

# Implementation Plan/Action

## COUNTY WIDE PRIORITIES

### 1. County Open Space Acquisitions

While Hudson County has an impressive array of open space areas and recreation facilities, the County is lacking in open space acres when compared to acreage recommended based on the total population of the County. There are a total of 4,008 acres of open space in Hudson County, 550 acres are in County Parks and 597 acres are in Municipal Parks. There are 1910 acres of Open Space in State ownership, 893 acres of habitat are managed by the NJMC and 58 acres are Federal lands in the County.

The New Jersey Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan recommends 3% of developable land in each Municipality be set aside for municipal open space and recommends that 7% of developable land in a County be used for County Parkland. Based on this, the municipalities in Hudson County have a total deficit of 620 acres and the County has a deficit of 1,902 acres. Coupling this with the feedback from the Citizen Survey, where over 95% reported that open spaces and walking trails were important to them; it is obvious that more acquisition is necessary.

In support of these findings, most of the current county and local planning documents have express goals of augmenting and increasing their open spaces and recreation facilities. The Hudson County Strategic Plan includes the objective to create more parks and open space through the creation of vest-

pocket neighborhood parks on properties acquired through tax foreclosure; requiring parks, plazas and open space as new development occurs; and direct acquisition of key parcels, particularly along proposed waterfront walkways.



The most important development in the continued acquisition of open space in Hudson County is the creation of the Hudson County Open Space Recreation & Historic Preservation Trust Fund. On June 26, 2003, the Hudson County Executive requested, and the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved a resolution authorizing the placement of a public question (referendum) on the general election ballot for the establishment of a County Open Space Recreation & Historic Preservation Trust Fund. On November 4, 2003, the ballot question was approved by a two-to-one majority of County voter participants. The Board of Chosen Freeholders, by resolution dated December 23, 2003, voted to establish a trust fund entitled The Hudson County Open Space, Recreation & Historic Preservation

Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is funded through a property tax assessment to be approved annually by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, at a rate not to exceed one cent (\$0.01) per \$100.00 of the Total County equalized real property valuation.

The Hudson County Executive's office has pledged to double the current open space holdings of the county using the Hudson County Open Space Recreation & Historic Preservation Trust Fund. To that end, a program statement of policies and procedures for the administration of the fund was drafted and adopted in May of 2004. This document was created to establish the process, policy and procedures by which the County of Hudson will provide funding from the Trust Fund to eligible open space, recreation, and historic preservation projects countywide and to establish procedures by which the County of Hudson will ensure that lands acquired in conjunction with funding from the Trust Fund will remain in use for conservation, recreation, or historic preservation purposes in perpetuity.

The program statement of policies and procedures constitutes the rules governing the review and award of grants. It establishes project eligibility requirements, applicant eligibility, application requirements, application review criteria, application review governance, roles and responsibilities, funding award categories and criteria, grant terms, and program administrative requirements. The program statement also creates and defines the

membership of the Hudson County Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Board, charged with advising the County Freeholders on the merits of applications for funding to the Open Space Recreation & Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The membership of the Advisory Board includes two non-voting members, a representative of the Office of the County Executive selected by the County Executive and a representative of the Board of Chosen Freeholders selected by the Chairman of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The voting membership of the Advisory Board consists of nine members and are selected from the following categories:

#### OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND ADVISORY BOARD VOTING MEMBERSHIP

1. Hudson County Division of Parks, Board Member (Ex-Officio)
2. Hudson County Division of Planning, Board Member (Ex-Officio)
3. Hudson County Division of Housing & Community Development, Board Member (Ex-Officio)
4. Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, Board Member (Ex-Officio)
5. Conservation Board Member
6. Environmental Board Member
7. Historic Preservation Board Member
8. Parks & Recreation Board Member
9. Business Community Board Member

Every member of the Open Space Advisory Board shall be a resident of Hudson County.

The primary responsibility of the Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Board is for the systematic review and recommendation of applications for funding consideration from the Trust Fund, in accordance with the policies and procedures as established the guidelines. The Advisory Board will work closely with the County of Hudson to assist in the periodic review of the County's adopted Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Historic Preservation Plan; review, prioritize and recommend projects for open space, recreation, and historic preservation purposes; and review and recommend, as necessary, amendments to the policies and procedures outlined in this document for the Trust Fund.

The Advisory Board will consider applications for funding from the Trust Fund from the following entities:

1. The County of Hudson
2. The Hudson County Improvement Authority
3. Any of the twelve municipalities in the County of Hudson
4. Local entities, non-profit corporations and qualified charitable conservancies located within the County of Hudson that have received tax exemptions under section 501(c) of the 1954 Internal Revenue Code.

The Trust Fund monies are available to those entities for certain, eligible purposes. These include:

1. Acquisition of land for conservation and recreation purposes.

2. Development and redevelopment of land existing or acquired for recreational and / or conservation purposes.

3. Preservation of historic properties, including the acquisition of such properties for historic preservation, or

4. Payment of debt service on indebtedness issued or incurred by the County of Hudson for any of the purposes stated in (1), (2), or (3).

The Trust Fund monies are not eligible to be used for:

1. Any maintenance, care, custodial, or policing expenditures associated with active and passive recreation, and historic sites.

2. Lands that are and will remain predominantly covered by buildings or structures not appropriate for environmental education, recreational use, or historic preservation.

3. Activities that will have a significant adverse impact on environmental resources or open space values.

The Trust Fund will be funded through a property tax assessment to be determined annually by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, at a rate not to exceed one cent (\$0.01) per \$100.00 of total County equalized valuation. All of the money collected through the property tax assessment will be deposited into the Trust Fund and shall be apportioned approximately in the following manner:

1. No less than 50% for Land Acquisition Projects
2. No more than 25% for Development/Redevelopment, Improvement for Recreation or Conservation Projects
3. No more than 25% for Historic Preservation Projects

The Advisory Board will generate project application forms and draft timelines for submissions. The Advisory Board will then review applications to determine if they are eligible and complete according to the policies and procedures of the Trust Fund. The Board will then rank and prioritize projects with funding recommendations to the County Executive for consideration. Following the submission of recommendations from the Advisory Board, the County Executive will submit proposed projects for funding consideration to the Board of Chosen Freeholders after his/her review of the Advisory Board's recommendations. Only then will the Board of Chosen Freeholders approve by resolution final projects and funding allocations following a public hearing.

Applicants that have been approved for funding will have three months from the date of Freeholder approval of the required Hudson County funding resolutions to execute a Grant Agreement with the County. Upon execution by both parties of the grant agreement, projects are expected to progress at a reasonable pace, subject to the specifics of a particular project. If the applicant fails to maintain applicable schedules, the grant agreement and any unused funds may be forfeited. Any failure to uphold other aspects of the executed grant agreement may result in the forfeiture

of unused funds. Unused funds will revert back to the Trust Fund.

The following items reflect general guidelines that will be considered in recommending projects for the acquisition of property for conservation and/or recreation purposes, the development or redevelopment of conservation and recreation areas, or for historic preservation purposes:

- A. Encourage projects that benefit a broad population segment, especially those of regional, countywide, or statewide significance.
- B. Encourages multi-use projects, (e.g. projects including several elements such as water protection, recreation, historic and scenic preservation, etc.)
- C. Give consideration to projects involving land under immediate threat of development.
- D. Encourage the use of conservation easements, restrictive covenants, or interests other than ownership by fee simple, to limit or restrict development.
- E. Give consideration to lands within Tier-1 wellhead protection areas; recharge areas where water enters the ground or aquifers to fill wells.
- F. Encourage multi-fund source projects, which qualify for, but are not limited to, the State Green Acres Program, Historic Preservation Trust Program, federal funds, municipal matching funds, recreation groups, donations, and all other appropriate funding sources. Applicants are encouraged to provide or obtain non-Open Space Trust funds of at least fifty (50%). The respective governing bodies must endorse all projects.

G. Encourage partnership projects with local entities, non-profit corporations and qualified charitable conservancies that have received tax-exempt status under section 501(c) of the 1954 Internal Revenue Code.

H. Projects should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the Hudson County Historic Preservation Plan, as prepared by the County of Hudson.

A priority scoring system will be used to evaluate the relative merits of proposed acquisition, development, and historic preservation projects. The system is designed to reflect the degree to which projects conform to findings, recommendations and priorities of the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and with statewide goals that are consistent with the Garden State Preservation Trust Act and Historic Preservation Office. The system uses a set of factors to evaluate each project's features. Not every factor is applicable to every type of project.

**Acquisition Factors**

1. Open Space Needs
2. Environmental Protection
3. Public Support
4. Planning
5. Accessibility
6. Recreation Potential
7. Public Access to Water
8. Cost Effectiveness
9. Project Priorities
10. First Time Applicant
11. Local Match

**Development and Redevelopment Improvement Factors**

1. Facility Needs
2. Service Area Needs
3. Environmental Protection
4. Public Support
5. Planning
6. Accessibility
7. Recreation Potential
8. Public Access to Water
9. Design Quality
10. Cost Effectiveness
11. Project Priorities
12. First Time Applicant
13. Local Match
14. Facility Design Sensitivity and Site Suitability

**Historic Preservation Factors**

1. Historic Resource Preservation
2. Public Support
3. Planning
4. Accessibility
5. Design Quality
6. Cost Effectiveness
7. Project Priorities
8. First Time Applicant
9. Local Match

**Balanced Land Use**

The Balanced Land Use Deficit table assesses a community's parks and open space needs and assigns point values based on need.

**Public Access to Water**

Both federal and State laws through Coastal Zone Management policies and waterfront development regulations promote public access to open bodies of water. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection assigns bonus points to Green

Acres applications, which facilitate access to oceans, bays, rivers and other bodies of water based on their depth and breadth.

The County and the municipalities agree that there is a deficit in open space, so the question that remains of what to do about it. The first, important steps include the passage and establishment of the Hudson County Open Space Recreation & Historic Preservation Trust Fund and the Hudson County Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Board. The Advisory Board can now take the next steps to identify basic goals for the open space acquisition program, examine potential sites for acquisition and then help build strong partnerships with the municipalities, adjacent counties, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, the State Parks and Forestry and Green Acres Programs, the Federal government and perhaps most importantly, local, regional and national non-profits with programs or interests in Hudson County.

The County should adopt a goal of “ten minute walk to a park bench”, providing access to greenspaces to all of Hudson County’s residents, young and old. The County need not focus only on large areas and undisturbed properties, but should work to identify new opportunities for small, local vest pocket parks throughout the County. These small parks can be nothing more than a few trees, some benches and woodchip path, a simple oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of this very urban county. But these small parks can also be much more, and include playgrounds, dog runs or community gardens. Community gardens can be an incredible neighborhood resource, providing not only green spaces and recreation, but also a local supply of fresh food and a sense of cooperation and accomplishment to local residents.

The County needs to also identify the existing parks that have a potential for expansion. There is nothing more powerful than momentum for an open space program that can build on previous success. Every park in the County system should have adjacent parcels investigated for possible acquisition. The County should also consider large parcels for acquisition as well. While land prices are high now, they will only get higher as time goes by. Any large, contiguous acreage of undeveloped or even underdeveloped or abandoned land should be investigated for possible acquisition. The Vacant Land Survey, attached as an appendix to this plan, is the first and best source for this initial review of acquisition possibilities.

The County has already created a list of the top sixteen acquisition priorities it wishes to pursue. This list is the product of many meetings between County and Local officials, County and Local staff and the various Non-profits consulted in the drafting of this document and should form the basis of any acquisition program.



<u>Site</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Estimated Acreage</u>
1. Kearny Point south	Kearny	46 acres
2. Former PJP landfill	Jersey City Westside	57 acres
3. 6th Street Embankment	Jersey City Downtown	8 acres
4. Reservoir No. 3	Jersey City Heights	14 acres
5. Enos Jones Park North	Jersey City Downtown	18 acres
6. Mori Tract	Secaucus/Harmon Meadow	75 acres
7. North 40 Park	Bayonne	32 acres
8. Perisi Site	North Bergen waterfront	7 acres
9. Passaic Riverbank Park	Kearny	1 acre
10. Newark Industrial Track	a. East Newark	3 acres
	b. Harrison	5 acres
	c. Kearny	17 acres
11. Boonton Line	a. Jersey City	7 acres
	b. Kearny	26 acres
	c. Secaucus	7 acres
12. Little Snake Hill	Secaucus/Laurel Hill	59 acres
13. Vitamin Factory, waterfront	Guttenberg	1 acre
14. 1600 Park Avenue	Hoboken	2.5 acres
15. Municipal Pool	North Bergen	14 acres
16. Park Avenue/ Harbor Drive	Weehawken	2.5 acres

This list should be expanded to include those vacant parcels in each municipality that have been identified as possible green spaces, as well as any existing publicly owned parcels that can be transferred and converted to open space uses, such as green spaces, active recreation or natural lands areas.

The County needs to become actively engaged with each municipality and encourage them to follow the County's example by adopting an open space funding mechanism like a local open space tax. Currently, no Hudson municipalities have their own open space tax. This tax is a vital resource for acquisition funds and this allows the municipalities access to more NJDEP Green Acres funding than those municipalities that do not have a dedicated open space tax.



The County also needs to become actively engaged with each municipality and encourage them to follow the County's example by preparing inventories of publicly owned properties that can be considered for use as open space. Many municipalities have vacant or underutilized parcels of land that is already on local ownership, either through prior acquisition of tax foreclosure, that are not being utilized that can be improved or developed as recreation facilities or rehabilitated as greenspace

or natural areas. The county should also encourage municipalities to prepare a list of municipal acquisition priorities, often derived from the Vacant Land Survey for each locality. The towns can also review their tax rolls to identify properties in considerable arrears for possible foreclosure proceedings to bring these properties in to public ownership.

The County can then work cooperatively to either acquire or develop these properties for open space use. Many other jurisdictions have benefited by reviewing the efficiency of managing certain parcels of open space and have begun swapping them with other jurisdictions. For example, a municipality may find that it owns property adjacent to a county recreation facility and it makes more sense to transfer this property to county ownership for inclusion and management with the existing park facility. The County may have an isolated park property that would be better served by local ownership. Such partner agency swaps can occur between any level, including the state, federal government or the NJMC.

The County can also coordinate with local governments, adjacent counties, state and federal agencies to increase the requirements for green spaces at public or private facilities. It is already a state requirement for Hudson Riverfront development to include a public access walkway; this same philosophy can be applied to other development around the County. This is not only a low-cost method for creating greenspaces, but developers will find their property values increasing by including such local amenities in development proposals.

The County needs to begin utilizing the recently passed Parks, Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund to begin acquisition activities. The



fifteen identified open space priorities should already be in the pipeline for investigation, negotiation and should be evaluated for possible partnership opportunities. By partnering with local municipalities, adjacent counties, state agencies and private non-profit conservation groups for joint acquisition of open space, the County will be able to leverage available funding. For example, through the NJDEP Green Acres program, if the county identifies a local municipal government and a non-profit as partners in the acquisition, the state will provide 50% of the acquisition and appraisal costs, while the county, municipality and non-profit each only have to provide 17% a piece of these same costs for the project. Each of the partners gets additional open space added to the overall inventory and at only a fraction of the cost that it would have cost to proceed with the project alone.

The County has already seen the benefit of this type of co-operative open space acquisition, the most recent County open space acquisition is a 14.9-acre wedge-shaped parcel in Secaucus on the Hackensack River to the immediate south of Laurel Hill Park to be added to that recreation area. This property is being acquired in conjunction with the NY/NJ Baykeeper.

The County is also assisting the City of Hoboken convert the former Todd Shipyard into a municipal park. In a public-private partnership, the adjacent property owner, BDLJ, is turning an adjoining parcel over to the city and the county is spending \$2 million on an 800' walkway for the site. The City of Hoboken is buying the property with Green Acres funding and then turning it over to the County. This type of multi-jurisdictional, private-public partnership for open space is exactly the kind of project that needs to be repeated and emulated to help Hudson County reach the goal of 1,902 acres of new County owned open space and assist local partners acquire 620 acres of new municipal open space.

## 2. Hudson River Waterfront Walkway and other Walkway development:

As there continues to be development and redevelopment along the Hudson River Waterfront, it is a priority for Hudson County to ensure that the mandated walkway is completed. Currently, there are still several “gap” sites (areas with no public walkway) along the waterfront that need to be addressed. The developing Hudson River Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan identifies these gap areas and provides implementation for completion of these areas. Upon completion of the HRWW Implementation

Plan, Hudson County should work with the affected municipalities to implement the strategies outlined to ensure that the gap areas are addressed. Furthermore the County needs to ensure that areas being developed by other entities are meeting the necessary standards.



There are several areas along the HRWW that are to this day working port areas, mainly in Bayonne and Jersey City. It is understood that at this point these areas will not be able to provide waterfront walkway access. The HRWW Implementation Plan outline several options for alternative routes, staying as close to the water as possible. Hudson County needs to collaborate with the affected municipalities to agree upon alternate routes around working port areas and to ensure that they are established and connect with existing walkway segments on the waterfront. When these working areas are available for redevelopment, the County will have to ensure the completion of the walkway on those sites and make every effort to make connections to existing walkway.

There are also other waterfront walkway opportunities either under development or have the possibility for development, more specifically along the Hackensack and Passaic River and it should be a priority of the County to complete public walkways

along these waterfronts also. Hudson County currently has a plan for the Hackensack River Walk. The County should continue to implement strategies outlined within that Plan to ensure the completion of that Walk. The County should work in cooperation NJMC and the affected municipalities so every entity involved has an understanding of the goals of the Hackensack River Walk and it a priority for those entities to complete.



Finally, there is redevelopment activity occurring along the Passaic River, mainly in Harrison and Kearny, which provides an opportunity for another public walkway system along that waterfront for residents to enjoy. The Town of Kearny currently has an existing walkway system along parts of the waterfront where there are open space and recreation areas. The Passaic Avenue Redevelopment Plan speaks to one of the last segments along the River that does not have a developed walkway and includes planning strategies to complete the walkway there. The Town Harrison within its Waterfront Redevelopment Plan has included a walkway along the Passaic River in which the developer is responsible for completing.

The same process could be followed for this waterfront area as with the others. Hudson County should consider creating a Plan

for the development of a public walkway system along the Passaic River, working in conjunction with the affected municipalities to ensure that in any development that may occur along the Passaic River, there is a possibility for a public waterfront walkway to be included.



### 3. County Recreation Facilities Expansion and Maintenance

Hudson County has an impressive array of recreational facilities in its county and municipal parks. However, there is plenty of room for improvement. There are certain types of facilities that are not as well represented in the County as others. The County should develop a capital investment program to begin to address the needs identified in this plan's recreation needs assessment.

Dog runs or dog play areas were the most requested facility type in the citizen survey. They are often very low cost facility areas, often consisting only of fencing, gates and wood chips and can easily be added to many existing parks. Swimming pools and sprinklers were the second most requested facility in the citizen survey, but require much more of a budget for facilities, staff and maintenance.

There are no public golf courses in the County at this time. There are two courses proposed for the County, Bayonne Golf Course in Bayonne and Resort Recreation Community Golf Course in Kearny, but no facilities exist at this time. The County needs to ensure that these projects are completed, while pitch and put and miniature golf are uses that can fit on relatively small parcels of land, as small as one or two acres making them more affordable and easier to maintain and manage.

Community gardens are an excellent use of vacant lands and underused areas. Community gardens not only provide food and recreation, but they can bring a community together. Community gardens also provide much-needed greenspace in urban neighborhoods. The cost of running the program is very low, often requiring only water, compost and staff time.

Public waterfront access is obviously important to a County surrounded by water. Canoeing offers a very low cost introduction to boating to the public and the more opportunities that are available, the better for the recreating public. Closer boat launches, rowboat rentals, canoe and kayak launching and fishing/ crabbing piers were identified in the citizen survey are requested facilities.



The County should also continue to create new bikeways along new and proposed routes to better link existing and proposed open space and historic resources and improve signage along established bikeways. Bicycle paths can also be considered multiple use paths for rollerbladers and runners. There is no reason why many of the existing trails can be designated multiple use and used for walking, jogging and cycling. Hiking trails and interpretive walks are low cost additions to natural areas that greatly increase their recreation value.



The most frequently requested specialty recreational facilities were volleyball courts and skating rinks. There is also a strong desire for more band shells or Amphitheatres throughout the park systems for evening concerts and other types of performing arts and for food courts in the recreation areas. Many of these programs, if run wisely, can actually provide a revenue stream for the parks department, while providing recreation services.

The Hudson County Park and Recreation Plan Master Plan of 1998 made recommendations for facilities improvements at eight county facilities and these improvements have been actively pursued. The remarkable results are obvious to anyone visiting the parks lately. Facilities have been updated, restored and resurfaced and the effects are impressive. The County Parks Department should ensure the completion of the 1998 Park and Recreation Plan recommendations for the existing facilities improvements.

The County administration should make efforts to increase the funding priority for the maintenance and upgrading of facilities in County Parks and should encourage the same increases in Municipal facilities. There were repeated calls for basic services at parks in the citizen survey, especially maintenance of drinking fountains and restrooms. These services are basic and vital for continued positive experiences at County recreation facilities. There also needs to be a separate effort from facilities maintenance that assess the need for landscaping and tree maintenance.

#### 4. Critical Resource Area Acquisitions

While Hudson County is an urban, highly developed area it still has natural resources and natural lands worth protecting and conserving. The County should use the presence of natural lands or habitats as a deciding factor in whether to go forward with potential open space acquisitions. Those resources identified in this plan, wetlands, flood plains, species habitat, waterways and steep slopes are all critical for the health and well-being of Hudson County residents and vital to the continued appreciation of natural areas.

Hudson County contains approximately 2,192 acres of wetlands, which cover 7%

percent of the County’s non-tidal land area. These areas are largely concentrated along the Hackensack River in what is commonly referred to as the Hackensack Meadowlands. There are also scattered wetland areas also located along the Hudson River and Newark Bay in Bayonne and Jersey City. 10,776 acres or approximately 37 percent of the land in Hudson County is within the 100-year flood hazard area. Much of the land identified as flood plain has already been developed.



The most abundant species habitat type, by far, are the emergent wetlands habitats found in the large wetlands complex in the Hackensack Meadowlands. They occupy 2,100 acres and represent over 7% of the non-tidal land area of the County. The remaining habitat types are forested wetlands, forests and grasslands and occupy less than one half of one percent of the county. Slope in the county are divided into two classes, moderate slopes are from 8 to 15% and occupy 586 acres of the County while steep slopes are from 15 to 25% and occupy 23 acres in the County.

The surface waters surrounding the County are not only the Hudson River, the Passaic River and the Hackensack River, but also by the Upper New York Bay to the southeast, the Kill Van Kull to the south, Newark Bay at the southwestern end of the County, and even Bellman’s Creek to the north. Hudson County is a long, narrow isthmus that lies between the rest of New Jersey and the boroughs of New York City. The County should pursue acquisition

of any acres of these remaining critical resource areas and, like any other open space acquisition, the County needs to pursue co-operative resource protection with municipalities, adjacent counties, the state, federal agencies and private non-profit conservation groups. The New Jersey Meadowlands has acquired nearly 1,800 acres of wetlands and plans to continue acquisition of wetlands as sites become available. The NJDEP Bureau of Tidelands also has granted the NJMC the management rights of another 1,600 acres of tidal wetlands in the Meadowlands, including the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area. The NJMC is also active with seven wetland enhancement sites in the County. The County needs to continue to work with the NJMC on conservation programs as well as continue its co-operative associations with the Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper, and develop relationships with other non-profit conservation groups to ensure the continued protection of the Counties natural resources.

Hudson County can also suggest critical



resource protection ordinances for municipalities. These ordinances are adopted by many towns and are enacted to control development in critical resource areas. The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions can provide sample ordinances that will meet the needs

of Hudson County municipalities. The County should also institute a program of evaluating any county capital improvement program in critical resource areas. It would be foolish for one County department to be actively pursuing acquisition of critical resource areas in one area and then have another County department destroying them in another area.

#### 5. Ensure Protection of Historically and Culturally Important Properties

Hudson County is rich in historical and cultural resources. There are numerous sites that are already on the State and National Registers and many more that have at least have a decision rendered from SHPO. To that end, the preservation of the Counties historic districts, places and structures of important historical significance must be a priority. There are several strategies that can be utilized to preserve these significant areas. First and foremost is the creation of an inventory of significant areas with acquisition priorities. The can be completed by the following:

- Creating a list of all County historical



and cultural resources,

- Creating a list of County historical resource acquisition priorities,
- Encouraging municipalities to prepare inventories of properties with important historical and cultural significance, and
- Encouraging municipalities to prepare a list of municipal historical resource acquisition priorities.

Utilizing the recently passed Parks, Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund the County can then to begin acquisition activities of historic resources and assist its municipalities in doing the same.

There are also alternatives to acquisition and these strategies aid in ensuring the preservation of significant resources and can be utilized on a County or municipal level. One of these includes utilizing adaptive reuse of historically significant structures. This has proven to be very successful tool used throughout the State. Not only do the structures become preserved, they are then turned into much needed uses such as housing or retail. Hudson County in creating its inventory should look for opportunities for adaptive reuse of structures and encourage its municipalities to do the same.

One final strategy is to encourage the use of façade easements to preserve the appearance of historic buildings and/or suggest municipalities adopt historic façade restoration/ rehabilitation ordinances. This is especially pertinent in municipalities that have multiple structures or historic districts. Hudson County should provide any necessary aid or technical assistance to further municipalities in this goal for it will further preservation efforts throughout the County.



## 6. Creating and Enhancing Community Connections

In setting the priority of creating and enhancing community connections for Hudson County, the Plan defines community connections in two ways. First, community connections are the physical network links of opens space and recreation areas. Secondly, community connections are the non-physical aspects of community involvement including educational programming.

### Network Links



Network links are the physical connections that can be created (for those that don't exist) or enhanced upon (for those that do exist) to create a functional system that links open space and recreation areas and resources. Since the County has such a wealth of existing resources spread throughout, the County should ensure that with every expansion or new development of open space or recreational facility connections are made.

These connections can be completed using various strategies some of which include:

- Providing way-finding signage to parks and recreation facilities.
- Improving and clarifying existing signage on walkways/bikeways throughout the County.
- Creating more multi-modal East/West connections to link the waterfront areas.
- Maximizing access to cultural and historic facilities through public transportation and pedestrian walkway improvements.
- Actively participate in Federal, State and regional open space and recreation initiatives that fall within the County.
- Completing proposed walkways and bikeways identified on the County Green Map.

Hudson County should also encourage its individual municipalities to create local connections to their existing open space and recreation facilities utilizing the strategies outline above.

### Education/Involvement

To have a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan there has to be a realization that creating community connections moves beyond just the physical aspects. It is also being involved on a community-based level by providing information, creating recreational and educational programs for residents to enjoy and partnering with local groups to respond to residents needs in term of open space.



Hudson County should provide its residents with as much information as possible on open space and recreation. This not only includes information on the direction that the County is taking in terms of recommendations made in this Plan but also on all open space and recreation planning activities occurring within the County. Furthermore, Hudson County needs to be on forefront of promoting the resources its has as well as working with local municipalities and non-profit groups to help them promote what is happening locally.

The County should also work in partnership with municipal, regional, State, and local non-profits in the development of new recreational programming that is currently missing within the County. This can be by assessing what is established within the

County and filling in the gaps. Moreover, the County should collaborate with the school systems to develop educational programming that deals with explaining the benefits of open space and environmental protection and the benefits of utilizing current recreation facilities to promote physical fitness, active lifestyles and wellness.

This Plan also recommends that the County create new educational signage for environmental, historic, cultural and recreational areas within the County. The NJMC is working to provide informational and educational signage for areas that fall under their jurisdiction along with educational programming. The County should partner with NJMC to promote their initiatives and replicate them to other “significant” areas within the County.

## PARCEL DATA REQUIREMENTS

The NJDEP Green Acres Program Open Space and Recreation Guidelines require GIS parcel data for current and proposed acquisition properties in an Open Space plan. The only town that has completed a GIS parcel database is Jersey City. The Bayonne MUA has contracted to do a citywide GIS system, but that system is not yet complete. The NJMC has a GIS parcel

database, but only for those portions of its constituent municipalities within the district. Hudson County would be well served by entering into a co-operative agreement with all of its municipalities to cost share and create a Countywide GIS parcel database. It would aid in every planning project, including open space planning.

