





This project was funded by a grant to the City of Paterson, from the National Recreation & Parks Foundation (NRPA), through their 10-Minute Walk Campaign (a partnership of NRPA, The Trust for Public Land, and Urban Land Institute). Researched and written by Andy Stone, Public Space Consulting, with assistance from Zainab Abdullah Al-Mansour and design by Yeju Choi.

Information and assistance provided by: City of Paterson: Office of the Mayor (Andre Sayegh, Kathleen Long, Edward Boze, Harsha Mallajosyula, Dacil Tilos), Department of Economic Development (Michael Powell, Gianfranco Archimede, Michael Deutsch. Richard Marra), Department of Public Works (William Rodriguez, Benjie Wimberly), Paterson City Councilmembers Ruby Cotton and Dr. Lilisa Mimms; Paterson Public Schools: Deputy Superintendent Susana Peron, Neil Mapp: Paterson Parks & Recreation Commission: Aracelly Calero, Yunior Fermin, Shonde Hansford, Matthew McKoy, Osvaldo Oliveros, Orlando Robinson, Tamra Scudder; Friends of Paterson Parks: Karen Agosto, Fred Ardis, Murat Baycora, Imran Hussain, Dr. Carlos Lugo, Patricia McNeil, Doris Most, Heather Ramirez; National Park Service: Superintendent Darren Boch; Passaic County: Deputy Adminstrator Kelly Ruffel, Counsel Matthew Jordan; NJ Community Development Corporation: Robert Guarasci, Michael Cassidy, Eddie Gonzalez: Paterson Habitat for Humanity: Scott Millard, Darryl Jackson, Steve Kehayes; City Green: Jennifer Papa, Jasmine Moreano: East Side Neighborhood Association: Michael Symonds.

Parks & Open Space in the 21st Century

In the 21st century a new parks paradigm has emerged, stressing the multiple benefits of parks, along with a wide variety of other public open spaces, including downtown plazas and pedestrian areas, waterfronts, community gardens, and enhanced schoolyards.

Based on this paradigm, public open spaces in Paterson should be designed, maintained, and programmed to support:

- Economic growth: well-designed, well-maintained outdoor public spaces enhance tourism, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and property values.
- Health: safe, usable outdoor public space encourages fitness and prevents obesity and diabetes. New facilities and outdoor programs led by health care organizations are some of the available options.
- Environmental Protection and Flood Prevention: urban trees, wetlands, and shoreline buffers reduce heat island effects, flooding, and combined sewer overflow.
- Education: adequate outdoor recreation space benefits students and increases the potential for outdoor environmental education (for jobs of the future and for understanding of global climate issues).
- Community Development: well-programmed and safe spaces, supported by active

community groups, promote community cohesion and reduce crime.

This vision centered around the "co-benefits" of parks will result in a significant potential increase in public-private partnerships and funding to support the programming, maintenance, and expansion of the public open space system.

Paterson Overview

Paterson's distinct character—rooted in its history, its natural features, and its distinct role in welcoming immigrants from throughout the world-must be part of any vision for the future of the City's parks. With a varied topography and a wide river bordering it on three sides, Paterson offers tremendous opportunities for a beautiful and compelling park system. Development of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PGFNHP) continues to grant more and more access to the most scenic and historic section of the river. Outside the Great Falls section, however, much of Paterson remains cut off from the river. And now that much of the City's investment in the PGFNHP is complete, greater attention can be paid to parks in Paterson's neediest neighborhoods.

The COVID-19 pandemic has powerfully demonstrated the importance of outdoor public spaces. People in dense cities have flocked outdoors, where infections are much less likely to spread. And in a low-to moderate-income city like Paterson, options to escape to large backyards or rural areas

are often scarce, making local parks a valuable resource.

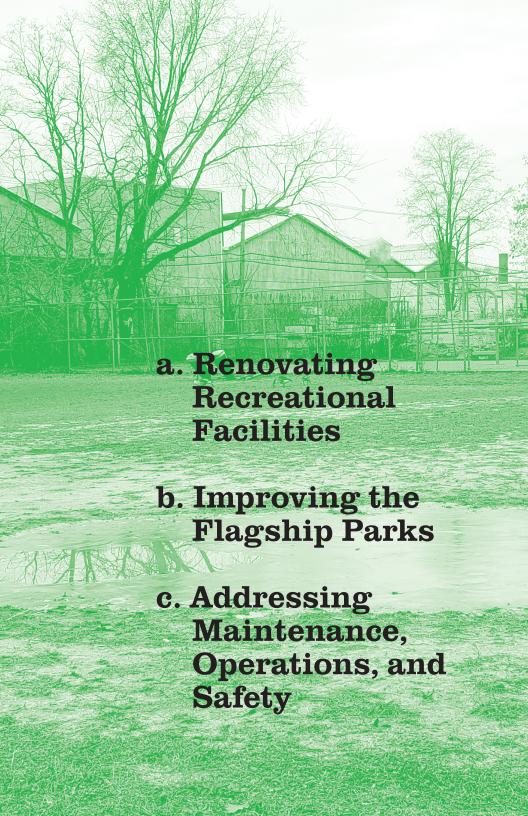
Opportunities for outdoor recreation are even more important in Paterson, given its high rates of diabetes and obesity. Initial data from the CDC indicates that COVID hospitalizations were six times higher among patients with underlying medical conditions.

This vision plan describes a range of goals and strategies, both short- and long-term. The broad goals are:

- 1. Upgrading the Existing Parks
- 2. Adding New Parks and Recreational Facilities
- 3. Enhancing the City's Environmental and Public Health

Achieving these goals, and implementing related strategies, is a multi-year effort that will require cooperation and funding from the Federal, State, and County governments as well as the private sector and concerned residents.

GOAL 1 Upgradi the Bxi Parks TO ALLEY ALLEY School 20 Playground, Paterson courtesy of Ruben Ramalies



Fitness Zone, East Harlem, NY courtesy of The Trust for Public Land



Paterson offers only a small amount of park space per capita. If you were to compare Paterson to the nation's 100 most populous cities*, Paterson would come in 99th—almost dead last—for the amount of parkland per 1000 residents, according to The Trust for Public Land. Its 2.1 acres of parkland per 1000 residents is less than 10% of the 27.1-acre median figure for these 100 cities. The median for high-density cities** is 6.7 acres per 1000 residents (more than three times the number for Paterson). For a direct comparison to NJ's two biggest cities: Newark has 3 acres per 1000 residents, Jersey City has 6.

Expanding the amount of parkland in Paterson is theoretically one option for addressing this deficiency, but very little vacant land is available for this. For this reason, improving the existing park system must be the #1 priority.

^{*} The most reliable current source of data on parks per capita is The Trust for Public Land's "City Park Facts 2020" which is limited to the 100 largest cities in the U.S. This is the best source of comparison even though Paterson ranks as the 181st most populous cities.

^{**}Based on 2019 U.S. census projections, among the 200 largest cities, Paterson is the fourth densest (Wikipedia, "List of United States cities by population"). Dense cities, which pack large numbers of people onto small amounts of land, tend to have the least parks per capita, so Paterson is most accurately compared to other high-density cities.

a. Renovating Recreational Facilities

Most of Paterson's smaller, neighborhood parks are dominated by fields, courts, and playgrounds. Yet, because of its low park acreage per capita, Paterson remains deficient in outdoor recreation facilities.

The scarcity of vacant land for new parks makes the condition of these recreational facilities of great importance. Under the current mayor and city council, the City has been spending \$1 million or more of municipal capital funds, each year, to renovate

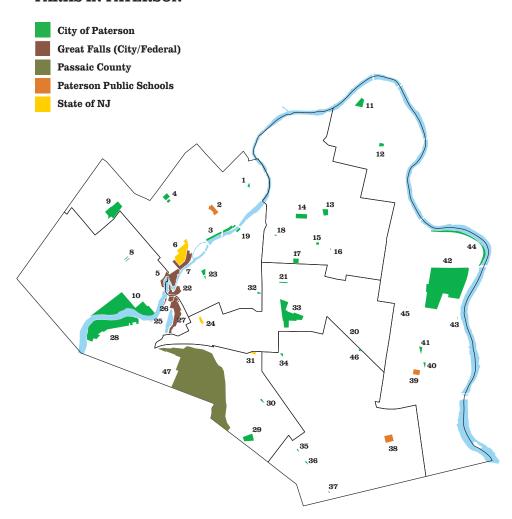
Recreational Feature	Total # for Paterson	# Per 10,000 Residents for Paterson	Median # Per 10,000 Residents for 100 Biggest US Cities
Playgrounds	23	1.5	2.6
Basketball Hoops	26	1.7	3.2
Baseball Fields	13	0.9	1.6
Tennis Courts	10	0.7	1.7

fields and courts. In particular, the City has been addressing a strong desire throughout Paterson for replacing worn grass and dirt fields with multi-purpose artificial turf fields. Out of the City's 18 fields (13 for baseball, and 5 for football, soccer, or cricket), five have recently been renovated with an artificial turf surface, and nearly all the rest are in need of attention. Also, all of the City's tennis courts (ten of them, at three locations) are in need of prompt repair or renovation.

Much of the play equipment in the City's playgrounds is recently installed and in good condition. While some playgrounds have rubber mats as a safety surface, the majority use wood chips. It is recommended that, for ease of maintenance, rubber safety mats be installed in any newly developed playgrounds or when major park renovations occur.

STRATEGY While the City completes planned projects, it should assess in detail the remaining unrenovated facilities to determine which ones a) require a complete renewal (e.g. replacing a worn dirt field with artificial turf) and which b) could receive a partial renovation (e.g. repair of cracks and resurfacing for courts, or grading, seeding, and yearly intensive maintenance for ballfields).

PARKS IN PATERSON



- Otis Cobb Park
- Lester F. Titus Field
- 3 Presidential Park
- Commons Field
- Mary Ellen Kramer Park
- Vista Park
- 7 Frank Graves/Valley of the Rocks
- Union Avenue Park
- **Buckley Park**
- 10 Westside Park
- 11 Riverside Oval 12 Baer Playground/Tony
- Lucas Park
- 13 Putnam Oval

- 14 Wrigley Park
- 15 12th Avenue Playground
- 16 Carnie Bragg Memorial Park
- 17 Barbour Park
- 18 MLK Park
- 19 River Street Park
- 20 Market & E. 24th Triangle
- 21 16th Avenue Park
- 22 Overlook Park
- 23 Lou Costello Park & Federici Park
- 24 William Carlos Williams Park

- 25 River Walk
- 26 Upper Raceway/Great Falls
- 27 Upper Raceway/Lou Costello Pool
- 28 Pennington Park
- 29 Brandes Field
- 30 Main & Hine Triangle
- 31 21st Avenue Playground/ Lloyd Green Park
- 32 Federal Plaza Park 33 Sandy Hill Park/Roberto
- Clemente Park/Bauerle Field
- 34 Boys & Girls Club Park

- 35 Main & Montclair Triangle
- 36 Gould Avenue Park
- 37 Eagle Park 38 School #25
- 39 School #20
- 40 Vreeland & 20th Triangle 41 Vreeland & 19th Triangle
- 42 Eastside Park
- 43 Park & E. 42nd Triangle
- 44 McLean Boulevard Park 45 33rd and Park Avenue
- 46 Market & 26th Street
- 47 Garret Mountain

5000

b. Improving the Flagship Parks

Paterson's larger "flagship" parks combine recreational facilities with more natural elements, which are less common in the neighborhood parks. The City's two oldest—Eastside and Westside—need the most attention.

Eastside Park

STRATEGY Invest in a Master Plan to ensure that capital funds are well spent over a multi-year period. Address issues such as:

- Adapting two historic structures—the Horse Barn and the Women's Comfort Station—for park-related public use.
- Landscape enhancements—improving lawns, paths, and overlook area.
- Eliminating some roads within the park on the upper level.

Westside Park

STRATEGY Implement NJ CDC's Master Plan, released in 2017, over the next 5–10 years. This plan calls for \$10 million in capital funds to renovate and restore most major park elements, most importantly:

- Renovate Totowa Oval, one of Paterson's most heavily used fields.
- Create a Waterfront Walk, bordering the river and Molly Brook for the full length of the park, and incorporate a launch for canoes and kayaks.

 The pedestrian bridge at the eastern end of the park, connecting to McBride Avenue, offers the opportunity for a pedestrian and bike loop to both Pennington Park and the Great Falls.

Pennington Park

This park primarily functions as a large recreation area, with four heavily used fields (two recently renovated). But it fails to take full advantage of its scenic waterfront location.

STRATEGY

- Renovate and extend the existing waterfront walkway.
- Enhance two large dirt soccer fields, which may be good candidates for an upgraded reseeding and maintenance program.
- Construct a new pedestrian entrance at the south end of the park on McBride Avenue.

Great Falls and Vista Park

In a true partnership, the City and the National Park Service have completed or are making progress on most of the pieces of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PGFNHP), a wonderful centerpiece for a city with a deep history and noteworthy natural setting. While this partnership continues implementing the PGFNHP vision, the City must take on the additional task of connecting this park to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, and recreational

resources, including the 8-acre Vista Park (now in design) and Hinchliffe Stadium.

STRATEGY To help assure Vista Park's successful adoption by its neighbors, priority should be given to ample programming by the City's Recreation Department and local nonprofits, and the development of strong physical corridors and paths to the park from the Northside and Totowa neighborhoods. In addition, strong connections to the PGFNHP will expand the use of Vista Park.

Garret Mountain Reservation

A remarkable 38% of the City's park acreage lies within this county park, which accommodates a wide variety of active recreation as well as a high-quality experience of nature. Paterson residents would benefit from greater awareness of and access to the park's amenities.

STRATEGY Highlight two existing pedestrian routes to Garret Mountain with better signage, and possibly also via a public education effort: a) from the end of Summit Street in the Stoney Road neighborhood and b) from Valley Road, just west of Route 19 near the Clifton border.

c. Addressing Maintenance, Operations, and Safety

Research and practice show that enhancing existing parks requires a combination of physical improvements, careful maintenance, programming, and community engagement.

Paterson service day courtesy of NJCDC



STRATEGY

MUNICIPAL

- Create a Department of Parks & Recreation, with a director reporting directly to the Mayor. This director should develop standards and practices appropriate to a 21st-century urban parks system, regarding both maintenance of recreation facilities and the special care needed to steward park landscapes and natural features.
- Create a new full- or part-time position in this department for a Volunteer Coordinator for Parks and Gardens. Developing and supporting neighborhood-based "friends of parks" groups is central to forming the alliances among residents, police, and park workers that can enhance safety.
 Community "adoption" of parks is a proven strategy for increasing use and safety. And while some community gardens associated with churches and social service organizations, and assisted by the nonprofit City Green, have thrived, ongoing organizing assistance is needed for independent neighborhood gardens to succeed.
- Assure that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are incorporated into all park design projects.

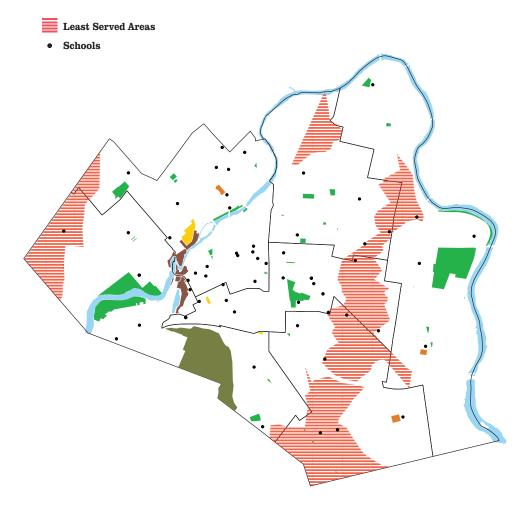
PARTNERSHIP

 Explore Passaic County's adoption of Westside Park, the second largest City park and the park in most need of repair. GOAL 2

Adding New Parks and Recreational Facilities



SECTIONS OF PATERSON THAT ARE LEAST SERVED BY PARKS





2500 0 2500 5000 7500 10000 f

a. New Parks for "Park-Poor" Neighborhoods

Paterson is among the more than 285 cities in the US that have joined the "10-Minute Walk Campaign," pledging to take steps to bring parks within a 10-minute walk of all residents. Currently 83% of Paterson's residents are within 10 minutes of a park.*

Using Vacant Land

In these underserved areas (and throughout the City) there is a limited supply of vacant assemblages large enough to be considered for new parkland (typically ½ acre or more), and much of what exists is slated for redevelopment.

STRATEGY In future large-scale redevelopment efforts, particularly in high-need areas, the City should look for opportunities to secure one or more new park sites.

Animating Leftover Spaces

In the most underserved areas, small "leftover" parcels such as traffic triangles could provide new recreational opportunities.

STRATEGY Assess community interest in adding play or fitness equipment to some triangles formed on diagonal streets such as Main Street and Vreeland Avenue (The Main and Gould triangle especially shows potential).

^{*} from Trust for Public Land, ParkServe website: https://www.tpl.org/city/paterson-new-jersey



Using existing public land

Green Schoolyards

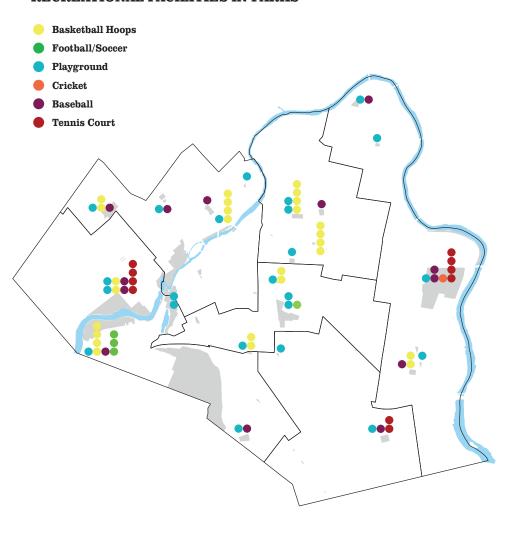
STRATEGY Identify schoolyards for potential redevelopment as green schoolyards.

Sites in this program would:

- be renovated to include an artificial turf playing field
- remain open for public use outside of school hours
- contain "green infrastructure" elements to absorb stormwater and enable outdoor learning
- be jointly operated by Paterson Public Schools and Paterson Parks

The City should begin with one "pilot site" to develop, in the largest "park-poor" area: the underserved neighborhoods in the eastern 4th and 5th wards. The nonprofit The Trust for Public Land has partnered with other New Jersey cities on green schoolyards.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN PARKS



Parks

2500 0 2500 5000 7500 10000

b. Adding Recreational Facilities to Meet Citywide Need

Recreation Center

Paterson is one of the few cities of its size without a municipal recreation center. At a minimum, this building would contain a large gymnasium and auxiliary facilities such as fitness/weight rooms. The addition of an indoor pool should be considered. A medium-size recreation center could cost \$20-\$40 million (depending on whether a pool is included).

Fields Paterson especially lacks fields for soccer and cricket.

STRATEGY Priority should be given to identifying a new park site of at least 1.5 acres, for a multi-purpose field.

Basketball Hoops

Paterson rates low in terms of basketball hoops (half courts) per capita. This is especially true for the eastern and southern sections of the city.

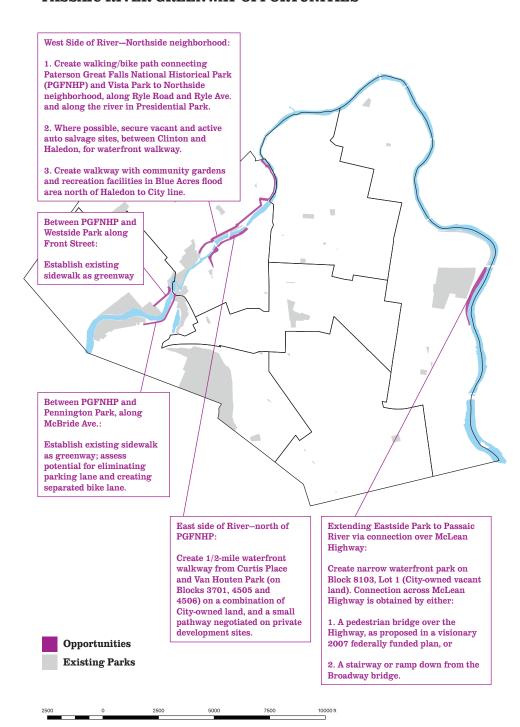
STRATEGY The City should prioritize new hoops whenever a park renovation or new park is contemplated in these areas.

Fitness Zones

Another innovative approach, virtually new to Paterson, could be the establishment of "fitness zones"—containing fixed equipment as well as equipment with moveable parts—in conjunction with health care providers.

STRATEGY Develop partnerships with Paterson- and Passaic County-based health care providers to fund and operate fitness zones.

PASSAIC RIVER GREENWAY OPPORTUNITIES



c. Advancing a Citywide Passaic River Greenway

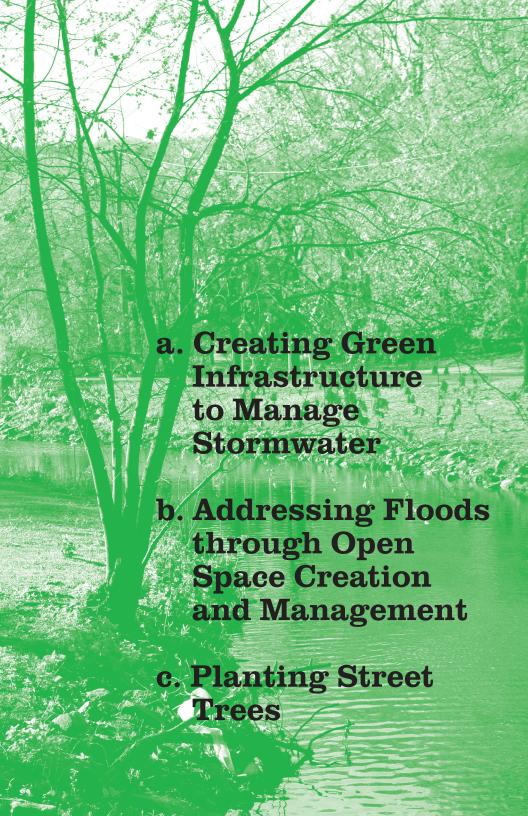
Opportunities to enhance riverside parks and expand public access to the riverfront include:

- Plan and implement a continuous 1/2-mile greenway along the Passaic River in the Northside neighborhood—from Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PGFNHP) north to the City border. Habitat for Humanity Paterson and the NJ Chapter of the American Planning Association have laid the groundwork for further City action through the release of a vision in early 2020. Implementation efforts will address the area hardest hit by flooding and should involve a partnership with the County and State.
- Establish marked pedestrian and bicycle paths to connect PGFNHP and Westside and Pennington parks.
- Create a half-mile walkway north of downtown, on the east side of the river, from PGFNHP to the Arch Street Bridge, by combining vacant land (mostly City-owned) and requiring a dedicated riverfront strip on the edge of redevelopment sites.
- On the east side of Paterson, a long-term vision is to reconnect Eastside Park with the river by a footbridge across McLean Boulevard or a switchback ramp down from the Broadway Bridge, to derelict Cityowned property on the river. This riverfront strip is wide enough for a walkway and potentially for a canoe/kayak launch and other amenities.

为以的的

GOAL 3

Emhance
the City's
Environmental
and Public
Health



In an era where climate change is taking center stage, parks and open space are at the forefront of addressing this global environmental challenge.

a. Creating Green Infrastructure to Manage Stormwater (and Keep Sewage Overflow Out of River)

Paterson is one of eight NJ municipalities facing a federal mandate to improve water quality in the Passaic River by lowering sewage overflows ("combined sewer overflows" or CSOs). A Long-Term Control Plan to address this is currently being finalized, but ongoing compliance with the federal mandate will continue to require City efforts to reduce CSOs.

STRATEGY

- Incorporate green infrastructure (g.i.) elements such as permeable surfaces and rain gardens into all future park and schoolyard renovation projects, to retain rainwater on-site.
- Promote community and school stewardship of g.i. elements through partnerships with nonprofits such as the Great Swamp Watershed Association.

b. Addressing Floods through Open Space Creation and Management

STRATEGY Continue acquisition in Paterson's worst flood zone, along the Passaic River in the Northside neighborhood, and partner with nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity and City Green to engage local residents in greening and stewardship of the land, moving toward ultimate park creation.

c. Planting Street Trees

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, neighborhoods lacking green backyards and street trees (like many in Paterson) generally suffer from a "heat island effect," with temperatures up to seven degrees hotter than adjacent suburbs. This heat island effect results in increased energy consumption as well as heat-related illnesses, especially among the elderly. Planting additional trees in the public right of way—in median strips and along sidewalks—can help address this.

STRATEGY

- Identify and pursue private funds to develop a Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP), which will make Paterson eligible for NJ Urban and Community Forestry grants for tree planting and care. New street trees should be targeted to blocks where neighbors want them and can help maintain them.
- Assess the feasibility of requiring developers of buildings along City streets to provide street trees (this is currently required by the County along its roads in Paterson).

The strategies described in this vision plan provide both an agenda for some short-term actions by the Mayor and City Council and a framework for further discussion with Paterson residents and organizations. Cooperation with and support from all levels of government (County, State and Federal), as well as grassroots engagement, will be crucial ingredients for success.





Paterson, New Jersey

Parks & Open Space Vision 2021

