

Open Space Plan Vision and Intent

It is the year 2025 and the residents of Hudson County have a multitude of recreational opportunities available to them. Young people, adults and seniors all have their own favorite park within a quick walk from their home, or a favorite recreation facility within a short car or bus ride. No one feels their outdoor needs are unmet and vacant lots are now vest pocket parks that provide refuges of shade and greenery to calm the mind and lift the spirit.

The rivers that surround and define the county have transformed from industrial sites and natural barriers to become magnificent walkways. The Hudson River Walkway runs from North Bergen to the tip of Bayonne and provides Hudson County's citizens an amazing experience, providing unrivaled views of the most recognizable skyline in the world and glimpses of some of the nations most treasured landmarks. The Hackensack River Walkway links natural areas, marshes and boat launches to create a unique recreational experience for the citizens of Secaucus and Jersey City. The Passaic River Walkway links Kearny, East Newark and Harrison to the waterfront, anchored by new waterfront parks in Harrison featuring a new NY/NJ Metrostars soccer stadium and unparalleled views of the Newark waterfront and the NJ Performing Arts Center.

Weekends find soccer fields available for adult and youth leagues. Football gridirons are filled with teams fighting for yards and inches. Baseball diamonds are alive with the shouts of fans rooting for their

favorite Cal Ripken League teams. Softball teams take the field throughout the county. Basketball courts are filled with pick up games and league play and jump shots fall hitting nothing but net. Young athletes hone their skills on running tracks and in swimming pools.

The youth of the county have their choice of skate parks to show off their latest tricks on rails, hits and half-pipes. The summer sun shines down on volleyball games on white sand courts. Seniors and young alike roll bocce balls on well kept courts and archery ranges are the scene of many a bulls eyes. The canine residents of Hudson County are able to romp and play in dog parks while their owners compliment each other on their fine friends.

The links are full of avid golfers, enjoying two county golf courses, while driving ranges ring with the sound of long drives and pitch and putt courses offer 18 holes of action with a lot less walking. Young golfers can challenge their grandparents to 18 holes of miniature golf just a bus ride away. Formal gardens delight the senses with springtime beds of multicolor blooms and children wonder at butterflies alight in gardens designed for them. Community gardens have sprung up in vacant lots throughout the county, feeding families, educating children and providing hours of enjoyment to urban gardeners.

Citizens on the move can bike miles of bikeways and share trails with pedestrians and roller bladers to take in the many sites that surround the county. Running tracks



provide countless miles by the quarter mile. The rivers and waters that surround the county are the providence of boaters and anglers taking advantage of all the county has to offer. Boat launches and canoe liveries get citizens out on the water. Fishing bulkheads and piers find anglers young and old catching their legal limits and throwing the rest back for another day.

Interpretive trails through natural areas provide young and old a way to learn while they exercise, exciting the mind while exercising the body. Bird blinds and viewing platforms allow amateur naturalists to explore the natural world around them. Scenic overlooks are places for quiet contemplation and inspiration to artists and photographers. Picnic grounds provide families and friends opportunities for reunions, parties and happy memories. Gazebos and amphitheatres set the stage

for evening concerts, recitals and theatre events.

It is the intent of this plan to establish a well-organized program to identify, prioritize, enhance and preserve critical open space within the County. This plan will serve as the framework for moving forward with a proactive agenda for meeting all of the open space and recreational needs of Hudson County's citizens. The plan will address the four major elements of open space, aesthetic value, ecological function, active recreation and cultural identity.

It is the intent of this plan to be crafted in a way as to take advantage of the benefits granted by a strong Open Space Plan. This plan is a proactive plan for open space protection, thereby preventing purely reactive actions created by individual

development proposals. This Open Space Plan will meet the criteria of the NJDEP Green Acres Program for an Open Space and Recreation Plan. This compliant plan, coupled with the recently passed Parks, Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund will meet the requirements for matching funds and acquisition grants from the NJDEP Green Acres Program. The universal approach

and reliance on the countywide recreation survey will create strong community buy-in and support, crucial for the success of any initiative. This Open Space Plan is complementary to and in with agreement with existing plans for the region and will be another key element in the continuing application of Smart Growth principles guiding Hudson County.

