



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 2, 2016
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County Responds to Citizen Comments in update to Open Space Trust Fund Plan

Many of the goals and recommendations made in the 2000 Open Space Trust Fund Plan have been completed; the updated plan seeks to build on that record of achievement. The current update to the Open Space Trust Fund Plan is intended to secure the continued success of existing programs under the Plan, and ensure that goals and recommendations identified but not yet accomplished may be undertaken.

The update to the Open Space Trust Fund Plan now under consideration proposes no changes to the existing grant programs or the use of the Trust Fund and gives the Board of Chosen Freeholders no additional authority to utilize the Trust Fund monies beyond what was authorized through the 2008 ballot referendum.

Citizens provided comments at the December 15, 2015, Freeholder meeting and a subsequent public meeting hosted by the Parks & Open Space Advisory Board on January 19. Some suggested changes in verbiage are reflected in the revised Draft Plan. The County continues to accept comments and they may be incorporated into a newly revised final draft of the Trust Fund Plan which is expected to be introduced by the Board of Chosen Freeholders in February. A record of the new changes, as well as a revised Draft Open Space Trust Fund Plan, is posted to the County's website, www.co.hunterdon.nj.us.

Eighty percent of the Trust Fund is dedicated to open space and farmland preservation acquisition grant programs, with an additional 3.5% available for municipalities and nonprofits to use for historic preservation. The percent allocations are decided annually by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, although they have remained unchanged since February, 2010.

The County retains 15% of the open space tax revenue for open space acquisition and stewardship of its parks, which now total over 8,400 acres for the benefit of Hunterdon County residents. The County also retains 1.5% of the revenue for historic preservation spending on County-owned historic structures.

Additional details about the breakdown of the Open Space Trust Fund can be found on the County's Open Space Trust Fund website: <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/openspac.htm>

The proposed update to the Open Space Trust Fund Plan lists completed objectives, reiterates and clarifies goals and objectives identified in earlier versions of the Plan, and restates its purpose to reinforce its value to the citizens of Hunterdon County.

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all Hunterdon County Residents

<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/planning.htm>

County's Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.hunterdonceds.com>