

Eleanor Kieliszek (formerly North Gaylord) Park – Located on Route 4 Westbound (WB), this 2.25-acre park is bisected by Belle Avenue. The western half of the park has a curvilinear asphalt walkway extending from Billington Road to a bus stop on Route 4. The Police Athletic League building (Inv. # RGA 9) is located within this section of the park, facing east onto Belle Avenue. A low rectangular sign surrounded by shrubbery welcomes passersby on Route 4 to Teaneck. The eastern section of the park lacks hardscape features. Landscaping in both sections is characterized by grassy lawns and mature deciduous and coniferous specimens in an informal arrangement. Smaller flowering trees and some low shrubbery, particularly in the vicinity of the building and the sign, add texture and interest to the understory.

South Gaylord Park – This 2.49-acre park on Route 4 Eastbound (EB) has a concrete sidewalk parallel to the highway from the Garrison Avenue Bridge east to the Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue/CSX Railroad/Windsor Road. The park is bisected by Belle Avenue. The western section has a curving concrete sidewalk that extends from Grace Terrace northwest toward the primary walkway along Route 4. A welcome sign near Belle Avenue matches the one in Kieliszek Park. Both sections of the park are characterized by grassy lawns with mature hardwood trees and scattered shrubbery.

Windsor Park – Extending both north and south of Route 4, Windsor Park serves as a vegetative buffer between the residential areas west of Windsor Road and the CSX Railroad corridor on the east. Totaling 4.2 acres, the linear park is maintained as open space and characterized by mature hardwoods and limited undergrowth. The areas of the park closest to Route 4 have grassy lawns, but the areas farther north and south are densely wooded.

*See Continuation Sheet.*

**Setting:**

The Route 4 Greenbelt extends in a linear fashion on both sides of Route 4 in Teaneck Township. Surrounding development is primarily residential and institutional in nature. Commercial properties are concentrated around the Teaneck Road intersection, and an industrial section is located near the easternmost section of the Greenbelt, on its westbound side. East and west of the Greenbelt, in the cities of Hackensack and Englewood, Route 4 is a densely developed commercial corridor.

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## CONTINUATION SHEET

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**Description:** *Continued from Landscape Attachment.*

Milton Votee (formerly Central) Park (southwest section) – Votee Park is Teaneck’s largest recreational facility. The developed area of the park is located east of Palisade Avenue and includes ball fields, an amphitheater, and a playground. A discontinuous triangular parcel bounded on the south by Route 4, on the west by CSX Railroad, and on the east by Palisade Avenue, serves as part of the Greenbelt. This southwest section of the park is a 1.35-acre tract with mature hardwoods along Route 4 and the railroad corridor; the remainder is maintained as an open grassy lawn.

Route 4 –Route 4 in Teaneck Township extends in an east-west direction from the Hackensack River to the township’s boundary with the City of Englewood, roughly 2.5 miles. The roadway carries three lanes in each direction for most of its distance, with the exception of the area from Garrison Avenue to Queen Anne Road, where the eastbound roadway narrows to two lanes. Acceleration and deceleration lanes are located at major intersections, and bus pullouts occur at intervals along both sides of the highway. A concrete Jersey barrier extends down the center of the roadway for its entire length, and steel guard rails are located in many areas. Both at-grade and grade-separated intersections have planted medians. Overpasses occur at Garrison Avenue and Margaret Street, and pedestrian bridges span the highway near Dartmouth Street/Lincoln Place and Phelps Road. Bridges carry Route 4 over River Road, Palisade Avenue/CSX Railroad/Windsor Road, Queen Anne Road, Teaneck Road, and Webster Avenue/Farragut Drive.

Garrison Avenue Bridge (Structure No. 0206-168) – This three-span, continuous encased thru girder bridge carries Garrison Avenue over Route 4. Supported on concrete abutments and pier columns, the bridge has its original metal railing with concrete posts. Concrete stairways providing pedestrian access between Garrison Avenue and Route 4 are located on the west side of the north abutment and the east side of the south abutment.

Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue/CSX Railroad/Windsor Road (Structure No. 0206-169) – This eight-span, encased multi-girder viaduct carries Route 4 over two, two-lane roads (Palisade Avenue and Windsor Road) and the CSX Railroad corridor. The bridge has concrete abutments and piers and a concrete balustrade; the sidewalks are cantilevered.

Route 4 Bridge over Queen Anne Road (Structure No. 0206-171) – This single-span, encased stringer bridge has paneled concrete wingwalls and a concrete balustrade of standard design. The bridge carries five lanes of traffic – two eastbound and three westbound – and sidewalks in each direction over Queen Anne Road.

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## ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET

Historic Sites #:

History: *See Continuation Sheet*

Significance: *See Continuation Sheet*

Eligibility for New Jersey and National Registers:  Yes  No National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
Level of Significance  Local  State  National

Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility: *See Continuation Sheet*

**For Historic Districts Only:**

Property Count: Key Contributing: \_\_\_\_\_ Contributing: \_\_\_\_\_ Non Contributing: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Individual Properties Only:**

**List the completed attachments related to the property's significance:**

Landscape Attachment: Route 4 Greenbelt

**Narrative Boundary Description:**

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### History:

During the 1920s and 1930s, a major impetus for development within Bergen County was the George Washington Bridge. Prior to its opening in 1931, commuters in North Jersey were highly dependent on the railroad and New York ferry system for access to the city. The mere promise of the bridge set real estate promoters into motion in Bergen County before construction of the bridge began in 1927, and Teaneck was one of many communities that both benefitted from and suffered the ill effects of real estate speculation and rapid population growth during this era (Fogarty et al 1985: 131; Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs [BCDCHA] 1983).

The George Washington Bridge necessitated an improved network of access highways to facilitate movement onto and off of the structure. Several connecting highways were built simultaneously to provide access to the bridge from various points in northern New Jersey, including two through Bergen County (*New York Times* 1929b). The northerly highway, Route 4, was to extend from Fort Lee to Englewood, through Teaneck and Fairlawn, thence to Paterson. Route 6 (modern US Highway 46) carried traffic in a southwestern direction from the bridge through Palisade Park, Ridgefield Park, and Hasbrouck Heights, en route to Paterson and Hackettstown (*New York Times* 1929b). Construction had started by December 1929 on both roads, although the 17.57-mile section between the Hackensack River and Fort Lee was not begun until September 1930 (*New York Times* 1929a; New Jersey State Highway Department [NJSHD] 1930a). When the George Washington Bridge opened in October 1931, six months ahead of schedule, construction of the section of Route 4 through Teaneck was not yet finished, and motorists had to be diverted onto existing local roads until its completion (Dickinson 1931; Vogel 1932).

The State Highway Department selected a road alignment (100-foot right-of-way except at grade crossings) intended to impact the least built-up sections of the various towns through which the road passed. In Teaneck, Route 4 passed through sparsely developed land, much of which was formerly part of the Phelps Estate. At the eastern end of Teaneck, the Phelps Manor Country Club's golf course abutted the highway right-of-way; elsewhere, the road cut through several existing farms. As-builts indicate that residential subdivisions had been laid out along much of the route, but relatively few houses had been constructed in the immediate vicinity of the highway. Exceptions were at Garrison Avenue, where a number of houses with detached garages were located north of the Route 4 corridor, and at Queen Anne Road, where dwellings were located on the Kings Court cul-de-sac north of Route 4. The Teaneck Road intersection also had some existing development, including several houses and a two-story commercial/industrial building located within the right-of-way (NJSHD 1930b).

In 1932, the final section of Route 4 was completed between Grand Avenue in Englewood and River Road in Teaneck. The roadway in Teaneck varied from 40 to 70 feet in width, with 15-foot shoulders and concrete curbs. The number of lanes varied with the roadway width, from two to three in each direction. Low concrete curbs, 12-15" high, were located on the center line at some, but not all, intersections, and wire rope railings were used at many locations on the shoulders. Grade-separated intersections were located at River Road, Queen Anne Road, and Teaneck Road; a modified grade separation was also constructed at Webster Avenue, and a full grade separation was planned for Lafayette Avenue but never built (NJSHD 1930b). Both the River Road and Teaneck Road intersections were noted in contemporary engineering journals as representative highway intersection designs in New Jersey (Hill 1931: 836; Swan 1933: 81). Other notable roadway features included a concrete viaduct built to carry Route 4 over Palisade Avenue, the West Shore Railroad (CSX), and Windsor Road; and two concrete, encased thru girder bridges that carried Garrison Road and Margaret Street over Route 4. Despite the many grade separations on the roadway, a small number of entrance and exit ramps were constructed at-grade, with no acceleration or deceleration lanes (NJSHD 1930b).

Contemporary newspaper articles indicate that \$2,869,000 was spent to design and build Route 4 in its entirety (*New York Times* 1932). Three years after it opened, the portion of Route 4 lying within Bergen County was named "Mackay Highway" in honor of State Senator William B. Mackay, a Bergen County representative who had been an advocate for construction of the George Washington Bridge (New Jersey State Legislature 1935).

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Route 4 and the other new highways to the George Washington Bridge were touted as “the most modern type, with all grade crossings eliminated and concrete surfaces wide enough to accommodate from four to six lanes of traffic,” claims which proved to be exaggerated (Dickinson 1931). In fact, despite the inclusion of features designed to improve traffic flow, Route 4 and the other George Washington Bridge access highways ultimately failed to convey traffic safely and efficiently because abutting properties had unlimited access to the roadway. Gilmore D. Clarke, a civil engineer and landscape architect known for his park and parkway designs, including the Garden State Parkway, noted in 1959:

We are still suffering from inadequate planning of the approaches to the George Washington Bridge... Even in the late twenties, there was ample precedent for building roads on the freeway principle with wide rights-of-way and limited access, but New Jersey had not yet obtained the appropriate enabling legislation (Clarke 1959: 44).

The deleterious effects of constructing the highways with unlimited access were felt almost immediately, as “gas stations and hot dog stands” appeared along the routes, cluttering the roadside and impeding traffic flow (Clarke 1959: 46-47; Swan 1947: 147-149).

In Teaneck, right-of-way acquisition and construction of Route 4 resulted in many narrow lots with highway frontage that were either unsuitable for residential use or, in some cases, any type of construction. The acquisition of some of these parcels was recommended in the township’s first Master Plan, adopted in 1933 (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: 23). The Teaneck Plan, as it was known, was developed in response to the increased residential construction and associated population growth that had begun to occur in the township by the mid-1920s. Much of this growth was attributable to the subdivision of the William Walter Phelps Estate, which had occupied thousands of acres in the heart of the township from the mid-nineteenth century. Phelps died in 1894, but it was not until his widow’s death in 1920 that the family’s lands were sold off for development. The effect was immediate: according to one source, during the one-year period from July 1924 to July 1925, 1,065 property transfers were recorded in the township (Hewitt 1996). Subdivision and new construction resulted in a dramatic population increase, from approximately 4,000 residents in 1920 to more than 16,500 in 1930 (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: 7).

Township government struggled to respond to the sudden increase in population and the resulting demands on public works and services. In 1929, the Township reached its debt limit, and over half the funds raised through taxation was appropriated for payment of debt service. Outraged citizens organized the Teaneck Taxpayers League to restructure municipal government under a non-partisan, city manager system. In 1930, a public referendum to adopt the New Jersey Municipal Manager Act passed, and the League put forth five successful candidates for the new township council (Teaneck Taxpayers League 1941). Paul A. Volcker was hired as the township’s first manager, a position he would hold until 1950. A city planner by training, Volcker had previously served as the city manager in Cape May; in addition to his position as municipal manager, Volcker also served as the Teaneck Township engineer throughout his tenure (Taylor 1977: 93, 95).

Under Volcker’s leadership, the newly reformed government took on many initiatives, one of the most important being the development of a master plan for the community. Teaneck had adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1928, and three years later it became one of the first municipalities in the state to create a planning board under enabling legislation passed in 1930 (Hewitt 1996; Kates 1999: 84; Glassman 1983). The Planning Board, with Councilman Milton G. Votee serving as its chair, hired the Technical Advisory Corporation of New York, the nation’s first city planning firm, to develop the plan (Lovelace 1993: 6). The Teaneck Plan began with this stated goal: “That everything possible should be done to preserve Teaneck’s many advantages and charms and to encourage its future development as a predominantly residential community of the best type” (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: 8). Toward that end, the plan recommended improvements to the street system, the development of municipal parks, and construction of public buildings, including new facilities for the police and fire departments and the library (Teaneck Planning Board 1933).

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The Teaneck Plan depicted extant and proposed open space along Route 4, as shown on Figure 2. Existing “grass plots within the state highway limits” were located at the intersections of River Road, Queen Anne Road, Teaneck Road, and Webster Avenue, where planted medians had been created between the roadway and ramps. A “grass plot” also extended along Route 4 EB between Queen Anne Road and Teaneck Road, creating a barrier between the highway and Elizabeth Avenue, which ran parallel to Route 4. This grassy area also acted as a buffer between highway traffic and Teaneck High School, which was located on the south side of Elizabeth Avenue (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: Master Plan Map).

In addition to the existing state-owned “grass plots,” the Township had acquired and developed two narrow strips of land on Route 4 EB from Wilson Avenue to Lincoln Place as “planting strips” by 1933. A neighboring parcel on the east side of Lincoln Place was identified for acquisition as a school site; the Lowell School was built at this location the following year (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: Master Plan Map; Sanborn Map Company 1958). Also recommended for acquisition and development as parkland was a 2.3-acre parcel owned by the State Highway Department at the Belle Avenue intersection (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: 23).

Farther east, on Route 4 WB between Arlington and Madison avenues, four additional strips of land were identified in the plan as “not suitable for building purposes” and recommended for acquisition. The Planning Board noted, “if suitably planted with shrubbery and flowers [these parcels] would give travelers from the east a most favorable first impression of Teaneck” (Teaneck Planning Board 1933: 23). The proposed abandonment of Hopson Place, which extended from Palisade Avenue east to Queen Anne Road, also offered potential for Township acquisition of frontage on the south side of Route 4.

The Teaneck Plan’s stated goals – to protect the community’s residential character and to increase its parkland – served to guide the Township’s growth in the years following its adoption by the Planning Board in 1933. As early as June of that year, the Council received a petition from property owners of about 5,000 feet of frontage on Route 4 north of Woods Road to change the zoning from residential to commercial. Those in favor of the change argued that the land was worthless for residential use because of the proximity of the highway. Residents who opposed commercial development along the highway suggested that commercial development would deteriorate property values in adjacent residential areas. One resident, Mr. Ruggie, suggested that “the State Highway should be maintained as a beautiful roadway rather than an eye sore” (Teaneck Township Council 6 June 1933: 665).

A public hearing was held on the rezoning proposal a year later, in June 1934. Residents and property owners spoke out for and against the proposal at the meeting, with most of the statements focused on the viability of the land for residential use versus the likely impacts of commercial development on the community’s character and aesthetics (Teaneck Township Council 11 June 1934: 149-152). At least one participant expressed concern that much of the land would be unmaintained, at least in the short term: “[U]nless the Township of Teaneck can purchase an area of land on each side of the highway for a park system the land will be dormant for many years” (Teaneck Township Council 11 June 1934: 150).

The Township had already begun the process of acquiring land along Route 4. In addition to the property acquired prior to the publication of the Teaneck Plan, the municipality bought 1,136 feet of frontage on the highway in 1933 at tax sale. Councilman Robert P. Lewis noted at the public hearing that an additional 8,751 feet of frontage was to be purchased through tax sale in 1934, giving the Township ownership of roughly 38% of the frontage on Route 4. Lewis went on to state, “in two or three years, the town is going to own practically all of Route 4 through the Township” (Teaneck Township Council 11 June 1934: 151).

Property acquisition along the highway included donations of land. Mezick was one development company that supported the creation of the Greenbelt through donation of a 15-foot strip of land along the highway, probably near River Road (Teaneck Township Council 6 June 1933: 665; *New York Times* 1935). A local citizen recalled later that Mezick had deeded the land to the Township because of the company’s past experience with commercial development having an adverse effect on neighboring residential sections (Teaneck Township Council 6 June 1933: 665-666). Another local developer, Kings Builders, also donated a 20-foot wide strip on Route 4 EB, east of Teaneck

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Road, to the Township in 1935. The company stipulated that the township plant shrubbery on the parcel as a condition of the donation (Teaneck Township Council 3 September 1935: 543). The strip is shown on the 1936 property atlas of Teaneck as open space abutting the "Kings Lawnside" neighborhood (Franklin Survey Company 1936; see Figure 3).

The 1936 atlas does not indicate which properties along Route 4 were owned by the Township; however, the use of green shading to depict islands in the highway intersections, as well as on several properties abutting Route 4 that are known to have been part of the Greenbelt by that date, gives some indication of the extent of its development. The map also clearly shows the narrow strips of land that had resulted from the highway construction. Many of these were awkwardly shaped lots, too small to accommodate any type of development; for example, the parcels on the north side of Route 4, east of Arlington Avenue, had a flattened, semi-octagonal shape and measured less than 25 feet deep (Franklin Survey Company 1936).

Both the Teaneck Plan and the 1936 atlas illustrate the land owned by the State Highway Department east of Garrison Avenue, which the Planning Board had targeted for acquisition and development as a park. State Senator Winant Van Winkle assisted the Township in negotiations with the Department for donation of the parcel for park use (*Bergen Evening Record* 1937b). On July 4, 1937, the park was formally dedicated with festivities that included an address by Van Winkle, who noted:

We are here today to dedicate a new park; a playground, a resting place and a beauty spot for the people of Teaneck, showing what can be accomplished by cooperation between the State and the municipality" (*Bergen Evening Record* 1937a).

Known today as South Gaylord Park, the facility was "the Township's first public park-playground" (*Bergen Evening Record* 1937a). The park was reportedly "landscaped and equipped with benches and a bus waiting room"; Figure 3 is an early view of the park (*New York Times* 6 July 1937).

Development of the park was likely funded at least in part by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA). Created in 1935 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the WPA was charged with putting the unemployed to work on public works projects. Teaneck availed itself of the program to complete numerous projects: construction of an Armory, installation of murals in the library, and numerous road and sidewalk improvements (National Archives and Records Service 197-?; Teaneck Public Library n.d.). In 1935, a project to "Improve Township Parks" was funded by the WPA (WPA 1935). The available information does not reveal which park or parks in Teaneck were developed with WPA funds, but it seems likely that Gaylord Park, as the township's first, benefited from the federal grant.

Although the Teaneck Plan had recommended the Township hire a landscape architect to develop its park system, none of the sources consulted revealed whether a designer was involved in the development of Gaylord Park or the Greenbelt. It seems unlikely that the Technical Advisory Corporation, authors of the Teaneck Plan, were involved in its design, as the firm's emphasis was on city planning, not park or parkway design. Architect George M. Cady of West Englewood was also involved in the preparation of the Teaneck Plan, providing design illustrations for the Teaneck Civic Center and other proposed public buildings. Cady may have been involved in the development of the parks; he had a long relationship with the community, later working as the Township's Superintendent of Buildings from 1945 to 1955 (Teaneck Planning Board 1933; *The Sunday Sun* 1959). It is also possible that City Manager Paul Volcker was involved in the parks' design in his capacity as city engineer (Larry Robertson, personal communication, 6 April 2010; T. Robins Brown, personal communication, 9 March 2010). Correspondence files at the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office suggest that landscape architect Marjorie Sewell Cautley, who worked in Bergen County on projects including Roosevelt Common in Tenafly and the Radburn development in Fairlawn, may have been involved in the project; however, research did not verify a connection between Cautley and the Greenbelt (New Jersey Historic Preservation Office n.d.; Walker 2000: 48). Cautley was familiar with Route 4: a series of photographs collected by Cautley in 1935 and titled "Zone the Roadsides for Planting" included a photograph of Route 4 illustrating erosion caused by a lack of vegetation (see Figure 4; Cautley 1935). However, neither Township records

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nor primary and secondary sources related to Cautley's career document her involvement in the Greenbelt's development.

Plans for the development of the Greenbelt have not survived in the Township's records, but the Council's interest in landscaping along Route 4 is documented in its meeting minutes (Lissette Aportela, personal communication, 3 March 2010; Teaneck Township Council 1933-1935). Less than a year after the highway opened, Council members inquired as to the State Highway Department's plans for plantings along Route 4. When told that the Department had done no planting, the Council offered to provide unemployed labor to assist with the work (Teaneck Township Council 2 May 1933). In 1935, the Township Council established a Shade Tree Commission and passed an ordinance "Providing for Control, Planting, Protection and Improvement of Shade Trees and Shrubbery upon the Public Highways, Public Parks and Public Places" in Teaneck (Teaneck Township Council 1935). The community's commitment to landscaping was affirmed again in 1936 by the creation of a Shade Tree Bureau within the Department of Public Works. The Bureau was charged with planting and caring for trees on the Township's streets, as well as trees and shrubbery in the public parks (Swan 1947: 108).

In 1942, the Teaneck Taxpayers League celebrated "Teaneck's Most Progressive 12 Years" with a retrospective publication trumpeting its activities since its founding. Two of the League's top three accomplishments were related to the Route 4 Greenbelt: prohibiting businesses on the highway, and planning an extensive parks program (Teaneck Taxpayers League 1941: n.p.). The publication noted that in 1930 the Township had no municipal parks or playgrounds, but by 1942 there were 10 parks, including a "park along Route 4 at Garrison Avenue," Gaylord Park (Teaneck Taxpayers League 1941: n.p.). Notably, the League did not specifically mention creation of the Greenbelt among its accomplishments.

By the end of World War II, the Township had acquired much of the land bordering Route 4. A newspaper article in 1946 noted that "the Township now owns about ninety percent of the border strip which lines the highway on both sides between the Town's limits" (Bishop 1946). The Town Plan of Teaneck, adopted the following year, is the earliest planning report to document the existence of the Greenbelt, which then was referred to as the "Route 4 Park Strips" (Swan 1947: 147). The plan noted that the Greenbelt varied from 15 to 50 feet in width. Roughly half of the frontage on Route 4 EB was protected from development as "service streets paralleling the highway, school sites, or grass plots," but significantly less land had been acquired on Route 4 WB (Swan 1947: 148). Acquisition of undeveloped parcels east of Teaneck Road and west of River Road was recommended, both to protect homes near the corridor and to maintain traffic flow on the highway, but the plan acknowledged that parcels that had already been developed would be "both difficult and expensive to acquire" (Swan 1947: 148-149).

The author of the Town Plan, Herbert Swan, praised the foresight of the Teaneck Planning Board and Council in protecting the roadway from commercial development:

[T]hese strips, improved as grass panels on either side of the roadway, ...giv[e] the highway both the appearance and the functions of a parkway through Teaneck. Though of little recreational value as such, these grass strips are of tremendous value in maintaining the integrity of the town plan (Swan 1947: 148).

The comparison of the Route 4 Greenbelt to a parkway is instructive, as contemporary parkway design likely influenced the Greenbelt's development by Teaneck Township. The Bronx River Parkway, completed in 1925, was an influential design that many communities were inspired to emulate, and its proximity to Bergen County virtually assured that local residents were familiar with the project. Much of the Parkway was located in Westchester County, New York. The "quintessential suburban county," Westchester was home to an extensive commuter rail service and numerous middle- and upper-class residential communities (Troetel 2006: 249, 258). Bergen County had much in common with Westchester, leading one local resident to note that the Lower Teaneck Civic Association "took their idea of civic decency and civic pride from Westchester" (Teaneck Township Council 6 June 1933). The idea of a parkway was clearly in the minds of Teaneck Planning Board members during this period: its Chairman, A. Thornton Bishop, referred to Route 4 as a "parkway" in a newspaper articles published in 1946 (Bishop 1946).

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With the support of civic associations and local residents, Teaneck's leaders were largely successful in protecting the Township's residential character. A postcard view from circa 1945, included as Figure 6, shows the area west of Garrison Avenue, which at the time was planted with grass and few if any trees or shrubs. Aerial photographs from the early 1950s suggest that most, if not all, of the land comprising the Greenbelt had been acquired by this time, as shown on Figure 7 (NETR 1953, 1954). Another aerial view in the vicinity of Teaneck High School, dating to circa 1960 (see Figure 8), clearly illustrates the green space along Route 4. The Teaneck Master Plan of 1962 noted, "all of the abutting right-of-way not owned by the state was purchased by the Township," confirming that the Greenbelt's development was complete by this date (Teaneck Township 1987).

Teaneck's efforts to protect its residential character were rewarded in 1949, when the United States Army selected the community from among the nation's 10,000 towns as "a model of democracy" (Young 1949). Photographer Victor De Palma visited Teaneck and captured life in the Township through pictures, which were then made into exhibits for display in occupied countries. The Army's intent was to illustrate democracy in action through photographs of the Township's citizens in action, as well as its schools and municipal facilities. Contemporary newspaper articles trumpeting Teaneck as a "model town" included among the Township's many assets its parks and playgrounds, which then occupied 20 percent of the Township's land area. The articles also frequently mentioned the absence of billboards and commercial development along its roadways (Young 1949; *New York Herald Tribune* 1951).

The frequent mention of the Township's efforts to protect the Route 4 corridor from development confirms that the Greenbelt was well-established by the early 1950s, although it was not referred to by that name until the 1970s (Larry Robertson, personal communication, 6 April 2010). Nevertheless, the mid-twentieth century was one of change on the Route 4 corridor, as the roadway itself was improved to accommodate new safety features and to better handle traffic volumes. In 1949, an 18" concrete barrier was placed down the center of the highway, which originally had only a low concrete curb. The barrier was raised again, to 36", around 1975 (Horner 1974). The State Highway Department also undertook a major reconstruction of the River Road intersection around 1960 (NETR 1954, 1966). The effort was likely a response to the purchase and subsequent development of the Bergen Junior College campus by Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1954 (Fairleigh Dickinson University 2010). New pedestrian bridges were also constructed during the mid-1960s at Lincoln Place/Dartmouth Street and at Phelps Road (NETR 1954, 1966).

In 1983, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) presented plans to widen Route 4 through Teaneck. The plans met with significant local opposition, as the widening would have destroyed much of the Greenbelt (Snowflack 1984). Residents organized the "Preserve the Teaneck Greenbelt Committee" to fight the plans, and the Township administration made an initial application to the Office of New Jersey Heritage (present-day New Jersey Historic Preservation Office) to list the Greenbelt on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987 (O'Shea 1985; DiPiazza 1985[?]). Although the application was never advanced – due in part to the unusual nature of the resource – efforts to protect the Greenbelt were ultimately successful, with the NJDOT modifying the project in order to limit impacts on the Greenbelt (Teaneck Township 1987; New Jersey Historic Preservation Office n.d.; Duarte 1989; Kates 1999: 86-87).

Teaneck Township has continued efforts to preserve and protect the Greenbelt through the work of the Teaneck Greenbelt Committee, whose members are appointed by the Township Council (Teaneck Township 2009). The Township has an ordinance prohibiting the pruning or removal of trees in the Greenbelt without a permit, and in 1997, the Teaneck Greenbelt Committee protested when NJDOT's contractors cut down 520 trees, many of which were saplings, without a permit (Hanley 1997). The Committee has worked with the NJDOT regarding plans to widen and make other improvements to the highway in the years since its creation (Chichowski 2007).

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### Significance:

The Route 4 Greenbelt in Teaneck Township is significant as an early example of municipal planning in a suburban community in New Jersey with the intention of protecting its residential character from encroachment by commercial properties. When the State Highway Department began planning the construction of Route 4 as an access highway to the George Washington Bridge, it selected a route through the rapidly developing suburban enclaves of Bergen County. In Teaneck, Route 4 extended in an east-west direction through the center of the Township, effectively dividing the community in half. By the time the highway opened to traffic in 1932, surrounding residential neighborhoods had been laid out and many houses had already been constructed. The influx of new residents to Teaneck – the population increased fourfold between 1920 and 1930 – placed enormous pressure on the municipal government, which was unable to meet public demand for services. Rising taxes, coupled with ballooning municipal debt, led to the formation of the Teaneck Taxpayers' League and, soon after, the adoption of a municipal manager form of government in 1930. In the same year, the State Legislature passed enabling legislation to permit creation of municipal planning boards, and Teaneck became one of the first communities to form a planning board under the act. A master plan was soon adopted by the Township; known as the Teaneck Plan, the document's goals included protecting the residential character of the community and developing a park system for the Township. Although the Greenbelt was not specifically laid out in the Teaneck Plan, the plan did recommend acquisition of several parcels along the highway. In 1934, the Township Council upheld the principles of the Teaneck Plan in the face of property owners' demands to rezone Route 4 for commercial use, and Township acquisition of land along the highway proceeded during the 1930s and 1940s, both through purchase and donation. Contemporary publications in the late 1940s and early 1950s lauded the municipal efforts to protect the highway from commercial development and the erection of billboards, and by 1962 the Greenbelt was firmly established in the municipal Master Plan. The Route 4 Greenbelt demonstrates the foresight of Teaneck's leaders in protecting the Township's residential areas from encroaching highway commercial development.

### Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility:

The Route 4 Greenbelt is historically significant and eligible for the National Register under Criterion A on the local level in the area of Community Planning and Development. Teaneck Township was among the first suburban municipalities in the state to establish a Planning Board (1931) and a Master Plan (1933) to guide its growth, and the Route 4 Greenbelt is among the most important and enduring legacies of the Township's planning effort. The acquisition of highway frontage prevented commercial development on Route 4 in Teaneck and was a novel solution to the problem of protecting the community's residential character. The Greenbelt's period of significance begins in 1933 with the publication of the Teaneck Plan and initial property acquisition by the Township and ends in 1962, by which date all available undeveloped properties along Route 4 had been acquired by the Township or protected from commercial development through ownership by another public entity.

The Greenbelt includes publicly-owned property abutting the highway in Teaneck Township from River Road to the municipal boundary with the City of Englewood (see Figures 9 and 9a-9d). The portion of Route 4 between River Road and the Hackensack River is excluded from the boundary because there are no Township-owned parcels in that area. This area has also been extensively altered by the redesign of the River Road intersection and differs in character from the publicly-owned parcels to the east. Also excluded are privately-owned parcels located elsewhere along the highway corridor. These parcels generally contain tree cover along the highway to screen neighboring properties from traffic and thus harmonize with the publicly-owned Greenbelt properties; however, they are not included as contributing resources because the Greenbelt's historic significance stems from its purchase and ownership by Teaneck Township and other governmental bodies.

The significance of the Route 4 Greenbelt stems from the Township's acquisition of property along the highway to prevent commercial development and create a protective buffer for neighboring residential areas. Therefore, contributing properties are limited to those publicly-owned parcels along the Route 4 corridor. These include properties owned by the Township, Teaneck Board of Education, and Bergen County. Parcels owned by the latter two entities are included because ownership by a public entity prevented commercial development on these

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properties. The boundary excludes the roadway and bridges, which were constructed prior to the period of significance and do not contribute to the Greenbelt's importance as a unique example of municipal planning in a suburban community.

The Route 4 Greenbelt retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association. It is unclear to what extent the Greenbelt was a designed landscape because no plans survive in Township records; however, aerial photographs indicate that the Greenbelt generally retains its design, which is characterized by mature hardwoods forming a vegetative buffer between the highway and neighboring residential neighborhoods. Medians at highway intersections retain their original design and are simply planted with grassy lawns, some shrubs, and low-growing trees. The setting of the Route 4 Greenbelt is relatively unchanged: residential neighborhoods border the Greenbelt on the north and south, and a busy highway runs through its center. East and west of the Greenbelt, dense highway commercial development on Route 4 in Englewood and Hackensack provides a stark contrast to the tree-lined section of highway through Teaneck. Noncontributing, privately-owned parcels scattered at various locations on the Route 4 corridor maintain the setting of the Greenbelt. Typical of historic landscapes in general, the Route 4 Greenbelt has experienced changes to its planting materials due to the life cycle of its vegetation; however, these changes have not negatively impacted the Greenbelt's integrity. Where losses have occurred – for example, the removal of more than 500 trees by NJDOT in 1997 – the impact has been small relative to the more than two-mile length of the Greenbelt, and new trees have been planted to replace those lost. Finally, the integrity of feeling and association remains high, as the Greenbelt continues to protect the residential character of Teaneck from the ill effects of the high-speed highway corridor that runs through its center.

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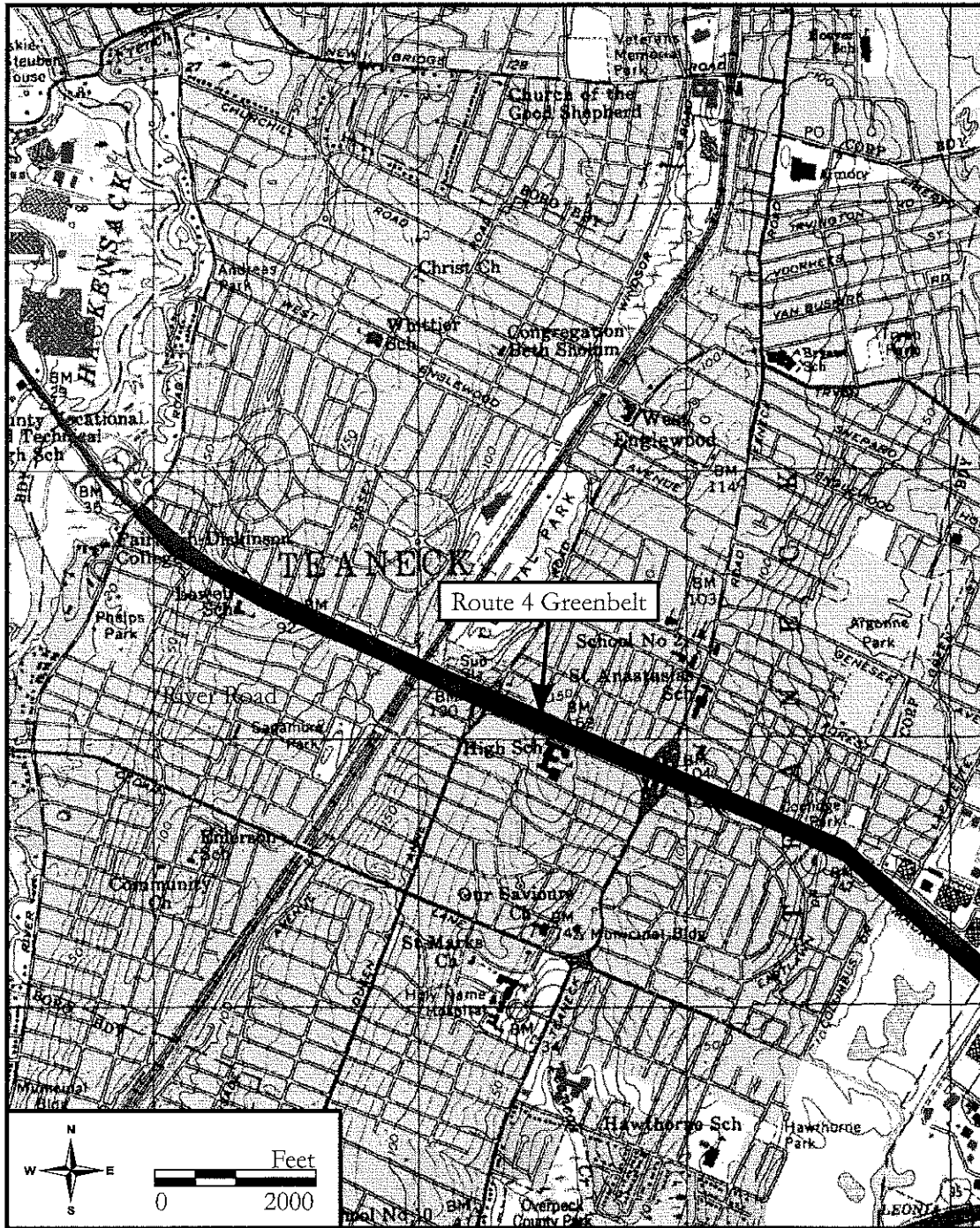


Figure 1: Location Map  
(U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangles: 1997 Hackensack, NJ; 1998 Yonkers, NY-NJ).

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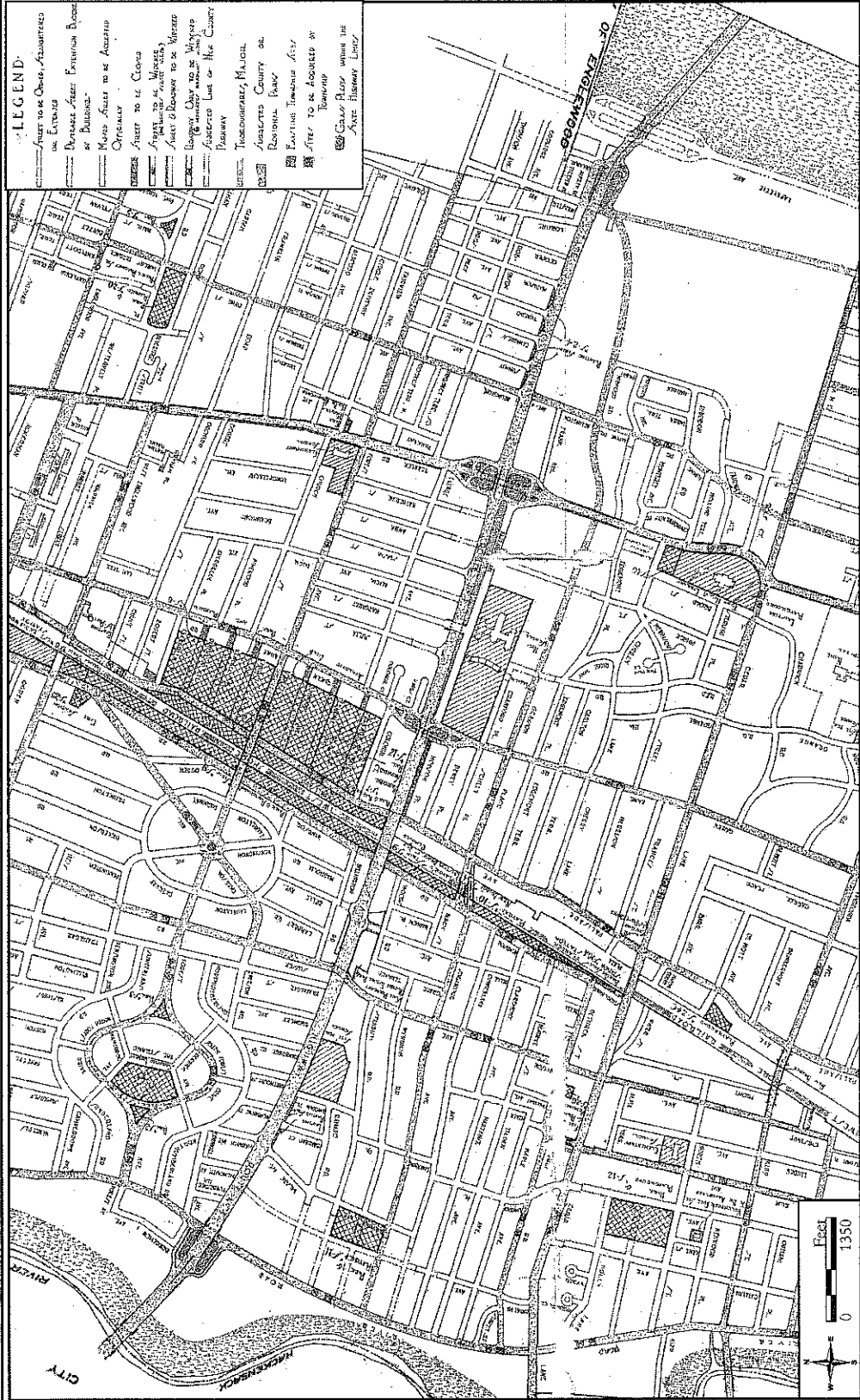


Figure 2: 1933 Teaneck Planning Board, Master Plan Map.

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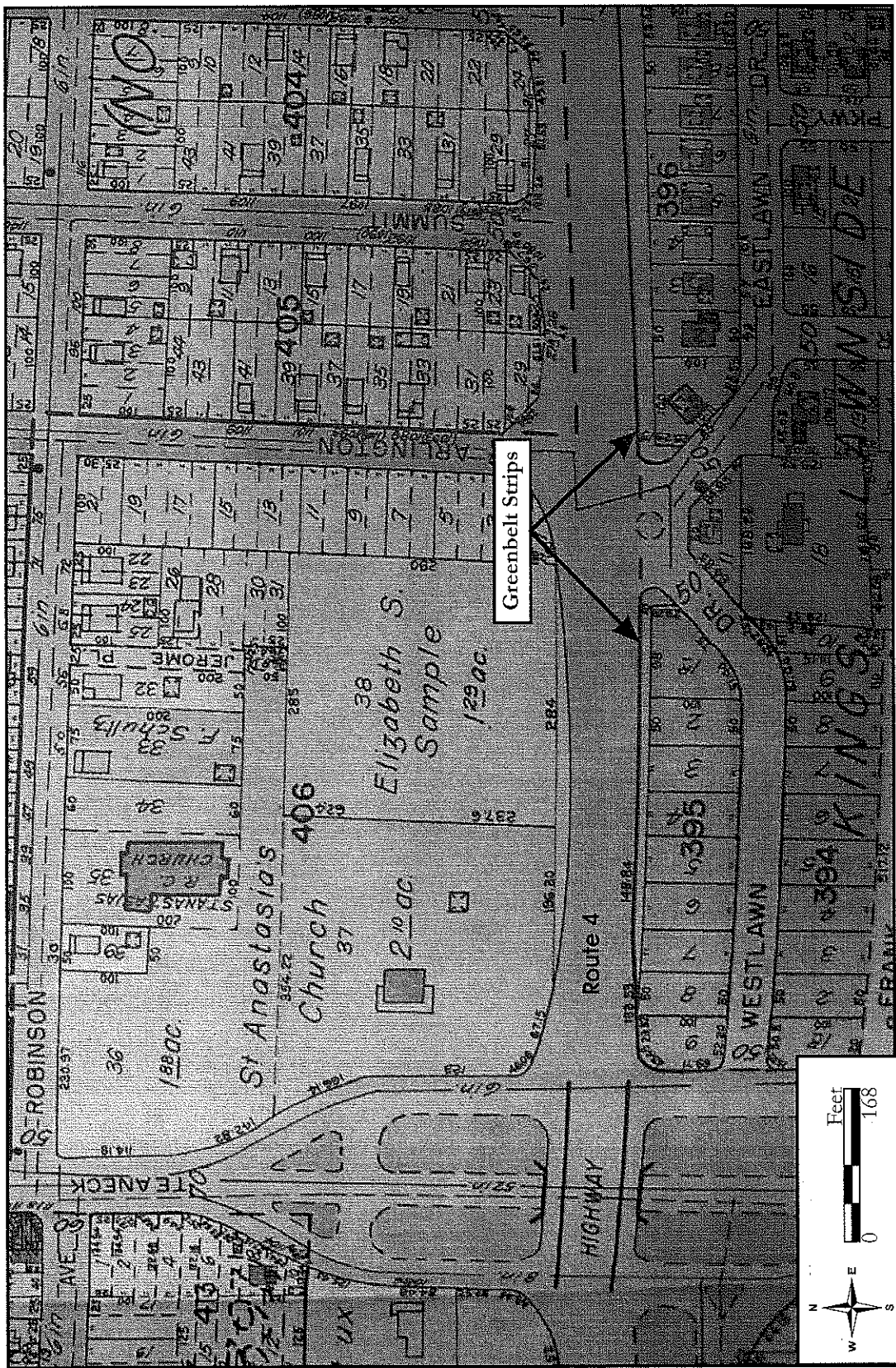


Figure 3: 1936 Franklin Survey Company, Property Atlas of Bergen County, New Jersey, Vol. 1. This detail map shows Route 4 east of the Teaneck Road intersection. The green strips between Route 4 and the parcels on Westlawn and Eastlawn drives were donated to the Township by a developer in 1935. Note the small, irregularly shaped lots on the north side of the highway, east of Arlington Avenue.

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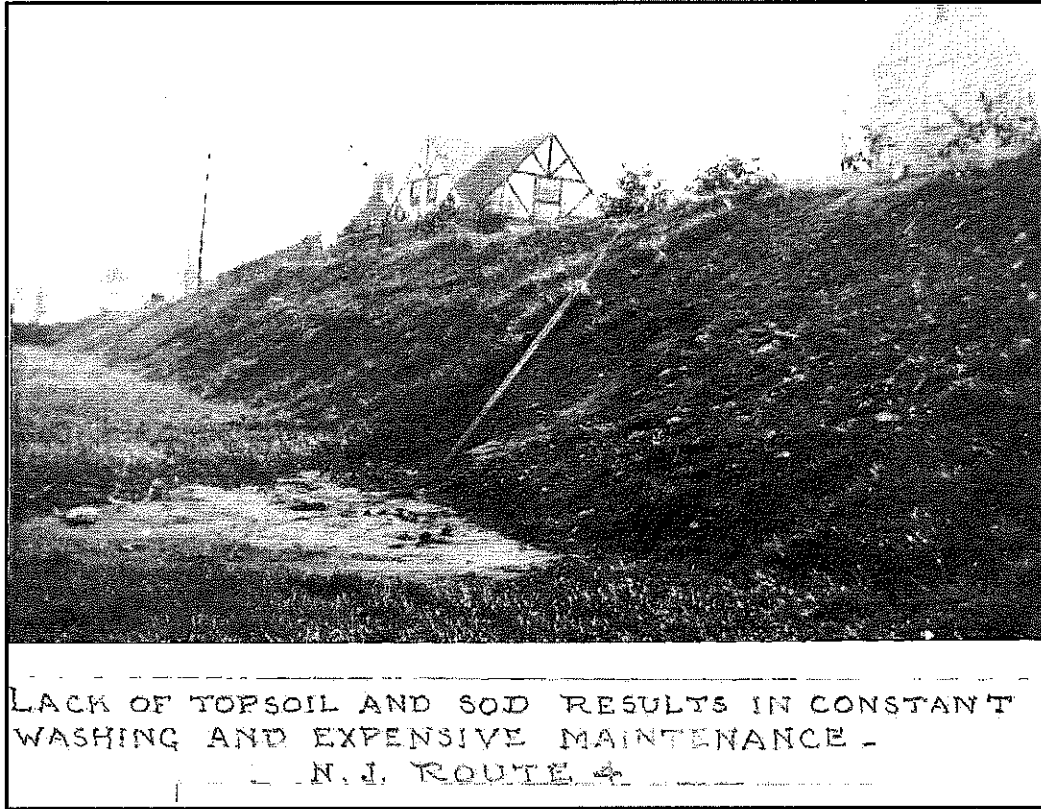
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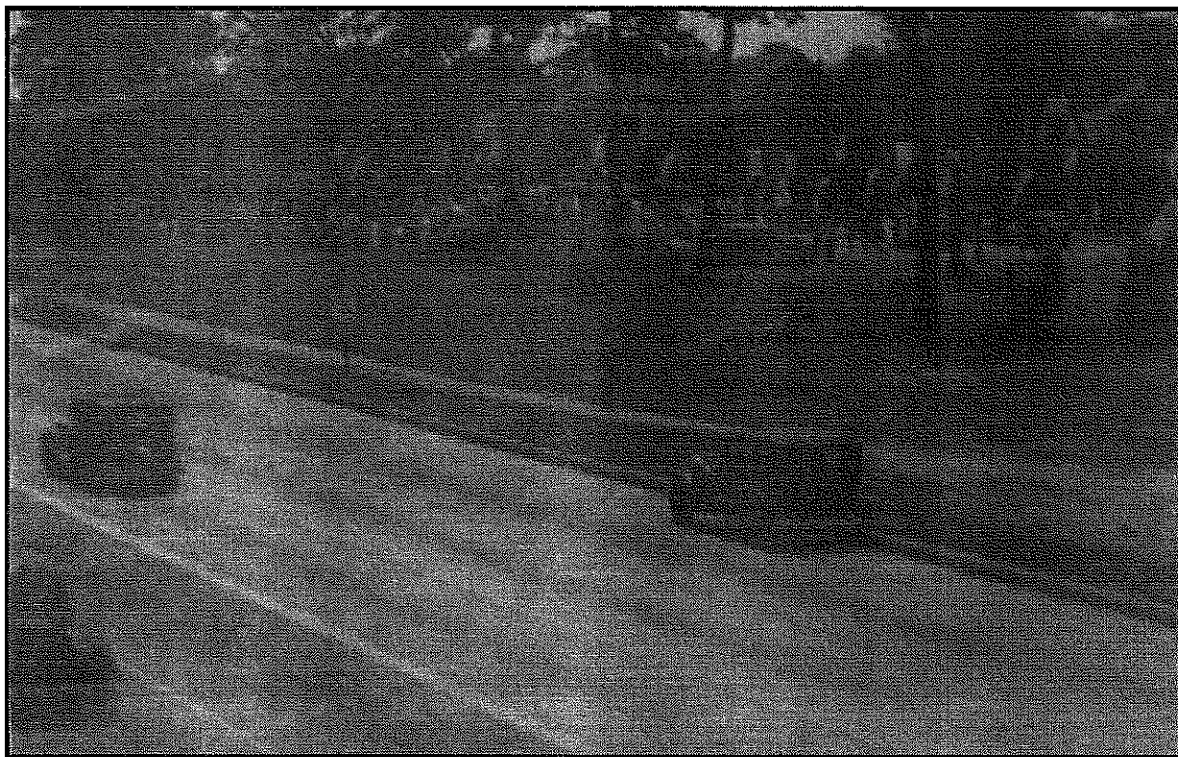
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**Figure 4.** Image of Route 4 from Marjorie Sewell Cautley's collection, "Zone the Roadsides for Planting," with caption. Although the location of the photograph is not indicated, the sloping hillside and Tudor architecture is similar to the area west of the Garrison Avenue Bridge in Teaneck. The caption suggests Cautley's familiarity with the area but gives no indication of her involvement in the development of the Greenbelt.

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**Figure 5.** Route 4 at South Gaylord Park. This undated photograph may have been taken on the day that the park opened, July 4, 1937, judging by the numerous American flags on display and the type of vehicles on the highway (from Hall 1997).

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**Figure 6.** View of Route 4, from Garrison Avenue Overpass, Teaneck, N.J. (from Postcard Collection of the Teaneck Public Library). This photograph depicts the Greenbelt, notably lacking in trees at this early date, looking west from the overpass, with the Lowell School at left. Published by Tomlin Art Company of Long Island, which operated from 1943 through the 1960s, this view likely dates to circa 1945; an 18-inch concrete barrier was added to the center median in 1949.



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Historic Sites #:

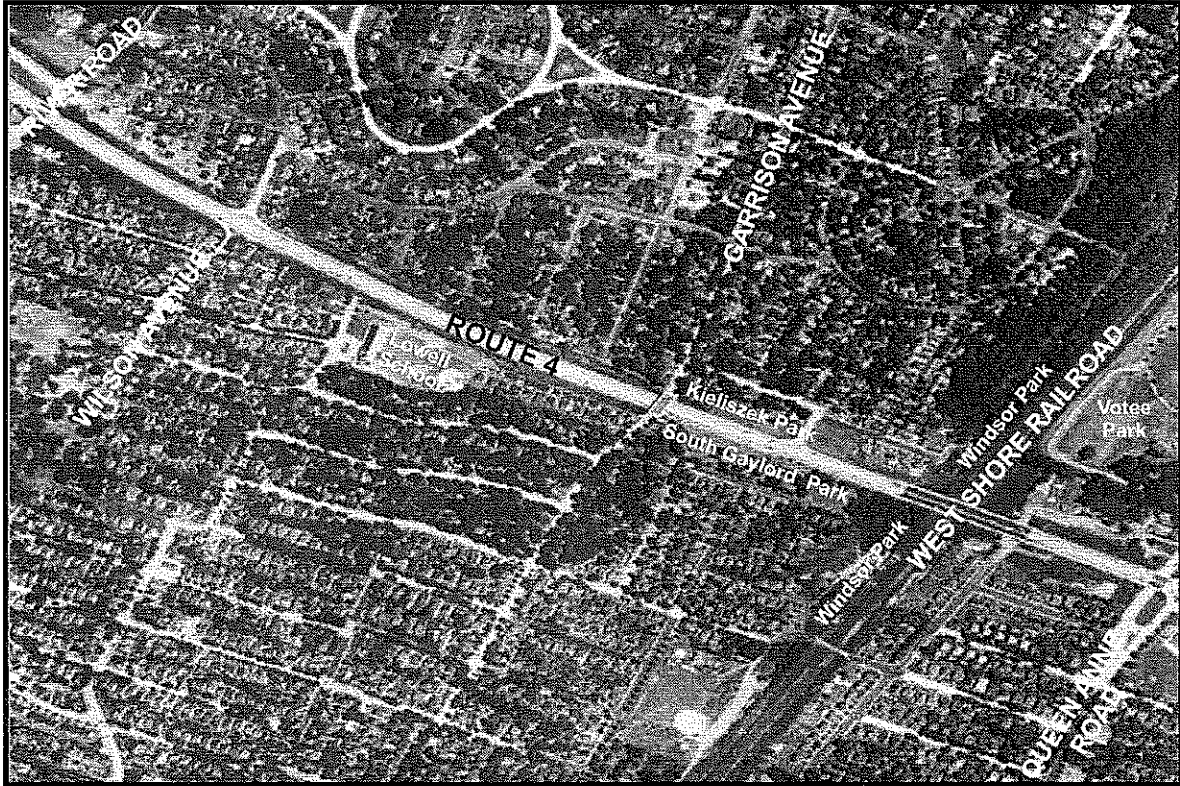
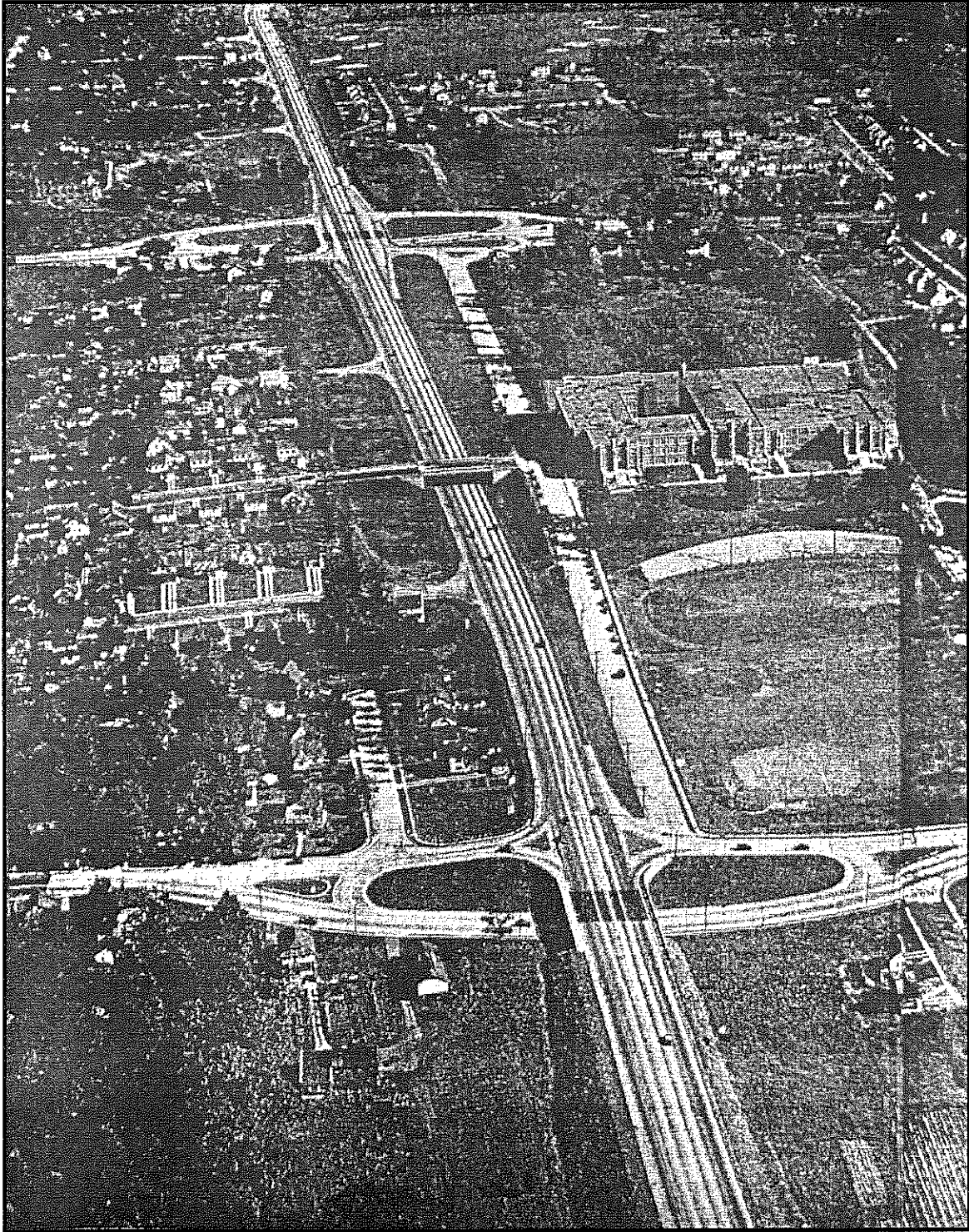


Figure 7. 1953 Aerial photograph of the western portion of the Route 4 Greenbelt, from River Road east to Queen Anne Road (from NETR 1953). The Greenbelt along Route 4, at center in the picture, is evident by this date and includes landscaping at the Lowell School as well as Kieliszek, South Gaylord, and Windsor Parks.

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**Figure 8.** Undated aerial view of Route 4, looking east (from Teaneck Public Library). The Queen Anne Road intersection is in the foreground. The Greenbelt has relatively few trees in this view, which appears to date from circa 1960.

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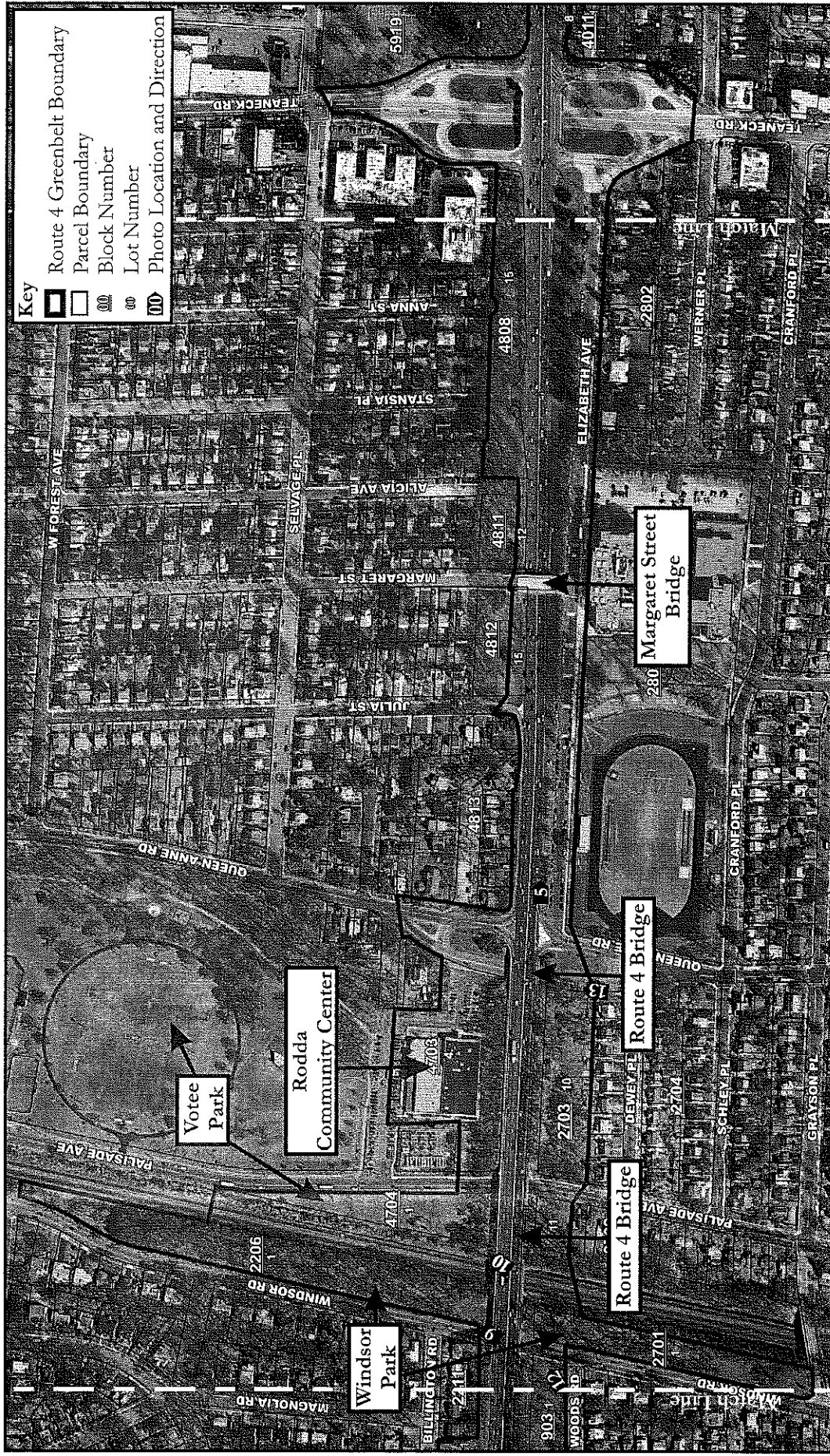


Figure 9B: Site Map 2.

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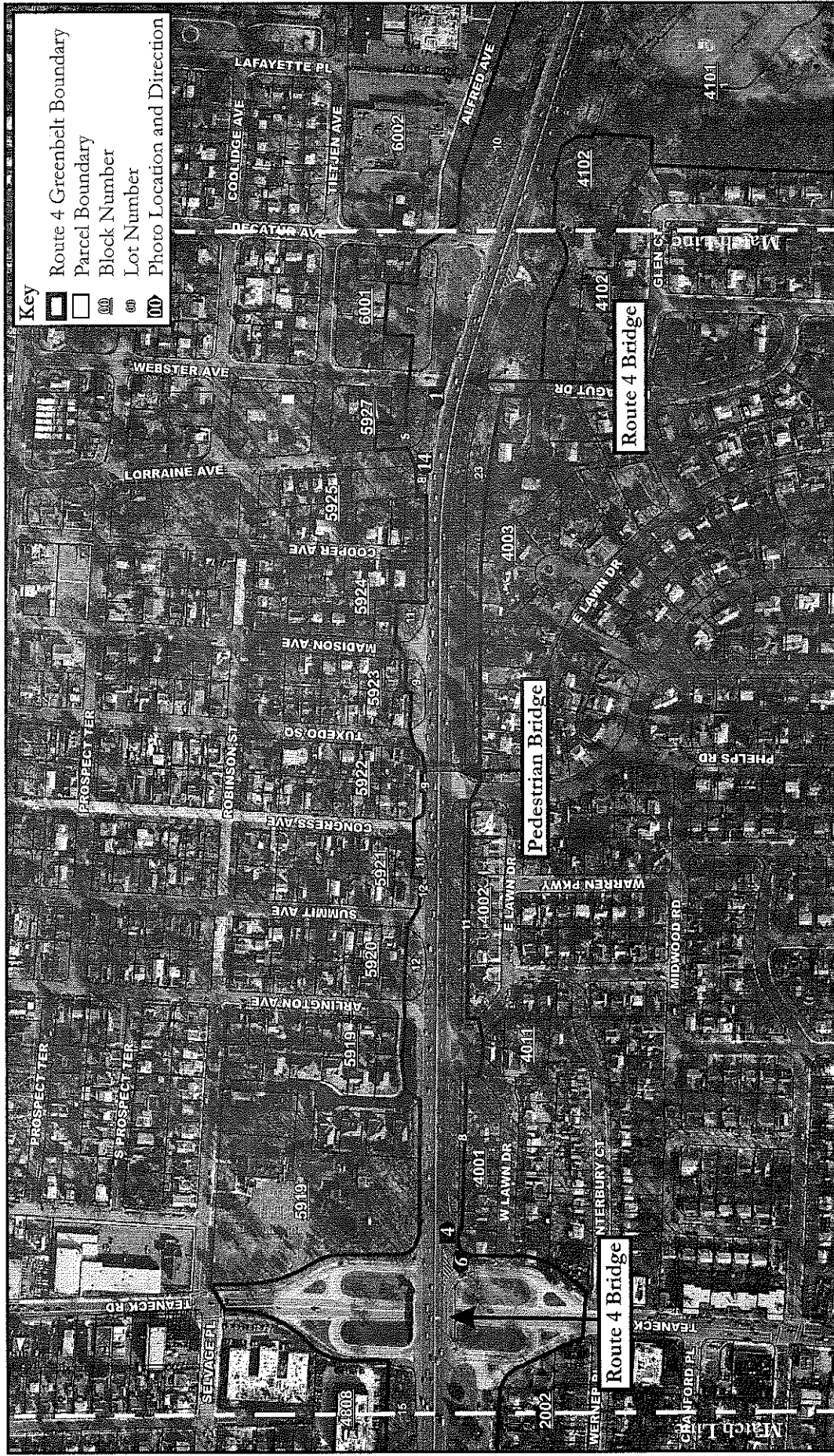


Figure 9C: Site Map 3.

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Figure 9D: Site Map 4.

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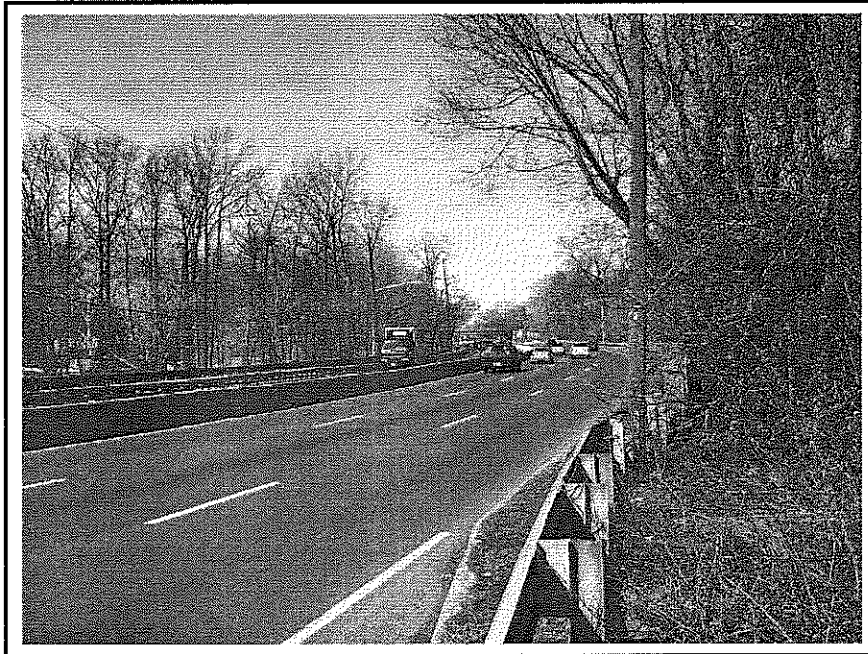
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Historic Sites #:



Route 4 Westbound, looking west from near Alfred Avenue intersection.

**Plate:**

1

**Photo View:**

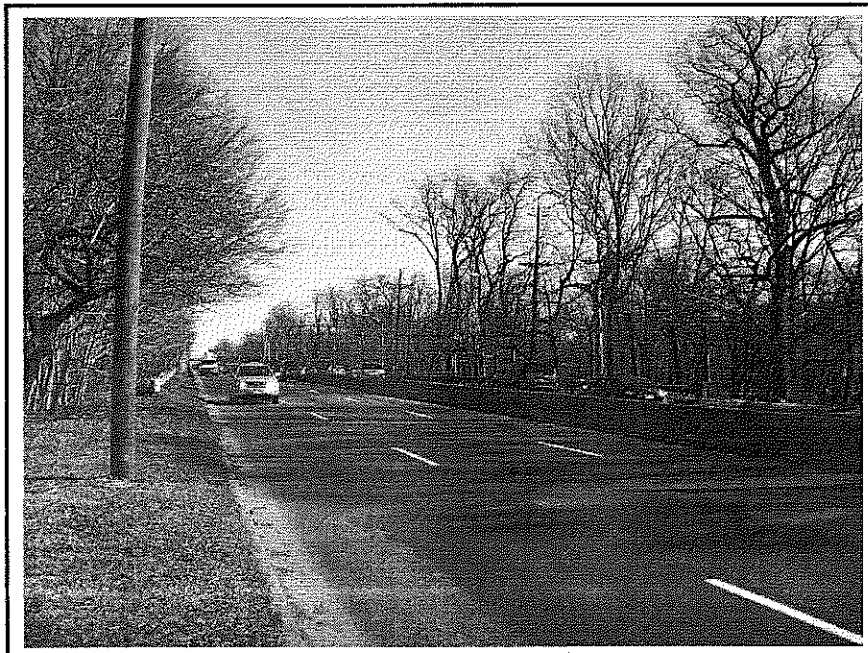
West

**Photographer:**

Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**

March 4, 2010



Route 4 Westbound, looking east from Kieliszek (North Gaylord) Park.

**Plate:**

2

**Photo View:**

East

**Photographer:**

Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**

March 9, 2010

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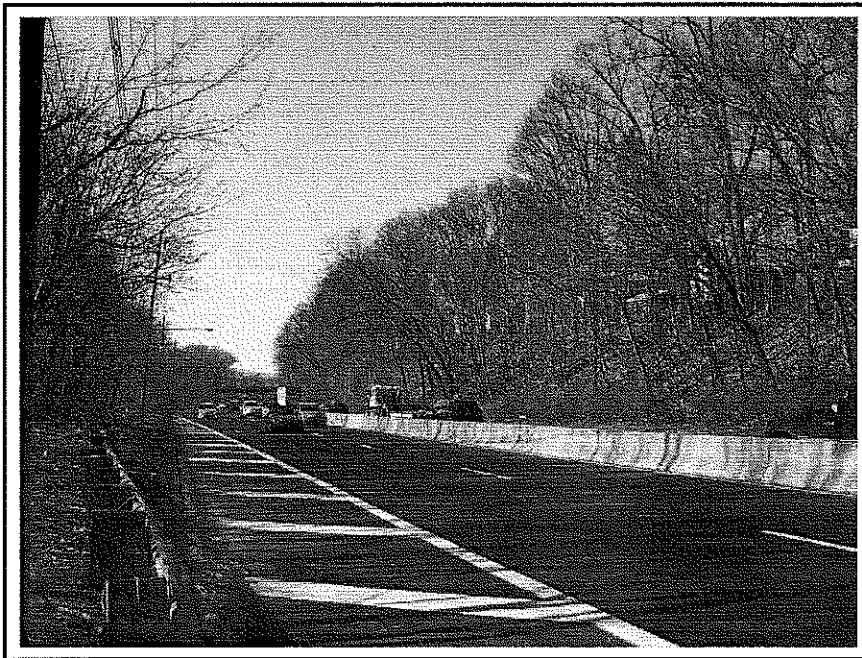
Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

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Historic Sites #:



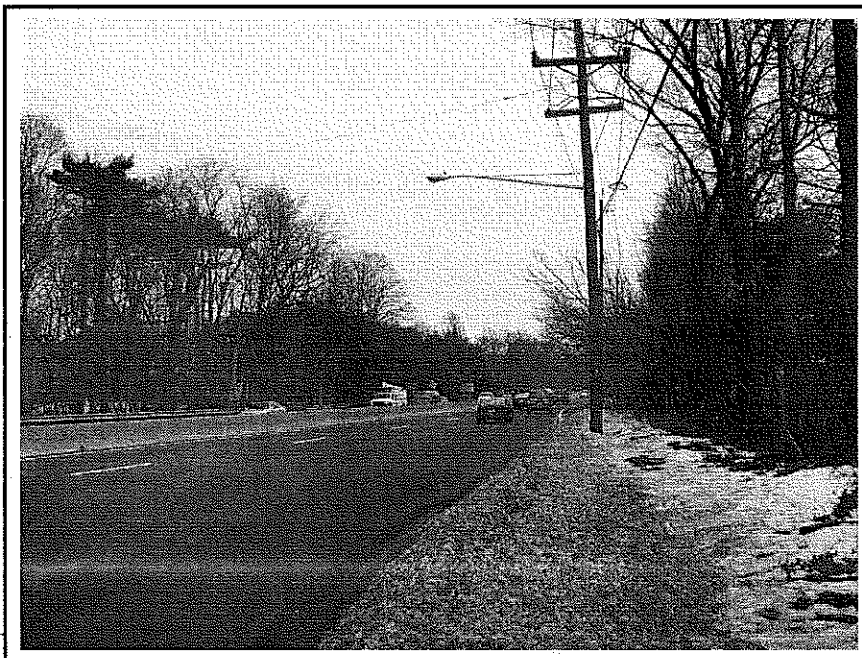
Route 4 Eastbound, looking west from near the Garrison Avenue Bridge.

**Plate:**  
3

**Photo View:**  
West

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010



Route 4 Eastbound, looking east from near Teaneck Road intersection.

**Plate:**  
4

**Photo View:**  
East

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 4, 2010

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

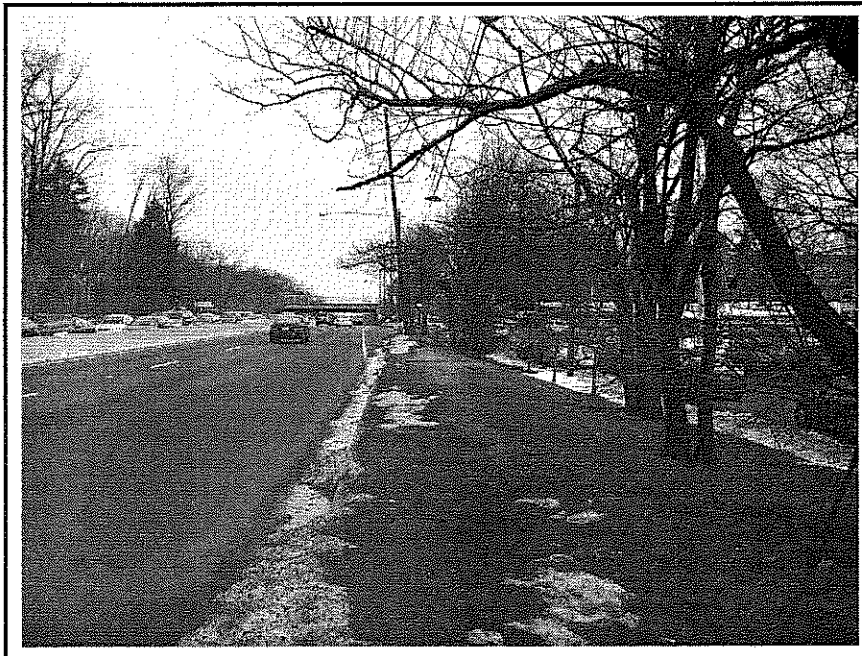
Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Historic Sites #:



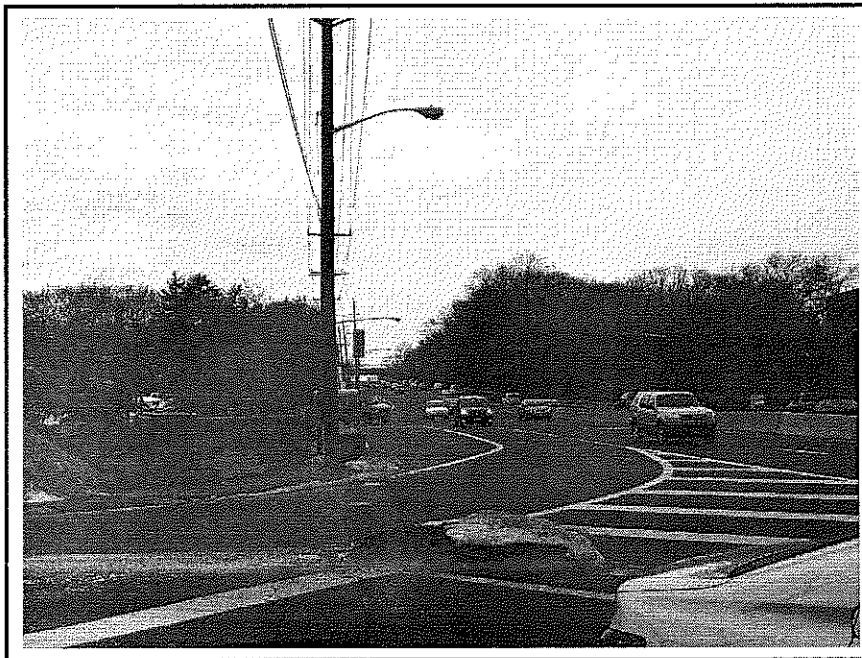
Route 4 Eastbound, looking east from near Queen Anne Road intersection. The planted median at right separates Route 4 from Elizabeth Avenue.

**Plate:**  
5

**Photo View:**  
East

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010



Route 4 Eastbound, looking west from Teaneck Road intersection.

**Plate:**  
6

**Photo View:**  
West

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 4, 2010

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

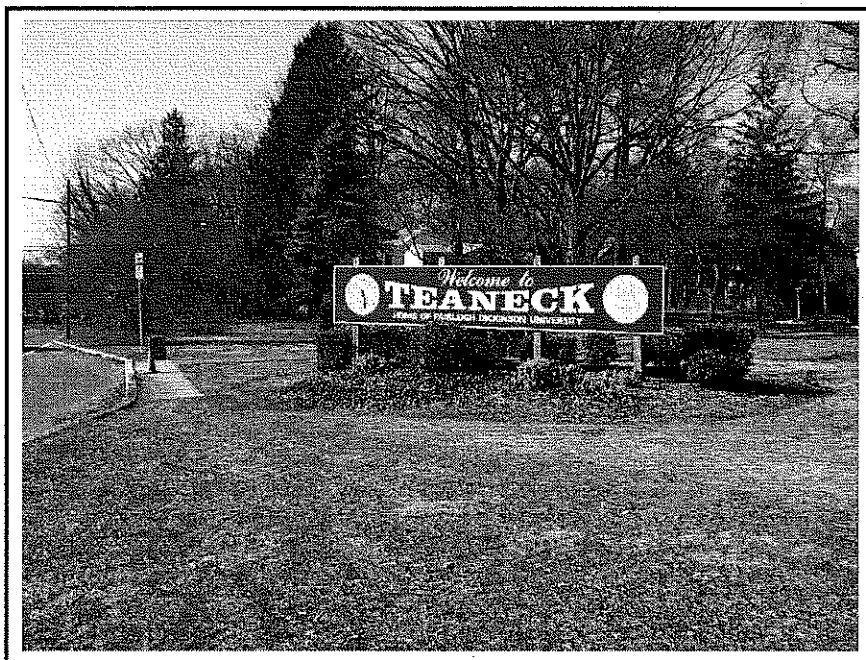
Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates



# CONTINUATION SHEET

Historic Sites #:



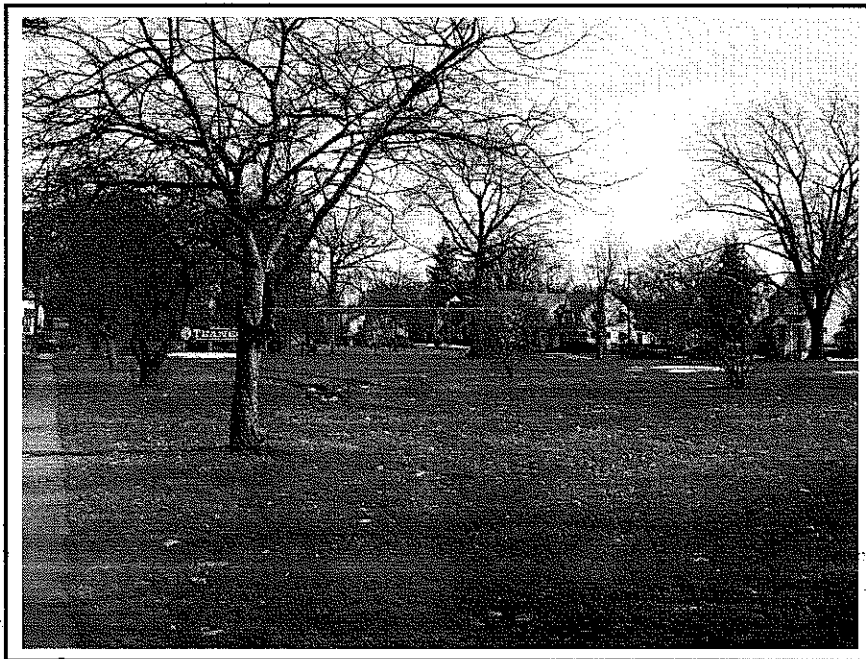
**Plate:**  
7

**Photo View:**  
Northwest

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Kieliszek Park, western section viewed from Belle Avenue. The bus pullout is visible at left in photo, and the Police Athletic League building is in the background at right.



**Plate:**  
8

**Photo View:**  
Southeast

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

South Gaylord Park, western section viewed from near Garrison Avenue bus stop.

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

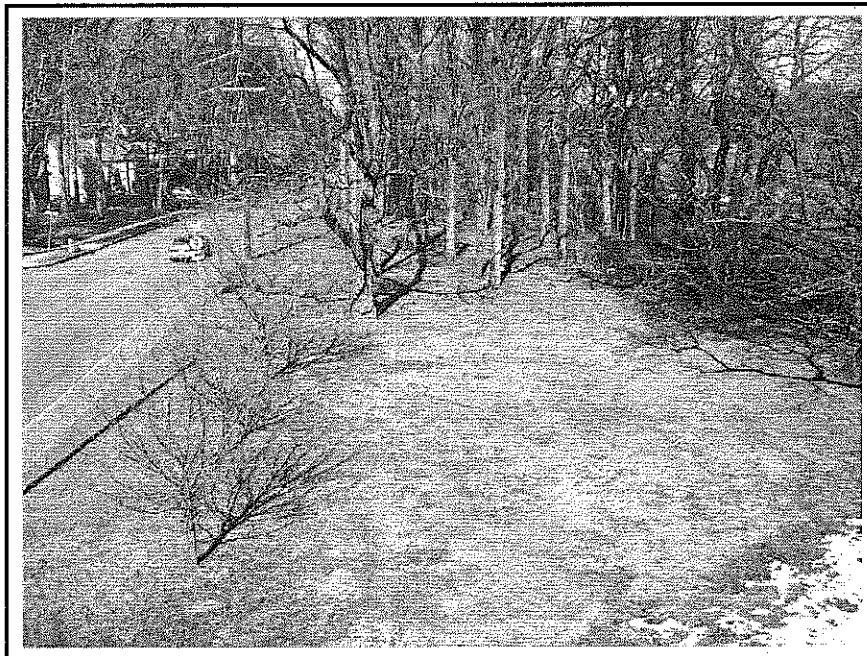
Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Historic Sites #:



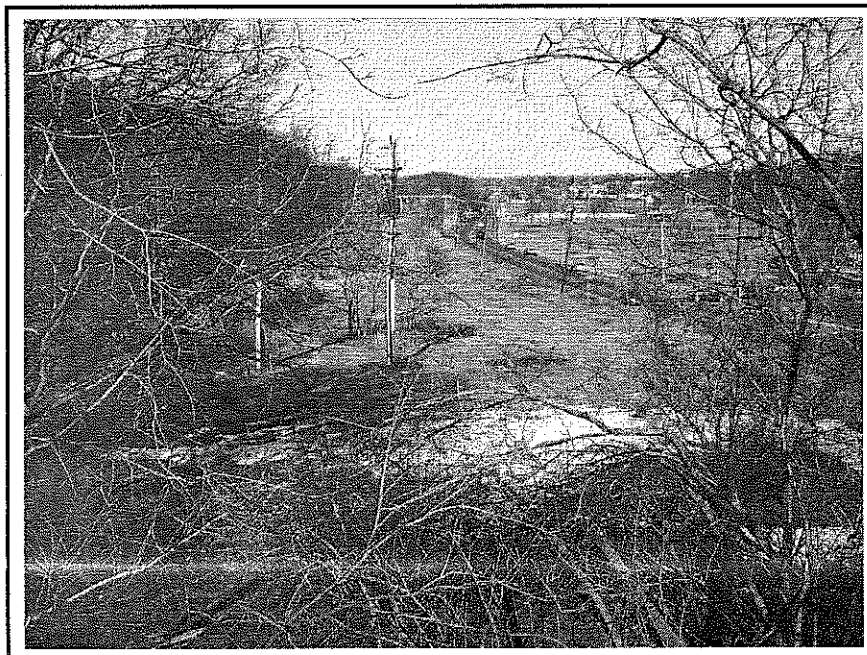
**Plate:**  
9

**Photo View:**  
North

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Windsor Park, north of Route 4. Windsor Road is visible at left, and the CSX Railroad corridor is behind the trees at right.



**Plate:**  
10

**Photo View:**  
North

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Milton Votee Park, southwestern section. Palisade Avenue, which separates the park's southwestern section from its main developed section, is visible at right. The CSX Railroad corridor is behind the trees at left.

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

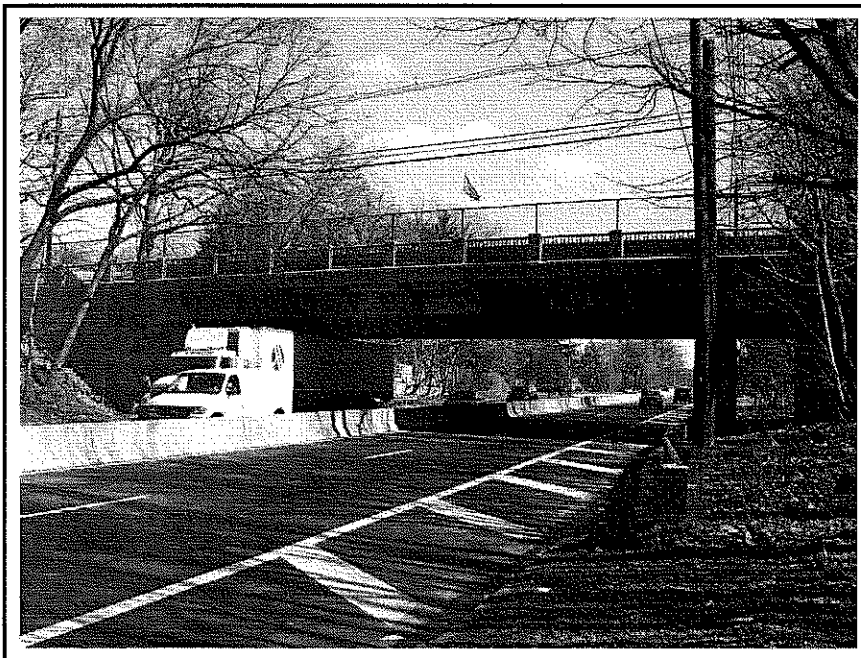
Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

# CONTINUATION SHEET

Historic Sites #:



Garrison Avenue Bridge over Route 4. Note the intact metal railing between the concrete piers.

**Plate:**  
11

**Photo View:**  
East

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010



Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue/CSX Railroad/Windsor Road. This photograph shows the western spans viewed from South Gaylord Park. Windsor Road is visible at center, and Windsor Park is located on the opposite side of the road.

**Plate:**  
12

**Photo View:**  
North

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

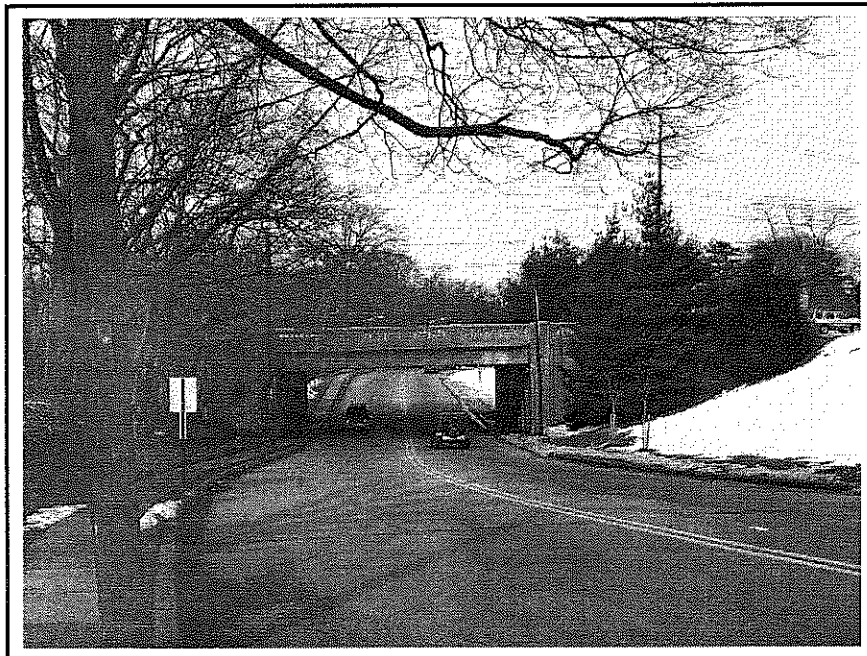
Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

# CONTINUATION SHEET

Historic Sites #:



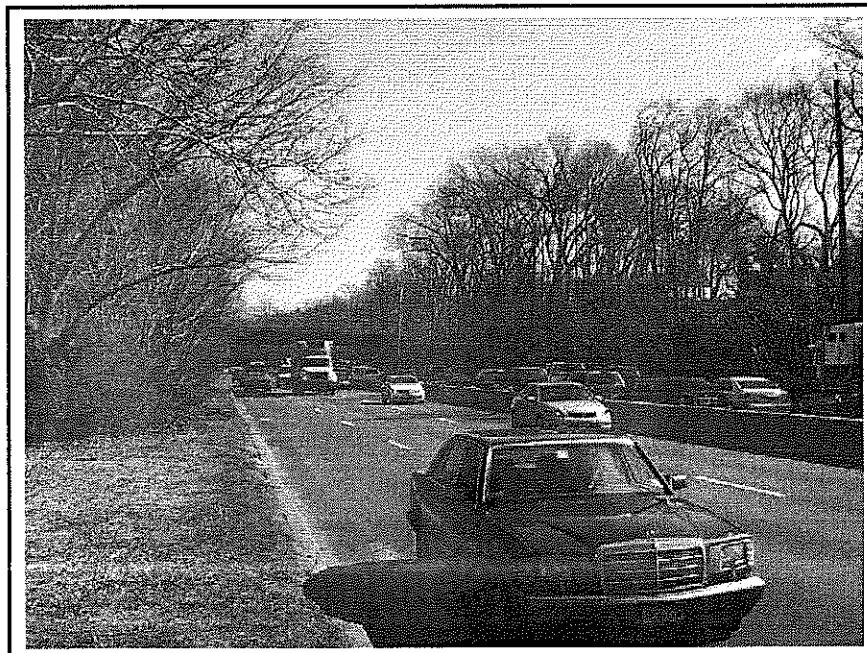
Route 4 Bridge over Queen Anne Road, viewed from near Dewey Place.

**Plate:**  
13

**Photo View:**  
North

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 4, 2010



View toward the Lincoln Place/Darhmouth Street pedestrian bridge, looking east from near the Wilson Avenue intersection.

**Plate:**  
14

**Photo View:**  
East

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

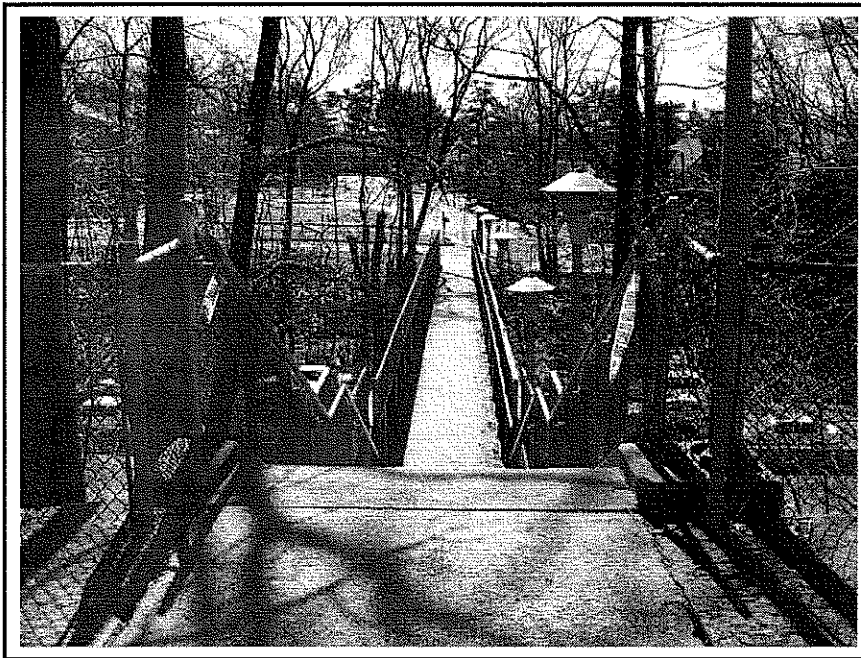
Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates



# CONTINUATION SHEET

Historic Sites #:



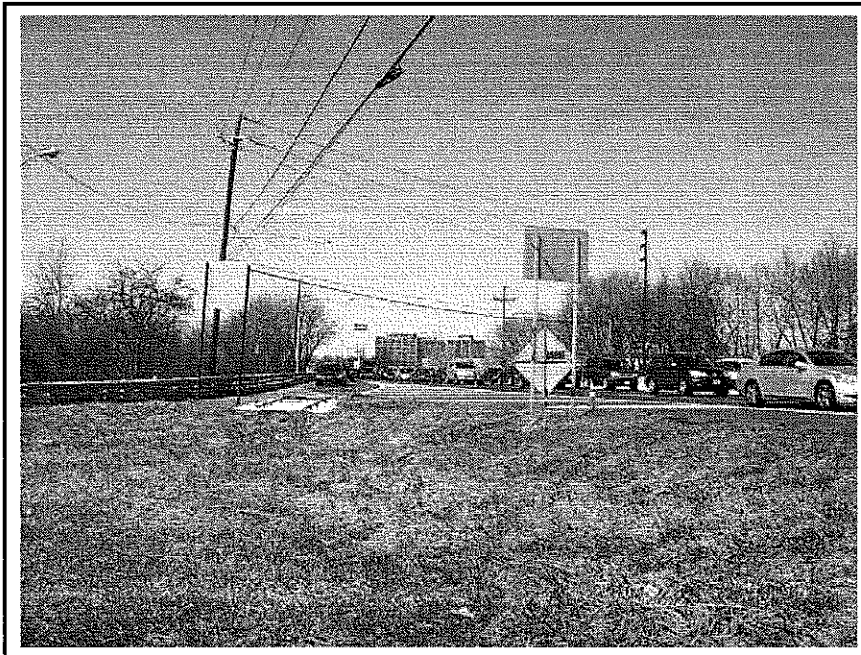
Dartmouth Street/Lincoln Place Pedestrian Bridge over Route 4, viewed from Dartmouth Street.

**Plate:**  
15

**Photo View:**  
South

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010



View west toward the Route 4 Bridge over the Hackensack River, from the redesigned River Road grade separation. This area is not publicly owned and thus lies outside the Route 4 Greenbelt. Note the high-rise development in the background in neighboring Hackensack.

**Plate:**  
16

**Photo View:**  
West

**Photographer:**  
Jennifer Leynes

**Date:**  
March 9, 2010

Survey Name: Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road

Surveyor: Jennifer B. Leynes

Date: March 2014

Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates

# HISTORIC DISTRICT OVERLAY

Historic Sites #:

<b>District Name:</b>	<u>New York, West Shore &amp; Buffalo Railroad Historic District</u>		
<b>County(s):</b>	<u>Bergen County</u>	<b>District Type:</b>	<u>Transportation</u>
<b>Municipality(s):</b>	<u>Teaneck Township</u>	<b>USGS Quad(s):</b>	<u>Hackensack</u>
<b>Local Place Name(s):</b>	<u>Teaneck</u>		
<b>Development Period:</b>	<u>1870</u>	<b>To:</b>	<u>1930</u>
<b>Source:</b>	<u>Ridgefield Park Railroad (1871); Kunath (2010)</u>		
<b>Physical Condition:</b>	<u>Good</u>		
<b>Remaining Historic Fabric:</b>	<u>Medium</u>		
<b>Registration and Status Dates:</b>	<b>National Historic Landmark:</b>	<b>SHPO Opinion:</b>	
	<u>National Register:</u>	<u>Local Designation:</u>	
	<b>New Jersey Register:</b>	<u>"Potentially Eligible" (NJHPO)</u>	
	<u>New Jersey Register:</u>	<b>Other Designation:</b>	<u>Other Designation</u>
<b>Determination of Eligibility:</b>	<u>Determination of Eligibility:</u>	<b>Date:</b>	<u>2001</u>

### Description:

The New York, West Shore & Buffalo Railroad (a.k.a West Shore Railroad) is one of the major trunk lines connecting the ports of New Jersey and New York with western New York State and the Midwest. In New Jersey, it extends from Weehawken, Hudson County to the New Jersey/New York state line at Northvale, Bergen County. In Teaneck Township, the focus of this survey, the railroad passes through a wooded right-of-way with a mix of light industrial and commercial development at trackside and dense residential suburban development in the surrounding area. The railroad travels beneath four overgrade highway structures in Teaneck: Cedar Lane (modern); Sagamore Avenue/Grayson Place (1966); Route 4 (1931) (Structure No. 0206-169), and State Street (1926) (Structure No. 0250-163). The railroad also passes beneath the Milton Vote Park Pedestrian walkway (modern). The municipality's two passenger station stops at Teaneck and West Englewood have been demolished. Only the West Englewood Avenue pedestrian tunnel and brick stairway shelters survive from the latter station site. At its height, the railroad featured a four-track main line. The line utilizes three tracks today. There are no other railroad-related resources inside Teaneck.

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<b>Survey Name:</b>	<u>Route 4 Bridge over Palisade Avenue, CSX Railroad and Windsor Road</u>		
<b>Surveyor:</b>	<u>Philip A. Hayden</u>	<b>Date:</b>	<u>July 2014</u>
<b>Organization:</b>	<u>Richard Grubb &amp; Associates, Inc.</u>		