

Goals and Recommendations

Hunterdon County is fortunate given the high degree of preservation activity that is occurring. It is also fortunate in that so many of the organizations — both public and private — have years of experience and success in obtaining funding, negotiating with property owners, and creating partnerships with each other to leverage funding. This presents a tremendous opportunity — an opportunity for groups to work together, to cost-share, and thus to stretch their dollars in advancing common goals.

The ability to achieve the ambitious goals set forth by the County Park System and Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board remain uncertain, however, even in the face of such opportunity. The Trust Fund could be used to retire debt service on bonds to purchase additional parkland and farmland. But the County would still have to allocate an unprecedented amount of additional funding to achieve the goals of both programs.

In recent years, the Freeholders have spent on average \$3.4 million annually between the two programs. Nearly \$8 million in annual expenditures could be required to secure the 6000+ acres of parkland and 40,000+ acres of farmland desired in the next 10 years (the duration of the current State spending program), depending on funding strategies used and economic conditions. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the Trust Fund will remain in effect beyond 2004. County voters

must approve its continuation at that time.

Funding increases may or may not be possible. Still, the County can make great advances toward achieving its goals, providing the Trust Fund is in place through the next 10 years. This chapter offers goals and recommendations to guide the Board of Chosen Freeholders in its annual and long-range budget and program decisions.

Goals

Goal: Continue to support the farmland preservation program administered by the County Agriculture Development Board.

The Farmland Preservation Program represents perhaps the most successful of preservation programs in Hunterdon County. Development rights, or easements, are far less costly than lands purchased in fee. Furthermore, local and County contributions are modest for the return that the program is able to provide. The reason is that the State absorbs the lion's share of the purchase price, which is indexed according to easement values and averages about 66 percent.

There are additional reasons to aggressively support the Farmland Preservation Program. Paramount is the need to capitalize on the State funding available through a narrow 10-year time frame to preserve large, relatively contiguous masses of farmland.

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Second, this program not only requires a relatively modest outlay of funding from the County (and municipality) compared to other State-supported preservation programs, but it retains the land on the tax rolls. It is true that the County must take responsibility for monitoring most preserved farms to ensure that the easement restrictions are upheld. However, unlike developed parkland, there are no operation and maintenance requirements. Easement monitoring currently necessitates hiring an intern during the summer on an annual basis.

Third, prime farmland is perhaps the most vulnerable resource in the County. Generally, prime farmland soils are particularly well-suited for development. As development pressures mount, this resource will be increasingly at risk.

Finally, County residents have voiced ongoing support for farmland preservation for years. The Freeholder Board should respond accordingly, by continuing to contribute its local cost-share for the purchase of development rights.

Goal: Support the continued expansion of the County Park System by seeking not only Green Acres funding for future acquisitions, but also municipal contributions, nonprofit support, and/or other potential sources.

Most County parks have been acquired exclusively through a combination of County and State funding sources. Currently, Hunterdon

County is positioned to receive 50 percent State grants to support acquisitions. Even so, the Park System would have to absorb at least 60 percent of the \$38 million in revenues from the Trust Fund projected over the next 10 years, to achieve its goal of acquiring more than 6,000 acres of land.

County funds could be stretched much further if the Park System were able to negotiate additional resources from municipalities and/or nonprofit organizations. Over the past year, the Park System entered into such arrangements in three instances. In 1999, a new park property was acquired in Union Township through a joint arrangement with the Township (see p. 20 and Fig. 9).

In Lebanon Township, the County Park System is collaborating with the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance to add 300 acres to the Park System. HLTA, in turn, is seeking resources from a private foundation, potentially reducing the County's financial burden. In West Amwell, the Park System is teaming up with the D&R Greenway, West Amwell and the State to assemble a 700-acre tract, a portion of which will serve as a General Use Park if the acquisition comes to fruition.

In each example, the properties in question advance the goals of all parties involved. Therefore, each participant agrees to share in the acquisition and/or maintenance responsibilities.

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The County Park System should view future park acquisitions in much the same way that the Farmland Preservation Program functions. By sharing resources with other entities having common preservation goals, the County will be able to stretch its dollars further.

The County Park System has identified other potential funding sources which should also be tapped for further leveraging capacity. Three such sources are:

1. Tea-21 Funding – The federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (Tea-21), passed in 1998, authorizes numerous transportation programs for six years. One of the programs it funds is the Transportation Enhancement Program, begun under prior ISTEA legislation. Transportation enhancement projects that can receive such funding cover 12 categories, including, for example, acquisition of abandoned railway corridors for use as pedestrian or bicycle trails.

The Park System has secured ISTEA funding in the past for bridge improvements on the Columbia Trail. However, the Transportation Enhancement Program is very competitive. Twelve million dollars was distributed statewide in FY 2000 among 35 projects – an average of less than \$350,000 per project. Only one of the funded projects was in Hunterdon County.

2. Land and Water Conservation

Fund – Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964. The purpose of this Fund is to use revenues from offshore oil and gas receipts to purchase land and water for conservation and recreation. The LWCF is authorized to receive \$900 million annually. However, a significant portion of the funds have been diverted to other uses.

In FY 2000, Congress appropriated matching grants to the states for the first time since 1995. New Jersey received just over \$1 million and this funding will be administered through the Office of Green Acres. The Conservation and Reinvestment Act is currently under consideration by Congress. This Act would fund the program at the \$900 million level and do so automatically, eliminating the current need for annual appropriations. If approved, this would translate into nearly \$18 million for New Jersey in FY 2001. Since the Act funds a variety of conservation-related programs, including but not limited to the LWCF, New Jersey would be eligible for \$60 million per year in total.

3. Forest Legacy Program – The Forest Legacy Program is a federal program developed in partnership with states to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. In New Jersey, Forest Legacy funding is devoted strictly to the Highlands Region. New Jersey receives on average only \$1 to \$1.5 million annually. The pro-

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gram is intended for State acquisitions (fee simple or easements) however, counties are able to submit recommendations to the State for property acquisitions.

Given the numerous potential leveraging opportunities that exist or may avail themselves to the Park System, the Freeholder Board's future funding decisions should take into consideration whether other partners and funding programs are utilized to acquire additional property.

Goal: Consider future partnerships with nonprofit organizations pursuing land preservation projects that are consistent with the County's parkland, open space, and farmland preservation goals.

Hunterdon County has entered into successful partnership arrangements in the past with nonprofit land conservation organizations that have requested County support on specific acquisition projects. This it has done after thorough review of the project's merits and feasibility, on a case by case basis. There are several nonprofit organizations active in Hunterdon County with demonstrated capabilities in packaging and facilitating acquisitions. In these situations, the preserved property does not become County parkland; instead, primary ownership and maintenance rests with the lead nonprofit or another partner.

The benefits of entering joint funding arrangements can be significant.

Nonprofit organizations typically obtain funding from a variety of sources on a given project. This reduces the amount that any single participating partner must contribute. Furthermore, these arrangements help the County to fulfill its goals more effectively by spreading limited resources among many more properties, while relieving it of long term management costs. Providing the project under consideration is one that is financially and administratively feasible and one that advances the County's myriad land preservation goals, the Freeholders should continue to support opportunities for joint ventures.

Goal: Provide a stable source of funding to advance municipal open space plans and preservation initiatives.

Although the majority of townships in Hunterdon County have approved open space trust funds, most do not have the tax base necessary to generate significant funding in the short term. Consequently, municipalities must issue bonds for land preservation and use the trust fund to retire debt service or to make down payments on the bonds.

Thus far, the County's smaller communities – boroughs, city and town – have not instituted trust funds. In some cases, there simply isn't enough land to warrant instituting a trust fund. Nevertheless, several of these municipalities have identified the need to supplement existing parkland, even if only with modest

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additions.

It is certainly true that virtually every municipality reaps the indirect benefits from County-preserved farmland and parkland. Such benefits include reduced traffic and savings in school costs as well as other local and regional services that residential development demands. However, not all communities will enjoy the accessible and visible advantages of a County park or preserved farm situated within its own borders. Several local officials have expressed this concern. It is a concern that may translate into reduced support for the County Trust Fund when it is up for reconsideration in 2004.

The County should consider providing a modest return on the contribution that the municipalities make toward the County Trust Fund. This supports the Trust Fund's broader mission of open space preservation, while simultaneously lending valuable assistance to our municipalities.

Goal: Establish a system for implementing open space funding programs that relieves the Freeholder Board of unnecessary administrative burdens.

Over the past two years, the Board of Chosen Freeholders has been approached with several requests to support land acquisition projects. These requests have been made by nonprofit organizations but could also be made by municipalities in the future. And they are expected to continue so long as State funding is available for land preservation.

While such projects may merit consideration by the Freeholder Board, there must be a system in place that removes the Board from performing unnecessary administrative functions that would otherwise be accomplished by the appropriate County departments.

In the end, funding decisions rest with the Freeholder Board. However, municipal and nonprofit requests for County funding should be processed by the County departments and boards with the resources and staff experienced in land preservation. Recommendations can then be forwarded to the Freeholder Board for a final determination. This approach is entirely consistent with that used by the County Agriculture Development Board to review applications for farmland preservation. Likewise, it is consistent with the procedures used by the Hunterdon County Park System.

Goal: Strengthen open space and parks planning through interdepartmental coordination.

The Hunterdon County Planning Board is equipped with resources and capabilities critical to open space/ parks planning and to farmland preservation. Its resources should be shared among the various boards and departments responsible for related planning programs.

One of many tools available to the Planning Board is a computer-based tool known as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). GIS is a power-

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ful planning tool because it allows spatial data such as wetlands, soils, geology, slopes, and land use to be visually displayed, inter-related, and mathematically analyzed. For example, using GIS, one can conduct an initial evaluation of a property for its suitability as a park according to a pre-determined set of environmental factors such as presence of wetlands, steep slopes, soil characteristics, acreage and access. GIS can assist with short-term land use decisions as well as long-term master planning issues.

Using GIS, the CADB has identified "Preservation Priority Areas." While still evaluating the merits of these areas as a planning tool, the CADB's intent is to assist municipalities in identifying target properties for the State Farmland Preservation Program. Preservation Priority Areas are groups of properties sharing certain soil characteristics and of a minimum size. The CADB also uses GIS to help evaluate requests for expansion of Agriculture Development Areas and to help evaluate individual applications for farmland preservation. These are just a few examples of GIS applications.

The Hunterdon County Planning Department provides professional planning staff to the CADB. The CADB has access not only to GIS but to other planning tools and expertise housed within the Plan-

ning Department.

Other County departments, such as the Hunterdon County Park System, also utilize GIS, but may not necessarily have the staff and time needed to fully develop planning expertise. The Planning Board collaborated with the Hunterdon County Park System on its 1980 Parks Plan. However, since then, it has not maintained a consistent working relationship. Future open space and parks planning initiatives may benefit from increased coordination between the Planning Board and Park System.

Goal: Provide a stable source of funding to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of County-owned historic structures.

The County Trust Fund can be used for the historic preservation of County-owned historic properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas or objects (hereby referred to as facilities). The County holds numerous facilities, many of them of existing or potential historical significance.

As such, there must be a means for retaining the integrity of these facilities. However, given limited funding which is generated by the County tax, criteria need to be established for determining that which is considered of historical significance. Also, policies must be in place to determine how best

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to prioritize expenditures. The Historic Preservation Plan offers such policies and recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Create a special funding program for municipalities and nonprofit organizations through an Open Space Trust Fund Municipal Grants Program and Nonprofit Grants Program, and create an Open Space Advisory Board to oversee the programs.

A Discretionary Fund should be created for municipal and nonprofit preservation efforts that advance the purposes of the County Open Space Trust Fund. The details of the program must be furnished as quickly as possible, once the Board of Freeholders approves this recommendation in concept. What follows is the suggested framework for this proposal.

A) Municipal Grants Program

It is recommended that the Freeholders return to each municipality up to 10 percent of its contribution toward the County Open Space Trust Fund (see also p. 64). This creates a stable source of funding for a variety of projects undertaken by municipalities. Providing they can demonstrate that the proposed project meets basic eligibility criteria, they should be able to utilize the funding or bank it over a period of time when the project is anticipated to take place.

Projects eligible for funding should

include:

- land and easement acquisitions for the purposes of open space, recreation, conservation, or farmland preservation;
- preparation of municipal master plan elements such as open space, parks and recreation plans or farmland preservation plans;
- preparation of Open Space and Recreation Plans pursuant to the Green Acres Green Trust Planning Incentive Program; and
- contributions toward the preservation of County-owned historic structures or facilities.

Municipalities seeking funding for land or easement acquisitions should be able to use the funding either to pay outright for the property, to serve as down payment on a bond or to retire debt service on a bond. In order to provide as much flexibility as possible, the Discretionary Fund should be available to support land or easement acquisitions, regardless of whether the municipality is receiving other funds, including County, State, or private sources.

Funding for relevant municipal master plan elements should be provided on a reimbursement basis if and when the Freeholder Board approves the plans for incorporation into the County Trust Fund Plan.

B) Nonprofit Grants Program

Like the Municipal Grants Program, it is recommended that the Nonprofit Grants Program be considered for

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up to 10% of the annual amount generated by the Trust Fund. Projects eligible for funding should include land and easement acquisitions for the purposes of open space, recreation, or conservation. These are projects that do not involve County ownership or management responsibilities, but clearly advance the purposes and goals of the County's Park and Recreation Plan. Funding for farmland preservation should be sought either through the CADB or else from municipalities that may take advantage of the Municipal Grants Program.

Funding through the Nonprofit Grants Program should be awarded on a competitive basis at least once a year. Criteria and a scoring system should be established to evaluate the merits of each application on its own and also to rank the applications relative to each other. An equitable and objective review process must be used for determining qualifying projects in the event funding requests exceed available resources.

C) Staffing and Board Oversight

The Freeholder Board should create a new entity, called the Hunterdon County Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB). The OSAB should be charged with:

- reviewing and making annual funding recommendations to the Freeholder Board on applications received through the Municipal Grants Program and the Nonprofit Grants Program;

and

- developing program policies, procedures and requirements for implementing these programs.

OSAB membership should consist of the following:

- 1 representative of the County Agriculture Development Board
- 1 representative from the Hunterdon County Park System
- 1 representative from the Hunterdon County Planning Board
- 4 representatives of the public
- 1 ex-officio member from the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

The Freeholder Board should consider the following policies related to OSAB public members:

- Public members should not serve on any of the aforementioned County Boards/Commission.
- To avoid any conflicts of interest or appearance of any conflicts, public members should not be concurrently serving as elected local officials.
- No two public members should reside within the same municipality.
- With each new appointment, the Freeholder Board should select an individual from a municipality that was not represented by the individual being replaced, thus rotating membership around all 26 municipi-

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palties.

The Freeholder Board should appoint two public members from each of the two geographic regions shown (see Appendix A). The geographic regions were chosen based on two criteria. First, each region's municipalities contribute approximately the same share toward the County Trust Fund. Secondly, they generally group together those municipalities within the same physiographic province. This is an important factor because the physical characteristics that distinguish these regions can impact on the type and use of preserved lands.

Board members should serve three-year terms, however initial membership terms should be staggered for some of the members. For instance, County representatives could each serve three-year terms. The initial public members could serve one-, two- or three-year terms, with subsequent members serving three-year terms. The Board should be appointed as soon as possible and work with staff to develop policies and procedures for both grant programs.

The County Planning Board staff should serve the OSAB and administer the grant programs. It should set up application procedures, criteria and policies for OSAB approval and thereafter, process grant applications for the municipal and non-profit programs.

Discretionary funds that are not util-

ized in any given year should be made available for any of the purposes set forth in the County Trust Fund at the discretion of the Freeholder Board.

Recommendation: Allocation of available funding among the numerous recommended Trust Fund programs should be determined on an annual basis, with up to 10% allocated each to the Municipal Grants Program, Nonprofit Grants Program, and historic preservation.

The County Open Space Trust Fund permits the Freeholder Board to raise up to three cents per \$100 of total equalized real property valuation on an annual basis. The Board of Chosen Freeholders may elect to establish a predetermined percentage allocation of the Trust Fund to be distributed among the various programs supported by the Trust Fund. Alternatively, it can make such decisions on an annual basis.

Annual determinations provide greater flexibility. This allows the Board to respond to unanticipated needs in any particular year and to shift funding around accordingly to address such needs.

Funding for the Park System and for the Farmland Preservation Program should be determined annually. It should be based on budget requests, projected needs, and a demonstration that the requests complement and advance the County's vision and goals for open space, park-

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land and farmland preservation contained in the Farmland Preservation Plan, the Park and Recreation Plan and the Open Space Trust Fund Plan.

To ensure a stable source of funding for historic preservation, for the Municipal Grants Program, and for the Nonprofit Grants Program, the Freeholder Board could allocate up to 10 percent of the Trust Fund annually toward each. With regard to the Municipal Grants Program, a set percentage (not to exceed 10 percent) of each municipality's annual contribution toward the County Open Space Trust Fund would be returned (see also p. 62) for local use.

In FY 2000, the Trust Fund is projected to raise \$3,600,000. Thus, the three programs combined would be eligible for up to \$1.08 million. – or 30 percent of the entire Trust Fund.

Recommendation: In making long-term funding decisions, the Freeholder Board should weigh the merits of bonding and/or capital funds to supplement Trust Fund monies.

The Open Space Trust Fund is expected to generate approximately \$3.6 million initially, assuming three cents were levied. The total will likely increase providing the County continues to experience a steady increase in ratables over the duration of its lifetime.

This amount is slightly more than

the total that the County has spent annually on farmland preservation and parkland acquisitions combined over the past three years (\$3.4 million). If the Trust Fund were used in lieu of current capital funds and bonding, it would not be able to additionally support historic preservation or the Municipal and Nonprofit Grants Programs contained in this Plan. Furthermore, although the Trust Fund will likely increase over the years as the County's ratable base grows, this increase may not be enough to support the ambitious goals of the CADB and Park System over the next 10 years.

There are many different long term financial options available to the County which must be considered by the Freeholder Board once it has determined the programs it chooses to support. One approach, used by Somerset County, is to bond a large sum of money up front. The money could be used to "front-load" preservation projects over the next few years.

Another approach would be to bond every year or two, depending on need and economic conditions. Any bonding that occurred during the first five years of the Trust Fund would have to be paid back using the County's operating budget in the event that the Trust Fund failed to be renewed in 2004. Bonding could be supplemented or replaced by available capital funding.

Additional financial analysis and guidance is offered in Appendix B.

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Recommendation: County departments responsible for implementing Trust Fund programs should convene periodically to review program needs and issues, and to offer recommended changes to the Freeholder Board as necessary.

Several new programs and administrative procedures could be introduced with the institution of the Open Space Trust Fund. The success of these programs will only be determined with time, as systems

are fine-tuned and administrative procedures are refined.

The Freeholder Board should stay apprised of progress and issues as newly established Trust Fund programs are implemented. To provide necessary guidance and input, it is recommended that the departments involved in implementing the Trust Fund convene annually to review and discuss respective financial and administrative issues, accomplishments, and anticipated future program needs or modifications. Those involved should include representa-

Scenario: County bonds for land preservation and uses Trust Fund to pay debt service...

The Hunterdon County Treasurer has determined, based on certain assumptions, that \$24 million could be bonded within the first four years of the Trust Fund and paid off entirely using the Open Space Trust fund over a 10-year period. Preliminary projections were made to determine whether such funding could achieve County Park System and CADB goals over the next 10 years. The financial analysis assumed that 20 percent of the annual Trust Fund would be set aside for historic preservation and for the Municipal and Nonprofit Grant Programs. It did not take into consideration the possible use of Installment Purchase for farmland preservation but did assume a certain level of State grants both for farmland preservation and for parkland acquisition.

The analysis indicates that the entire amount would be necessary to achieve the Park System's 10-year goals. Alternatively, if the entire amount were dedicated to the Farmland Preservation Program, the County could conceivably preserve 16,500 acres of farmland. In order to accomplish this, the County would close on 13 farms each year. This falls far short of the CADB's 50,000 acre goal (including existing and future preserved farms).

The bonding scenario described above assumes that the Trust Fund is in place over the next 10 years and that the maximum permitted annual levy is imposed. If County voters choose not to support its renewal, however, the County would have to use its operating budget to pay off the debt service.

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tives from the Hunterdon County Planning Board, Hunterdon County Park System, Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board, Open Space Advisory Board, Cultural and Heritage Commission, and Hunterdon County Engineering Department, as well as the County Administrator and County Treasurer. Findings and recommendations should be conveyed through an annual status report prepared by the Planning Board and submitted to the Freeholder Board at the end of each calendar year.

Recommendation: Create and maintain systems for data sharing among all government and private entities engaged in open space and farmland preservation planning in Hunterdon County.

Over three dozen organizations – both public and private – are actively involved in open space and farmland preservation within Hunterdon County. They own and/or manage preserved land and target future possible acquisitions. The ability to share such information can be extremely valuable for all such players. They can utilize these resources to prioritize potential future acquisitions and identify possible partners with which to pursue future projects.

The Hunterdon County Planning Board undertook an exhaustive six-month process of gathering

documentation on existing preserved lands and future target areas from the dozens of organizations active in the County. This it did by building on initial data compiled by the Hunterdon County Park System. For the first time, this information has been organized into a centralized database and mapped using Geographic Information System technology. Now that the information is centralized, it needs to be maintained and updated in order to remain useful to the players involved.

It is recommended that the Planning Board continue to serve as the clearinghouse on land preservation plans, properties and priorities in Hunterdon County. Information that is available for public dissemination should be available through the office. To keep the information as current as possible, it is further recommended that the Planning Board seek a liaison from each municipality and nonprofit organization active in the County. The liaison will be responsible for conveying all pertinent information on at least a quarterly basis. The Planning Board staff should clarify the logistics of such coordination.

Given the number of agencies engaged in open space planning and farmland preservation, long-term maintenance of data and its dissemination could quickly become unmanageable. Instantaneous access to data is critical in a time of fast-paced acquisitions.

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Advances in database and Internet technology, coupled with developments in GIS software, have provided the means to create applications that can automate, to some degree, the update of open space purchases as well as agency acquisition priorities. With the development of proper software applications, all agencies could update their own data through the Internet, providing a snapshot of current efforts that are being undertaken at all levels of government and by the nonprofit sector. The information could be centralized in a single database and shared by all entities involved in planning and acquisition. This is the basis for a long-term strategy being developed by the State.

This strategy is being devised by the State Office of Information Technology (OIT) Division of GIS, in collaboration with the Hunterdon County Division of GIS, the Hunterdon County Planning Board staff, the Office of Green Acres and the SADC. OIT hopes to secure funding and support to use Hunterdon County as a pilot project for establishing an Internet-based open space and farmland data maintenance and data sharing system. In addition, it has formed an ad-hoc committee to develop Internet-based tools for individuals and municipalities that do not possess in-depth GIS knowledge. These tools would allow them to perform a variety of functions necessary for planning and map development.

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Board staff and GIS Department staff should continue to cooperate with the State OIT. If the pilot project comes to fruition, it could result in access to state-of-the-art capabilities that would benefit the County, municipalities and all players engaged in open space and farmland preservation.

Recommendation: Evaluate staffing needs and requirements to implement various aspects of the Trust Fund.

Numerous program recommendations called for in this Plan demand additional administrative needs. Many of the requirements are discussed in relation to the various applicable recommendations outlined above. Viewed collectively, these requirements are presented below and are augmented by additional responsibilities that may prove necessary and/or valuable. It is recommended that the Hunterdon County Planning Board staff carry out these functions:

1. Manage preserved lands inventory

- Request liaisons from each municipality and nonprofit organization, county, and state departments maintaining or acquiring lands in Hunterdon County.
- Set up system for reporting new acquisitions and sharing data among liaisons.
- Maintain and update inventory of preserved lands in Hunterdon County.
- Participate in State Office of In-

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- formation Technologies (OIT) pilot project to centralize and streamline the maintenance and distribution of preserved lands database.
2. Administer Municipal and Non-profit Grants Programs
 - Develop application forms, procedures and policy manual for approval by the Open Space Advisory Board.
 - Review applications based on a pre-determined time table.
 - Present recommendations to the Open Space Advisory Board.
 - Prepare annual budget requests to the Freeholder Board;
 - Correspond with Grant applicants as needed.
 - Keep municipalities and non-profit organizations apprised of changes to Program policies and procedures.
 3. Provide technical and planning assistance for municipalities
 - Develop Internet-based planning tools for local open space planning purposes in coordination with the GIS Division of the County's Management Information Systems Department. Program needs include identification of relevant GIS coverages, identification of needed computer capabilities to conduct GIS analysis, and ability to serve as a liaison with the GIS Division.
 - Conduct workshops for municipalities on such topics as open space planning and grant-writing (for land preservation or open space planning).
 4. Oversee interdepartmental coordination of Trust Fund
 - Convene an annual meeting of all relevant County departments and commissions implementing the Trust Fund programs (CADB, Park System, Planning Board, Cultural and Heritage Commission, Open Space Advisory Board, County Administrator, County Treasurer, GIS Division) to assess progress, needs, issues.
 - Prepare annual report for submission to the Freeholder before the end of each calendar year.
 5. Establish increased coordination with the Hunterdon County Park System
 - Work with the Director of the Hunterdon County Park System and the Board of Recreation Commissioners to identify opportunities for enhancing
- Meet with each municipality annually to discuss local open space planning issues, answer questions, and provide input as requested.
 - Identify areas of regional concern where joint open space planning between municipalities could be beneficial; keep municipalities apprised of each other's plans and those of the County and nonprofit organizations, to heighten coordination and cooperation at a regional level.

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planning coordination between departments. Opportunities might include assistance in future updates of Park and Recreation Plan and data analysis/recommendations related to future land acquisitions.

6. Miscellaneous needs
 - Stay apprised of any legislation that may impact upon the Trust Fund.
 - Coordinate with County Counsel on an as-needed basis.
 - Pursue available grants that can assist in facilitating County land/easement acquisitions.