



Bergen County Parks Master Plan

Community Meeting, 5/10/2017

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Agenda

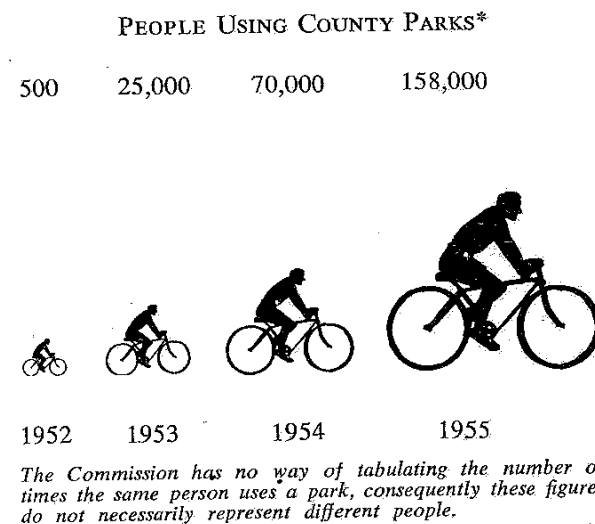
- Report Public Input
- Master Plan Big Ideas
- Design Explorations
- Open Discussion





Bergen County Parks Commission 70th Anniversary

- Strong visionary leadership
- Data driven (pop. demographics, acres/person, financial)
- Focus on Waterways (Hackensack, Passaic, Saddle Rivers)
- Diverse public parkland amenities beyond scope of municipalities
- Long-term vision of collaborations (municipal, private, civic groups)
- Multiple funding sources (gifts, public funds, bonding, grants, concession revenues)



Construction began in many areas during 1954. This shows activity started in the Ridgefield Park section of the Overpeck Park site.

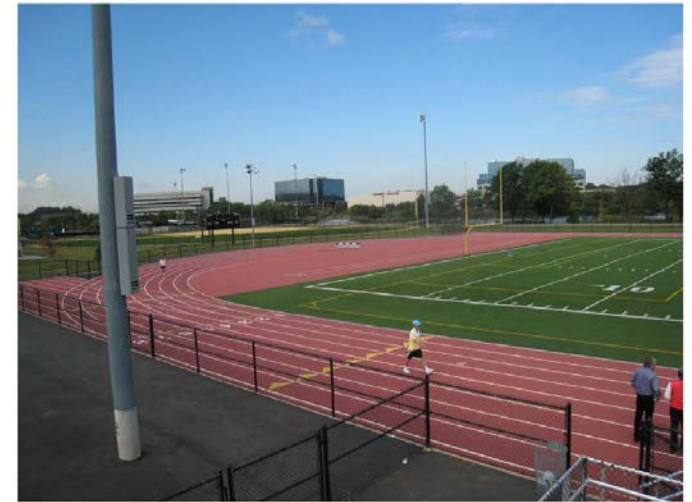


Goals

- Meet current and future County and local community needs.
- Encourage public park usage.
- Develop a long-range plan to sustainably protect, manage, and enhance the County park system.
- Utilize the County's financial and manpower assets in the most efficient manner possible.



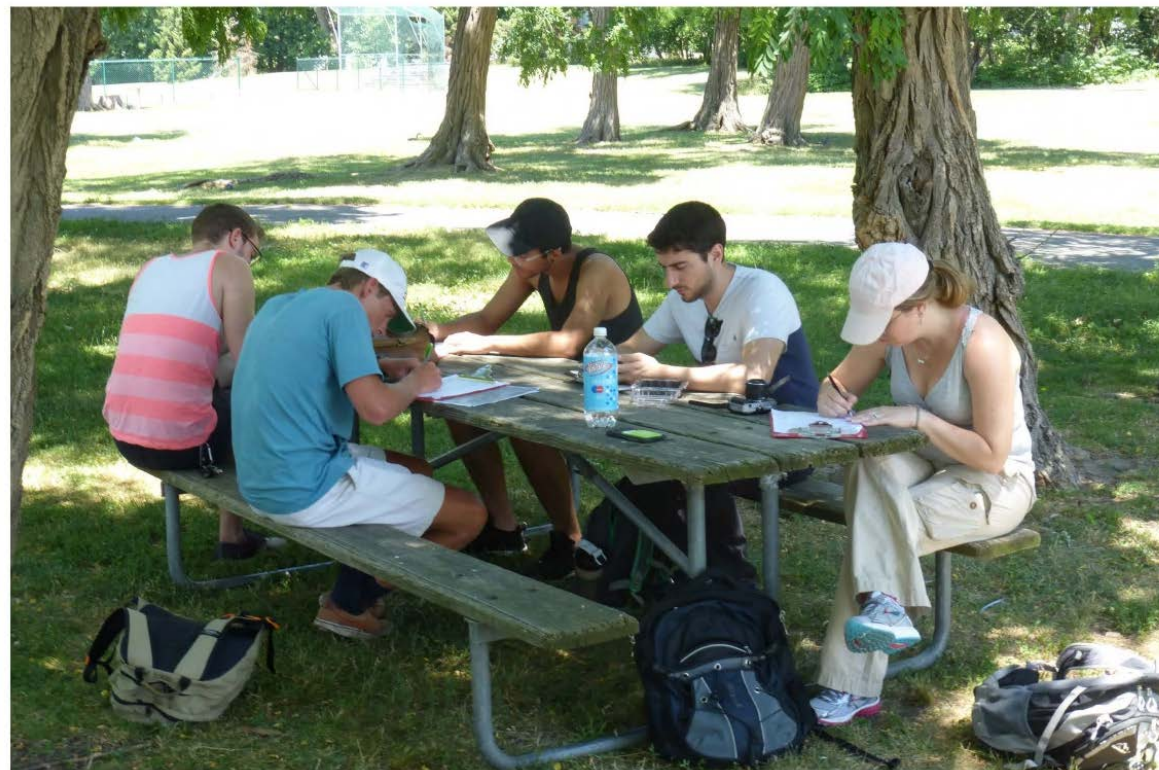
Van Saun Zoo



Overpeck track



Parks Inventory & Report



Students filling out qualitative data sheets after completing the site walk through and ground truthing with the CollectorApp (Image 1.2)



Students utilizing the Collector App to gather GIS information for use in the ArcMap program (Image 1.1).

Public Input

- Online Survey (2200+ responses)
- Park Intercept Surveys (~700 responses)
- 8 Public Meetings (~300 participants)
- Email Communications
- Stakeholder 1-on-1 Meetings
- Municipal Data Review
- Technical Advisory Group

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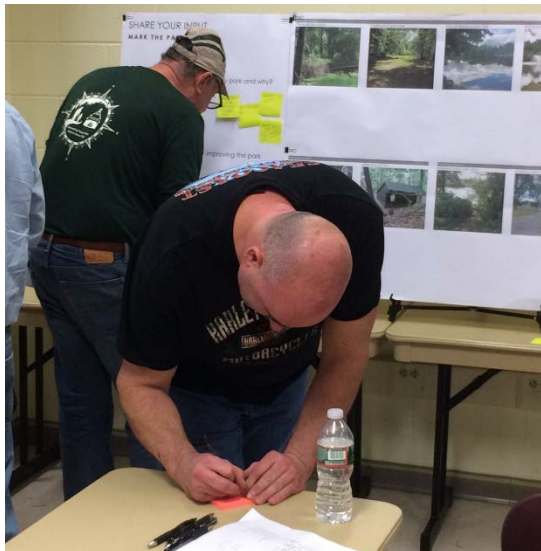


Public Input Excerpts



Online Survey & Meeting Comments

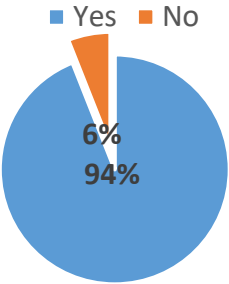
- Better connectivity for safely biking & walking to parks (bike lanes, rails-to-trails, etc.)
- Protect our nature areas
- Access to wider range of activities (cricket, socialization, etc.)
- Do not “commercialize” the parks
- Amenities for Special Needs and Seniors
- Traffic plan for large events
- User-friendly parks website/app to help plan visits
- Easy online permitting
- Enforcement to prevent vandalism & manage crowd control



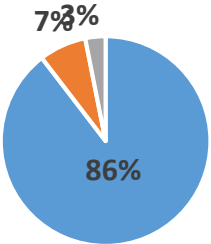
Online Survey

More than 2300 total online survey responses/comments to date

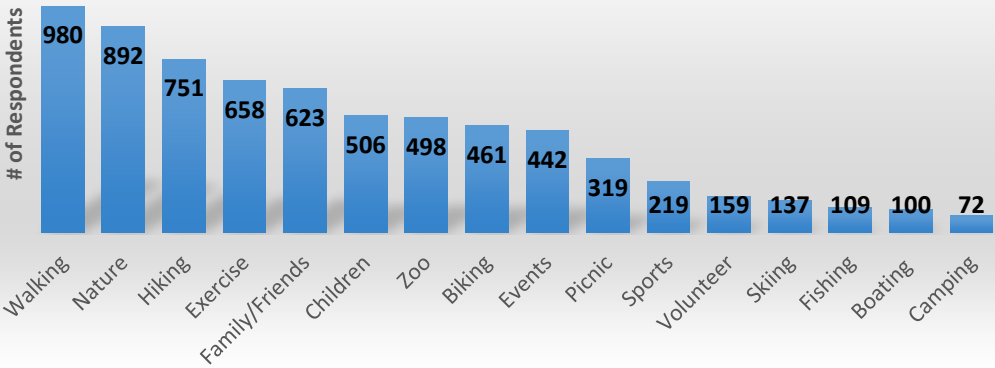
Do Parks Enhance Quality of Life?



Mode of Transportation to Park



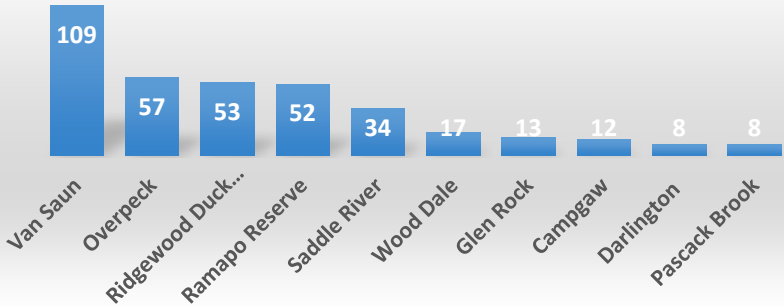
Reasons for Visiting Bergen County Parks



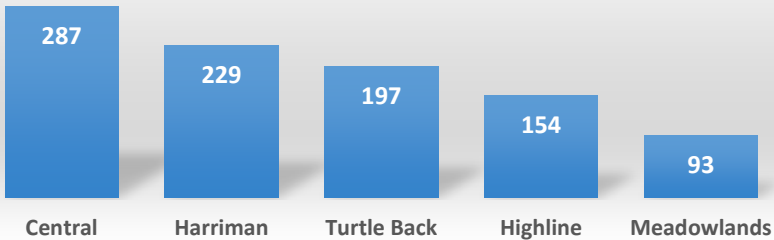
Frequency of Park Use

	PERCENTAGE	25 – 44 PERCENTAGE
DAILY	7%	6%
WEEKLY	34%	36%
MONTHLY	28%	32%
OCCASIONALLY	28%	24%
RARELY	3%	3%

Favorite Park

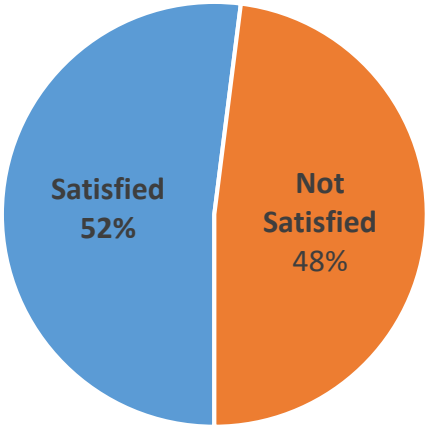


Other Parks Visited (25-44)



Amenities & Events Feedback

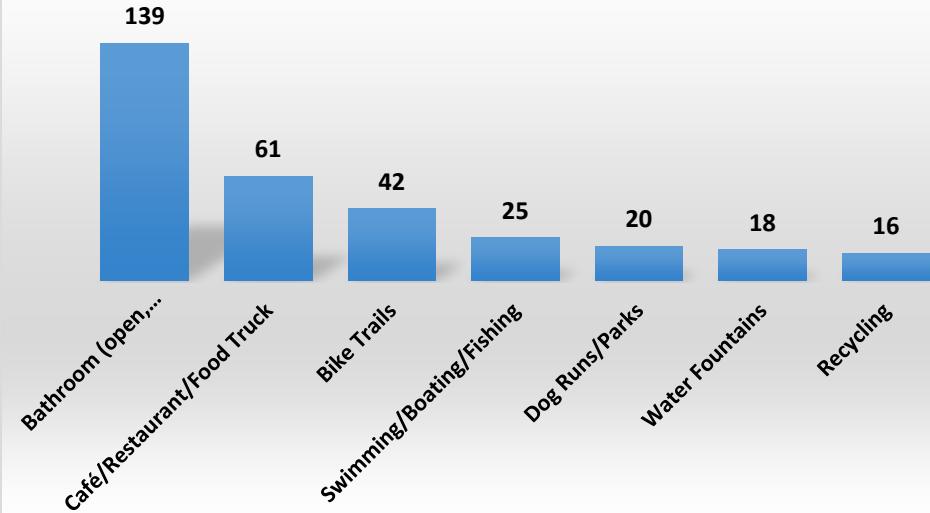
Overall Survey Response



25-44 Age Group



Amenities Requested



Reasons for Food/Beverage Dissatisfaction

	# RESPONDENTS
LIMITED OR LACKING OFFERING	148
UNHEALTHY OFFERINGS	39
BRING MY OWN	22
COST	7

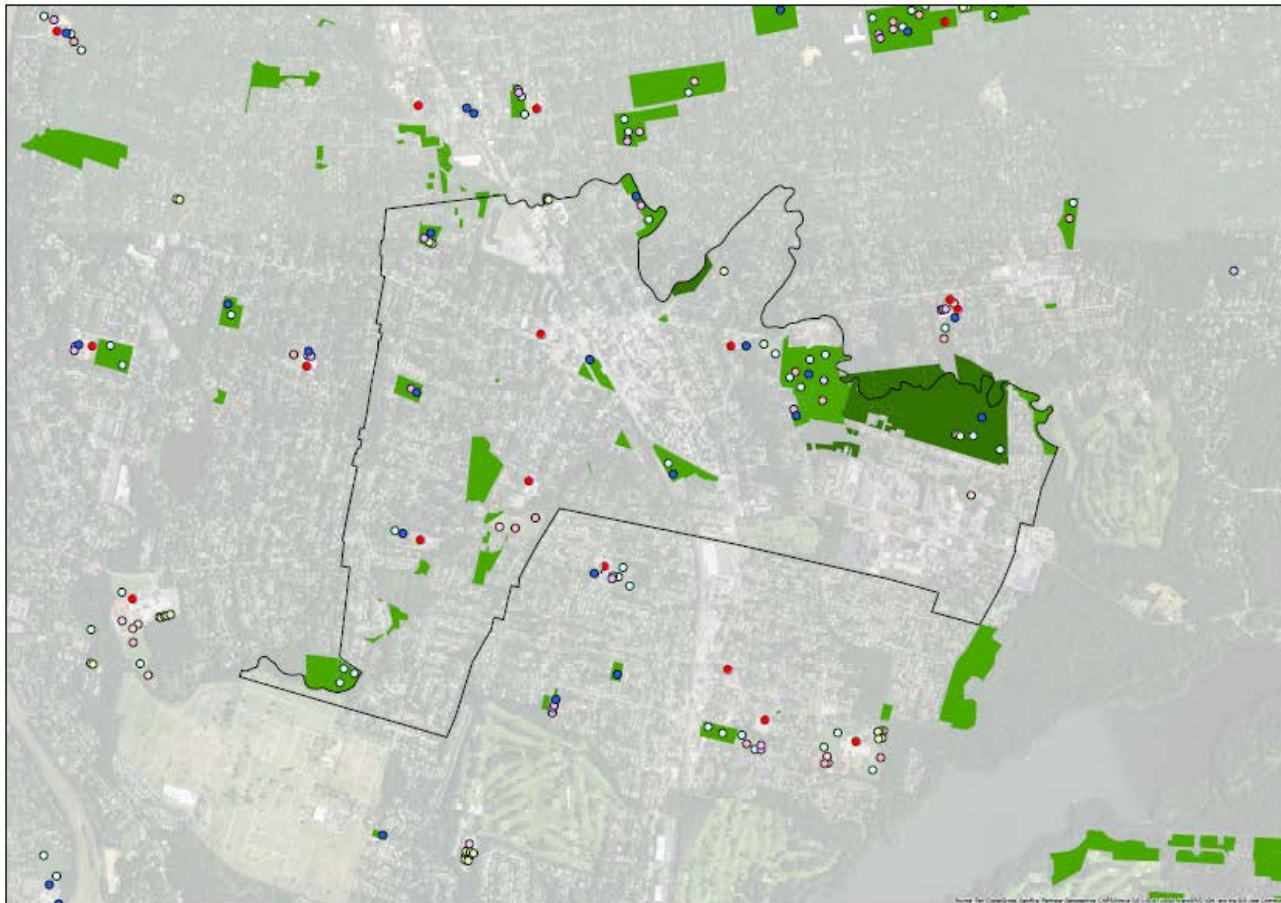
Desired Types of Events

	PERCENTAGE	# RESPONDENTS
MUSIC & ART	69%	881
ATHLETIC (RUNS, WALKS, YOGA)	57%	727
FAMILY-CHILDREN FOCUSED	45%	572
ETHNIC/CULTURAL	39%	499

Municipal Data Review

Sent to 70 municipalities; 13 returned comments

WESTWOOD BOROUGH



- Legend**
- MUNICIPALITY**
- WESTWOOD BORO
- SCHOOLS**
- SCHOOLS
- PLAYGROUNDS**
- PLAYGROUNDS
- SPORTS FIELDS**
- BASEBALL FIELD
 - BASKETBALL COURT
 - BOOCIE
 - DOG PARK
 - EQUESTRIAN
 - FIELD HOCKEY
 - FOOTBALL FIELD
 - HANDBALL
 - HOCKEY RINK
 - KICKBALL FIELD
 - LACROSSE FIELD
 - OTHER
 - POOL
 - RAQUETBALL COURT
 - SHUFFLEBOARD
 - SOCCER FIELD
 - STICKBALL
 - SWIMMING POOL
 - TENNIS COURT
 - TRACK AND FIELD
 - VOLLEYBALL
- COUNTY PARKS**
- COUNTY PARKS
- MUNICIPAL PARKS**
- MUNICIPAL PARKS

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles
Scale 1:10,000

In Bergen County Municipalities:

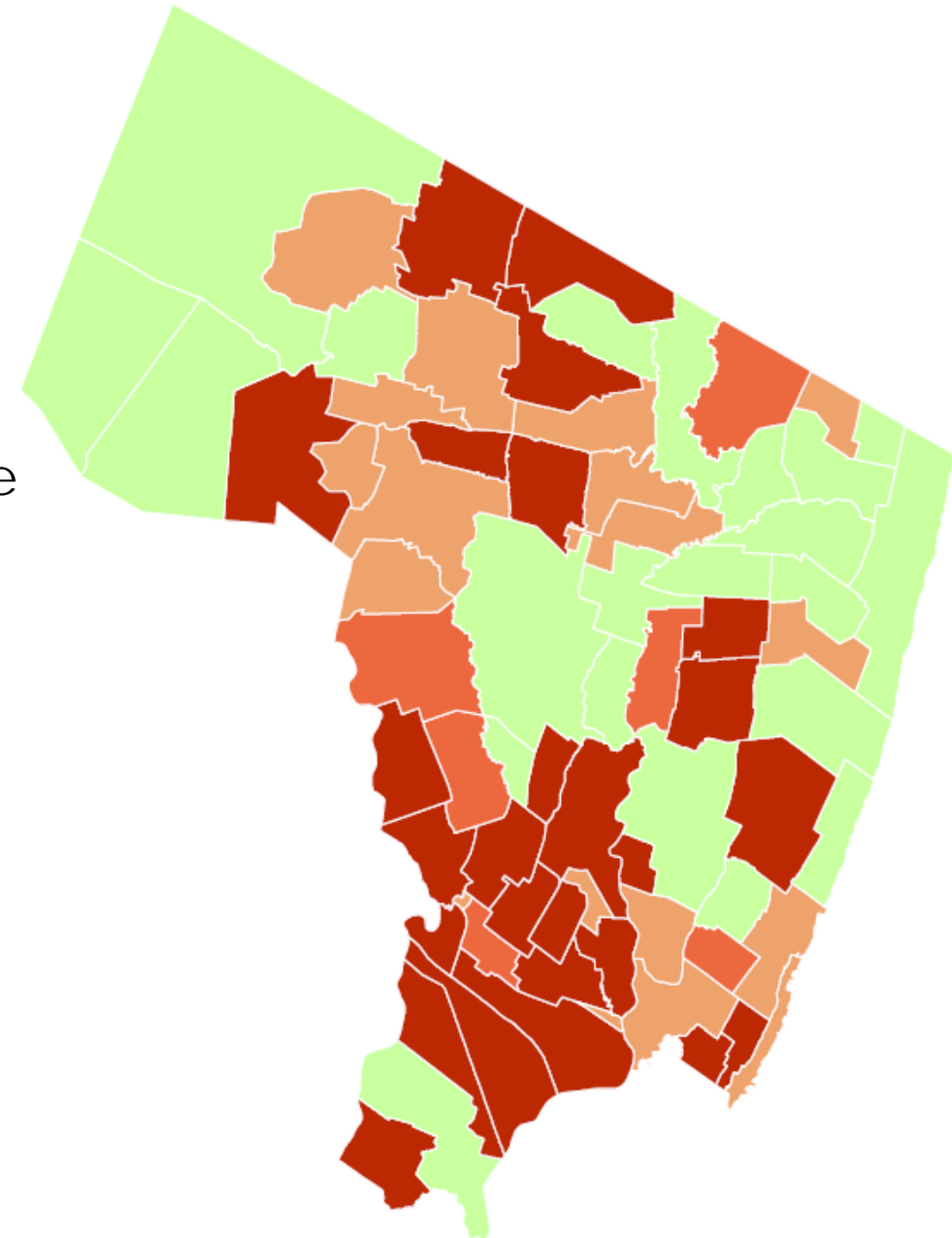
- 2,284 Total Sports Fields
- 423 Total Playgrounds

Data Sources:

- NJ DEP ROSI data
- Google Earth imagery

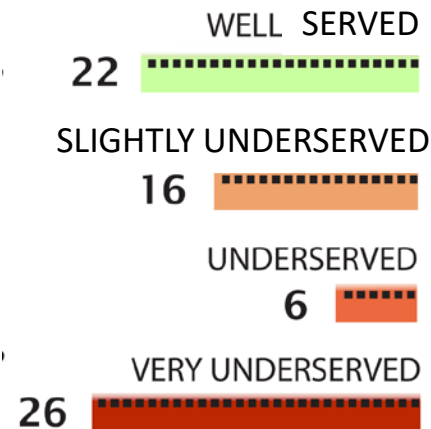
Open Space For Residents

- People need open space.
- GIS inventory of all existing municipal, County, and State open space.
- Analysis of the overall open space compared to the population of each municipality,
- Methodology developed by the Trust for Public Land for their 2016 City Park Facts report.



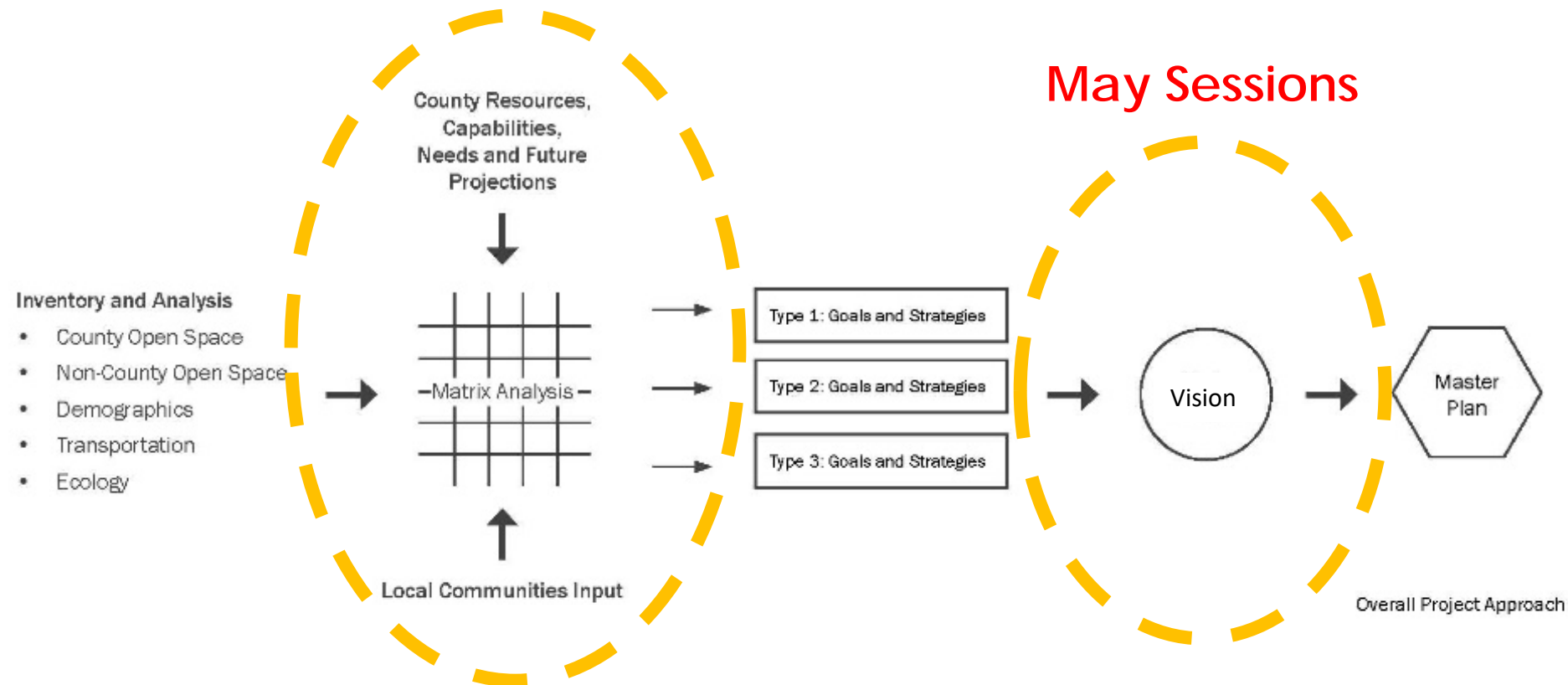
PERCENT OF MUNICIPALITIES UNDERSERVED

37.1% 31.4% 22.9% 8.6%



Project Sequence

Jan/Feb Sessions





Bergen County Parks:

From the Marshes to the Mountains Vision

- **Emphasis** on diversity of open spaces easily accessible by all residents
- **Anchor parks** as backbones of the park network
- Safe & convenient multi-modal **connectivity** between open spaces
- County parks complementing municipal & non-profit open space

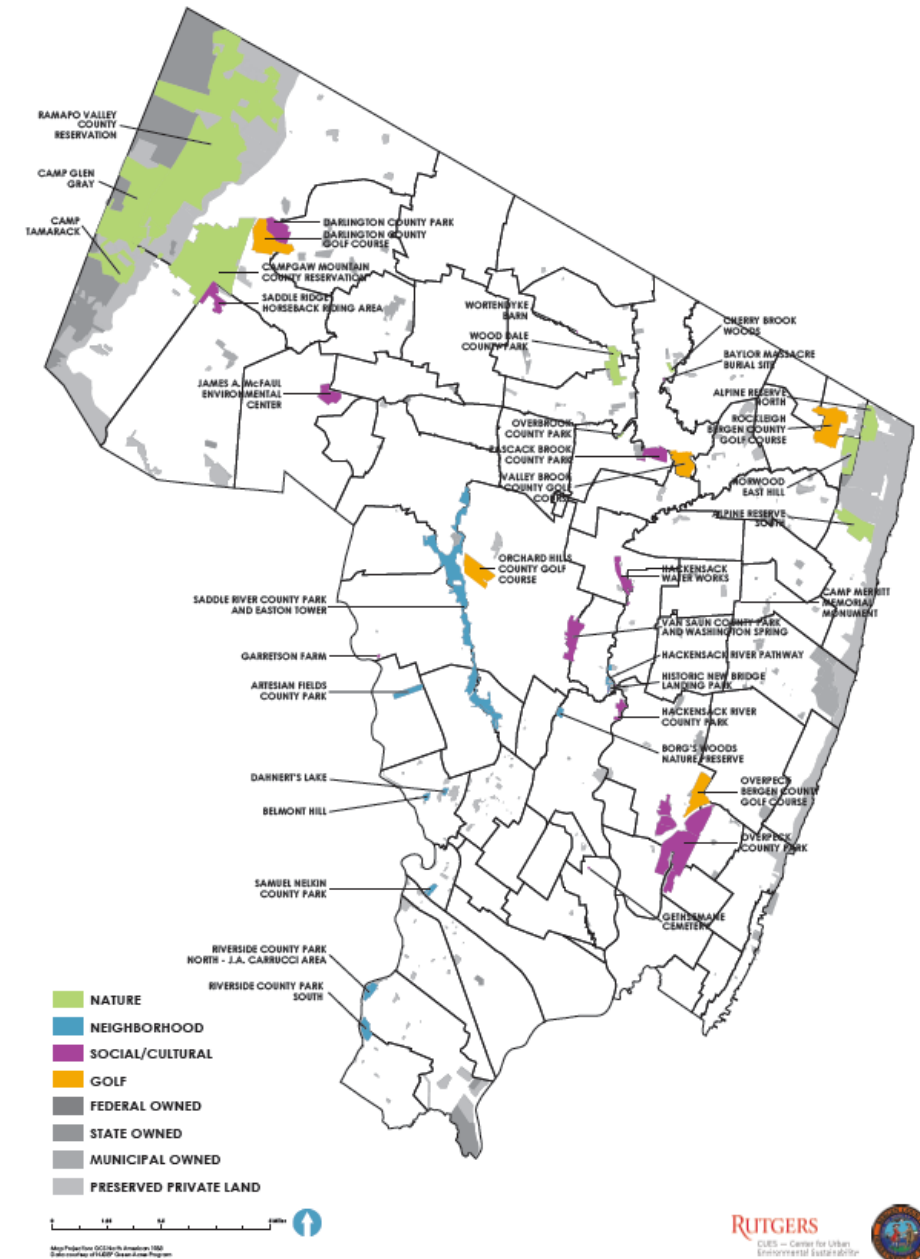
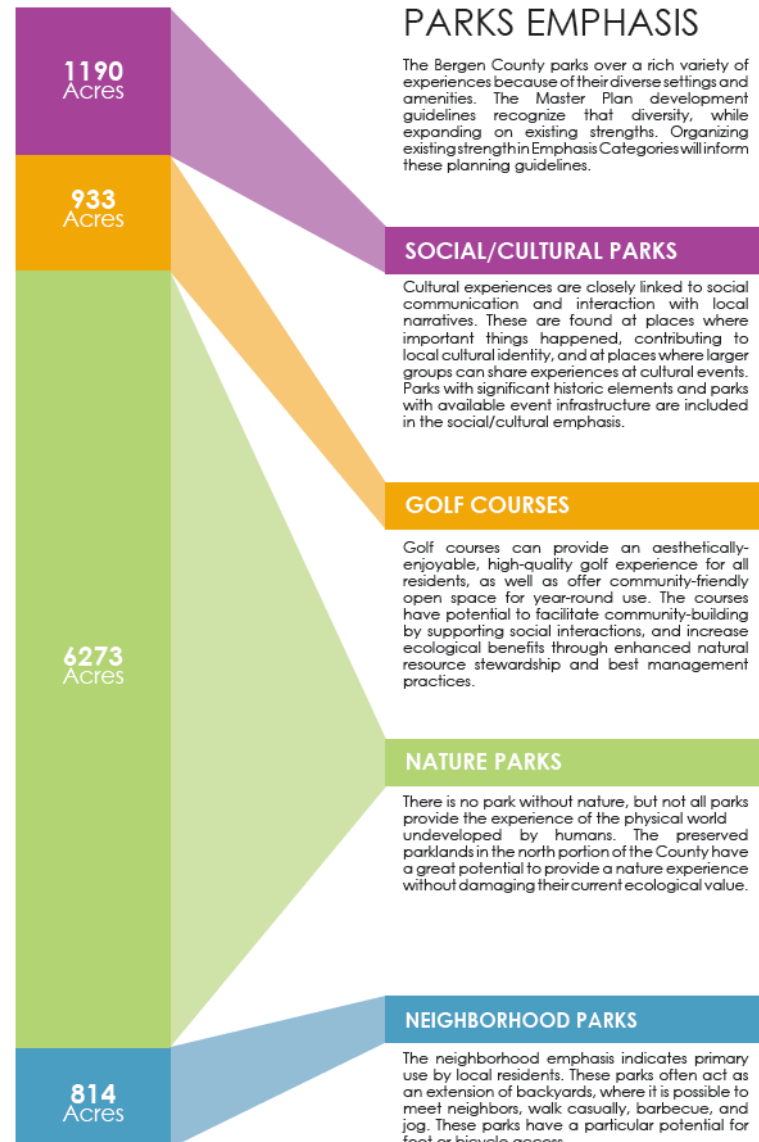


Parks Master Plan Elements

- Park Emphasis
- Anchor Parks
- Connectivity



Element-Park Emphasis



Goals for Park Emphasis

NATURE

- Enhance existing uses while preserving the overall feeling of nature ("NJ Pristine")
- Balance public use of the natural resources with protecting & enhancing overall ecosystem health
- Provide a venue for appropriate activities & events to be enjoyed without affecting the sustainability of natural resources
- Wildlife management

Goals for Park Emphasis

SOCIAL/CULTURAL

- Provide a park environment in which social interactions between a diversity of visitors can flourish
- Support existing and additional park uses that promote health and social interactions in a sustainable manner
- Encourage year-round use of facilities through more robust seasonal programming
- Design programming and events in ways that consider potential impacts on local residents and communities (e.g. traffic patterns)
- Celebrate iconic features of each site & facilitate enjoyment of them while enhancing ecosystem health

Goals for Park Emphasis

NEIGHBORHOOD

- Facilitate multi-modal access to promote health and reduce vehicular dependence
- Enhance existing infrastructure and facilitate a wider array of additional uses that require less-intrusive infrastructure (e.g. kayaking)
- Celebrate unique features of each site and facilitate enjoyment of them while enhancing ecosystem health
- Provide concession or amenity options as requested/appropriate
- Incorporate local art into the parks

Goals for Park Emphasis

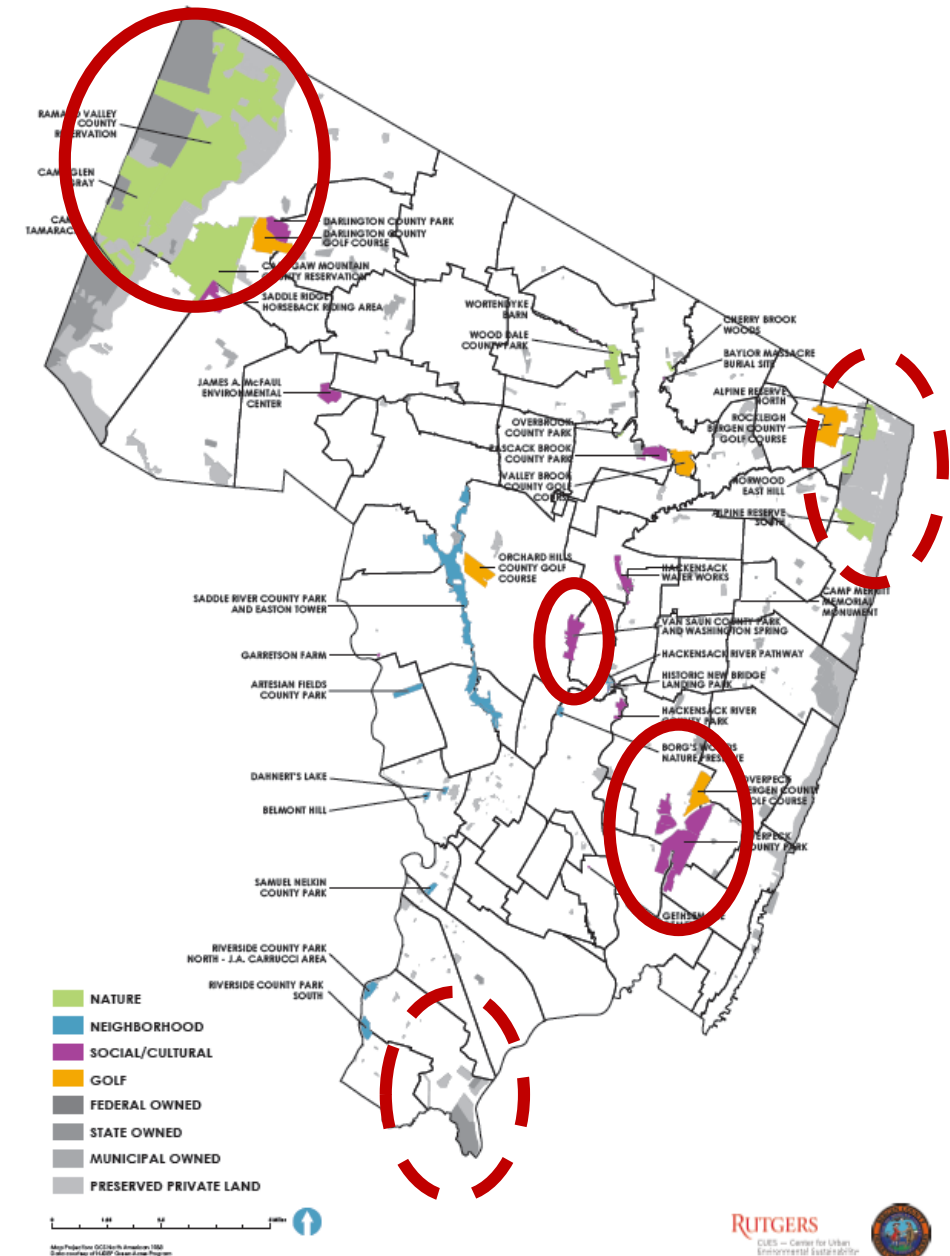
GOLF

- Provide aesthetically enjoyable, high-quality golf experience for all (men, women, students, handicapped) residents
- Facilitate community-building by supporting social interactions including food and beverage concessions
- Promote courses as community-friendly open space resources available for year-round use (where appropriate), rather than exclusive clubs
- Enhance natural resource stewardship and best management practices to increase ecological benefits provided by golf course open spaces

Element-Anchor Parks

- Provides amenities to a regional audience
- Management requires County resources & expertise
- Attractions beyond a municipal scale
- Space to host large events
- Multiple uses
- Could be County-owned or strong County collaboration with other owners

Ramapo Palisades Van Saun Overpeck Meadowlands





Element-Connectivity

- Multi-modal connections
- Encourage bike and pedestrian access
- Provide bike & pedestrian amenities
- Bike lanes on appropriate roadways
- Adaptive re-use of rail lines



Exploration-Connectivity (Local)



Overpeck Connectivity Analysis



Exploration-Connectivity



Photo courtesy Rogers Partners



Photo courtesy Kittelson & Assoc. Inc.



Exploration -Historic Connectivity

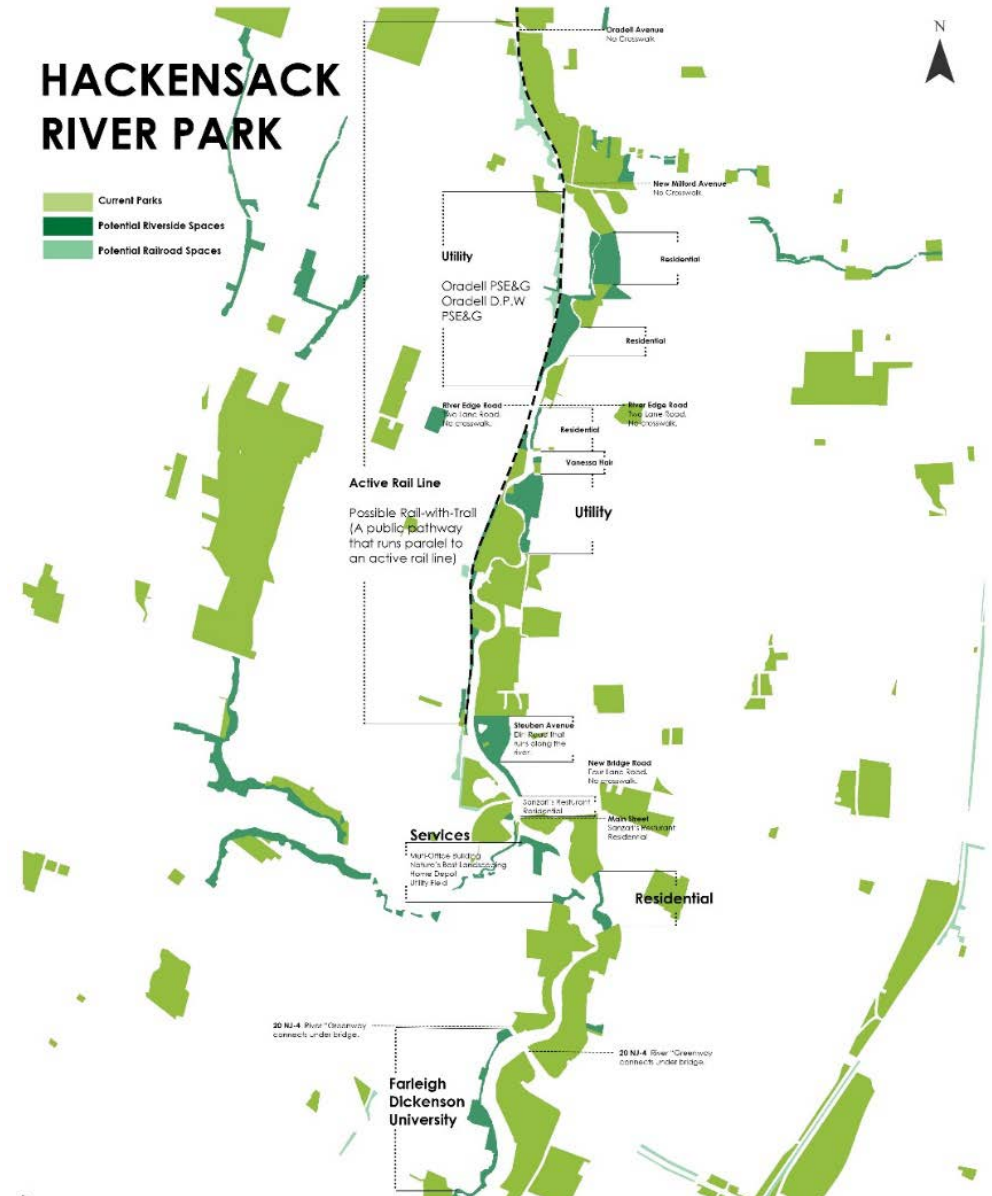
- **Identify** existing historical sites more clearly for the public via integrated map, website, app, etc.
- **Improve access** to historical sites via a green bike/walk network & **creatively reveal history** along these routes
- **Enliven** existing historical sites through appropriate events/concessions/programming
- **Enhance** existing historical sites/infrastructure through more sustainable maintenance strategies and priority improvements
- **Adaptive re-use** of sites/historical infrastructure (e.g. Hackensack Waterworks)
- Better **support/partner with** historic preservation groups through a stronger parks conservancy and streamlined business processes



Exploration

-Connectivity Corridor

- Develop contiguous open spaces along existing corridors (rivers, rail lines, etc.)
- Identify parcels that are ripe for open space acquisition (flood-prone, etc.)
- Identify potential partners in providing connectivity (e.g. university, corporate center, etc.)
- Role model Saddle River Park.



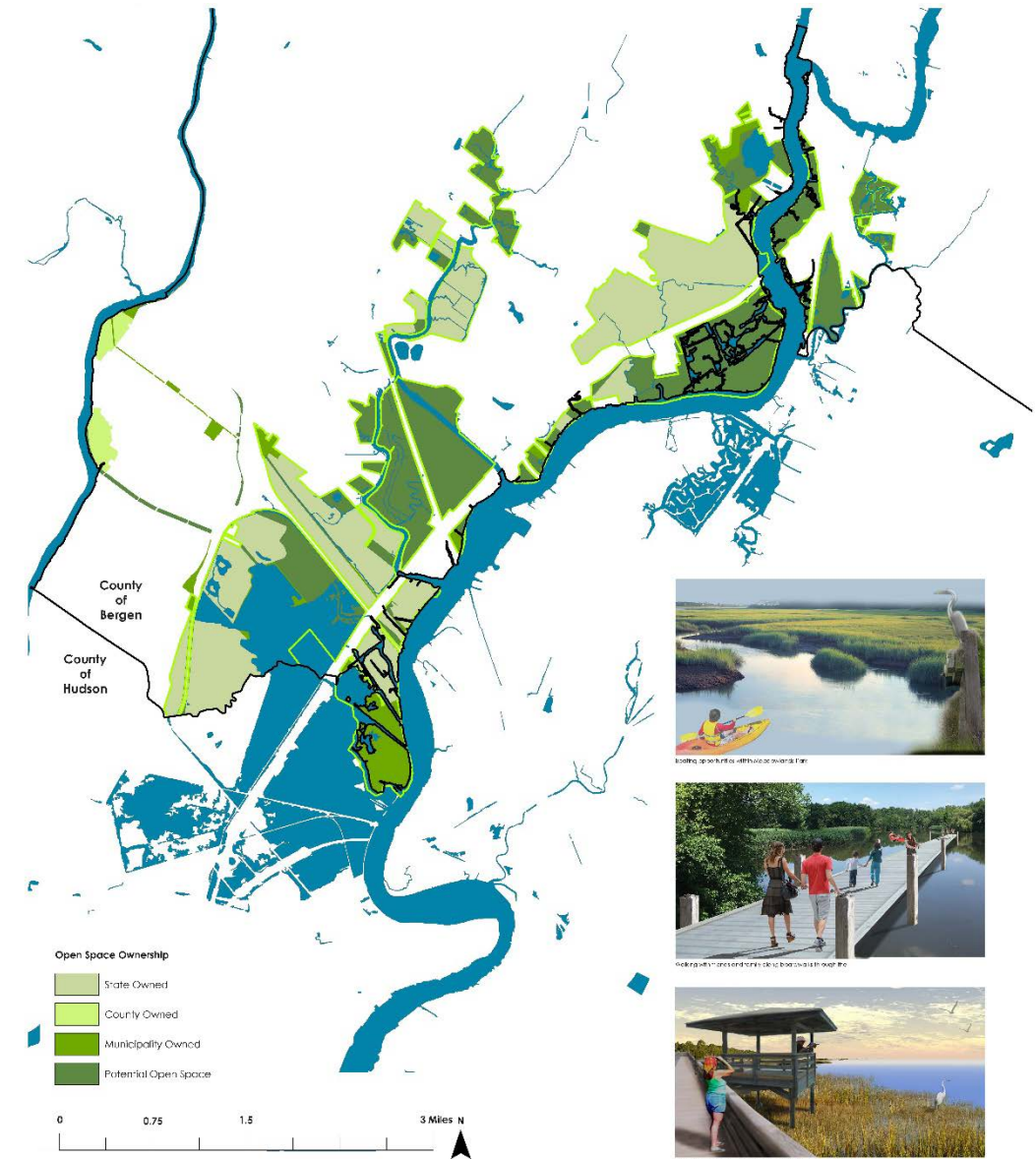
Exploration-Connectivity Corridor



Photo courtesy Tracy McGill

Exploration- Meadowlands Park

- Addresses southern under-served region
- Regional visitor base
- Potential connection to Passaic River parks
- Space to host large events
- Could be County-owned or strong County collaboration with other owners



Meadowfest



Photo courtesy MIB Mediaworks



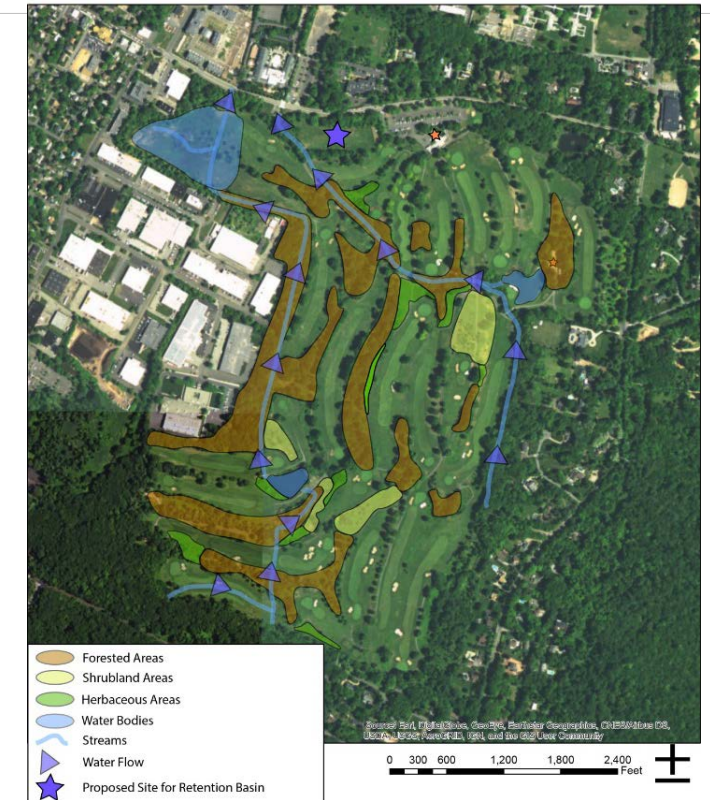
Photo courtesy MIB Mediaworks



Photo courtesy MIB Mediaworks

Exploration-Golf Emphasis

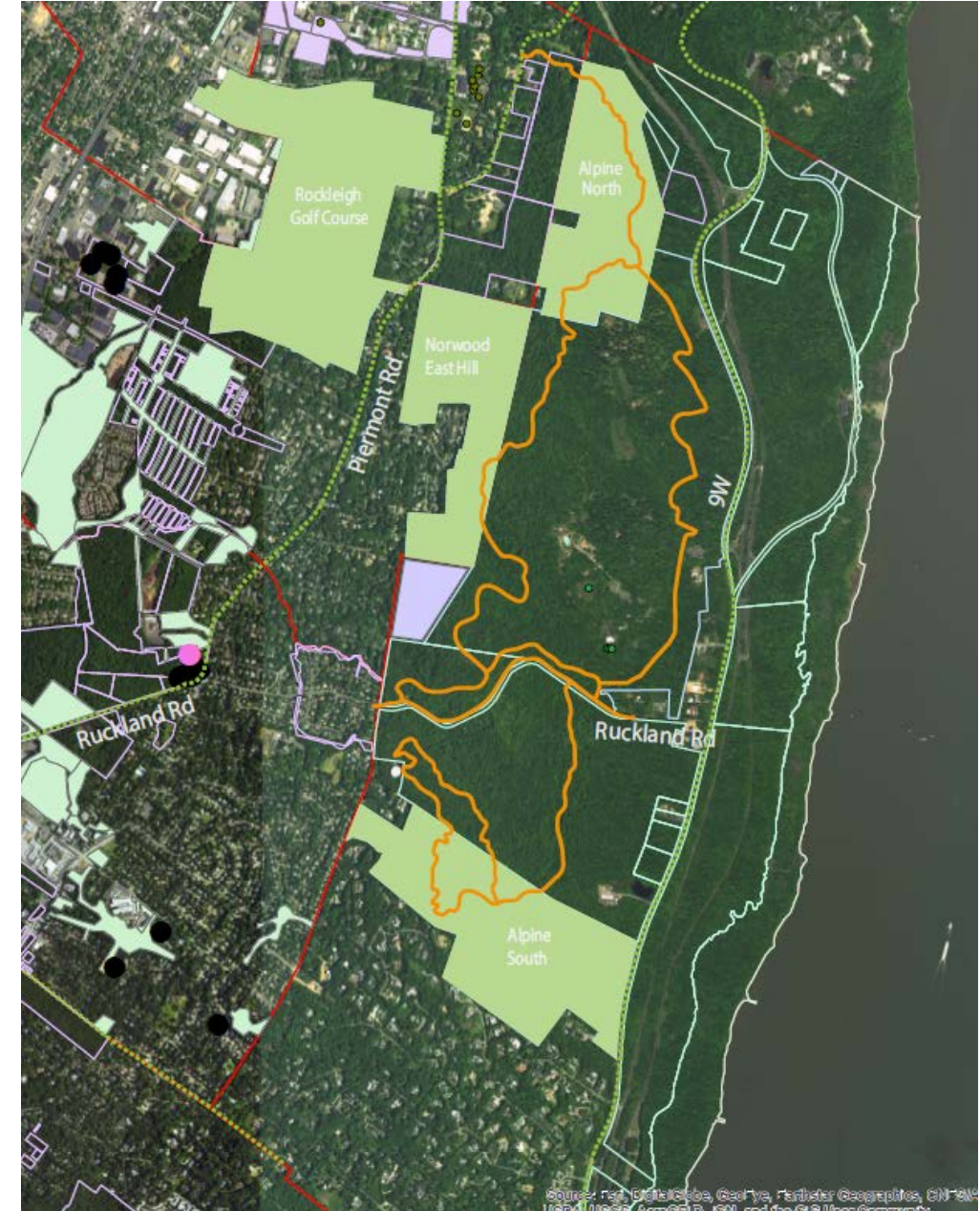
- Landscape & aesthetics
- Food & beverage concessions
- Native species
- Invasive species (e.g. geese, common reed, tree pathogens)
- Water & nutrient management to prevent eutrophication of water bodies





Exploration -User Conflicts

- Trail access & Trailheads
- Trails that can accommodate multiple users
- Light footprint
- Species habitat considerations
- Rules & Rangers?

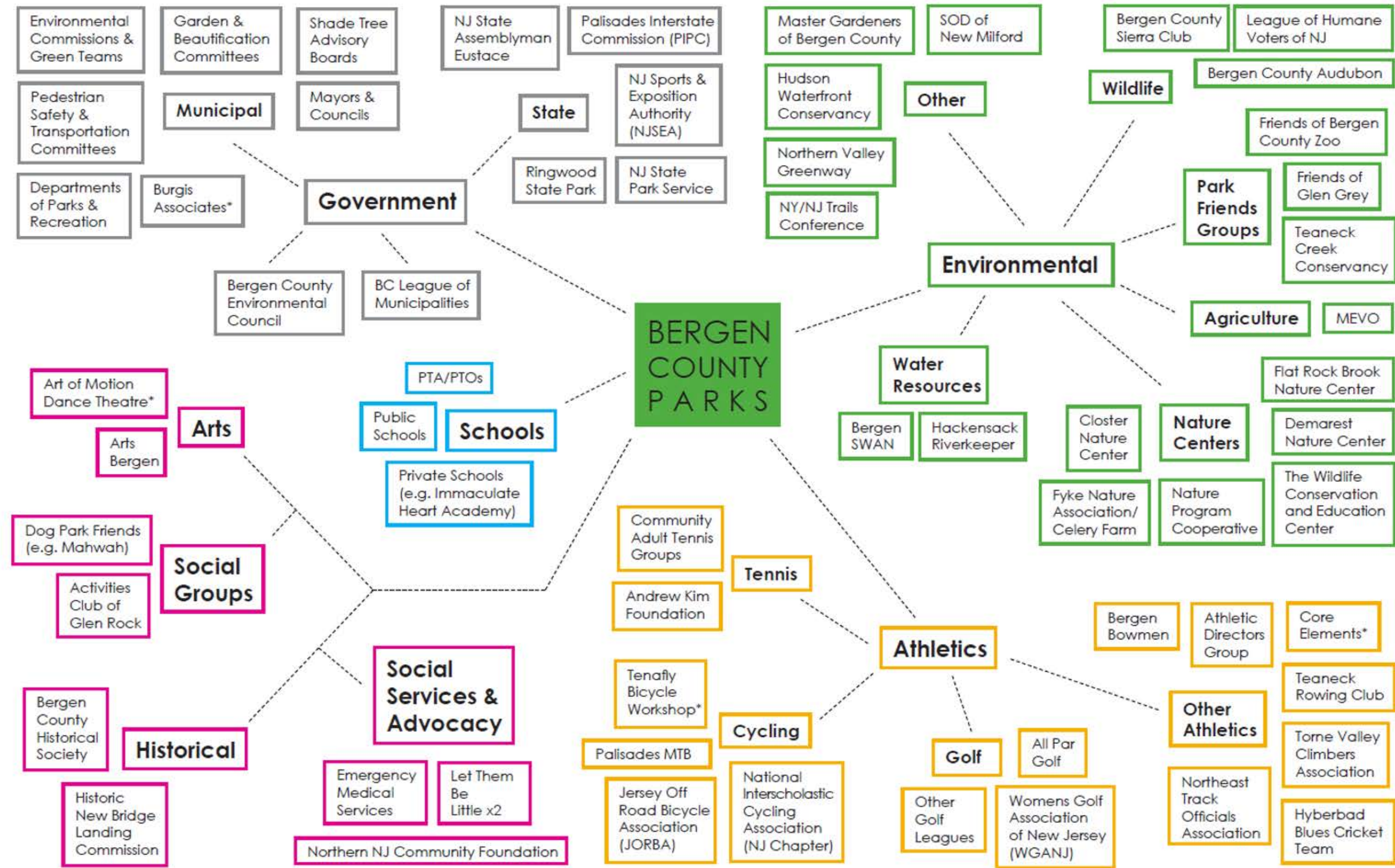


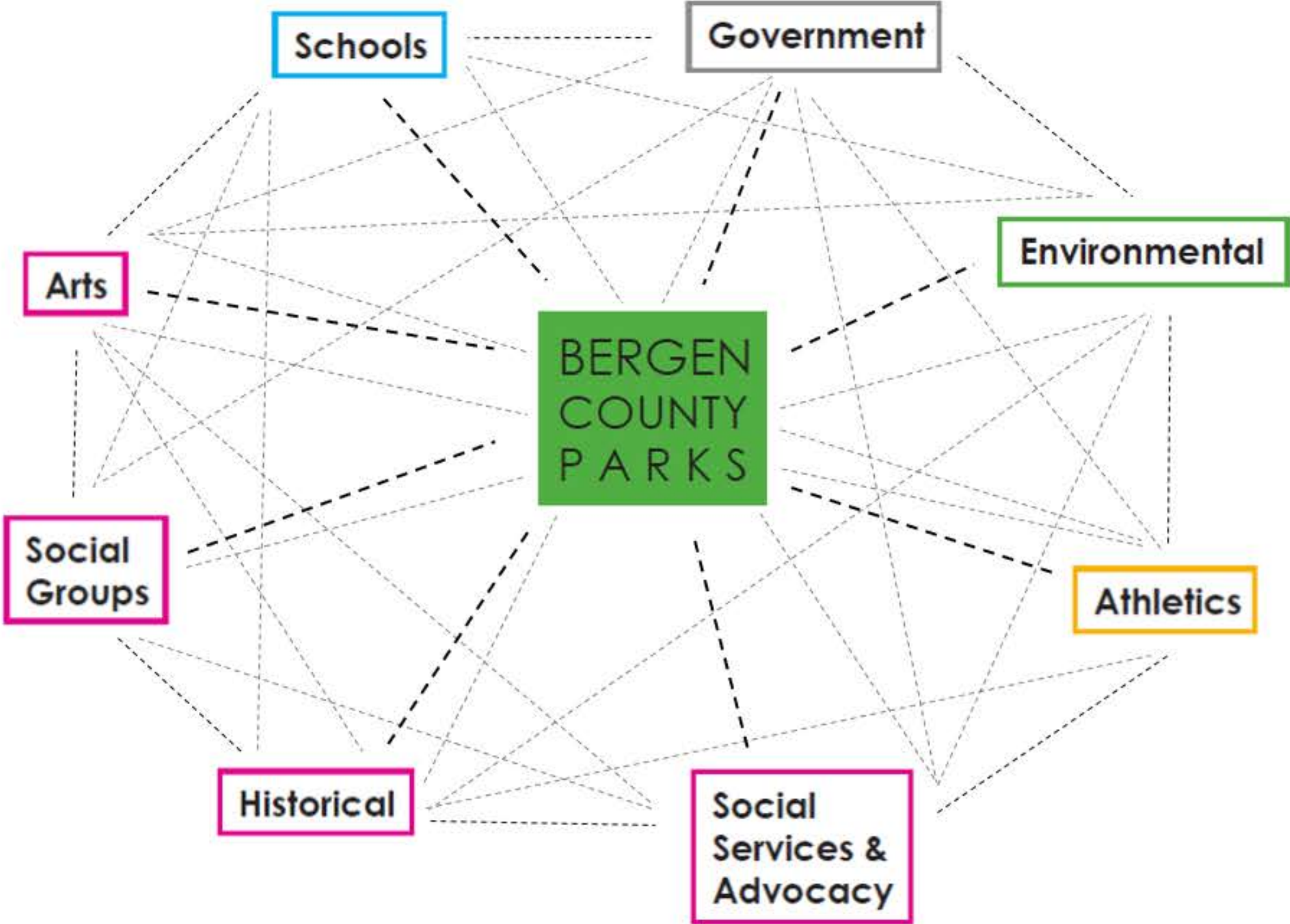
Implementation Challenges

- Fostering Effective Collaborations
- Diverse Interest Groups
- Transportation & Congestion
- Increasing Park Land in Underserved Areas
- Business Model & Funding

Solution-Fostering Effective Collaborations

May Community Meetings





Solution-Accommodating Diverse Users

Sample Events Schedule

<u>Event</u>	<u>Day of Week</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Estimated Attendance</u>
<i>Week of July 10</i>			
Movie Series	Wednesday pm	Van Saun Park	1,000
Small-Scale Music Series (Jazz/Blues/Bluegrass)	Friday pm	Wood Dale County Park	300
Exercise Series (Yoga/Tai Chi/Boot Camp)	Tuesday/Thursday (am or pm)	Hackensack River County Park	100
Kids Movie Series	Friday pm	Samuel Nelkin County Park	750
¹ Overpeck Amphitheater Summer Festival Series	tbd (Thurs pm, Sat pm)	Overpeck Amphitheater	3,500
Storytelling Series (Library Partner)	Sunday (am/early pm)	Pascack Brook County Park	150
Dance Series (Salsa, Tango, Swing)	Sunday	Darlington County Park	1,000
<i>Week of July 17</i>			
Movie Series	Wednesday pm	Riverside County Park South	1,000
Small-Scale Music Series (Jazz/Blues/Bluegrass)	Friday pm	Van Saun Park	300
Exercise Series (Yoga/Tai Chi/Boot Camp)	Tuesday/Thursday (am or pm)	Darlington County Park	100
Kids Movie Series	Friday pm	Belmont Hill	750
¹ Overpeck Amphitheater Summer Festival Series	tbd (Thurs pm, Sat pm)	Overpeck Amphitheater	3,500
Storytelling Series (Library Partner)	Sunday (am/early pm)	Wood Dale County Park	150
Dance Series (Salsa, Tango, Swing)	Sunday	Overpeck Park - Henry Hoebel Area	1,000
<i>Week of July 24</i>			
Movie Series	Wednesday pm	Saddle River County Park - Otto C. Pehle Area	1,000
Small-Scale Music Series (Jazz/Blues/Bluegrass)	Friday pm	Samuel Nelkin County Park	300
Exercise Series (Yoga/Tai Chi/Boot Camp)	Tuesday/Thursday (am or pm)	Overpeck Park - Henry Hoebel Area	100
Kids Movie Series	Friday pm	Van Saun Park	750
¹ Overpeck Amphitheater Summer Festival Series	tbd (Thurs pm, Sat pm)	Overpeck Amphitheater	3,500
Storytelling Series (Library Partner)	Sunday (am/early pm)	James A. McFaul Environmental Center	150
Dance Series (Salsa, Tango, Swing)	Sunday	Pascack Brook County Park	1,000



Solutions-Expanded Amenities





Solutions-Anchor Park Transportation



- Bicycle, pedestrian, mass transit and vehicular access



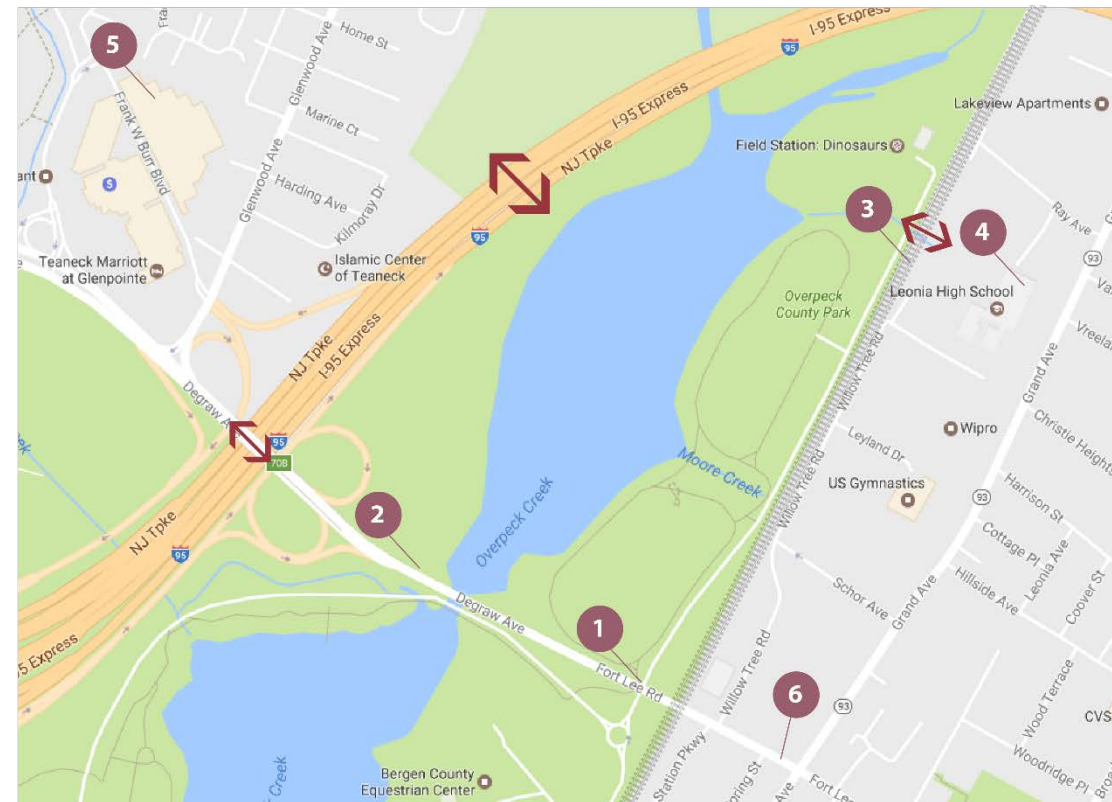
- Parking adequacy and alternatives



- Internal circulation



- Event-specific considerations



Henry Hoebel Area
Overpeck Park

- 1 Vehicular, Bicycle and Pedestrian Entrance
 - 2 Vehicular, Bicycle and Pedestrian Entrance
 - 3 Train tracks blocking pedestrian and bicycle entrance
 - 4 Leonia High School
 - 5 Corporate campus
 - 6 Bus Stop
- Red double-headed arrow: Barriers to movement or access



Solutions-Ecology

Forests

- Dominated by oak, hickory
- Elm, ash, birch
- cottonwood, maple, beech
- Pockets of hemlock forests and hardwood swamps

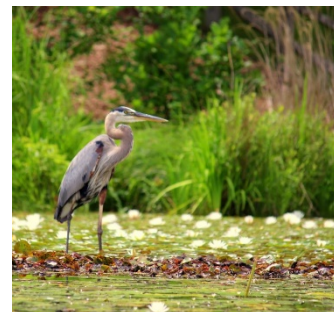
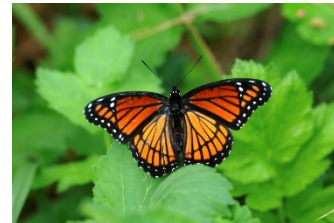
Fertile lowlands

- Adjacent to watersheds with rich soils formed during glaciation

Open water, marshes & wetlands

- Important habitat for migratory birds along the Atlantic Flyway

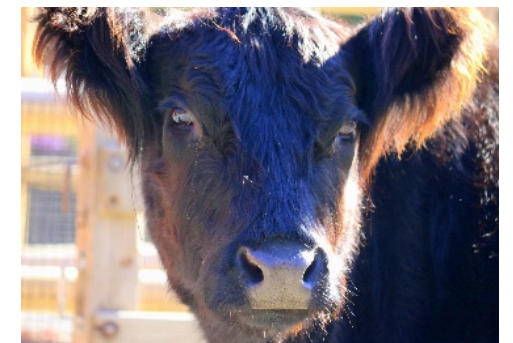
Watershed	Acres of Forest in County Parks	Acres of Wetland in County Parks	Acres of Water in County Parks
Ramapo River	4341	296	87
Hackensack River	1428	272	208
Hudson River	429	70	3
Saddle River	173	186	65
Passaic River	69	44	8



Ecologic Quality

- Enhance, preserve, & conserve stream and river corridors to filter surface runoff
- Restore wetlands to provide buffer to waterways and further filtration of runoff
- Plant and expand native forest and native meadow to increase infiltration and carbon sequestration
- Manage non-point sources of pollution
- Restore, enhance and support native forest regeneration
- Avoid fragmentation of existing forest patches and restore where forests have been fragmented
- Avoid deforestation and destruction of mature tree canopy
- Develop adaptive management plans for all county-owned forest/woodland

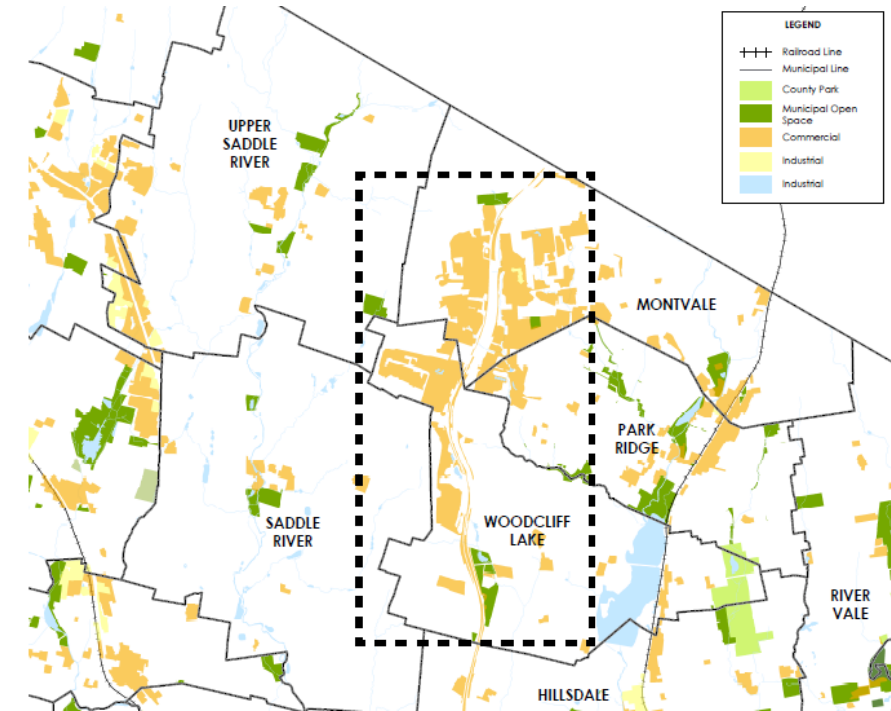
Managing runoff from County parklands to improve water quality.



Solutions - Underserved Areas

In areas lacking adequate open space, how can we identify potential ways to increase open space through redevelopment?

- Aging office parks in the north?
- Former industrial parcels in south?
- Even an old gas station can become a pocket park!



Challenge-Investment in Parks

- Increasing demands on public open space due to population growth and demographic diversity place additional pressures on the existing parks
- Overall park maintenance is adequate at present, but some properties are below standards
- Present business model is inadequate to support needed ongoing maintenance, additional land acquisition, or enhanced facilities & programming

Next Steps

- May: Present & discuss early concepts with the public
- June-Aug: Develop comprehensive master plan report
- Sep: Review by County
- Oct: Revisions
- Nov/Dec: Final draft



Achieving Open Space Goals Together

- How can **YOU** help?
- How can **YOUR GROUP** help?
- How can **YOUR TOWN** help?

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