

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Hunterdon County Planning Board Approves Open Space Strategic Plan**

The Hunterdon County Planning Board, on December 6<sup>th</sup>, adopted the County's Open Space Strategic Plan, which creates the goals of preserving 4000 more acres of open space, the creation of four County general use parks, linkage between preserved lands, and increased stewardship of parklands.

Freeholder Board Deputy Director Suzanne Lagay, a member of the Planning Board, stated, "The final adoption of this plan comes after several public hearings and considerable public input that has helped to make the plan an effective tool to guide the County's land preservation and stewardship policies into the future."

The Open Space strategy also calls for a renewed focus on the park-goer experience. Better signage and wayfinding, making connections between existing parks, and expanding opportunities for users like hikers, bikers, and equestrian riders have been brought forth as examples toward a better park system.

Planning Board Chair Carol Hoffmann said, "This component of the master plan addresses increased connectivity between county parks and open space parcels; something the public has asked for a long time. Our thanks to the Planning Board members who have dedicated a significant amount of attention to public input to make this a comprehensive plan."

The County's Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee had previously endorsed the plan.

The Planning Board held public hearings on October 18<sup>th</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> and, for the first time, created the opportunity for public comment via the County's website and Facebook page.