

# Hunterdon County Strategic Park & Open Space Plan

Public Engagement Summary

May 2, 3 & 4, 2016

# WHO WE ARE

## \* Project Team

### \* **Maser Consulting P.A.**

\* John Madden, Project Manager [Jmadden@maserconsulting.com](mailto:Jmadden@maserconsulting.com)

\* Marcia Shiffman [Mshiffman@maserconsulting.com](mailto:Mshiffman@maserconsulting.com)

### \* **GreenPlay LLC**

\* Tom Donlin [Tomd@greenplayllc.com](mailto:Tomd@greenplayllc.com)

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# OUR PROCESS

- \* Talk with County Staff, Users and Stakeholders
- \* Review existing plans and guiding documents
- \* Inventory existing facilities and programs
- \* Conduct a statistically valid survey
- \* Examine demographics and trends

# OUR PROCESS

- \* Analyze information gathered
- \* Identify gaps and enhancement opportunities
- \* Make realistic, achievable recommendations

# TONIGHT

- \* We're here tonight to share what we have heard in our meetings over the last 3 days

# FOCUS GROUPS

- \* We talked to approximately 70 individuals in 9 focus group meetings
- \* The individuals represented a variety of communities and organizations with an interest or role in the provision of open space, parks and recreation
- \* The majority of the participants are long term residents of the County

# WHAT WE HEARD

- \* The following represents a summary of the comments, suggestions and input from the Focus Groups

# PERCEPTIONS (on a 1 to 5 scale)

## \* RANKED HIGHLY

- \* Quality of Current Programs 4.1
- \* Customer Service 4.1
- \* Quality of Current Facilities 3.8
- \* Maintenance 3.6

## \* RANKED LOW

- \* Feedback sought 2.0

# STRENGTHS

- \* Staff
- \* Quality of programs
- \* Division is responsive
- \* Trails
- \* Quantity of parks
- \* Preservation of the County character
- \* Concert series

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- \* Communication
- \* Coordination
- \* Connectivity/linkages
- \* Leveraging volunteers
- \* Addressing maintenance
- \* Invasive plant management
- \* Signage
- \* Water access

# ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

- \* Summer camp expansion
- \* Land stewardship training
- \* Environmental literacy/nature study
- \* Equestrian programming
- \* Birding
- \* Canoe and kayaking
- \* Winter activities

# IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING FACILITIES

- \* Parking – Horse trailer
- \* General parking
- \* Access
- \* Restrooms
- \* Signage
- \* Update Arboretum
- \* Maintenance – Mowing and clearing

# UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

- \* Seniors
- \* Teens
- \* Physically challenged
- \* People without cars
- \* Mid-low income
- \* Southern portion of County

# ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- \* Splash pad
- \* Additional dog parks
- \* Additional linear parks/greenways
- \* Benches
- \* Birding and wildlife blinds or observation platforms
- \* Equestrian arena
- \* Amphitheater
- \* Water trails/access
- \* Play structures/exercise stations

# FUNDING OPERATIONS

- \* Most participants felt the current structure of a combination of user fees and tax subsidy is appropriate
- \* Alternative funding should be sought

# KEY ISSUES AND VALUES

- \* Conservative
- \* Value open space, culture and heritage
- \* Environmental protection/conservation
- \* Protection of water resources
- \* Home rule
- \* Maintain the rural character
- \* Provide a sense of place
- \* Public health

# KEY PARTNERS/STAKEHOLDERS

- \* Land trusts and non-profits
- \* Municipalities
- \* State
- \* Clubs and interest groups
- \* Schools/colleges
- \* Business community
- \* Medical community (Hospitals, health professionals, insurance companies)
- \* HART
- \* Scouts

# WHAT ELSE?

- \* Do you have any information on these topics to add to our understanding of open space, parks and recreation in Hunterdon County?

# WHAT'S NEXT?

- \* This summary to be posted on County Website
  - \* (Next week)
- \* Survey will be sent out
  - \* (3-4 weeks)

# THANK YOU

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