



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
 GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY



Governor Murphy Announces Nearly \$100 Million Investment in Community Recreation Initiatives Across the State

04/18/2023

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced a proposed investment of nearly \$100 million for projects to develop or update parks and preserve open space, including a new initiative to fund construction of inclusive playgrounds for differently abled children. The funding, announced during Earth Week 2023 through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Green Acres Program, will enhance the quality of life for residents across New Jersey, especially in many overburdened communities.

The proposed investment includes \$92.2 million in funding subject to approval by the Garden State Preservation Trust, and an additional \$7.7 million for Urban Parks projects, bringing the total to \$99.9 million. The investments are especially timely as this year's national Earth Week theme is "Invest in Our Planet" (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/v9w6i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3cBZ_naUS).

"The projects recommended for funding to the independent Garden State Preservation Trust will help build and update New Jersey's outstanding parks, recreation, and open space inventories while providing for construction of inclusive playgrounds," said **Governor Murphy**. "These grants and loans will benefit numerous communities across the state by providing opportunities to engage in healthy activities, enjoy the outdoors, and spend quality family time together."

"From our incredible Green Acres investments in local parks, to our historic investments in the restoration of natural resources throughout the state, the Murphy Administration has put its money where its heart is," said **Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette**. "This Earth Week, with Governor Murphy's vision and leadership, we are again investing in our planet with Green Acres awards in every county, accelerating our work to ensure that our neighbors across New Jersey can connect with nature and one another at quality open and recreational spaces."

Green Acres funding allows governments and nonprofits to leverage millions of additional preservation dollars through matching federal, state, county, and local funds, as well as from private sources. For the first time, Green Acres is providing non-matching grants to incentivize projects in Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/b2x6i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3Ic-MwUcS in Urban Aid municipalities)) in Urban Aid municipalities (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/ruy6i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3c6CXXGyS).

BY THE NUMBERS

The \$92.2 million in projects recommended to the Garden State Preservation Trust ([- 1. \\$27.2 million for municipal and county land acquisition projects;
- 2. \\$45.1 million for local development of parks and recreation facilities;
- 3. \\$7.4 million to counties for development of Completely Inclusive Playgrounds as part of Jake's Law \(\[https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/nf06i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3RLlvZgUS\]\(https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/nf06i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3RLlvZgUS\)\);
- 4. \\$3.8 million for local stewardship projects;
- 5. \\$4.4 million for acquisition projects by nonprofit organizations;
- 6. \\$3.6 million for nonprofit recreational development projects; and
- 7. \\$720,000 for nonprofit stewardship projects.](https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/7mz6i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3X6P25SkS) includes:</p>
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After approval by the Garden State Preservation Trust, the Legislature must formally appropriate the Green Acres funds for these projects that will establish, expand, or revitalize new and existing parks; acquire land; improve waterfront access; develop athletic fields and playgrounds; improve parking lots; create open space; and enhance land stewardship.

In addition to these projects, DEP has approved \$7.7 million for park development projects serving Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/3706i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3Fi8MEgS in Urban Aid municipalities)) in Urban Aid municipalities (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/j016i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX35Hi6Bu4S further emphasizing the Murphy Administration's commitment to environmental justice. These communities are so designated because they have a combined stressor total higher than the 50th percentile for total environmental and public health stressors)), further emphasizing the Murphy Administration's commitment to environmental justice. These communities are so designated because they have a combined stressor total higher than the 50th percentile for total environmental and public health stressors (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/zs26i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX32IiaaGUS).

Funding for these projects comes from both the DEP's Green Acres Program, funded by the Corporate Business Tax ([### URBAN PARKS PROJECTS](https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/fl36i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3h2hKMS) and the Urban Parks Program, which is funded by a state budget appropriation.</p>
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Sixteen municipalities ([- **Mount Holly Township in Burlington County** proposes a multi-purpose synthetic turf field and canoe launch at Iron Works Park in addition to lighting and other aesthetic improvements.
- **East Orange in Essex County** would reconstruct the basketball court and park entrance, implement a new stormwater management system, and add a new fitness area, playground, and spray park at Memorial Park.
- **Paterson in Passaic County**, in partnership with the New Jersey Community Development Corporation and the Open Space Land Institute Land Trust, Inc., would make multiple improvements to Westside Park. The improvements include installing an accessible ramp and staging area with access to the Passaic River, enhancing riparian and meadow areas, and adding a new pedestrian pathway system, picnic area, children's garden, and play area. Reconstructing tennis courts and a basketball court and making various athletic complex improvements are also proposed.
- **Salem City in Salem County** would rehabilitate three existing pools and ADA \(\[### INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND PROJECTS\]\(https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/b646i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3pcNbk0AS\) lifts at two pools in the Salem City Pool Recreational Area. A pavilion, benches, picnic table, and a playground will also be installed. This is the first time Salem City will be participating in the Green Acres Program.

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<div data-bbox=\)](https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/vd46i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX35MNAQb8S) in nine counties have been recommended to receive funding for projects in their communities. Among them:</p>
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New this year, the Green Acres Jake's Law Pilot Program provides 75% matching grant funding to county governments to construct Completely Inclusive Playgrounds (https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/ry56i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3Wop6MXES in compliance with standards established by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs)) in compliance with standards established by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs ([- **Riverside County Park South in North Arlington Borough and Lyndhurst Township in Bergen County** would receive \\$1 million to replace the old playground with accessible play equipment for all abilities and various age groups in a more central location within the park. The project also includes safety surfacing, lawn and landscaped areas, seating, and fencing around the playground perimeter.
- **Long Bridge Park in Hainesport, Burlington County** would receive \\$1 million to replace the current playground with one that includes nature-themed playground equipment built with primarily natural materials. The design also includes a range of spaces for interaction, socialization, education, and discovery opportunities.
- **New Brooklyn Park in Winslow Township, Camden County** would receive \\$1 million to install inclusive swings, freestanding play areas, and wheelchair-compatible equipment such as merry-go-rounds. A new drop-off area and sidewalks and new trailer restrooms also would be constructed.
- A \\$1 million award would help fund construction of a playground next to the library in **Bridgeton, Cumberland County**. The first accessible playground of any kind west of Vineland and Millville would have a pour-in-play surface, fencing, seating, and a perimeter walkway.
- **James J. Braddock Park in North Bergen, Hudson County** would receive \\$1 million to replace the existing playground with one featuring play equipment for children ages 5-12 as well as a new turf safety surface.
- **Camp Hope in West Milford, Passaic County** would receive \\$903,375 to build accessible paths, parking areas, ramps, climbing structures, ground-level play structures, and safety fencing.
- **Eno's Pond County Park in Forked River, Ocean County** would receive \\$771,750 to replace the existing playground.](https://urldefense.com/v3/___https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjej/fd1r1rbm/7q66i3_!!J30X0ZmC1oQtBAiOJypSjFDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEyiEF74VAybVYqiYIDfXhbKV0NeUvRqF09nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX3WnZyOAS) The eight Completely Inclusive Playground projects recommended for funding are:</p>
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- **David B. Crabiel Park in North Brunswick Township, Middlesex County** would receive \$750,000 to install play equipment, fencing, and ADA-compliant curb and ramp improvements. This would be the first Completely Inclusive Playground in the county.

GREEN ACRES PROJECTS

Major local projects

([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjef/fd1rrbm/nj76i3___!!J30X0Zrnc1oQtbA!OJypSjFtDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEYIEf74VAybVYqYIDfXhbKV0NeUVrqFo9nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX343a8x-s\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/3vbjef/fd1rrbm/nj76i3___!!J30X0Zrnc1oQtbA!OJypSjFtDLnt9HJ_PiK3p1jeEYIEf74VAybVYqYIDfXhbKV0NeUVrqFo9nitN5Zq6j0YR6kQs8bQIFeOqX343a8x-s$)) recommended for matching grants of \$1 million or more include:

Atlantic County:

- **Egg Harbor Township** proposes installing synthetic turf and sod at Tony Canale Park, adding parking and fencing, and creating a walking path around the athletic fields.
- **Pleasantville** proposes constructing a linear waterfront park linking Jokers Field and the Pleasantville Marina. The former sports complex would also be redeveloped into a nature park.

Bergen County:

- Bergen County proposes multiple improvements at Riverside County Park in **Lyndhurst** and **North Arlington**, including a foot path connection at Bergen Avenue and River Road, an extended walkway with lighting and footpaths, fitness stations, a playground, and a spray park.
- **Garfield** plans active and passive recreational improvements to Columbus Park, including an amphitheater, benches, playgrounds, and biking/walking/jogging paths.

Cumberland County:

- **Vineland** would add exercise circuit stations around the running/walking track at the Joseph E. Romano Sports Complex, in addition to developing a sensory garden and constructing a restroom facility.

Essex County:

- Weequahic Park in **Newark** would get an updated jogging track and new fitness equipment, benches, and park signage.
- In partnership with the Trust for Public Land, **Newark** would create Broadway Park, featuring playgrounds, playing fields, lighting, and gardens.

Hudson County:

- Funding would benefit Phase IV improvements at Laurel Hill County Park in **Secaucus**, which includes the development of wildlife habitat gardens and native landscaping, most notably the planting of more than 300 new trees. A living shoreline along the Hackensack River would be stabilized, the boat ramp would be repaired, and upstream dock replaced. Basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts as well as an upgraded aquatic playground also would be added.
- The development of Cape May Street Waterfront Park in **Harrison** would continue with restoration of a riverbank section, addition of a pier overlook, and eventual connection to the Passaic River Walkway. Other improvements include a synthetic turf soccer field, main plaza, fitness stations, kayak launch, and bicycle racks.
- **Hoboken** plans to expand and improve Southwest Park with pickleball and basketball courts, play structures, a community garden, and hopscotch area.

Mercer County:

- Synthetic turf would replace existing grass fields at Mercer County Park in **West Windsor**. The project also calls for an LED sports field lighting system, new sidewalks, fencing, and parking improvements.
- **Trenton** would continue expanding the Assunpink Greenway Park by improving visibility and access. Plans propose adding a skatepark, shade structure, bicycle polo, street soccer, tennis, volleyball, a community gathering space, restrooms, and bridge renovation.

Middlesex County:

- **Carteret** would extend the walkway at Waterfront Park along the Arthur Kill and add a scenic overlook that would extend out over the water. Lighting, railings and site furnishings would be added.
- **Old Bridge** proposes a four-phase development project to transform the Cottrell Farm property into a park with active and passive recreation activities. The first phase calls for rehabilitating historic structures on the property. Phases two through four would add walking and fitness trails, a splash pad, amphitheater, picnic grove, and stormwater management improvements.
- **Perth Amboy** would develop a waterfront park along Riverview Drive at the base of the Victory Bridge. The park would have an area for dogs, motorized boat launch, picnic area, fishing esplanade, and cleaning stations.
- The dog park and adjacent marina in **Woodbridge** would be improved with new exercise play equipment, gazebos, benches, a walking path, and dog comfort amenities. A second parking lot is proposed for additional marina parking and boat storage.

Passaic County:

- **Clifton** would resurface basketball courts at Nash Park, renovate the playground, install a splash pad, upgrade the dog area, renovate restrooms, install new picnic tables and benches, and create a walking path.
- **Passaic** proposes installing a rubberized track surface at Third Ward Veterans Memorial Park, a safety surface at Mayor Johnson Park Playground, a sensory park, and a bioretention rain garden.

Union County:

- **Plainfield** would continue improvements to the Rushmore Avenue Recreational Complex, primarily in the pool and playground area, and add landscaping accents.
- **Roselle** would make improvements at Warren Street Park, such as adding an inclusive, barrier-free playground including an electronic play area with sensory activities and a rubber safety surface. Decorative fencing, lighting, and benches are among other planned improvements.

New Jersey has long been a leader in preserving open space and creating parks. The Green Acres Program, the oldest of its kind in the nation, was created in 1961 as the result of an innovative bond referendum. To date, the Green Acres Program has protected more than 720,000 acres of open space and provided hundreds of recreational facilities around the state.

Green Acres projects create jobs and stimulate economic development by making communities more attractive places to live and work, consequently boosting civic pride. They also improve air and water quality, providing New Jerseyans a better quality of life.

The DEP is a partner in the Governor's Population Health Challenge, which calls on state agencies to promote health through their policies. Studies have found that investments in parks and recreational amenities positively impact health and fitness, resulting in less strain on the health-care system. Studies also demonstrate that people are likely to be more physically active if they live close to parks and recreational facilities.

To learn more about the Green Acres Program, visit www.NJGreenAcres.org

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