

Plans, Master Plans and Amendments

Report to the Board March 14, 2024, through May 8, 2024

Municipality	Hanover Township
Document	Open Space and Recreation Plan and Environmental Resource Inventory
Public Hearing	May 21, 2024
Summary	Update to the Township’s 2001 2011 Open Space Plans

- The goals of the Open Space and Preservation Plan are summarized as “Protect and Connect,” e.g., greenways and bicycle/trail systems, “Steward,” e.g., recreational and natural areas and “Sustain,” e.g., continue to fund open space acquisition and stewardship. Objectives of the Plan include assessing the potential of undeveloped or underdeveloped properties as public land, evaluating land which connects or expands existing parks and/or trails, prioritizing preservation for lands which can be acquired in partnership with others, continue to restore local historic sites and funding opportunities to create open space in underserved areas.
- The Plan notes that there are 1,038 acres of preserved open space in Hanover, 132 acres more than there were in 2011. Additions since 2011 include but are not limited to 3.6 acres added to Bee Meadow Park and the addition of 74 acres of former NJDOT lands originally to serve as part of the Route 24 right-of-way. Descriptions are provided for municipal parklands, local recreation programs and local historic sites.
- State and county funding for local open space is outlined. Morris County’s financial contributions are noted, including \$2,534,750 from the Open Space Trust Fund for open space projects between 1996 and 2022, \$662,992 from the County trail construction grant program and \$249,038 from the Preservation Trust Historic Program from 2007 to 2022.
- Plan recommendations include:
 - Continue collaboration efforts with state and local officials to steward and acquire public land.
 - Integrate trails and greenways that expand the Township’s outdoor ethic.
 - Support the conservation of land to protect wetlands and water resources.
 - Provide opportunities for recreation, including open space and playing fields.
- Action items are identified related to: Preservation (e.g., encourage landowners of undeveloped or underutilized land to consider preserving their property), Stewardship (e.g., review existing ordinances to protect riparian buffers), Funding (e.g., update the Township ROSI and reapply to NJDEP Green Acres to renew funding in the Township’s Planning Incentive Grant and Recreation and Trails (e.g., update the municipal website to include a link to trail locations and mapping for visitors / meet with the Morris County Park Commission to discuss expansion and maintenance of Patriots Path.)
- An Environmental Resource Inventory was also completed in February 2024. Topics addressed include geology and topography, soils, land use, vegetation, wildlife, hydrology, wetlands, flood zones and riparian areas, climate, air, historic and cultural resources, transportation infrastructure and known contaminated sites.