



OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

OPPORTUNITIES

CONNECTIVITY

Connections throughout the County have always been a major priority for policymakers and stakeholders. However, automobile and public transit are not the only modes that present mobility options within Hudson County. Routes for pedestrians and cyclists can bridge a significant gap in travel connections. Moreover, such routes present commuters with a healthy and environmentally friendly transit option.

Waterfront Walkways

Our waterfronts offer a unique opportunity to create a continuous pathway for pedestrians and bikers. As a protected and separate corridor, a designated walkway presents an appealing and safe route for Hudson County residents.

Hudson River Waterfront Walkway

With the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway nearly complete, individuals can walk, jog, or bike almost seamlessly along the waterfronts of seven Hudson County municipalities: North Bergen, Guttenberg, West New York, Weehawken, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Bayonne. The County continues to support the Walkway and explore public and private opportunities for its funding and completion.

Hackensack Waterfront Riverwalk

The banks of the Hackensack River in Hudson County stretch from Bellman's Creek in North Bergen to Newark Bay in Bayonne. A potential Riverwalk trail could run north and south for 8 miles along the western borders of North Bergen, Secaucus, Jersey City, and Bayonne. The County is committed to supporting this the completion of this public resource.

Passaic Waterfront

A Passaic waterfront walkway has only been partially built, but there are opportunities to fill in substantial gaps. It could serve as a major connection for the communities of West Hudson to Bergen County. The County recognizes the potential of the Passaic Waterfront and is committed to assisting the communities along the Passaic River in pursuing the expansion of this route.

Biking Network

Since the 2005 Plan, there have been major strides toward the creation of a Hudson County biking network. As of 2013, Hoboken has the most extensive biking network in the county. In 2009, Hoboken began by designating and striping streets as Class II (5 foot wide striped lanes) and Class III (sharrows) shared-lanes. In 2011, Hoboken passed an ordinance



Passaic Waterfront



A bike rodeo hosted by the Hudson Transportation Management Association

designating an additional 10 miles of streets with striped Class II bike lanes. Striping for these lanes began in Spring 2012. In addition, a Class I fully-separated off-street bike trails exists parallel to Sinatra Drive between Newark Street and 4th Street. Plans for redevelopment and reorganization of the roadway along Observer Highway may potentially include additional Class I bike trails.

Jersey City has also begun creating a bikeway network, striping its first permanent bike lane in 2013. In 2012, the City released a plan to install 35.2 miles of striped lanes, and an additional 19.5 miles of shared lanes, for a total of 54.7 miles of bicycle infrastructure throughout the city. Through the coordination of the two municipalities through the Hoboken-Jersey City Interconnectivity Task Force, options are being discussed that would ensure a link between the presently distinct bicycle networks.

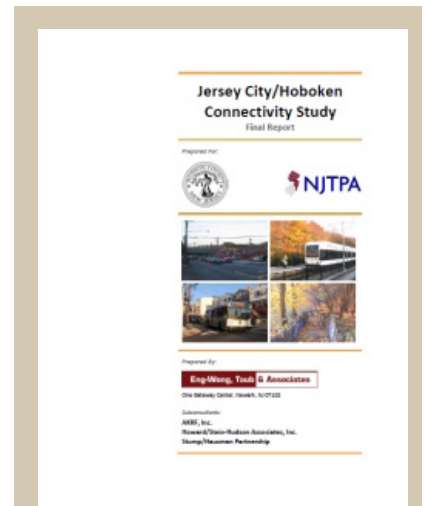
The County striped its first road in July 2012 when it installed a half mile bike lane on River Road from Palisades Medical Center in North Bergen and the border with Bergen County near Bulls Ferry Road. Bikeway expansions represent a promising trend for an entirely new mobility network throughout Hudson County.

VACANT PROPERTY

Vacant lands can be acquired and developed as active recreation sites. Any expenses not accrued for demolition and cleanup of a site can be spent on the development of recreation facilities. Many of the vacant lands in Hudson County are less than an acre in size and have become areas of blight, where trash and refuse collect and associated negative impacts propagate.

The transformation of these lots has the potential to greatly improve a neighborhood, providing an inviting green space with recreation opportunities, picnic facilities, statuary, or even community gardens. In particular, as the following map indicates, many vacant properties are far from existing open space resources and could increase access to open space in underserved neighborhoods throughout the county.

The majority of the vacant lands in the county are in flood prone areas. The County therefore recommends exploring the use of open space for flood control purposes, through programs like NJDEP’s Blue Acres Program (See “Constraints: Superstorm Sandy”).



Final Report for NJTPA

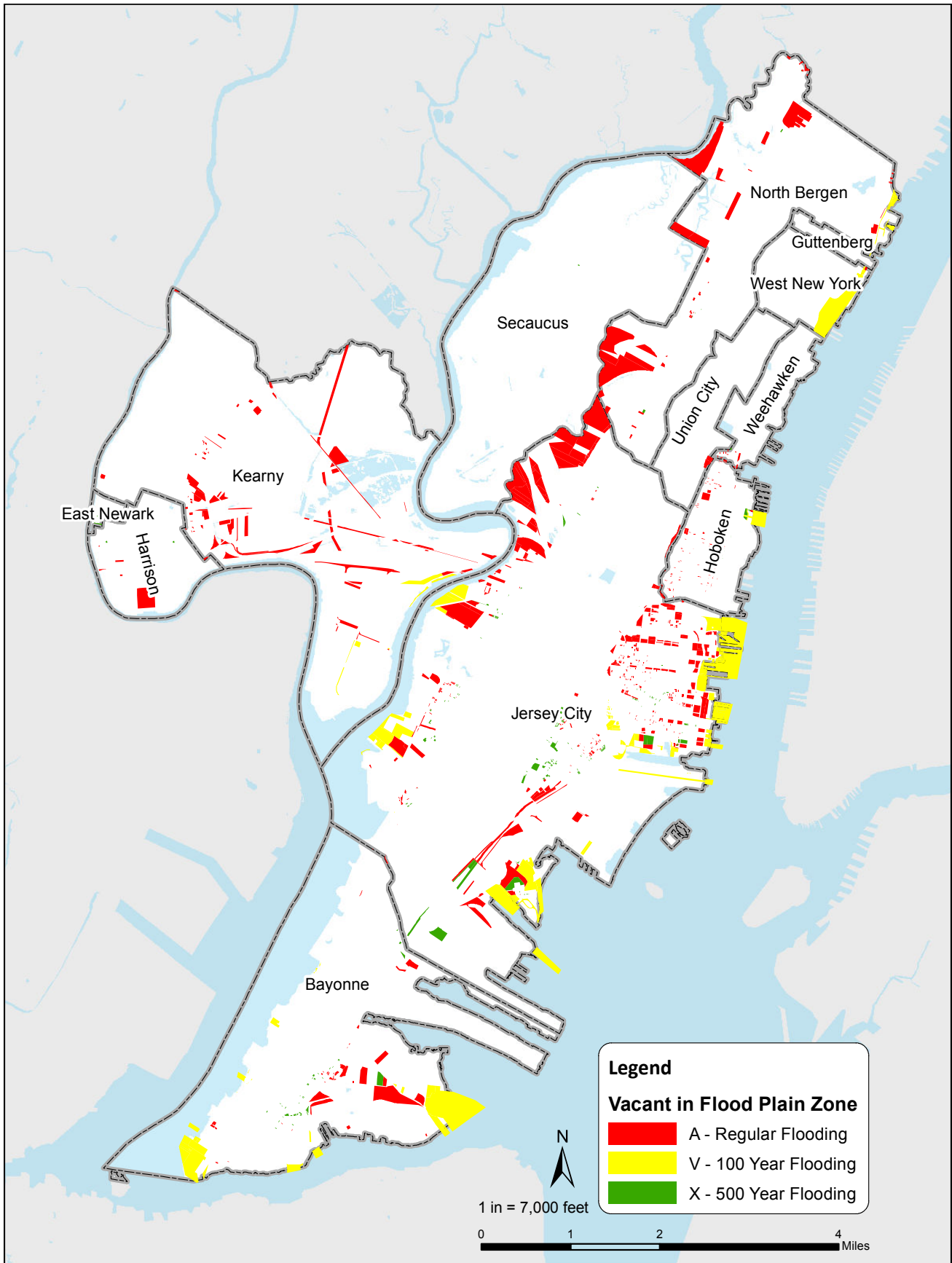


East Coast Greenway tour in Jersey City



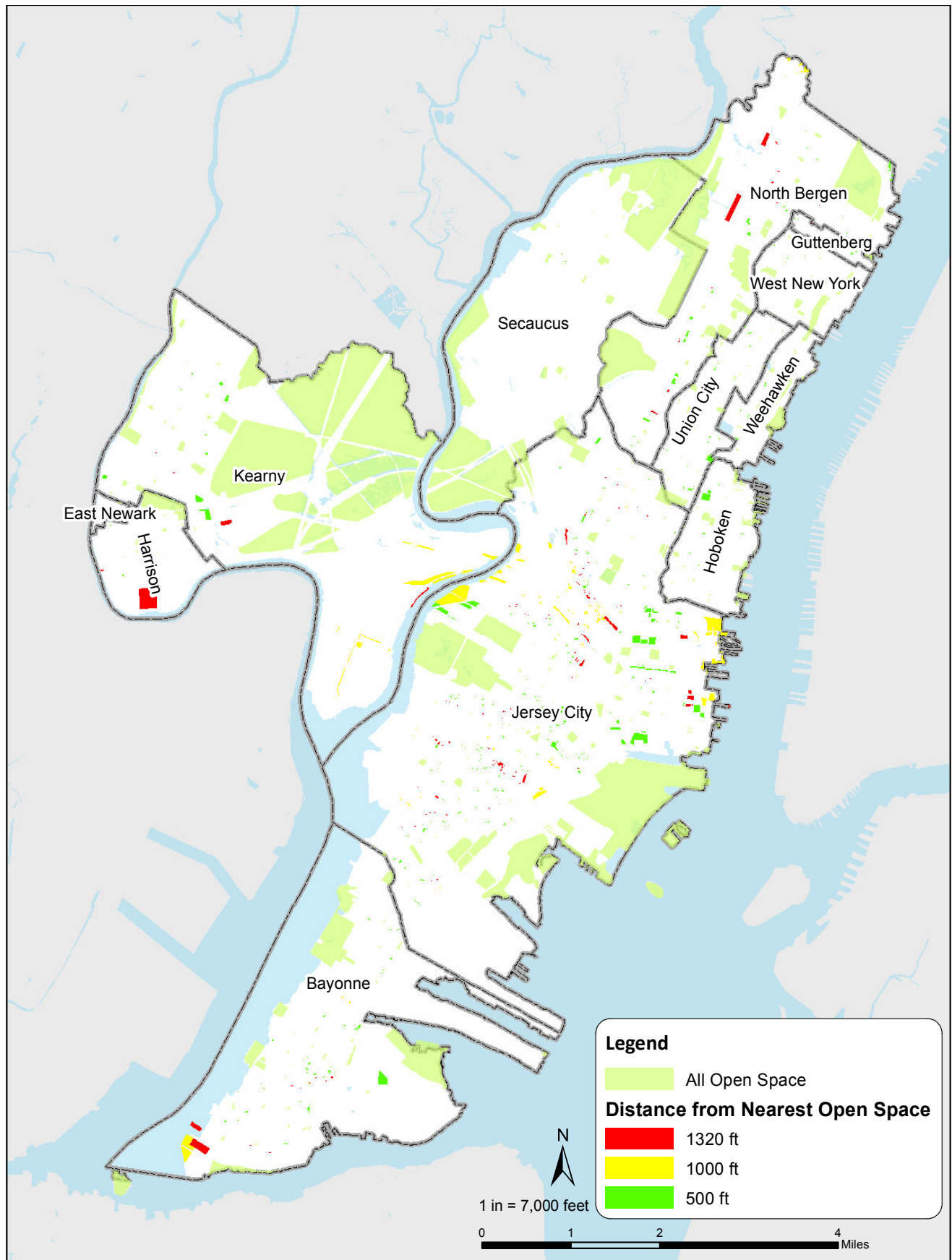
The Boonton Line in Kearny

VACANT PROPERTIES AND FLOOD PRONE AREAS



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE). December 2013. Accessed December 2013.

VACANT PROPERTIES AND DISTANCE TO OPEN SPACE



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE). December 2013. Accessed December 2013.



Jersey City's portion of the East Coast Greenway.



Walk to School Month celebration march hosted by the Safe Routes to School program.

Vacant Properties for Potential Open Space Conversion:

- Southwest Site (Jackson Street & Newark Street, Hoboken)
- “Pino” Site (7th Street & Jackson Street, Hoboken)
- BASF Site (11th Street & Madison Street, Hoboken)
- Kerrigan Avenue Property (Union City)
- Old boatyard and field station (near North Midland Avenue, Kearny)
- Area along Passaic River (near Park Avenue, Kearny)
- Hazard mitigation sites (Jersey City)
- A section of the Hudson River Waterfront in Guttenberg

GREENWAYS

Greenways are corridors of open space managed for conservation, recreation, and transportation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and link nature reserves, parks, cultural features, historic sites, and other public spaces with each other and with populated areas.

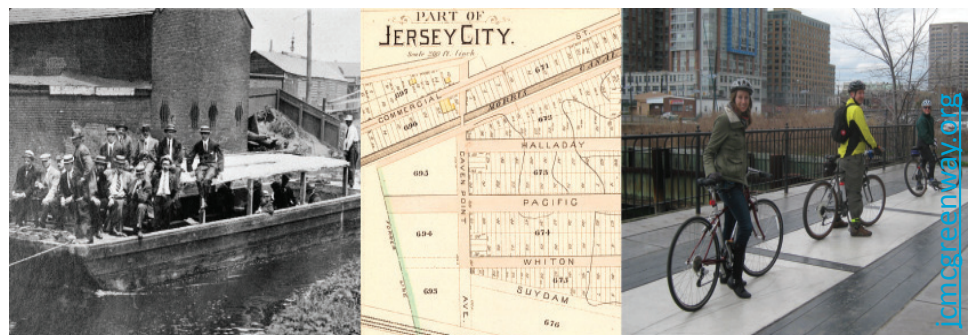
East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway is a system of trails for bikes, pedestrians, and other non-motorized transport that will, when completed, connect many major east coast cities from Florida to Maine. The trail, which is currently under construction but mostly complete within Hudson County, will include a variety of locally owned and managed trails of all different types, from existing trails to newly created paths ranging from rural to highly urban in nature.

The current Hudson County Greenway route is made up of park pathways, designated non-motor paths, and vehicular roads. The ECG designated route is as follows:

Hudson County Route (9 segments)

1. Hudson River Waterfront Walkway (Existing)
2. 6th Street Embankment (Proposed)
3. Jones Park path (Existing)
4. Bergen Arches (Proposed)
- 5a. Witt-Penn Bridge alignment (Proposed)



- 5b. Boonton Line Rail-Trail (Proposed)
- 6. Newark Industrial track (Proposed)
- 7. West Hudson Park path (Existing)
- 8. West Hudson Park to Newark (Existing)
- 9. Cross-Meadowlands Route (NWK-JC) (Proposed)

As part of the ‘Liberty to Water Gap Trail Project’ the NJ DOT authorized \$940,000 for the creation of a bike and pedestrian path along Truck Route 1&9 connecting Newark, Kearny, and Jersey City. With the completion of a sidewalk along the Truck 1&9 Bridge in 2011, the Hudson County element of the ECG is now fully accessible to bikers and pedestrians.^[vi] This improvement not only services the communities of Kearny, Jersey City and Newark but also represents a significant link in the East Coast Greenway, the Liberty to Water Gap Trail and the September 11th National Memorial Trail.

Plans are currently in place to use the 6th Street Embankment in downtown Jersey City as part of the Hudson County element of the Greenway. The county’s paths already offer some of the most stunning scenery on the East Coast. The completion of both riverfront walkways, along with the adaptation of bike and pedestrian-friendly crossings for the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers, would make Hudson County a one-of-a-kind destination hub for the Greenway.

Morris Canal Greenway

The City of Jersey City has recently prepared a plan for a future bicycle and pedestrian greenway following the former path of the Morris Canal to the greatest extent possible. It is envisioned that the greenway will be off-road where feasible and on-road where necessary to establish a continuous 6-mile bicycle and pedestrian route through Jersey City. The addition of a greenway will enhance bicycle and pedestrian accommodations; increase recreational space in the City; connect trails, parks, schools, neighborhoods, and businesses; and celebrate one of the City’s historic resources.

From 1836 until 1924, the Morris Canal in Jersey City traveled around the upland Palisades formation in the southern half of the city and linked the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers.

Several general opportunity categories were identified that would support the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the former path of the Morris Canal. The categories include proximity to schools and other community features, proximity to transit, and connectivity with existing and planned facilities. An environmental screening of the corridor was also conducted.

Within a quarter mile of the former alignment of the Morris Canal there are:

Schools and Community Features

- 20 schools; 24 municipal, county and state parks totaling 1,489 acres;
- 2 planned parks which will add an additional 50 acres; 3 ballfields;



Artist’s rendering of the former Morris Canal in Jersey City (njcu.edu)



The path of the former Morris Canal across Jersey City.

2 recreation centers; 24 houses of worship; 6 neighborhoods, as defined by the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation; 3 health centers; and one hospital.

Transit Features

5 Hudson-Bergen Light Rail stations, 153 NJ TRANSIT bus stops for 10 different NJ TRANSIT bus lines, 31% of the City's signed bicycle network.

Historic Features

509 listed, identified or eligible Historic Properties and 10 listed, identified or eligible Historic Districts, including the Morris Canal Historic District. Listed Historic Properties and Districts are included in the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places.



Liberty Water-Gap Trail

The Liberty-Water Gap Trail is a 156 mile non-motorized route across northern New Jersey, composed of locally owned and managed trails. The trail stretches from the Delaware Water Gap, along a meandering path across the state, and reaches Liberty State Park. Established by the National Trails Program, this path was referenced in NJDEP's 2009 NJ Trails Plan Update.^[vii]

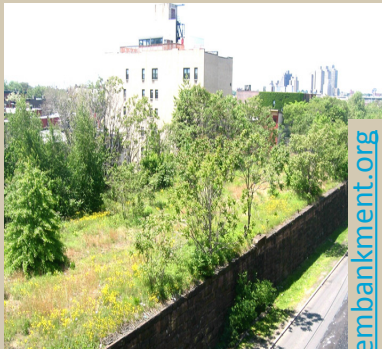
Within Hudson County, the Liberty-Water Gap Trail shares a 10 mile route with the East Coast Greenway through most of West Hudson, with combined signage. A new bike and pedestrian-accessible sidewalk on Truck Route 1&9 Bridge was created with NJDOT funding allocated for the Liberty to Water Gap Trail Project. This element of the path is now usable for non-motorists, whether they are commuting or traveling the East Coast Greenway or the Liberty-Water Gap Trail. At the Hudson River, the Liberty-Water Gap Trail then splits off onto the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway before entering Liberty State Park. The inclusion of this route on both trails was authorized by the cities of Jersey City and Newark.^[viii]

Enhancements to the East Coast Greenway in Hudson County will have twice the impact, since they will improve the Liberty-Water Gap Trail as well.

Hackensack RiverWalk

The Hackensack RiverWalk continues to be a priority of the County. Continued work between the County, local municipalities and private developers over recent years have created opportunities to improve access along this waterfront, as well create connections between existing and future open space locations. The Bayfront Redevelopment in Jersey City proposes a public riverfront walkway all along its residential site. Moving north, the trails along the wetland restoration project in Lincoln Park West have provided better public access. Additional upcoming improvements and completion of the public golf course will soon close a significant gap. The next greenway linkage would be Jersey City's acquired property for the future Skyway Park. The County plans to facilitate this linkage by exploring options to purchase properties on Duncan Avenue.

From Skyway Park, the County envisions the Hackensack Riverfront



6th street embankment

embankment.org

continuing north to connect to Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus. Along this route, however, there are multiple constraints for a seamless connection, such as large tracts of PSE&G property and other industrial sites. Major cooperation between private landowners and other public agencies would be required to negotiate conservation easements for the construction of a walkway in this area of the riverfront. Other alternative routes may be considered to complete these major greenway gaps.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Hudson County is densely populated and relatively small, making most areas extremely walkable. However, the routes that children travel between home, school, and recreational areas may be dangerous or undesirable for pedestrians or bike riders. It is recommended, that the County consider creating safe, green paths for children to walk or bike to school.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation has partnered with the Hudson TMA to administer Safe Routes to School programs in Hudson County. Programs include Walking School Bus, Youth Bicycle Education, Walk and Bike to school events and the development of School Travel Plans.

LARGE PARKS

Large parks are an important aspect of Hudson County’s recreational mosaic. They often provide large-scale active facilities; such as soccer, baseball, and football fields; tennis courts; and running tracks. In addition, many county and state parks have lakes and other water features, with the associated scenic resources and opportunities for passive recreation that smaller municipal parks cannot offer.

However, by virtue of their size or their location on the outskirts of the county, some of these parks—most notably Laurel Hill County Park and Liberty State Park—are difficult to access by walking or public transportation. This presents a pressing issue in a county with some of the lowest car ownership rates in the nation according to the 2010 US Census. Various options exist to ensure that all residents of Hudson County can access large parks easily and affordably, including public transportation, a bikeshare program, and the creation of safe and walkable streets between communities and parks.

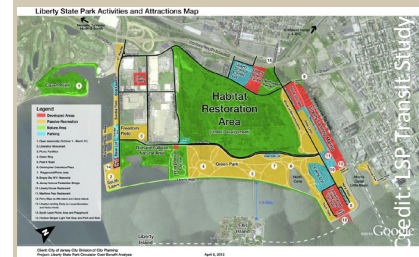
Liberty State Park

Liberty State Park is an area of particular concern, given that it is both one of Hudson County’s premier recreational and scenic resources and very difficult to access using car-free transit options. This closes the park off from the surrounding and underserved communities of Lafayette and Greenville. To combat the trend of automobile-only access to the park, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of City, County, State, and Park agencies; transportation professionals, and local businesses was formed to conduct a transit study on Liberty State Park.

The goal of this study, which was funded by the North Jersey Transportation



Liberty State Park was formerly an industrial and transportation hub for the region before it was converted for recreational and conservation purposes.



The TAC committee created an activities and attractions map for Liberty State Park to pinpoint circulator bus destinations.



When complete, the Embankment will be a site of unique historic and recreational value for Hudson County.

Planning Authority (NJTPA), was to decrease the use of cars as a method of getting to the park. The final recommendation of the TAC was a circulator bus service or trolley and increase access opportunities to the park through mass transportation. Improved public transit access will serve both as a boost to tourism, already a major element of Liberty State Park's use profile, in addition to opening up the park to use by a greater percentage of Hudson County residents.

6th Street Embankment

The 6th Street Embankment in Jersey City has the potential to be an extraordinary recreational and transportation opportunity for Hudson County as a whole. As a park/transit corridor, the Embankment provides a unique crossroads through downtown Jersey City and a highly walkable connection to the Journal Square, Heights, and Newport neighborhoods. A proposed element of the East Coast Greenway passes through both the Hamilton Park and Harsimus Cove National Historic districts. In addition to the services it provides, the Embankment is also an intrinsically valuable site both ecologically and as a historic structure listed on the State Register of Historic Places.



Properties that receive Green Acres grants must post a Green Acres sign.



The site of Jersey City's Skyway Park, currently in the planning stages.

GREEN ACRES¹

Green Acres is New Jersey's conservation, recreation, and open space funding program. It is part of the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Natural and Historic Resources. Through its Local and Nonprofit Funding Program; municipalities, counties, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for state funding matches for open space projects.

There are two types of eligible projects:

Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Development of facilities that will support the increased public use or enjoyment of outdoor recreation and conservation land. This includes facilities for outdoor games and sports, lighting, playgrounds, restrooms, and similar structures that support outdoor recreation.

Funding Matches:

- Hudson County: 50%
- Urban Aid Municipalities: 50% (Bayonne, Hoboken, Jersey City, Kearny, North Bergen, Union City, Weehawken, West New York)
- Non-Urban Aid Municipalities: 0% (2% loan)
- Nonprofits in urban area: 50%
- Densely Populated Municipalities: 25% (East Newark, Guttenberg, Harrison)

Eligible Project Costs:

Green Acres can provide funding for outdoor recreation facilities and structures that support outdoor recreation.

Construction costs:

- Preliminary Assessment Report
- Costs of preparing engineering plans, specs, supervision and inspection, limited to 13% of the Green Acres funding allocated to construction costs.
- Incidental costs such as legal and advertising fees
- Permit fees

Land Acquisition

Acquisition of lands for recreation and conservation purposes; including water bodies that provide for physical and or visual access; a natural area such as a wildlife preserve, forest or wetland; a historic property; or lands suitable for play-grounds, athletic fields, and other active and passive outdoor opportunities.

Funding Matches:

- Hudson County : 50%
- Planning Incentive Municipalities: 50%
- Urban Aid Municipalities: 75%
- Other Municipalities: 25%
- Nonprofits: 50%

Eligible Project Costs

- Land – up to certified market value (or hypothetical land value if needed and if provided); Never to exceed purchase price
- Appraisals



Credit: Hudson County

The first portion of Southwest Park, which will be almost one acre in size, is slated for completion in 2014. The City of Hoboken is looking at opportunities for expanding the park through the acquisition of nearby lots.



Credit: David Jolkovski, The Patch

The "Pino" site



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HISTORIC AND CULTURAL TOURISM

As a region of unique cultural diversity and one of the oldest urban areas in the United States, Hudson County has a wealth of historic and cultural tourist destinations.

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty are two of the top historic tourism locations in the United States, but numerous additional destinations include Jersey City’s Apple Tree House, Reservoir #3, the Historic Loews Theater, Sixth Street Embankment in downtown Jersey City, Union City’s bustling Bergenline Avenue, and Hoboken’s Washington Street to name just a few. In addition to these, municipalities across the county are home to a variety of arts centers, shows, and performances; world-class museums and attractions; frequent cultural and artistic events; numerous restaurants and varied shopping.

The County has been working to showcase and promote these resources with the Visit Hudson County website at www.visithudson.org, which provides a guide to a variety of tourist opportunities in the county.

RIVERS AND WATERFRONTS

With the ongoing but highly successful remediation of the Hudson, Hackensack, and Passaic rivers, Hudson County has made large strides towards reclaiming its rivers and waterfronts as recreational and environmental assets despite decades of industrial pollution. Opportunities now abound for residents and tourists to access miles of waterfront paths as well as to participate in activities like fishing, boating, and kayaking on all three rivers.

On the Hudson River, the Hoboken Cove kayak launch has dramatically expanded access to the river on the New Jersey side for kayakers of all levels. The Hackensack Riverkeeper’s pontoon boat cruises and kayaking events allow boaters, bird watchers, and many others to discover and explore the Hackensack Meadowlands as well as the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers.

With continuing remediation and expanded waterfront access infrastructure, Hudson County’s rivers can continue to link communities and provide the urban community with exciting world-class recreation opportunities.

Photo: Lincoln Park Wetland Restoration Project (Below)



Photo: The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

CONSTRAINTS

BROWNFIELDS

A brownfield is defined under NJ state law (N.J.S.A. 58:10B-23.d) as “any former or current commercial or industrial site that is currently vacant or underutilized and on which there has been, or there is suspected to have been, a discharge of a contaminant.” While this is the definition recognized in state legislation, there are many variations on this definition. Generally, brownfields are properties that are abandoned or underutilized because of either real or perceived contamination.

Due to its long industrial past, Hudson County has a significant amount of brownfield sites throughout its 12 municipalities. As of April 2012, the NJDEP Known Contaminated Site List listed 1,258 “Active Sites with Confirmed Contamination,” 195 “Pending Sites with Confirmed Contamination,” and 2,241 “Closed Sites with Remediated Contamination.”

Brownfields present unique opportunities for new open space and recreation areas. Often sites can be cleaned and capped, and new surfacing for recreation areas can effectively “seal” the area. Recreation uses are also desirable for brownfields because remediation of a site is less expensive for open space use than housing.

NJDEP launched the “Brownfields to Greenfields” initiative in November 2002. This initiative encourages the restoration of brownfield sites into recreational or natural areas. If a municipality, county or partnership wants to turn a brownfield into a greenfield, experienced NJDEP case managers can oversee remediation and revitalization efforts to help the locality comply with the Technical Requirements for Site Remediation. Assurance that the public is protected from any exposure is a key concern addressed by long term monitoring and maintenance of engineering and institutional controls when required.

Hudson County Open Space Trust Fund awards were granted to the following current “Brownfield to Greenfield” project sites:

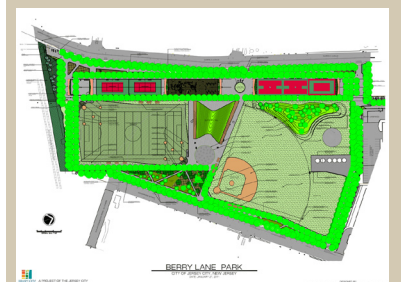
- Berry Lane Park in Jersey City - The City of Jersey City acquired this land as part of a multi-phase project spearheaded by the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency to transform 17.5 acres of former rail yards, junk yards, auto repair shops, industrial facilities, and warehouses into a recreational amenity in a low to moderate income neighborhood. Cleanup was successfully completed in 2012. On August 23, 2012 officials broke ground on the park and a portion of it will be opened in 2013. This park will provide residents with a variety of active and passive recreational resources.
- 1600 Park Avenue in Hoboken – The City of Hoboken acquired



1600 Park Avenue Park in Hoboken



Ground breaking for Berry Lane Park development



The final plan for Jersey City's partially complete Berry Lane Park.

We are replacing a polluted landfill with a beautiful public amenity.

—Jim Kennelly County Director of Policy and Communication



Skyway Park

approximately 2.1 acres of land located at 1600 Park Avenue and began cleanup in 2009. The final design park design includes both passive and active recreation, including a multi-use synthetic turf field and a plaza area, as well as cohesive linkage between 1600 Park Avenue and Hoboken Cove Park. Cleanup of the site was successful, and park completion is expected in 2013.

- Hackensack Riverfront/Skyway Park in Jersey City- The City of Jersey City acquired the former PJP landfill site along the Hackensack River, totalling approximately 28 acres. The extensive cleanup and capping was completed in 2012. The City is planning a passive facility with pedestrian walkways, environmental components, and grassy meadows. The City hopes to go out to bid for construction by Fall 2013.
- Golf Course- The Hudson County Improvement Authority proposes a nine-hole public golf course on approximately 60 acres of underutilized land in Lincoln Park West.
- The Lincoln Park Wetland Restoration Project-Cleared illegally dumped debris, restored approximately 31 acres of wetlands, created 4,500 linear feet of new inter-tidal channels and created a new walking trail near the Hackensack River.²

SUPERSTORM SANDY

The County sustained substantial damage to open space and natural features in multiple municipalities and under multiple jurisdictions. This damage posed significant challenges for the County in terms of financial support for open space.

The tidal surge in New York Bay sent deep water into the Liberty State Park, including the first floor of the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal and the Nature Interpretive Center. In addition, a third of the pavers on Liberty Walk were washed away and the Jersey Avenue footbridge connecting Liberty State Park to Jersey Avenue in Downtown was pushed 30 feet from its location and left in shambles. The Park and its nonprofit group, the Friends of Liberty State Park, led volunteer clean-ups throughout the winter. The footbridge was reopened this May, and parts of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway as well as picnic and playground areas are predicted to open later this year. However, due in part to harm to the park's historic railroad terminal and nature center, it may take up to two years for a full recovery from Sandy's \$20 million in damage.

Sandy wreaked havoc in parks across Hudson County, causing \$500,000 in damages and taking down about 250 trees.³ The County Parks along the Hackensack, Lincoln Park West and Stephen R. Gregg Park, were flooded significantly by the storm surge. In addition, Fields 10 and 11 and the Little League Field in Lincoln Park in Jersey City were damaged. In both cases, Sandy's 85 mph winds got under and lifted the artificial turf of the fields, creating huge wrinkles or kinks in the carpet. In addition, the bluestone wall in Mercer Park in Bayonne took substantial damage from wind and water and must be replaced.



Damage to Liberty State Park's playground area post-Sandy.

Municipal open space resources faced damage as well. Much of Hoboken's waterfront parks were damaged to varying degrees. Pier A sustained minor damage, while large portions of Pier C were left in disrepair. Parks in Weehawken were also affected. The new waterfront park was hit with substantial debris during the hurricane but luckily suffered relatively little lasting damage.

Multiple New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) properties suffered a great deal of damage. Located on the eastern portion of the town, the Kearny Marsh suffered damages that included downed trees along trails, carp abandoned in water that pooled in Gunnell Oval, and in one spot, a radically altered shoreline. In addition, the NJMC's Mill Creek Park in Secaucus was significantly damaged.

The storm highlighted the vulnerability of the County on all sides and the need for innovative approaches to combat flooding. As was highlighted through the new goal of "Low Impact Development", green techniques can significantly reduce the negative impacts of stormwater overflow. This ideal reflects trends on the local level as well. Hoboken is creating a Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan through Together North Jersey's Local Demonstration Project Program. The City will seek to develop place-based stormwater management and flood control strategies and identify implementable climate adaptation action steps.

The County recommends the further exploration of open space for flood control purposes through programs like Blue Acres. The Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres, and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2007 authorized \$12 million for acquisition of lands in the floodways of the Delaware River, Passaic River or Raritan River, and their respective tributaries, for recreation and conservation purposes. An additional \$24 million was approved by the voters in the Green Acres, Water Supply and Floodplain Protection, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009.²

Properties (including structures) that have been damaged by, or may be prone to damage caused by, storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage, are eligible for acquisition.²

For further information on this program, and for useful links regarding current emergency management efforts and guidance, please refer to NJDEP's Blue Acres Floodplain Acquisition page.

LAND VALUE COSTS AND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

Given Hudson County's increasingly dense urban grid and proximity to New York City, property values are substantial and land prices beyond what can easily be afforded by municipal or county governments. This places a constraint on acquisition of properties for public open space or historic preservation.

With the economic recession, average residential sales price has decreased somewhat from a high in 2007, but remains over \$350,000 for Hudson County.⁵ A challenge presented by economic recovery will be the reversion of this trend in sales prices, with land value continuing its pre-2007 rise.



Clean-up effort in Jersey City



Clean-up effort in Jersey City

However, the rising cost of acquisition will hopefully be balanced by increasing availability of grant funding on the state and federal level, and by recovering municipal incomes with housing development again on the rise⁶.

The financial burden of open space and historic property acquisition is one of the reasons for the continued importance of the Hudson County Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. Many of the State of NJ and federal grants for acquisition, including New Jersey Green Acres program, require a local match. The Hudson County Trust Fund grants have double impact in providing funds directly and unlocking grant funds from other government or private entities.

RECESSION AND LIMITED STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING

The economic recession has also taken a heavy toll on Hudson County's open space development through the decreased availability of state and federal funding for open space projects. As late as last year, state budgets continued to suffer under the impacts of the recession⁷. Given the importance of state funding—especially the Green Acres program—to open space projects within the County, this impact has quickly made itself felt at the local level.

Additionally, cuts made to the NJ state open space fund by the Christie administration brought Green Acres funding to the program's lowest level in 20 years in 2012⁸.

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