



# SOUTH PATERSON PARKS ACTIVATION PLAN

October 2025



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**The Vibrant Places Project Team**

The Vibrant Places Program is a partnership between NJTPA and VTC. The Technical Assistance Project Team (Project Team) for work in Paterson included the following individuals:

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A special thanks to the student workers who have contributed to the making of this report, including Anika Kapoor (research assistant), Mary Topp (research assistant) and Annaya Syed (landscape architecture assistant). Sections of this report are modeled on previous reports from the NJTPA Vibrant Places Program).



# About The Vibrant Communities Initiative

The Vibrant Communities Initiative is a partnership with the NJTPA and Rutgers University's VTC. The Vibrant Communities Initiative provides targeted support to municipalities, counties, and community organizations in the NJTPA region through technical assistance, placemaking projects, information resources, and applied research. This effort promotes economic development, highlights cultural and historic resources, and engages communities in opportunities to enhance the quality of life for all residents while building strong, vibrant communities.

The Vibrant Communities Initiative continues the mission of municipal capacity building originally advanced through the Together North Jersey Initiative. Since the Together North Jersey grant ended in 2015, NJTPA and VTC have continued advancing the TNJ Plan goals by providing technical assistance to communities and working to advance the themes from the NJTPA's Long Range Transportation Plan.

## About the Vibrant Places Program

Funded by the NJTPA under the Vibrant Communities Initiative umbrella, the Vibrant Places Program (VPP) leverages the power of placemaking to strengthen connections between people and places, enhancing the social, physical, and economic fabric in communities across the region.

Placemaking is the application of community planning that integrates arts, culture, and other community assets to attract new investment and strengthen the local economy. It is a sustainable form of economic development that links job creation to specific places by enhancing public spaces, streets, and other community amenities. The Vibrant Places Program supports and advances placemaking projects with a focus on disadvantaged communities and diverse stakeholders. The Vibrant Places Program is supported by NJDCA through market analysis and subject matter expertise.

Eligible applicants for the program include municipal and county governments or non-governmental organizations. Each fiscal year, the NJTPA selects up to two projects and works directly with local communities to complete these projects within six months.

## About the Project

In 2024, the NJTPA Vibrant Places Program awarded the County of Passaic a technical assistance grant to develop a Vision Plan for three properties, two located in South Paterson along Main Street and the other a new parcel located in northern Paterson. The City intends to activate and revitalize these properties to increase the use of the parks, support economic behavior in the downtown and support environmental goals from local and regional plans. The project team worked closely with the County to provide a long-range vision and amenity prioritization for the future development of these properties.

In addition, the VPP team researched and developed programmatic recommendations to serve residents and visitors. This project will support the County and City's efforts to improve the aesthetics of the downtown area and provide a gathering space for the local community. Further, the Vision Plan is intended to guide the development of the three locations in the years to come and provide an inclusive community space for all residents.

## Placemaking and Parks

*Public parks have a dynamic relationship with the communities they serve; the places we protect can resemble anywhere or they can tell the stories of our collective history and values...the way we design parks can promote or hinder diversity of use, and the activity of a park can be limited or rich in encouraging our physical health and expression of our democratic ideals.*

- Trust for Public Land, Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks <sup>1</sup>

Urban green spaces play a crucial role in community well-being, public health, and environmental sustainability. However, disparities in access to these spaces have been widely documented, with low-income and minority communities often facing barriers to equitable green space availability. Access to green space can greatly influence the health and well-being of individuals, providing opportunities for physical activity, mental relaxation, social interactions, and improved air quality. Conversely, limited access often exacerbates health inequalities, particularly when low-income and minority communities often have a higher likelihood of lower health indicators. Improving access to park spaces and improving the maintenance of these parks can help to increase public health as well as community health.

In addition, urban green spaces, such as the small pocket parks covered in this report, can play a central role in placemaking by offering outdoor, accessible spaces for events and activities that can foster community identity, social interaction, and build community pride. The open space they provide can be a venue for arts activities, recreation, small festivals, and other activities that bring community members out of their homes and into central gathering place. Further, the creative design of parks and small outdoor spaces can add to the aesthetic appeal of a community, offering beautification and landscape design that can reflect the local character and culture of a place.

## The Project Area

This placemaking plan provides recommendations to the City of Paterson and Passaic County for two of the targeted parcels located on Main Street in South Paterson and Ward 6. This area is rich in architectural and cultural significance. Main Street itself is a scenic and Historic Byway of Passaic County and is also a center of economic activity, with restaurants, pharmacies, cafes and shops along the corridor. Redesigning and activating the two pocket parks in this area can provide new opportunities for Paterson residents and visitors to engage with outdoor space in new ways, creating an outdoor community hub for social and economic activity in this neighborhood of the city. While these parks currently provide some green, outdoor spaces for the neighborhood (see current conditions below), improved placemaking can help animate these spaces, rejuvenate infrastructure, improve public safety, and provide a venue to bring the community together.

In addition, this report includes recommendations for a third parcel of land owned by Passaic County, a passive triangle of land located in the northern portion of the city, also known as the Dublin neighborhood. The parcel was recently added as part of a road re-design to improve the circulation of Wayne Bridge Avenue. Because the needs and use-case for this parcel are distinctly different from the two already-established parks on Main Street, the recommendations for this parcel are included in Appendix A.

<sup>1</sup> Trust for Public Land, Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks, published September 14, 2017. Accessed on June 30, 2025 at Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks - Trust for Public Land.



**FIGURE 1. OVERALL PROJECT AREA WITH PASSIVE PARCEL IN THE NORTH AND THE TWO PARK PARCELS IN THE SOUTH.**



**FIGURE 2. THE TWO PARK PARCELS IN THE PROJECT AREA, HIGHLIGHTED.**



**FIGURE 3. AERIAL VIEW OF THE PASSIVE PARCEL. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PARCEL ARE PROVIDED SEPARATELY IN APPENDIX A.**

# Planning Process

## Plan Review and Case Example Research

The project team conducted a review of relevant municipal, county, state, and regional documents to understand the existing planning and regulatory framework in the City of Paterson and Passaic County. The team reviewed planning and zoning documents from several county and regional entities to identify the overall goals and challenges for each jurisdiction. The plan review helps put the city in context within each of these jurisdictions. Paterson or park and recreation areas were mentioned or noted at least once in the following plans:

- Moving Passaic County: Transportation Element of the Passaic County Master Plan (2012)
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Element of the Passaic County Master Plan (2018)
- City of Paterson: 2020-2024 Five-year Consolidated Plan
- Passaic County, New Jersey: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (2014)
- Great Falls Circulation Study: Passaic (2016)
- City of Paterson City-Wide Transportation Assessment (2010)
- City of Paterson Master Plan (2014)
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Memo
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Toolkit- A Guide for Planning and Designing Safer Streets in the City of Paterson.
- Vista Park Master Plan (2018)
- Parks & Open Space Vision 2021
- Paterson Vista Park Design (2024)

The key commonalities across the plans are a focus on enhancing public spaces, improving transportation networks, and fostering community development through interactive programming. They also emphasize the need for stormwater management and environmental consideration. The integration of these elements into the redesign of these two parks will create safer, more accessible, and environmentally resilient outdoor spaces for Paterson's residents. The full plan review is included in Appendix B.

## About the Project Area: South Paterson

### Demographics

Passaic County is located in northern New Jersey with Sussex County to the west, Morris and Essex to the South, Bergen County to the east, and Orange and Rockland counties (NY) to the North. The County is 197 square miles and includes urban, suburban, semi-suburban and rural communities. The City of Paterson is the county seat of Passaic County, and the state's third-most-populous city, with an estimated 2024 population of approximately 156,434.

The median age of Paterson residents is 33.1 years, and the median household income is \$52,092. The city exhibits diversity with 35.6 percent of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, 23.5 percent as Black or African American, 15.8 percent as Two or More Races, 10.4 percent as White (Hispanic), and 7.7 percent as White (Non-Hispanic). The full economic summary is included in **Appendix C**.

The project area that includes Main & Gould Park and Main & Eagle Triangle Park is located in economically diverse areas with modest population and household growth projected through 2029. Both neighborhoods surrounding the two parks are largely multicultural and family-oriented and have relatively low homeownership rates but show signs of stabilization with increasing ownership. Housing affordability remains a concern, especially in the Main & Gould Park area, where mortgage burdens are higher relative to income.

## Neighborhood Context and Access: South Paterson

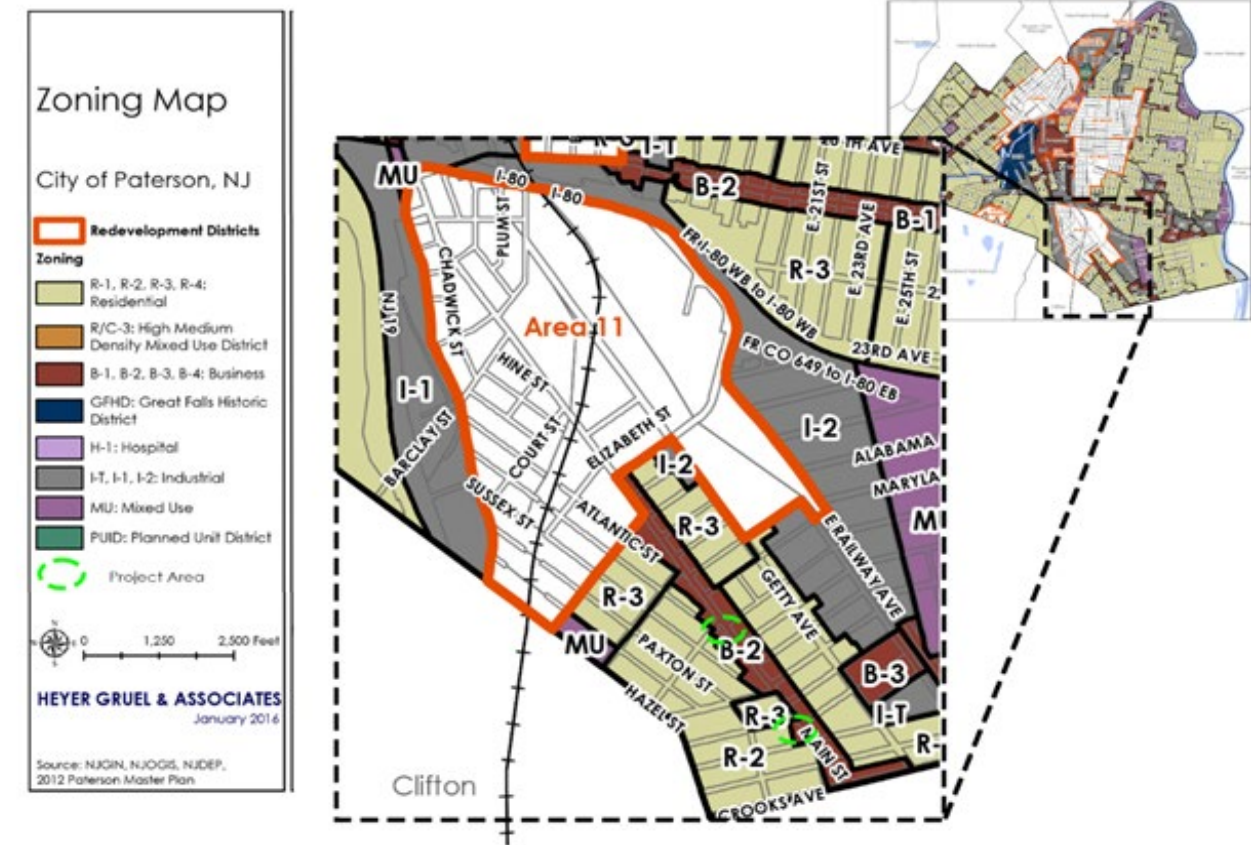


FIGURE 4. ZONING MAP WITH PROJECT AREA HIGHLIGHTED.

### City Zoning

The project area around the two park parcels has two types of zoning; the majority of Main Street is designated as business zones and the immediate surroundings are designated as residential. The two parks are the closest green spaces for many of these residential lots. With the parks located along the business corridor, businesses can support and encourage park activation as a strategy to re-invigorate the downtown area. Additionally, businesses may use the area for pop up events like farmer's markets, arts and crafts fairs, or suggest patrons check it out as an outdoor seating option.

### Urban Enterprise Zone

The City of Paterson was designated as an Urban Enterprise Zone city in 1994 by the state of New Jersey. The Urban Enterprise Zone program is an effort to foster economic development and employment in particularly under-invested areas. The businesses operating in these zones are provided tax discounts and tax breaks on operating supplies, energy and utility services and other specified purchases. The two park parcels located in South Paterson are also considered a part of the UEZ and are therefore eligible for UEZ funding to revitalize. In the Spring of 2025, the City of Paterson approved a funding request from the UEZ for both park parcels. At the time of report writing, the UEZ of Paterson had plans to submit an official application with funding plans to the State UEZ office for final approval and

awarding of the funding. If the funding is approved, the Paterson UEZ team can use the funding for adding amenities to the parks, implementing improved landscaping and beautification efforts.

### Need for Community Parks

The Trust for Public Land's ParkScore Index provides a comprehensive national benchmark for evaluating park access and quality across U.S. cities. The index ranks municipalities based on proximity, park acreage, funding, and equity, offering a valuable tool for cities like Paterson to measure their park system's strengths and weaknesses. According to the ParkScore Index, 83 percent of Paterson residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, a figure that exceeds the national median (55%) and the median for the 100 most populous U.S. cities (74%). This suggests that proximity to parks is not a primary barrier to access in Paterson. However, despite this relatively high accessibility, only 5 percent of Paterson's land is allocated to parks and recreation, significantly below the national median of 15 percent. This disparity indicates that while many residents live close to parks, these spaces may be small, overcrowded, or lack adequate recreational infrastructure. For more information about park access, park equity and crime prevention, see the project's literature review in **Appendix D**.

### Pedestrian, bicycle and transit access

Presently, there is a complete sidewalk network in and around the two parks that allow residents and visitors to safely travel along the corridor. Some sections of the sidewalk require maintenance or improvement, and others require improved ADA curb cuts to ensure those using wheels can use the network properly. While there are some painted crosswalks, highly visible crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs are recommended for creating safer pedestrian crossings into each of the parks.

The two parks are located in a high traffic area in the center of the economic district. This may make it challenging and unsafe for people to cycle without better bicycle infrastructure. To encourage more cycling, the city would need to provide safer biking infrastructure, which would require reducing some street parking. As parking in this downtown area is valued, this approach would need further research and public engagement.

Two bus stops are located near Main & Gould Park, one on the perimeter of the park, with the other on the opposite side of Main Street. The stops are serviced by NJ TRANSIT bus routes: 74, 74U, 190, 190D, 190E, 190X, and 190R (only on the North Bound Stop). Some travelers use the park as a waiting area for these buses and use the current benches to sit and wait.

### Neighborhood Context: North Paterson/Dublin and The Great Falls

The third site, referred to in this report as the passive parcel, is located in the Dublin neighborhood of North Paterson in the vicinity of Great Falls National Park. This parcel is owned by Passaic County and was recently established due to a roadway redesign that left a parcel of land unused. Due to the busy roadways nearby, the parcel is not a good candidate for active recreation. In addition, the immediate area surrounding the parcel does not have any heavy commercial activity. Therefore, this parcel is better suited for passive use, with an emphasis on providing greenery and natural landscaping. Details on the landscaping recommendations for this parcel are provided in Appendix A.

## Existing Site Conditions: Main & Eagle Triangle Park

### Pedestrian Infrastructure

The pedestrian infrastructure in and around Main & Eagle Triangle Park is comprehensive but requires some additions and improvements.



**FIGURE 5. SEVERAL CROSSWALKS AROUND MAIN & EAGLE TRIANGLE PARK HAVE BEEN RECENTLY UPDATED AND ARE BOTH HIGHLY VISIBLE AND ADA ACCESSIBLE.**

Pedestrians can safely cross Main Street at the north corner of Genessee Ave, and the north and south corner of Knickerbocker Ave. Pedestrians may also cross the roadway at the North portion of the park, using the painted crosswalk. While there are some painted crosswalks that connect the park with the surrounding sidewalk network, the park is missing a key crossing opportunity and the northern terminus of the park. If leaving the park to walk north, pedestrians are required to cross Main Street on their right and proceed using the eastern side of the sidewalk network. There is not currently a sidewalk on the northwest portion of the park. However, during the site visit, team members watched more than ten pedestrians cross from the northern curb cut of Main and Genessee Ave. This is a distance of 119 feet, 9 inches, without a painted crosswalk (measurements taken on AutoCAD). Crosswalks on the north and south corner of Knickerbocker Avenue as well as the midblock crossing from the park to the Eastern portion of Main Street's sidewalk, could also benefit from a repainting, preferably using vertical striping to improve visibility for drivers.



**FIGURE 6. PEDESTRIANS WALK 119 FEET, 9 INCHES, WITHOUT A PAINTED CROSSWALK TO REACH MAIN & EAGLE TRIANGLE PARK.**

The sidewalk is in decent condition, with a majority of sections remaining wide and flat enough to meet ADA accessibility requirements. However, there are several sections around the perimeter of the park that have been impacted by tree roots. These tilted sections present a tripping hazard and make it challenging for anyone using a device on wheels.



**FIGURE 7. SOME SEGMENTS OF THE PARK'S WESTERN SIDEWALK ARE UNEVEN AND PRESENT A TRIP HAZARD.**



**FIGURE 8. THE PARK'S EASTERN SIDEWALK IS IN GREAT CONDITION.**

### Park Maintenance

The park appears to be somewhat maintained; trash cans were not overflowing, and litter was relatively low. While observing during the site visit, team members interacted with an individual who cleans the park on a relatively consistent basis, and he expressed that trash and litter is the most challenging issue the park was facing. He explained that visitors sometimes smash glass bottles, which causes safety concerns and a maintenance challenge.

In addition to occasional litter, the park lacks ground maintenance; the grass is dead in some sections, roots overpower what appeared to be a path, and landscaping was significantly lacking. Several sections of the park are mostly dirt and appear to be worn from walking or congregating. There are also two large street planters located at the north and south of the park that contain old and dying plants. At the southeastern corner of the park, there is a welcome sign for the City of Paterson and an empty planter section below it.



**FIGURE 9. (ABOVE) LANDSCAPE IS LACKING IN CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE PARK, (BELOW) ONE OF TWO EMPTY STREET PLANTERS.**

### Park Amenities

The park currently has four wooden benches placed around the pedestrian pathway. One bench is partly charred from a presumed fire, the other three are in relatively fine condition. The park also has two garbage cans located at either end. The pedestrian pathway that weaves its way through the park from the south to the north is paved but broken up and uneven because of tree roots.



**FIGURE 10. (ABOVE) CHARRED PARK BENCH WITH LITTER AND A FILLED TRASH CAN; (BELOW) UNEVEN PAVEMENT MAKES IT CHALLENGING FOR PEDESTRIANS TO FULLY ENJOY THE PARK.**

The park has a multitude of informational signs that are placed at either end of the park. These signs explain the park restrictions (no littering, no loitering, no alcoholic beverages, no dogs). A second sign underneath it repeats the signage and specifies when the park is open. The other sign, located at the south section of the park, includes a warning about cleaning up after dogs and a notification of Adopt a Park. These signs are placed haphazardly and take away from the aesthetics of the area.



**FIGURE 11. (LEFT) SIGNS AT THE SOUTH SECTION OF THE PARK. (RIGHT) SIGNS LOCATED AT THE NORTH SECTION.**

While the site visit was conducted in daylight, team members noted that there are two tall spotlights at either end of the park. These lights are not pedestrian scale and resemble surveillance lights.



**FIGURE 12. TALL STREETLAMPS ARE LOCATED AT EITHER END OF THE PARK.**

## Strengths

During the site visit, team members observed three different parties visit the park. The first two were single individuals who came into the park to sit, talk on the phone and smoke. The other was a young family that brought sandwiches and ate on the park benches. Each party seemed to enjoy the space.

While some sections of the park lack grass, the southern portion is bright green and has an aesthetically pleasing appearance. The trees also provide great shade for those visiting the park.

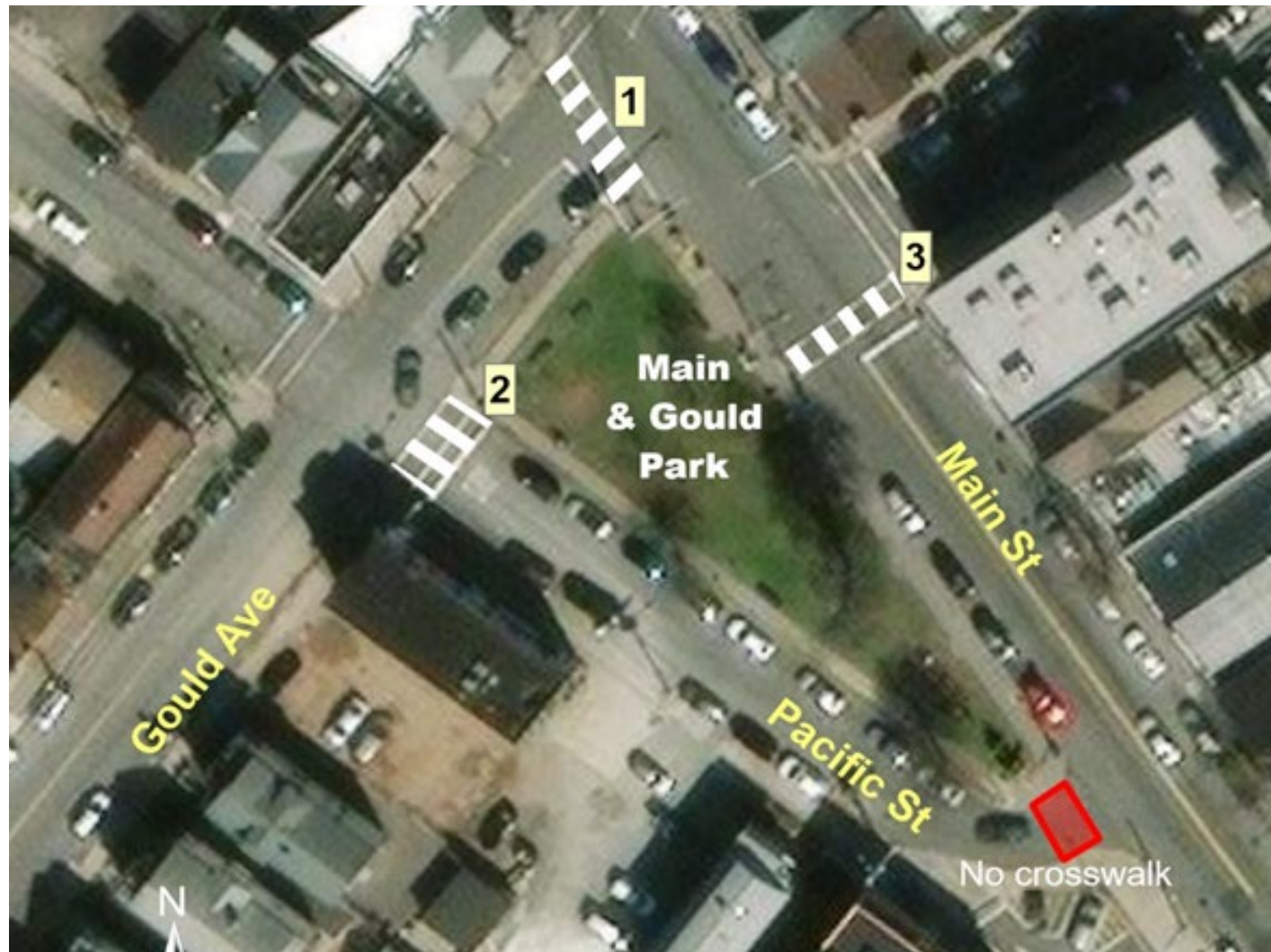


**FIGURE 13. WHILE IN NEED OF SOME IMPROVEMENTS , MAIN & EAGLE TRIANGLE PARK IS A BEAUTIFUL ELEMENT OF NATURE IN SOUTH PATERSON.**

## Existing Conditions: Main & Gould Park

### Sidewalk Infrastructure

The pedestrian infrastructure in and around Main & Gould Park is comprehensive but requires some additions and improvements (Figure 14). Pedestrians walking on the western portion of Main Street are able to cross into the park from the northwest corner of Main and Gould using a pedestrian crosswalk (1) and can do the same from the corner of Gould Ave and Pacific Street (2). However, pedestrians are only able to cross into the park from the eastern sidewalk along Main St. at the corner of Gould and Main, which is a midblock crossing in the park (3). There is not currently a crosswalk to allow pedestrians to cross Pacific Street into or out of the park. The sidewalk on the eastern perimeter of the park is in great condition and is ADA accessible. The sidewalk on the western perimeter has segments out of alignment because of tree roots.



**FIGURE 14. PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS SURROUNDING MAIN & GOULD PARK.**



**FIGURE 15. UNEVEN PAVEMENT ALONG THE PARK'S WESTERN PERIMETER.**



**FIGURE 16. PEDESTRIANS CROSS PACIFIC STREET WITHOUT A PAINTED CROSSWALK OR ADA CURB CUT.**

### Park Maintenance

While this park appears to be more intentionally landscaped than Main & Eagle Triangle Park, it lacks some necessary maintenance. During the site visit team members noticed litter, trash and benches in disrepair. The park's two street planters were also empty. Further, some sections of grass had several holes, which present a safety concern for park visitors.



**FIGURE 17. (LEFT) SMALL DITCHES/HOLES PRESENT TRIP HAZARDS. (RIGHT) LITTER LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE BENCHES.**

### Park Amenities

The park has eleven benches, seven of which face the sidewalk and are placed on the perimeter of the park. The outer benches are of an appropriate height and all in working condition. The other four benches also face out into the sidewalk and street but are in the middle of the southern section of the park. These benches are lower than the others and some have broken or sagging sections. The benches are also located inside a raised wooden rail which sticks out from the ground. These benches are not appropriate for anyone who may find sitting and standing challenging. The park does not currently have picnic benches or any sort of tables, which may make eating food or picknicking more challenging.



**FIGURE 18. (LEFT) THE BROKEN BENCH, UNEVEN PAVEMENT AND WOODEN PERIMETER MAKES USING THESE BENCHES CHALLENGING AND UNSAFE. (RIGHT) THE BENCHES ALONG THE PARK'S PERIMETER ARE IN GREAT CONDITION.**

## Signage

Visitors entering the park from the north are welcomed into the park by a sign that says 'Welcome to Little Palestine,' and includes imagery of the Paterson Great Falls. Behind it are local ordinance signs including a 'smoke free zone' sign and a 'no loitering, no littering, no alcoholic beverages' sign. At the southern entrance there is another set of signs, one saying 'do not feed the birds' and another indicating that this park has been adopted and has been named Deir Jarir, which is a small agricultural town in Palestine. While these signs are better placed than those in Main & Eagle Triangle, they still impact the overall aesthetic of the park. Additionally, it is unclear what the formal name of the park is, which may make it challenging for individuals to use it as a meeting spot.



FIGURE 19. THE SIGNS LOCATED IN MAIN & GOULD PARK.

## Strengths

While there is room for improvement and additions, Main & Gould Park offers some open green spaces, places to sit and relax as well as artwork and signage that celebrates the local community. The area also has a significant amount of opportunity considering the many nearby cafes, businesses and restaurants as well as the high pedestrian activity along the Main St. Additionally, the park has several spaces available for additional artwork. The two utility boxes near the northeastern section of the park provide ample space for local artwork and art wrapping.

The park has a newer art installation at the southern portion of the park which acts as an icon, landmark and a signifier of the park. The park also has a few large shady trees and a few smaller trees that have lights tied around their trunks.



FIGURE 20. WRAPPING UTILITY BOXES WITH LOCAL ARTWORK CAN ADD SOME BEAUTY WHILE ALSO CELEBRATING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.



FIGURE 21. A LOCAL ART INSTALLATION OF THE CRESCENT MOON AND STAR CELEBRATES THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN SOUTH PATERSON. THE SYMBOL REPRESENTS TIME, RHYTHM, LIGHT AND GUIDANCE IN ISLAM, BUT ALSO CAPTURES MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURES.



FIGURE 22. THE PARK COULD BENEFIT FROM ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING AND PLANTINGS, LIKE THE ONE BUSH PLANTED BESIDE THE BENCH.

## Public Outreach: The Process and the Findings

The VPP project team developed an outreach strategy to understand the public and other stakeholders' perceptions of the two parks and downtown South Paterson, as well as innovative programming strategies they'd like to see in the future. The outreach strategy aimed to reach various interested individuals, including residents, visitors, students, business owners, and other stakeholders. The strategy included:

- Online Survey: The project team designed and developed an online survey to distribute to residents and businesses in the neighborhood surrounding the two Main Street parks.
- Community Stakeholder Meeting: On February 19th, 2025, VTC, NJTPA, and Passaic County officials participated in a site visit and stakeholder meeting in Paterson. Pop-up Event: The project team members set up a tabling event on the afternoon of May 10<sup>th</sup> at Main & Eagle Triangle Park to speak with residents and visitors and promote the online survey. The tabling event included tablets to facilitate survey-taking on the spot, as well as flyers to distribute to passersby and encourage them to take the survey on their own.

The feedback from the stakeholder and public engagement noted that Main & Gould Park plays an increasingly active civic role, having recently hosted rallies and community events. There is interest in formally designing the space for gatherings, with suggestions to incorporate culturally relevant elements like Middle Eastern art and mosaics. Main & Eagle Triangle Park, by contrast, sees lighter use and was identified as a potential children's play area due to its lower traffic environment. Community members highlighted the area's vibrant street life, particularly along Main Street, which sees heavy foot traffic, store activity, and periodic road closures for festivals. Concerns were raised about pedestrian safety—especially for schoolchildren—and the need for pathways that accommodate strollers, walkers, and remain usable in inclement weather.

Programming already offered in and around the parks includes educational outreach, medical and census awareness, holiday celebrations, and food drives. The idea of expanding offerings to include sports watch parties and similar gatherings was met with enthusiasm. Parking emerged as a challenge, as the downtown area now draws around 20,000 visitors, placing pressure on local infrastructure. Attendees emphasized that the community is deeply family-oriented, civically engaged, and strongly connected to place. Recommendations for future outreach included engaging the South Paterson Business District, religious leaders, local Palestinian groups, and the community center. Participants also suggested that future engagement materials include clear mapping of the parks relative to known landmarks to ensure local understanding and accessibility.

Conversations with residents at the tabling event in the park included the recommendation to create a "Zen Garden" for relaxation and to provide a quiet retreat from the bustle of the City. Another resident emphasized that the City should keep the properties looking/feeling natural and should only use natural materials in whatever is built or installed in the space. Another individual noted that the tree roots pose a serious problem to renovating the space and that the City should install railroad ties around the park and add soil to raise the elevation of the property by a foot to cover the roots and create an event surface.

# Recommendations

The following section details recommendations for the two Main Street parks (recommendations for the third parcel are provided in **Appendix A**). These recommendations provide the City and the County with ideas and suggestions for both activating the space and enhancing the pedestrian infrastructure around the parks. Implementing recommendations from these sets of strategies will help ensure safe, easy access to the parks, as well as provide opportunities for engaging and fulfilling enjoyment of the two spaces. Finally, this section concludes with a discussion of park stewardship, including recommendations for engaging the community in the care and maintenance of these spaces to ensure continued enjoyment into the future. As described above, these strategies are organized around the three goals for the parks.

## Recommendation 1: Foster a sense of place in each park

Placemaking is a collaborative strategy that brings planners and communities together to create multi-benefit public spaces.<sup>2</sup> When public spaces, such as squares and parks, are planned collaboratively, they can provide health benefits, social connections, and economic development opportunities. Several of the factors influencing individual and community health are directly related to how public spaces are designed and operated. For example, urban sprawl and poorly planned development often result in unwalkable communities, poor air quality due to traffic congestion, and streets that are unsafe for pedestrians or cyclists.<sup>3</sup> Public spaces can be a space for passive recreation and exercise, making it easier for communities to build healthy habits.

As a result of the quality-of-life benefits that public spaces bring, communities with great public spaces can attract talent, entrepreneurship, and encourage local businesses. A community without vibrant public spaces will have a difficult time attracting and retaining talented, hard workers or being attractive to business. Additionally, public spaces can build local economies through events like farmers' markets, craft fairs, food festivals, and more. Public spaces can be ideal spaces for activities that bring people together and build community pride.

These two parks along Main Street should serve as an asset in this regard, as there are a multitude of local businesses, residents, and passersby who frequent the area. The strategies below are intended to enhance the sense of "place" at both Main Street parks located within the downtown commercial center by celebrating, supporting and reflecting the vibrancy of the local culture. The corridor is a major destination for Paterson residents and visitors from nearby towns and the surrounding region. Providing two vibrant, unique, and well-maintained parks will encourage people to linger, socialize, and frequent local businesses. This goal can be achieved through park activations like hosting programming and adding amenities.

### Strategy 1: Add amenities that encourage visitation

The two parks are located in a heavily trafficked area of downtown Paterson, with ample shops, restaurants, and heavy foot traffic. Adding some fresh amenities to these two parks can encourage the pedestrians and shoppers in the area to take advantage of this green oasis in the middle of a busy downtown. The City should consider the following additions:

<sup>2</sup> Madden, K. (2018) How to turn a place around: A placemaking handbook. Project for Public Spaces.

<sup>3</sup> Project for Public Spaces. (2016) The Case for Healthy Places.

<sup>4</sup> The International Economic Development Council. (2017) Place matters: The role of placemaking in economic development. [https://www.bigskyeconomicdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/EDRP\\_Placemaking.pdf](https://www.bigskyeconomicdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/EDRP_Placemaking.pdf)



**FIGURE 23. AN EXAMPLE OF MOVABLE STREET FURNITURE THAT COULD BE USED IN A SMALL PARKLET. THESE BENCHES CAN BE RECONFIGURED FOR A VARIETY OF USES.**

- **Seating:** While both parks have benches available, the seating options are not as varied and positioned well within the space. The City and county should consider acquiring varied and moveable seating options, which will allow visitors to move, adjust and a configuration that suits their needs on a particular visit. As Main & Gould Park is often the site of events and festivals, moveable seating will ensure that the space can be used to its capacity. Seating should also include tables or places to put items like food and beverages from nearby establishments.
- **Multi-faith Amenities:** The City might want to consider intentionally integrating culturally appropriate and multi-faith amenities in these pocket parks, as they are situated within the heart of a predominantly Islamic community. Parks could become dedicated spaces for prayer and meditation or include creative storage areas for prayer mats or water elements for washing before prayer. These elements might also help to encourage community stewardship.
- **Fitness Zone:** Outdoor fitness equipment is a great way to encourage physical fitness and provides outdoor recreational opportunities for adults. Outdoor gyms can include simple equipment, such as push-up bars, parallel bars, or balance beams, along with informational signage on how to do a variety of exercises on the equipment. Oftentimes these "fitness zones" can also double as play spaces for kids.



**FIGURE 24. AN EXAMPLE OF OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT, THE PUSH UP BAR.**

- **Small-scale playground equipment:** During stakeholder discussions, several community members expressed an interest in establishing the Main & Eagle Triangle Park as a more child-friendly play environment. This park is in a comparatively lower traffic area and is smaller in size compared to Main & Gould Park, which may make it a better spot for playground equipment. However, a large-scale playground may not be particularly feasible given the size of the park. Smaller, more contained equipment may be an excellent, and still engaging, alternative. Some examples include:
  - Balance beams
  - Wooden stepping blocks
  - Outdoor musical instruments



FIGURE 25. CHINNING BARS AND CHATTER BUG, EXAMPLE FROM PLAYGROUNDOUTFITTERS.COM.



- **Little Free Library installations:** Small collections of publicly accessible books, often called Little Free Libraries, can act as a resource for visitors and residents alike. The miniature neighborhood libraries allow visitors to take and leave a book and have become popular in recent years across the country. The website Little Free Libraries has resources regarding how to construct, start, and maintain the library. The library itself can be funded and maintained by residents, organizations, or the City. Little libraries may also be stationed next to or in social spaces like public parks. By pairing the library with available seating, visitors will be more inclined to gather in the area with their books.



FIGURE 26. LITTLE FREE LIBRARY IN TAYLOR PARK IN MILBURN, NJ. PHOTO CREDIT: FRIENDS OF MILLBURN LIBRARY.

- **Publicly accessible yard games:** Small, publicly accessible yard games can engage young kids (and adults) in each pocket park. Some games may be able to withstand all weather and can be kept outside. However, many will require maintenance and shelter. The City of Paterson may consider borrowing games from the NJTPA's Complete Streets Demonstration Library to engage with the community and to determine which game would be the best investment.
- **A community information kiosk:** A centralized location with information about upcoming events and activities can further support activation efforts. A well-defined and consistent location for event postings, local news, and information can keep residents informed and may increase participation. Kiosks are even available in a digital format so that information can be updated in real time from a remote location. Information kiosks can be placed in any location, though it may be best suited at the northern entrance of Main & Gould Park.



FIGURE 27. NJTPA SET UP OUTDOOR YARD GAMES AT A POP-UP PARKLET IN PROSPECT PARK IN MAY 2024. THESE GAMES ARE AVAILABLE FOR BORROWING THROUGH THE NJTPA COMPLETE STREETS DEMONSTRATION LIBRARY.

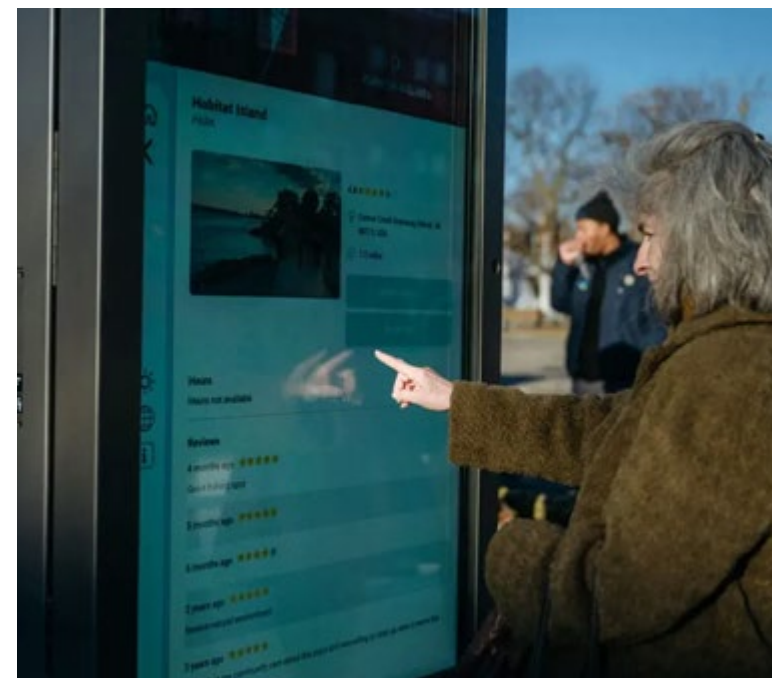


FIGURE 28. AN EXAMPLE OF A DIGITAL KIOSK IN DOWNTOWN DETROIT, MICHIGAN. SOURCE: DOWNTOWN DETROIT PARTNERSHIP.

## Strategy 2: Add amenities that improve aesthetics

Aesthetics is an important component of creating a welcoming space for users. As mentioned above in the section on site conditions, these two parks are in need of some improvements to clean and beautify the parks for visitors and patrons. These are often lower-cost improvements that can make a significant impact on how the parks are perceived by the community and guests. Recommendations include:

- **Art installations:** Additional statues or sculptures can also be a part of the cohesive design aspect, as previously discussed. Local artists can be called on to design installations for specific parks. These visual cues can be helpful for solidifying the identity of each park. Art installations can also be a wonderful way to communicate local culture and community pride or highlight the natural environment or history of Paterson. Examples of natural art can be found in the report *Engaging the Arts Along the Morris Canal Greenway*, published in 2021. The report is available for download on the Passaic County website, under Planning & Economic Development.
- **Beautify electrical boxes and other empty surfaces:** Electrical boxes are a necessary installation along the eastern portion of Main & Gould Park. However, the current condition of the boxes detracts from the overall aesthetic. Public art can address this by beautifying cold-looking surfaces with paintings or wrapping them with a design. In some communities, electrical boxes showcase similar images or colors to connect the effort throughout the area. In other communities, electrical boxes showcase elementary school kids' designs and drawings. Paterson may decide to expand this recommendation to other parts of the city, as it is a simple, quick, and effective effort to improve streetscape aesthetics.



FIGURE 29. A PAINTED ELECTRICAL BOX IN HACKENSACK, NJ. PHOTO CREDIT: NORTHJERSEY.COM.

- **Landscaping:** Intentional landscape design can help brighten up the park space and encourage new and different uses. Consider adding native grasses or bushes. Additionally, pollinator plants would be a beneficial inclusion that would help create a more welcoming environment and support wildlife.
  - **Location Specific:** Main & Gould, less plants are needed as the space is often used for large scale congregation. The best solution to this would be large, but moveable planters that can be moved

easily and can be used to establish borders, paths or spaces.

- **Location Specific:** Main & Eagle Triangle is already somewhat wooded, so shade-friendly grasses and flowers would be the best option. As this park is not often used for large scale events, landscaping may help to solidify the existing pathway by creating a more visible edge. Additionally, plants can be used to create separation from the road and the park, if this is something that is important for the community. This could include a sensory or pollinator garden like the one proposed in the Paterson Vista Park project. Adding plants that appeal to the senses of touch and smell would encourage visitors to further immerse themselves in the space.
- **Simple, attractive signage.** The City may consider consolidating the many park signs located in both parks into one instructional sign that gives general information about the park and the rules. This sign may be located near the recommended community board, where people can post flyers, posters and share event dates with others.
- **Covered trash cans:** Covered trash cans can help keep litter and trash from being blown up and around the park space, which will cut down on maintenance time.



FIGURE 30. EXAMPLE OF MORE SIMPLE SIGNAGE. SOURCE: SMARTSIGN.COM.

## Strategy 3: Activate the parks with activities

Activities, events and festivals are helpful tools for getting people to visit parks and creating an engaging community atmosphere. For medium to large scale events in smaller parks, the City is encouraged to refer to the programming at the Newark City Parks. Across their five parks, the organization has hosted a variety of wellness events aimed at providing opportunities for people to access valuable resources and engage with Newark's diverse array of cultures. Additionally, the services they provide are made easily accessible to all ages and levels with the help of partnerships with local organizations.

Main events held at these parks can range from workout sessions with guided instruction to music festivals featuring a variety of vendors and music performances. Newark's annual Fitness Festival, for instance, consists of dozens of activities for people to engage in such as bike rides, yoga, Zumba, Tai Chi, and meditation classes. The City has also partnered with the Newark Department of Health & Community Wellness to create events centered around providing free health and wellness services to residents that include health screenings, harm reduction supplies, creative arts therapy, and meditation sessions.

The City and County should work to encourage activities in these parks, whether by streamlining the permitting process, or working with local businesses to create events. Events and activities can include:

- **Skill-sharing events.** Residents of the City may wish to share some of their own knowledge and skills by leading their own skill-sharing workshops. For example, a high school drama student may want to lead an acting class, or a yoga teacher leading a class. Some workshops could also help provide resources to the community that help promote financial stability and local workforce development. Encouraging these types of events can help to increase residents' sense of belonging and community.

- **Mini artist markets with local vendors.** Mini artist markets could take place in either of the two parks on Main Street. These outdoor events gather local artists and craftspeople to showcase and sell their hand-made goods in a park setting. They are a great way to enrich the park environment, making it more vibrant and engaging for visitors. It can also help to foster community identity by providing a platform for local art and artists that reflect the city’s unique cultural heritage and artistic spirit.
- **Street festivals or fairs with tents and vendors.** The closure of Main Street could provide the City with a significant amount of additional space to use. Tents for local organizations or local vendors can be set up on the street to utilize this space fully. Similar to the artist markets, street festivals would be beneficial in promoting the community’s rich cultural heritage, particularly in the celebration of certain holidays and customs. For instance, the popularity of the City’s local cuisine during the holy month of Ramadan could be integrated into street festivals that help create a more accessible and immersive experience. This type of event could be done in conjunction with an open street closure, as described above.
- **Concerts.** Mini concerts or local band performances can take place in either pocket park during open street events. They could also be talks or readings that allow for open conversations about specific religions and cultures. These concerts could highlight cultural or religious holidays or festivals or celebrate local events in partnership with community organizations or local schools.
- **Farmer’s markets.** Access to fresh, healthy produce is always an important component of a vibrant community. Using these two pocket parks for small-scale farmers markets during the spring, summer, and fall, could be a great way to enhance access to health, fresh food, and also provide activation of the area. Farmers markets can draw residents from across the entire City of Paterson.

## Strategy 4: Engaging activities for children

- **Story walk.** Working with a local library, the City can set up a story walk along the perimeter of either park, or along a designated path. Each couple of feet a new page of a book is posted. This helps keep children engaged throughout a walk and visit. The topics of these walks could also connect to the City’s historical background, touching upon aspects such as the area’s diverse array of cultures and its natural beauty. The City should also collaborate with local book authors such as Alicia Greene, Diane Belinfanti, and Jesse Sima, to allow children to engage in meaningful conversations about their work.
- **Book readings.** The City could also work with the library to plan for outdoor book readings or live storytime for children. Readers could engage children with stories, lively costumes, and music. This could also be a way for local organizations and small businesses that serve parents and children, such as Paterson Reads and the Paterson Public Library, to co-sponsor events and promote local offerings. Adult book clubs could also be hosted by local nonprofits to activate the spaces.
- **Create an open street on Eagle Avenue.** The City and County could close Eagle Avenue to traffic to allow kids to bike, scooter or skateboard freely in the street. The City should use the multitude of open street events hosted within the area as a reference, including annual marathon fundraisers, jazz festivals, and Paterson’s year-round farmers markets. Such an event could be coupled with other activation ideas to create a kid-friendly festival in the park.

## Recommendation 2: Improve the Pedestrian Experience

Fostering a sense of place is only effective if that place can be easily and safely accessed by the community. Along with events and activation, the parks need to be safe and accessible for all users. The City and County should strive to make Main Street a place where people feel safe walking alone or with friends and family. By improving the walkability of the area of Main Street by the parks, the corridor can become a more desirable destination for individuals of all ages. Improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and programs to promote biking and walking will increase foot traffic in the area, adding to the area’s vibrancy, improving perceptions of safety, and reduce the demand for parking

The strategies listed below provide some recommendations for improving crosswalks, sidewalks, and wayfinding around the parks. These are in line with a Complete Streets approach to planning and design, which may be implemented by the City (in coordination and collaboration with Passaic County) to help move towards these safety goals. Implementation of these strategies can help to create a vibrant commercial and cultural corridor that is safer and more welcoming for all users. Further, more detailed recommendations could come from the City undertaking a **Complete Streets Technical Assistance** study. More information on Complete Streets Technical Assistance can be found in the funding section of this report.

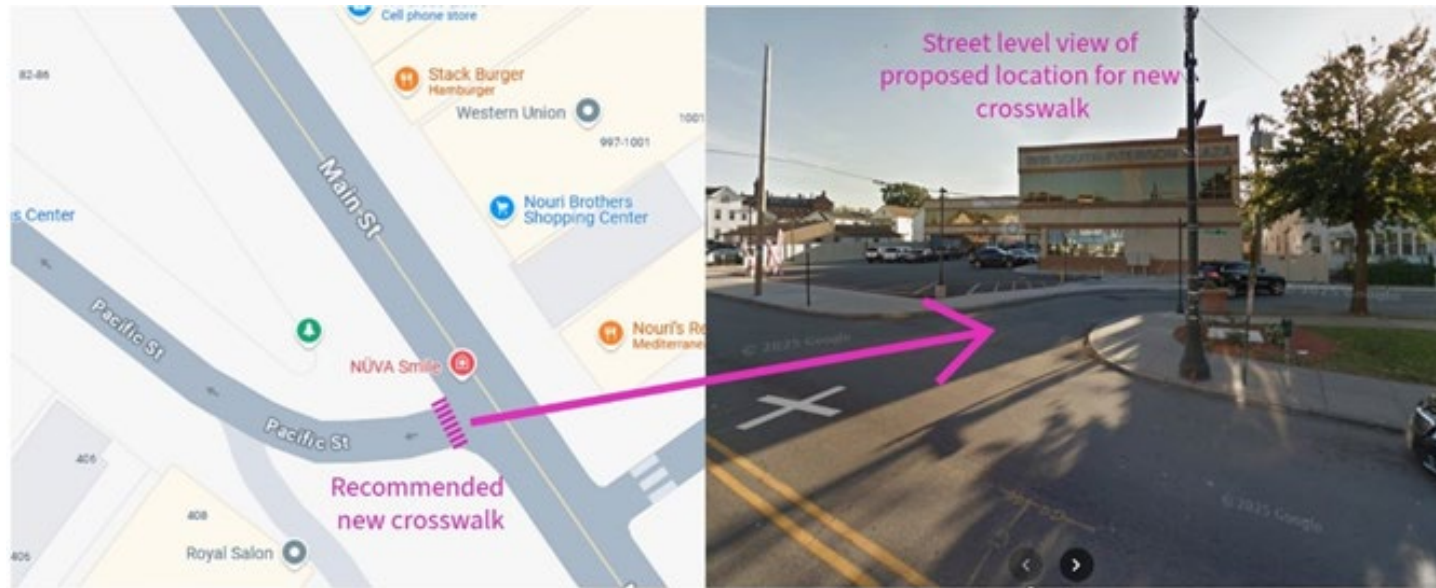
## Strategy 5: Implementing intersection improvements

There are a few intersections in the project area that need maintenance to enhance the pedestrian experience around the parks. The City should consider repainting disappearing crosswalks with the next street resurfacing project. In particular, the City should consider using vertical line crosswalks as a higher visibility option or, instead of traditional restriping, the City and the County should consider painting crosswalks with contrasting colors. The City could also use larger, more visible patterns (such as continental, zebra, or ladder striping) or replace painted crosswalks with thermoplastic tape, which is highly reflective, more durable than paint, and can be more cost-effective in the long run.

In particular, the City should consider the following location specific recommendations:

### Add a crosswalk from the southern corner of Main & Gould Park across Pacific Ave

As discussed above, there is a crosswalk missing at a key location near the Main & Gould Park that creates safety hazards for pedestrians trying to access the park. If the City is going to invest in creating an inviting atmosphere in the park for residents and visitors, they should ensure that the park can be accessed safely on foot. This includes adding a crosswalk to the southern corner of Main and Gould crossing to Pacific Avenue. The picture below shows the current condition at the park, and the rendering shows where a crosswalk could be added for increased safety.



**FIGURE 31. PROPOSED NEW CROSSWALK AT THE SOUTHERN CORNER OF MAIN & GOULD PARK.**

Reconfigure the Main St., Eagle Ave and Genesee Ave intersection to reduce crossing distance



**FIGURE 32. CURRENT CONDITION AT THE SOUTHERN CORNER OF MAIN & EAGLE.**

As discussed in the current conditions, pedestrians cross a long distance at the intersection of Eagle Ave and Genesee Ave to reach Main & Gould Park. While, addressing this issue will require a deeper intersection and feasibility study, a potential solution the City could consider would be the implementation of curb extensions.

Curb extensions are physical modifications of the street corner that extend sidewalks, creating safer and shorter pedestrian crossings. Beyond shortening the 120-foot crossing distance for pedestrians at this corner, extending curbs at this unsignalized intersection would also increase pedestrian visibility, and slow traffic by narrowing the active roadways. Curb extensions can be implemented using low-cost temporary materials such as paint, bollards, planters or striping. They can also become a more permanent solution with the addition of a new elevated sidewalk extension that can have features like vegetation or signage. Below is a conceptual rendering for how a curb extension might be used to shorten the crossing distance.

Rendering: Main St., Eagle Ave and Genesee Ave Intersection Reconfiguration

Option 1

Curb Extension-  
New Crosswalk



**FIGURE 25 OPTION FOR RECONFIGURATION OF CROSSING ON THE NORTH END OF MAIN & GOULD PARK.**

## Strategy 6: Improve bus stops

Main & Gould Park has a bus stop located along its northeast perimeter. Previously the bus stop had a covered shelter, but the shelter is no longer present. Currently the stop has a bench and a sign. From site visits and discussions with local community members, it is apparent that this bus stop is well used and highly trafficked. However, there is little separation between the bus stop and the park, often resulting in people waiting in the park for the bus to arrive. Unfortunately, this creates some visual confusion and can create a bottle neck along the sidewalk network. As this section of the park faces the majority of businesses and offers an excellent location for the entrance to the park, it is important to separate the bus stop from the park. The City can establish a separate location for the bus stop by clearly delineating it with signs, amenities and an enclosure can help to create space between a bus stop and the park. The bus stop is also located in the middle of the intersection, a challenging location for the high traffic corridor.

- **Move the bus stop.** The City and County could work with NJ TRANSIT to move this bus stop further south

along the park. This move can help open the northeast section entrance and will create a better pick-up and drop-off location. While NJ TRANSIT will cover the costs of installing bus stop amenities, municipalities are responsible for cleaning and maintenance. The stop location is generally decided by the municipalities and presented to NJ TRANSIT, but County roads may require additional approval.

- **Improving bus stop amenities.** Three other bus stops are located within a block or two of each park. The City and County can improve each by adding items such as trash cans, lighting, seating, or a leaning bar. These amenities are essential to a well-designed streetscape and play a key role in making travel by public transportation more comfortable and safer.

## Strategy 7: Develop consistent visual identity along the corridor

Consistent visual cues along Main Street and in the two parks can help establish the area as a community destination. These visual cues, or a defined “visual language,” can include fonts, colors, and logos, as well as visual motifs present along the roadway. The City can work with their community members to develop a visual identity that reflects the current community present in the area. A consistent visual identity has the potential to strengthen local pride and celebrate its uniqueness. Creating a visual language to be used throughout Main Street will assist with establishing the corridor as an economic center and connecting it with the two community parks. The visual identity can then be used for any placemaking efforts along the corridor or in the two parks. For example, the city can use the new visual identity to develop new banners to replace the current ones along the corridor.

Strategies for developing a visual identity include:

- **Leverage an existing logo:** Paterson’s logo can be used as a base for Main Street branding and visual identity. Consider utilizing the color palette or visual components to build a new identity specific to the economic strip. If Paterson chooses to create a logo and visual language specific to Main Street, the logo should be simple, easy to understand, and reflective of the neighborhood characteristics that set it apart from other communities.
- **Co-create a new visual identity:** To acquire public buy-in for a new design, Paterson and Passaic County could solicit ideas from residents as a community engagement activity. For example, a logo design competition can get individuals of all ages involved and will particularly engage local artists.
- **Installing gateway signage:** Install a temporary or permanent welcome sign to signify to visitors that they are entering the Main Street economic area. This sign could be located at the northeast side of Main & Gould Park, where the current ‘Welcome to Little Palestine’ is located.
- **Branded banners:** Banners specifically made for the Main Street Corridor can be exchanged for the already existing lamp posts banners to enhance the corridor’s visual identity and display South Paterson branding. Colors and icons should match any visual materials made for the parks as well.
- **Install an intersection mural:** Given that the intersections near these parks are in a central location on the corridor, the City can consider an intersection murals at one or both parks that are reflective of the spirit and culture of the community. By doing so, the intersection can also become a symbolic or reflective piece, depending on the context. If an intersection mural is not possible, the borough can consider the previously discussed crosswalk improvements.

## Strategy 8: Sidewalk leveling along and through the parks

Sidewalk improvements along the western perimeter of each park are necessary for creating an accessible and walkable corridor. Tree roots have pushed several sidewalk sections up and created uneven pavement and pathways. The City can address this through sidewalk repair that can smooth out the uneven sidewalks. Professionals can grind down uneven sidewalk slabs or patch areas that may be tripping hazards, though this is not effective for preventing further growth. In addition, the sidewalk can be replaced with flexible material that can adapt to root growth and minimize the risk of cracking. Raised sidewalks can help to address this challenge. The City and County may even consider cutting roots as needed and re-installing the sidewalk. However, this cannot be done without expert guidance as cutting roots may damage trees and destabilize them. In the future, the City should opt for trees with less aggressive root systems, such as a Red Maple, and install root barriers that help guide the roots to grow downward rather than outward.

## Strategy 9: Improve pedestrian scale lighting along the corridor and in the two parks

Most urban roads have lights that are designed to illuminate the entire road between sidewalks to increase visibility for drivers. However, these lights typically don’t shine on the sidewalks, making visibility of pedestrians difficult at nighttime. Furthermore, it is hard for drivers’ eyes to adjust to the difference in lighting between the road and the sidewalk, which can present conflicts at intersections. Pedestrian scale lighting can reduce pedestrian crashes by up to 42 percent<sup>5</sup>, making it another tool that can improve safety and encourage more people to walk by:

- Increasing sense of safety by brightening locations that are poorly lit.
- Helping pedestrians orient themselves by highlighting landmarks, street signs, and entryways.
- Improving visibility of pedestrians at crossings and intersections.
- Adding a vertical element to increase drivers’ alertness.
- Improving streetscape aesthetics by selecting a design that improves the character of the street.

The project team noted the existence of some lighting during the site visit to Main Street and the two pocket parks, but most lamp posts are taller in height than what is recommended for pedestrian scale lighting. Moving forward, the City can take further action to determine its precise lighting needs by hiring a consultant to undertake a lighting audit to help inventory current conditions, identify if and where there are any gaps, and provide solutions to address the needs. This study will help identify the full suite of practical and efficient solutions to meet the City’s needs. In particular, the City may want to consider installing additional lighting or adjusting the pattern of lighting near existing or proposed bus stops and throughout the two parks.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/lighting>

## Recommendation 3: Encourage community stewardship

The continued success of the two parks depends on maintenance. Through intentional programming and effort, community members should be encouraged to take an active role in upkeep. Additionally, residents of all ages should be educated on how best to respect the nature, amenities and policies of the two parks. Simple steps can convey to residents, visitors, and potential investors that Main Street and the two pocket parks are well-managed and is a place where community life and business activity can thrive. Signage, public art, and a corridor gateway can improve a sense of community identity and ownership in the short term.

### Strategy 10: Launch a Beautification Campaign

A Beautification Campaign can be funded by the municipality or through a partnership with local businesses, resident volunteers, and other organizations, such as a formal downtown Business Improvement District or an ad-hoc Beautification Committee. The City can provide some logistical and financial assistance, such as the use of a room for meetings or a small budget for starter projects, such as small planting projects like flower beds along the street or large planters in front of storefronts to attract pedestrians. This group of volunteers can continue to grow and self-organize into a formal South Paterson Beautification Committee capable of tackling more sophisticated, high-impact initiatives, such as:

**Stewards of the Park:** The City can partner with local high schools or middle schools to recruit people seeking volunteer and leadership hours to maintain and improve the two parks.

- **Delegate landscape maintenance through local sponsorship:** Local businesses or stores can sponsor segments of the road, a planter's box, or a tree. Businesses can be recognized with a small plaque or sign.
- **Implement an Adopt-a-tree Program:** Several New Jersey towns utilize this concept, in which individuals or groups have a chance to 'adopt' a tree and are responsible for its maintenance. In Flemington, NJ, this program is hosted through the Flemington Borough Shade Tree Commission, and all costs of materials and planting are waived using the municipal budget.
- **Host an annual or biannual neighborhood planting day:** Hosting a neighborhood planting event can allow residents to take pride in the nature that these parks provide. Highland Park, NJ, hosts a two-day neighborhood planting event in which volunteers are assigned to a planter and given materials and plants to beautify it. This activity may also be combined with other community efforts, like a fair, festival, or celebration.



# Bringing the Vision to Life

Park development can be costly, and resources are often scarce. To leverage city resources as much as possible, we have outlined some potential funding sources for implementing the pocket park plans below. Implementing and maintaining all the park features outlined in the conceptual designs may require multiple funding sources over time.

As mentioned above, in Spring 2025 the City of Paterson approved a funding request from the UEZ for both park parcels. The City should move forward with its plans to submit an official application with funding plans to the State UEZ office for final approval and awarding of the funding. Once awarded, the Paterson UEZ team can use the funding for adding amenities to the parks, implementing improved landscaping and beautification efforts.

Beyond providing technical support from the Vibrant Places Program, the NJTPA can offer the City a variety of resources, guides, and programs. For example, the NJTPA Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program supports municipalities by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to develop Complete Streets-related solutions. Selected participants receive free direct technical assistance to complete a specific task related to advancing a Complete Streets initiative in their community. To stay up to date on relevant funding opportunities or programs offered by the NJTPA, follow their website to receive announcements.

The City of Paterson may also consider working with the local Transportation Management Association, EZ Ride. EZ Ride provides technical assistance for municipalities, such as walkable community workshops, and assists with demonstration projects. These types of programs can act as a beginning step toward improving pedestrian experiences and safety. The assistance can also support the implementation of some transportation recommendations outlined in this report.

State and local funding is available to assist with the implementation of the identified strategies. Projects will be eligible for different types of funding, depending on the action and intended goal. Some additional funding to support park enhancements in New Jersey include:

**Local Recreations Improvement Grants (LRIG) from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs:** <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/lriggrants.shtml>

- **Description:** The LRIG is a competitive grant that supports improvement and repair of public, school recreational facilities including local parks, municipal recreation centers, and local stadiums. Ensuring public access to community facilities is imperative given access to outdoor recreation and community resources is critical for mental and physical health, particularly for those residents with limited or no other access to quality outdoor space or private recreational opportunities. The LRIG will allocate funds to update facilities and recreational spaces to meet this statewide need.
- **Eligibility:** New Jersey counties, municipalities, and school districts are eligible to apply.

**Green Acres (NJDEP) Local and Nonprofit Assistance Program:** <https://dep.nj.gov/greenacres/local-government-and-nonprofit-assistance/>

- **Description:** Green Acres provides grants and zero interest loans to municipal and county governments to acquire open space and develop outdoor recreation facilities. Green Acres works with local governments from the time of application through project completion. Over 80,000 acres have been protected and hundreds of recreation development projects throughout the state have been financed through Green Acres' Local and Nonprofit funding program.
- **Eligibility:** Local governments (municipalities and counties) that have adopted an open space and recreation plan.

**The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation:** <https://www.grdodge.org/our-work/>

- **Description:** The Dodge Foundation is a private philanthropic organization serving communities in the State of New Jersey. They fund local projects in community infrastructure and equity. Paterson is identified as one of their five communities of focus in the State.
- **Eligibility:** Nonprofit and community-based organizations

**New Jersey Clean Communities Grants:** <https://njclean.org/grant-funding/>

- **Description:** Awards funding used for programs of litter pickup and removal, litter-related education, and enforcement of litter related ordinances. Funds may also be used to abate graffiti. Up to 25 percent of annual grant funds can be used for litter clean up related equipment purchases and up to 25 percent of annual grant funds can be used for storm drain management activities.
- **Eligibility:** Municipalities and counties.



# Appendix A – Recommendations for the County-owned parcel near Paterson Falls

## Introduction

In recent years, the area surrounding Paterson Great Falls has undergone notable changes in its infrastructure, traffic systems, and general landscape. One of those changes was the redirection of traffic along Wayne Avenue and Front Street, along with the replacement of the bridge deck. These improvements allowed for the implementation of an additional garden space in the area. Located directly by the intersection of the two streets, the passive parcel sits in the middle of two active roadways with only a sidewalk to separate them. The sidewalk, which borders all edges of the parcel, can be accessed using connected walkways or by crossing the intersection between the two streets. Its proximity to Paterson Great Falls as well as dense residential zones make the neighboring area a point of attraction for visitors. A landscaped area in the vicinity of this residential zone and historic site would provide an opportunity for passive recreation and a place of respite, while also creating an attractive and inviting experience for visitors and locals alike. In addition, based on existing factors such as flooding hazards and constant littering, the site itself leaves the potential to mitigate some of the area's harsher conditions.



## Existing Conditions:

The following conditions highlight the site's existing features as well as areas of concern that can be improved upon.

### 1. Cleanliness

- There is a lack of properly designated trash or recycling facilities near and within the parcel, causing unwanted litter in the area. Additionally, there are several piles of trash bags, glass shards, and discarded alcohol bottles located throughout the site, potentially posing a hazard to pedestrians.
- Despite the rule about using reusable containers, there were no visible garbage bins on site. Instead, piles of trash bags and cardboard boxes were stacked up against signs at various different locations.

- When walking by the site, there is an unpleasant smell that infiltrates the area, likely coming from the surrounding litter.

## 2. Designated Signage

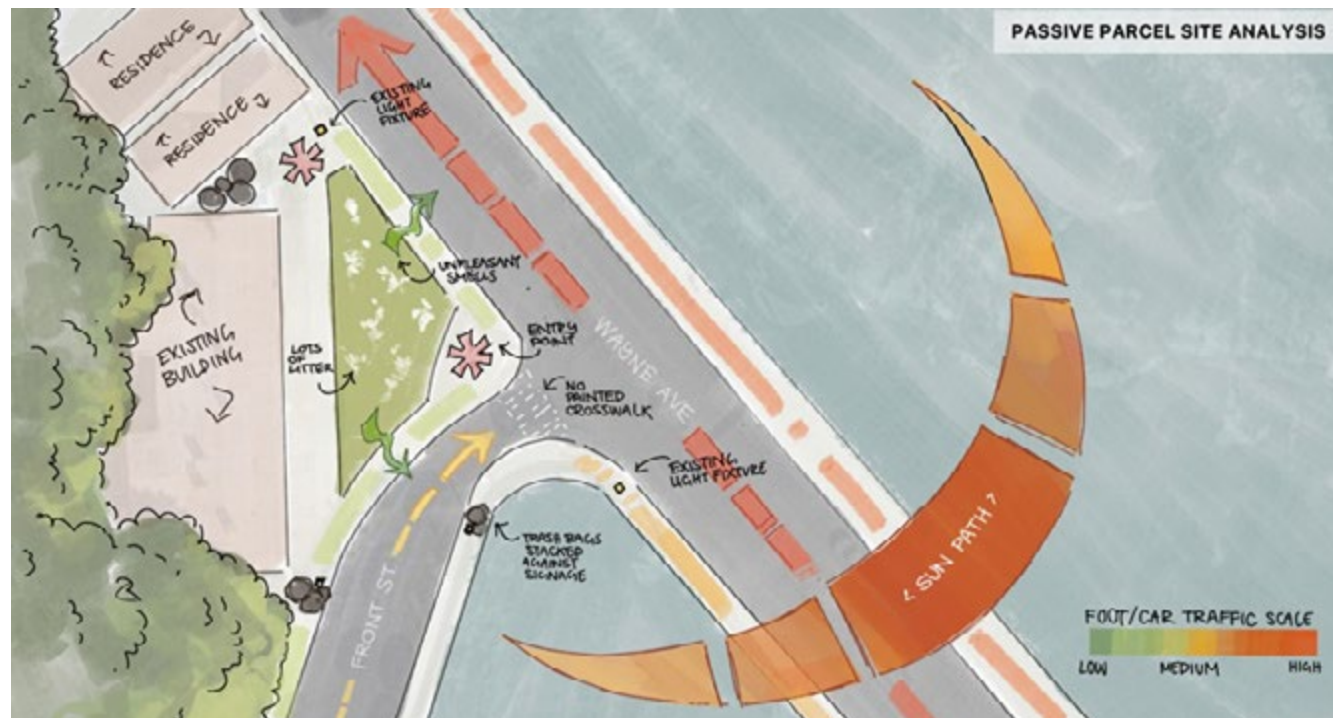
- A few signs designating rules for parking and garbage collection are situated near the parcel. A sign labeled as “Garbage Collection Days” lists the following information:
  - “Tuesday & Friday”
  - “After 6:00pm; Night before”
  - “Place in Reusable Containers Only”
- The lack of wayfinding signs and direct crosswalks leading to the site makes navigation of the site more difficult for pedestrians.

## 3. Safety & Accessibility

- There is no designated seating around the site, with pedestrians only accessing the location to get from one place to another.
- Poor reinforcement of traffic safety within the area makes it more hazardous to people who pass through it.

## 4. Oversight & Infrastructure

- A temporary surveillance system can be seen at the parcel, with various cameras capturing every angle of the surrounding area.
- The topography of the passive parcel is at a slight slope, following the one going from Wayne Ave to Front St.
- The parcel is located within a regulatory flooding zone that has a 1% annual chance of a flood hazard.



## Passive Parcel Recommendations

1. Pedestrian Safety: Most rain gardens call for a slight change in elevation, typically through a variation in the terrain slope or installing plants of different heights. Creating a distinctive space that provides separation between the roadway and walkways can help create a safer environment for pedestrians. Additionally, repainting the crosswalk at the intersection can make the space feel more inviting as well as increasing the safety of pedestrians.
2. Site Management: Designated trash and recycling bins should be installed in or around the parcel to help mitigate littering. Though the garden will be located directly next to a busy road, installing small trees can be beneficial in reducing some of the noise pollution it generates. Pollinator plants would also be beneficial in making the sign more visually and aromatically appealing. To help people navigate the site more easily, additional light fixtures and proper signage should also be considered. Similar to the temporary surveillance system seen on site, a few cameras should be added to the proposed light fixtures to help reduce illicit activity.

The city and county should also consider anti-littering programming like the “Plastic-Free Hoboken Campaign”.

- Art and signage installations promoting environmental messages, many designed by local students.
- Brightly branded cleanup stations stocked with gloves, reusable bags, and litter grabbers in public gathering spaces.
- Within the first year, plastic bag litter in public spaces declined by 68%, and volunteer participation in cleanup events increased by 40%. The campaign’s focus on accessible, local actions made environmental stewardship tangible and engaging for residents. The campaign also gave Hoboken’s parks and plazas a visual uplift, with cleaner pathways, more engaged users, and fewer overflowing bins – directly contributing to the city’s broader placemaking and livability goals.

3. Flooding Regulations: The parcel’s vulnerability to flooding requires design elements that can withstand and regulate moderate to heavy water flow. Stormwater can be redirected by lining the edges of the rain garden with vegetation or stone that also maintains a 3:1 slope. The selection of soil is also important in managing the garden’s water retention. Soil that is both sandy and loamy in texture is most preferred for its adequate nutrient absorption and infiltration system. Native wet-site tolerant plant species should primarily be used as their naturally long root systems enhance their durability and reduce the need for constant maintenance.

## Maintenance Recommendations

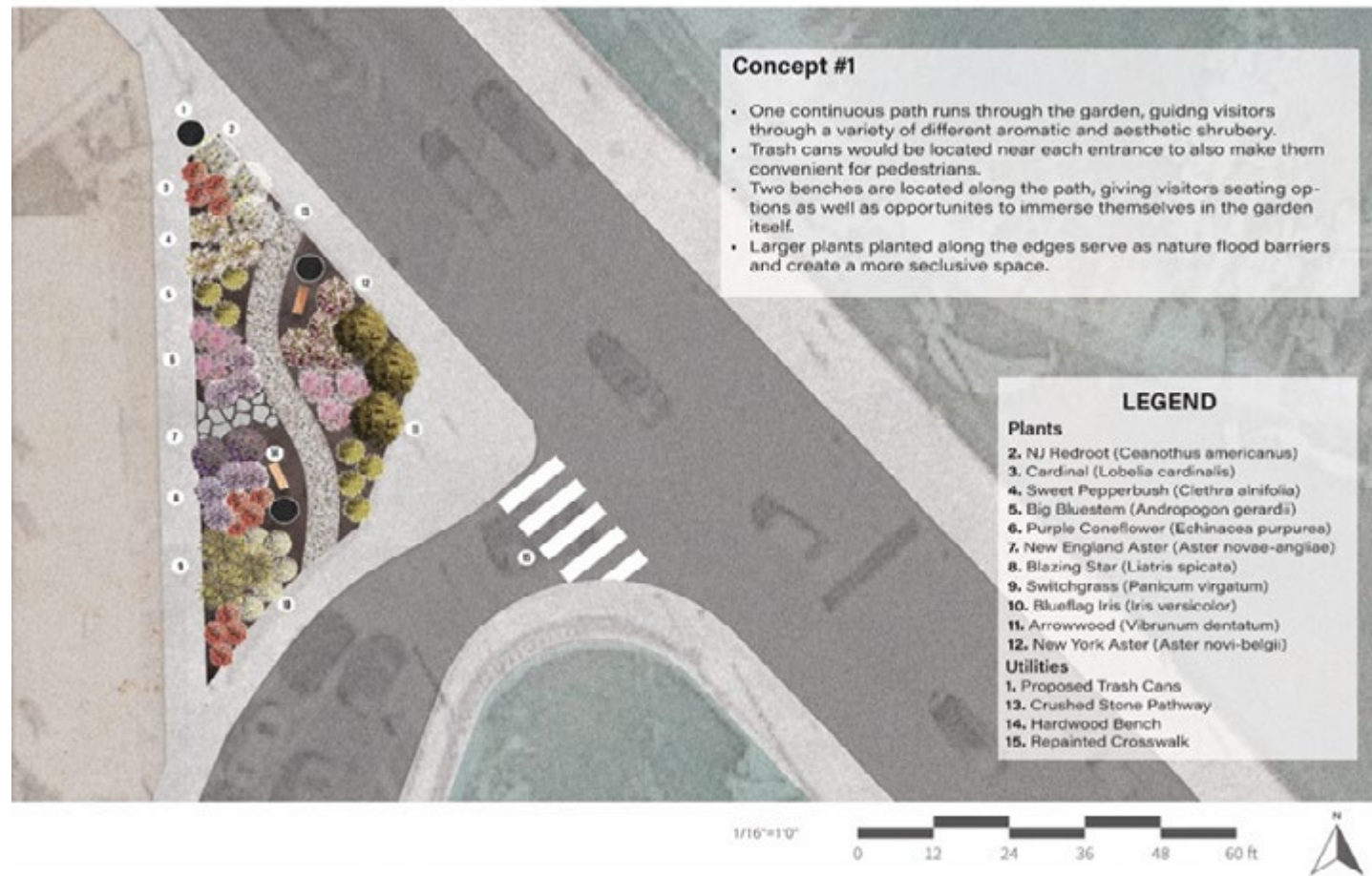
1. Weekly Maintenance:
  - a. For the first growing season, it is recommended for all of the plants to be watered (1 inch total) per week. The only exception would be during the first week, in which plants would be watered once a day. Once the root systems are properly developed and stabilized within the soil, most plants will only have to be watered during severe dry periods. If there is a significant amount of rainfall expected following the installation of the rain garden, create a small indentation in the berm to collect water.
2. Annual Maintenance:
  - a. Mulching: The rain garden should maintain a mulch layer of about 3 inches primarily consisting of shredded hardwood non-dye. Every spring, the mulch should be reassessed and replaced when necessary to maintain effective weed growth and erosion prevention.
  - b. Pruning: Plants that show signs of decay or excessive growth should be pruned every spring to ensure healthy new growth and improve the filtering capacity of the rain garden.
  - c. Filtration Management: Any excess buildup of sediment, debris, or leaves should be removed monthly in order to prevent any blockage within the water inlets. To reduce buildup, consider adding a grass or stone buffer between the rain garden and the roadway. If the filtration rates within are not

ideal, consider creating holes filled with coarse sand throughout the garden.

- d. Soil Testing: The typical soil pH for a rain garden is expected to be around 5.0 to 5.5, which is slightly acidic in nature. Make sure to retest the soil pH every 3 to 5 years, adding limestone if the pH drops below 5.2 or iron sulfate and sulfur if it exceeds 7.0 to 8.0.
- e. Fertilizing: Avoid fertilizing in the maintenance process as it is not necessary to allow rain gardens to thrive.

**Proposed Concepts**

Passive Parcel Master Plan | Concept #1



Passive Parcel Master Plan | Concept #2



**Recommended Plantings**

<b>Plant Name</b>	<b>Flood Tolerance</b>	<b>Shade Adaptability</b>	<b>Common Size</b>	<b>Price</b>
NJ Redroot (Ceanothus americanus)	<b>Low-Moderate</b>	<b>Full sun preferred</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$25-\$38
Blazing Star (Liatris spicata)	<b>Moderate</b> ; prefers moist to well-drained soils	<b>Full sun</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$5-\$15
Arrowwood Viburnum	<b>Moderate</b> ; adaptable to moist soils	<b>Tolerates full shade</b>	1-3 gal container	~\$25-\$65
Switchgrass (Panicum virgatum)	<b>High</b> ; ideal for stormwater areas	<b>Full sun</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$15-\$25
Sweet Pepperbush (Clethra alnifolia)	<b>High</b> ; tolerates periodic flooding	<b>Partial shade to full sun</b>	1-3 gal container	~\$25-\$85
Big Bluestem (Andropogon gerardii)	<b>Moderate</b> ; drought and flood resilient	<b>Full sun</b>	1 gal container	~\$3-\$15
Purple Coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Full sun</b>	1 gal container	~\$10-\$20
New England Aster	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Partial shade to full sun</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$5-\$20
New York Aster	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Partial shade to full sun</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$10-\$15
Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis)	<b>High</b> ; thrives in saturated soils	<b>Partial shade to full sun</b>	1 gal container	~\$14-\$25
Blueflag Iris (Iris versicolor)	<b>Excellent</b> ; prefers wet to saturated soils	<b>Partial shade to full sun</b>	1 gal container or plug	~\$10-\$18

# Appendix B: Plan Review and Context Research

March 5, 2025

Prepared by: Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University

Prepared for: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)

## Plan Review

The following section outlines the key points and findings from several important plans focused on the City of Paterson and the surrounding region, with an emphasis on housing, homelessness, recreation, transportation, and environmental strategies. When applicable and relevant to the project, team members will work to align recommendations with these reviewed plans, goals and strategies.

### 1. City of Paterson: 2020-2024 Five-year Consolidated Plan

**Purpose & Overview:** The Five-year Consolidated Plan for Paterson focuses on addressing the city’s housing and homelessness needs, while providing guidance for the allocation of federal funds across several key programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

#### Key Goals:

- Support community development.
- Increase homeownership and affordable housing access.
- Combat housing discrimination.

#### Key takeaways for Project Purpose:

- CDBG funds can be used for public facilities and infrastructure projects, and public services for youth and seniors. This may be a possible funding source for the public parks, especially if they focus on benefits for youth and seniors.
- Efforts to improve conditions for elderly residents, as a significant portion of the population is elderly and on fixed incomes. Park programming that focuses on elderly populations may be a relevant and useful recommendation

### 2. Passaic County, New Jersey: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (2014)

**Purpose & Overview:** The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan for Passaic County focuses on improving the County-owned parks and recreational areas. It does not directly address the city-owned parks, but it provides context for understanding broader county-level efforts related to open space and recreation.

### Goals & Objectives:

- Improve the quality of life for residents through diverse recreational opportunities.
- Maintain safe, clean, and well-maintained park facilities.

### Key takeaways for Project Purpose:

- Focus on recreational programming in the parks
- Focus on the safety, cleanliness and maintenance of the parks when designing the recommendations

### 3. Great Falls Circulation Study: Passaic (2016)

**Purpose & Overview:** This circulation study focuses on improving access to and circulation around the Great Falls National Park. Key recommendations include the creation of a gateway to the park, enhanced placemaking, and improvements to local intersections and transportation systems. This study is only applicable to the passive parcel located in the Northern section of the City of Paterson.

### Goals:

- Prioritize pedestrian safety
- Enhance residential quality of life
- Access and mobility
- Reduce/ counteract impacts of traffic and congestion
- Advance Spruce Street Bridge Corridor concepts

### Key Steps & Vision:

- A multimodal urban boulevard to connect the Great Falls National Historic Park with downtown.
- Traffic calming measures, pedestrian crossings, and two-way street conversions to reduce congestion.
- The creation of bike-share options and improvements to pedestrian safety.
- Integration of stormwater management strategies in park planning.

### Key Takeaways for Project Purpose:

- One recommendation is to create a gateway on Spruce Street Bridge into the park area. This bridge is located near the passive study parcel. When creating recommendations for the visioning plan, the project team may consider incorporating and highlighting this goal.
- Public meetings regarding the area around the park (which includes the passive study parcel) revealed that many school-aged children walk alongside heavy traffic, poor enforcement of traffic safety is common and there are limited wayfinding signs. While a majority of these concerns are outside the scope of this project, the team will attempt to incorporate considerations of traffic safety and wayfinding in the recommendations for the passive park parcel.



Figure from the Circulation study which shows the passive parcel as a place for stormwater management.

### 4. City of Paterson City-Wide Transportation Assessment (2010)

**Purpose & Overview:** This transportation assessment outlines key recommendations for improving Paterson's transportation network, focusing on enhancing circulation, improving pedestrian and bicycle access, and addressing parking issues.

### Recommendations:

- Upgrade outdated signal systems and improve parking regulations.
- Develop one-way street pairs to improve traffic flow.
- Create bike-compatible streets where possible.
- Improve pedestrian crossings and linkages between community facilities, including parks.

### 5. Moving Passaic: Transportation Element of the Passaic County Master Plan (2012)

**Purpose & Overview:** This element outlines key focus areas for Passaic County to pursue in the future years. Recommendations related to Paterson include the development of complete streets, creating a wayfinding system for improving safety and visibility of attractions (which may be particularly helpful for park facilities), capitalizing on the annual resurfacing program for road improvements, and implementing recommendations from the NJTPA Bus Stop Safety Toolbox. Main street (CR 601) which moves north toward Broadway and Prospect Park, and moves

South into Acquackanonk Byway, is a county roadway and is therefore included in the Complete Streets plan. The plan provides a variety of useful maps, one which highlights the area of bike and pedestrian hotspot crashes, which overlaps with the project's study area.

**Key Recommendations:**

- Development of Complete Streets principles, ensuring streets accommodate all modes of transport (e.g., walking, cycling, public transit).
- Improvement of intersections, especially in areas with a high incidence of crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians.
- Development of a wayfinding system to enhance visibility and safety for attractions like parks.

**6. City of Paterson Master Plan (2014)**

**Purpose & Overview:** The 2014 Master Plan for Paterson aims to revitalize the City through improved land use, economic development, transportation, and recreation. It includes strategies for increasing open space and addressing environmental concerns such as flooding and stormwater management. The plan outlines some of the general issues identified through public process and stakeholder meetings including, high crime, negative perception of the city, city identity, lack of coordination in municipal government and lack of action on previous plans.

**Goals & Objectives:**

- Increase open space and recreation opportunities within the City without negatively affecting the tax base.
- To address the problems associated with vacant and abandoned properties through the development of pocket parks and open spaces.
- Improve the City's urban design, public safety, and environmental sustainability.
- Promote the revitalization of downtown and ensure improved resilience to storm and flood events.
- Ensure accessible and connected parks and recreational facilities.
- Design goals including promotion of a design that is context sensitive, new landscaping, street trees, street furniture, decorative streetlights, clean up and remove litter.

**Key Takeaways for Project Purpose:**

- This plan will be helpful for guiding the recommendations for each park parcel.
- The SWOT analysis included within this plan reveals that there is a "lack of action- residents are already weary and perhaps even jaded from the amount of meetings, focus groups, and community forums among other things where they have been asked to voice their opinions and express their desires, only to see little come of it." This suggests that the community of Paterson may be experiencing some 'engagement fatigue'. Community engagement efforts conducted as a part of this project should take this into consideration and ensure that all feedback provided by residents is welcomed, recorded and reflected within the final product.

**7. Green Stormwater Infrastructure Element of the Passaic County Master Plan (2018)**

**Purpose & Overview:** This element focuses on green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and its role in managing stormwater while providing environmental, aesthetic, and social benefits. According to the NJ Flood Mapper, only the passive parcel is located within an area of concern for flooding. The passive parcel is located in a regulatory flooding zone with a 1 percent annual chance of flood hazard.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Green stormwater practices such as rain gardens, bioswales, and stormwater planters can be utilized in Paterson parks to address flooding concerns and improve water quality.
- There are available funding mechanisms for GSI implementation through the County Capital Improvement Budget and the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust.
- A higher proportion of the city is impervious area, which often worsens the effect of flooding. Proposed recommendations will take into consideration the benefit of reducing the impervious area.

**8. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Memo**

**Purpose & Overview:** This memo to the TNJ 2.0 Livable Task Force (a team created by the Together North Jersey team-now Vibrant Communities Initiative) discusses the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), a multi-disciplinary approach that uses urban design to enhance safety and reduce crime. It highlights the potential ethical concerns of CPTED, particularly its historical ties to discriminatory practices like redlining, and the risk of marginalizing certain groups from public spaces. Expert interviews with professionals in the field reveal evolving views on CPTED and advocating for more inclusive, community-driven approaches to crime prevention. The memo recommends further research and dialogue on CPTED, urging the incorporation of alternative strategies like the Neighborhood Empowerment and Safety Training (NEST) program, which emphasizes community development alongside environmental design.

**Key Takeaways:**

- While the project team will consider some of CPTED's analysis and strategies, the design and recommendations will not be exclusively based on the analysis.
- Balanced consideration will ensure that recommendations intended to increase safety do not create discrimination, unfair treatment and/ or bias.

**9. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Toolkit- A Guide for Planning and Designing Safer Streets in the City of Paterson.**

**Purpose & Overview:** This toolkit was funded by the Together North Jersey Initiative, in part through a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The document provides effective principles and guidelines for designers and planners to use when designing Paterson streets. While the project team has decided to not pursue CPTED specific analysis for the three project parcels, this document is helpful for learning more about what types of strategies and methods could be useful for encouraging activity and increasing perceptions of safety.

# Appendix C: Economic Analysis Summary Report (ESRI DATA)

## Business Environment & Economic Activity

	Main & Gould Park	Main & Eagle Triangle
<b>Daytime Population</b>	19,377	15,416
<b>Total Employees</b>	8,405	5,095
<b>Total Businesses</b>	651	615
<b>Total Sales (2024)</b>	\$1.714 billion	\$1.595 billion

Both areas have a diverse mix of small, independent businesses—including groceries, restaurants, law firms, health services, and specialty shops. Main & Gould Park has slightly higher daytime population and total sales, suggesting a denser commercial hub.

## Demographics & Income

	Main & Gould Park	Main & Eagle Triangle
<b>Median Household Income (2024)</b>	\$44,027 – \$58,802	\$49,669 – \$60,534
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$63,126 – \$84,019	\$86,568 – \$97,708
<b>% Below \$15,000</b>	15–23%	16–26%
<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	28–34%	35–39%

The average household income is significantly higher than the median in both areas—indicative of income inequality. Main & Eagle Triangle has slightly higher average incomes and homeownership rates.

## Population & Housing Trends (2024-2029)

### Main & Gould Park:

- **Population Growth:** 0.45%
- **Household Growth:** 0.9%
- **Owner-Occupied Housing:** Growing from 28.4% to 34.3%

### Main & Eagle Triangle:

- **Population Growth:** 0.46%
- **Household Growth:** 0.7%
- **Owner-Occupied Housing:** Growing from 35% to 38.9%

Both areas show modest growth, with homeownership slowly increasing—a sign of potential neighborhood stabilization.

## Key Takeaways:

- Implement strategies to increase territoriality, image, and cohesion in park areas through branding, wayfinding, landscaping and maintenance.
- Ensure high visibility and adequate lighting to enhance safety.
- Encourage community involvement in park upkeep to prevent vandalism and littering.
- Improve feelings of safety for pedestrians and cyclists by creating ADA compliant curb ramps and high visibility crosswalks
- Suggests that trees and landscaping efforts can help offer aesthetic, environmental, social and economic benefits to the city.

## 10. Parks & Open Space Vision 2021 Paterson, NJ

### Purpose & Overview

This report was developed for the City of Paterson, utilizing a grant from the National Recreation & Parks Foundation (NRPA). The report focuses on the co-benefits of parks, such as economic development, community development, education, environmental protection, and health improvements. A range of goals and strategies for the City’s parks development, both short- and long-term, are outlined. Overall, this visioning plan provides strategies that can be implemented by Paterson’s Mayor and City Council to further enhance the city’s access to parks and recreational opportunities.

### Key Takeaways

- The broad goals for parks in the City of Paterson are to upgrade existing parks, add new parks and facilities, and enhance the city’s public health.
- While the Great Falls section of Paterson has been further developed to grant more access to the river for residents, other parts of the city remain cut off from the river.
- Paterson offers only a small amount of park space per capita, approximately 2.1 acres per 1000 residents. This figure is less than the amount of parkland per capita found in other New Jersey cities such as Newark and Jersey City.
- The City of Paterson envisions a three-pronged approach to addressing public health concerns: 1) creating green infrastructure to manage stormwater, 2) addressing flood concerns through open space creation and management, and 3) planting street trees.

### Conclusion:

Review of these plans has provided valuable insight into how this project can help the City and County pursue their goals in terms of transportation, recreation, public spaces and community development. The key commonalities across the plans are a focus on enhancing public spaces, improving transportation networks, and fostering community development through interactive programming. They also emphasize the need for stormwater management and environmental consideration. The integration of these elements in the final Paterson Park project will create safer, more accessible, and environmentally resilient parks for Paterson’s residents.

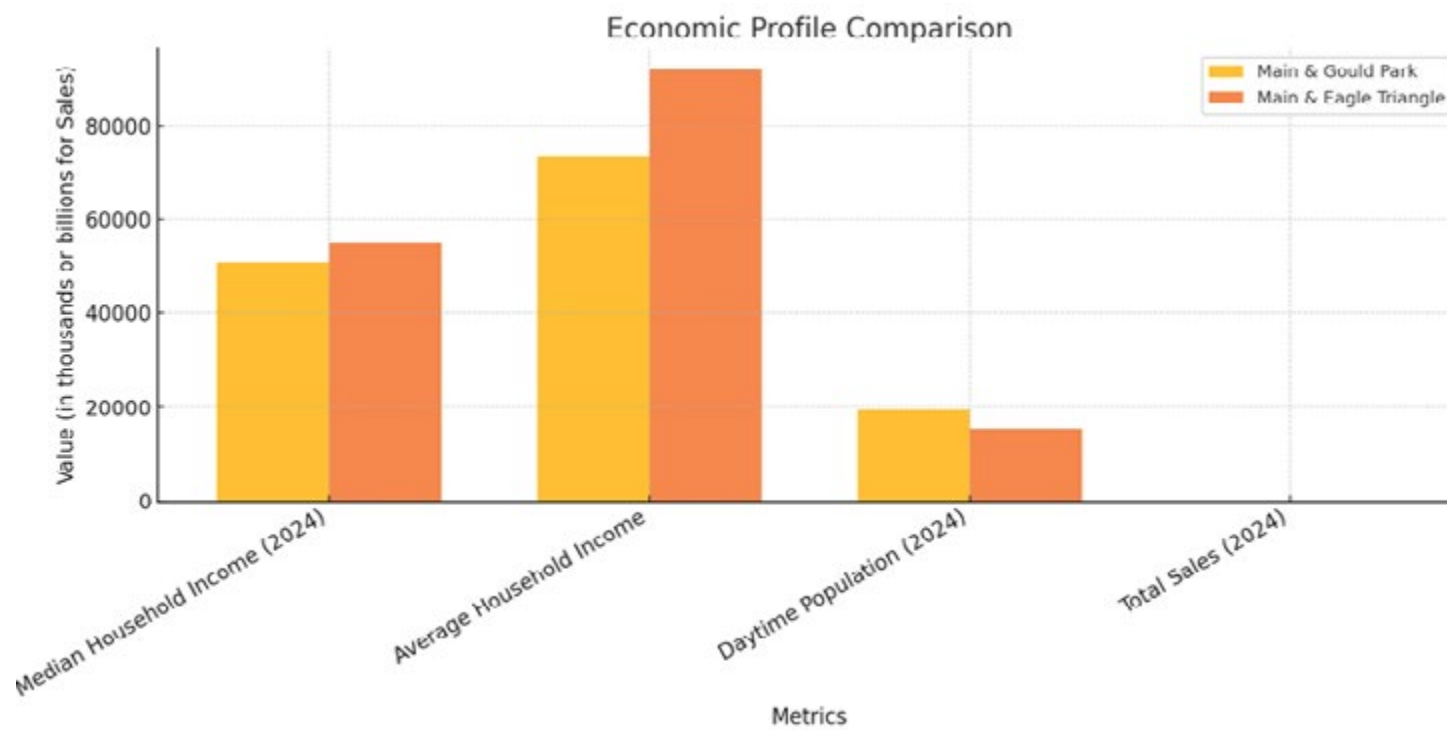
## Tapestry Segmentation Insights

- **Main & Gould Park:**
  - Dominated by **Diverse Convergence (13A)** and **Family Extensions (13B)**—immigrant, multicultural, and family-oriented communities.
- **Main & Eagle Triangle:**
  - Similar diversity, with **Urban Villages (7B)** also prominent.

These segments highlight the strong community ties and cultural vibrancy of these neighborhoods.

## Housing & Affordability

- **Main & Gould Park:**
  - Median home value (2024): \$366,667 – \$386,807
  - High mortgage burdens (52.1% of income for mortgages in 5-min radius)
- **Main & Eagle Triangle:**
  - Median home value (2024): \$334,752 – \$386,726
  - More affordable relative to income (42.2%–40.0% of income for mortgage payments)



The bar graph compares key economic metrics between Main & Gould Park and Main & Eagle Triangle. It highlights higher median and average household incomes in Main & Eagle Triangle, while Main & Gould Park has a larger daytime population and slightly higher total sales volume. This suggests that while Main & Eagle Triangle residents typically have higher incomes, Main & Gould Park remains a denser commercial hub with more employees and overall economic activity. The graph underscores the importance of balancing park activation efforts with these nuanced local economic differences.

## Key Takeaways & Implications

### Economic Strengths:

- **Thriving small-business ecosystems along Main Street:** Both areas are bustling commercial corridors featuring locally owned businesses—grocers, restaurants, legal services, and retail shops. These small businesses strengthen the local economy and create natural partners for park-based events like food festivals, pop-up markets, and health fairs.
- **Strong cultural and community identity:** The “Diverse Convergence” and “Family Extensions” tapestry segments reveal deep cultural roots and multi-generational households. This diversity enriches the cultural fabric of the neighborhood and signals a demand for parks that celebrate and reflect this vibrancy.
- **Steady, moderate population growth:** Both areas are seeing population growth of around 0.45% annually. This indicates long-term viability for investments in public spaces, as a growing population supports sustained park use and commercial activity.

### Challenges:

- **High percentage of low-income households:** Over 15–20% of households in these areas earn less than \$15,000 annually. This economic vulnerability requires park activation strategies to be inclusive and affordable, ensuring that everyone feels welcome and can participate in programs.
- **Significant income disparities:** The gap between median and average incomes points to some degree of income inequality. While some households have high incomes that boost average figures, many households face significant financial challenges. Parks must serve as equalizing spaces, not exclusive ones.
- **High housing cost burdens:** Many low-income residents spend more than 40–50% of their income on housing, leaving little for recreation. Parks should avoid fee-based programming and prioritize low-cost, accessible amenities—like shaded seating, walking paths, and open lawns for community use.

### Opportunities for Parks Activation:

- **Leverage economic activity for events:** The existing business density offers a ready network for collaboration. Parks can host local vendor fairs, restaurant pop-ups, or small business showcases—directly benefiting Main Street’s economic ecosystem.
- **Multicultural and family-focused programming:** Given the high presence of multigenerational families and immigrant communities, parks can include cultural festivals, dance and music events, and language-inclusive signage to strengthen community identity and engagement.
- **Equitable access strategies:** Recognizing the economic disparities, park planning must include free entry, affordable programming, and clear communication in multiple languages. This ensures parks truly become shared spaces that meet the needs of all residents, regardless of income or background.

## Alignment with Recommendations

- **Align with community values:** Local businesses and families are already the backbone of Main Street. Parks can strengthen these existing assets rather than imposing new uses that might not resonate.
- **Address community fatigue:** Residents are wary of unfulfilled promises from previous planning efforts. By designing parks that reflect local culture and economic realities, this project can build trust and long-term stewardship.
- **Support inclusive economic development:** Park improvements that incorporate small businesses, cater to local needs, and prioritize affordability will have a multiplier effect—improving health, social connections, and economic stability.

# Appendix D: Community Case Studies and Literature Review

## Community Case Studies

### Case Study 1: Philadelphia, PA – Green City, Clean Waters (2011–Present)

Philadelphia’s “Green City, Clean Waters” initiative is a nationally recognized model of urban green stormwater management. Launched in 2011 by the Philadelphia Water Department, the 25-year, \$2.4 billion program was created to reduce combined sewer overflows by shifting from traditional “gray” infrastructure upgrades to more sustainable, decentralized green solutions. Instead of investing in costly sewer expansions, the city focused on capturing rain where it falls – keeping it out of the combined sewer system.

The city implemented over 1,100 green infrastructure projects on public and private land, including:

- Rain gardens and bioswales filled with native plants to absorb and filter runoff.
- Permeable pavements on sidewalks, parking lots, and plazas that allow water to infiltrate.
- Green roofs on buildings to absorb rainfall and provide insulation.
- Tree trenches designed to manage runoff while enhancing tree canopy and street aesthetics.

These elements are not only functional – they significantly improve neighborhood aesthetics. Streets lined with tree trenches and bioswales feel cooler, greener, and more inviting. Permeable pavers and rain gardens break up expanses of concrete, softening urban blocks and supporting pollinators. These projects help prevent nearly 3 billion gallons of stormwater annually from overwhelming the sewer system, protecting the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers from pollution.

Beyond stormwater management, the initiative has yielded wide-ranging co-benefits:

- Cooling urban heat islands through increased greenery and shaded surfaces.
- Enhancing neighborhood appearance with vibrant native landscapes and greener streets
- Improving air quality by expanding the tree canopy and replacing paved surfaces
- Creating habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies, reconnecting communities to nature.

These visible improvements help build public support and foster local stewardship, especially in neighborhoods that historically lacked access to well-maintained green space.

Many installations are accompanied by educational signage, school partnerships, and job training programs in green

infrastructure maintenance. Community groups have adopted local rain gardens, and workshops have taught residents how green streets work and why they matter.

Economically, the results are promising. A University of Pennsylvania study found that homes near green stormwater features saw a 10% increase in property value. These improvements can spur additional private investment and support broader revitalization efforts – without the gentrification risks that often accompany large-scale redevelopment.

For Paterson, this initiative provides a blueprint for using green infrastructure to address aging systems, flood risks, and environmental inequities – while also beautifying neighborhoods and engaging the public.

### Case Study 2: Paterson, NJ – CPTED Corridor Audit (2015)

In 2015, the City of Paterson undertook a comprehensive Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit targeting six high-crime corridors across three city wards. This project, developed with support from Together North Jersey and Rutgers University, emphasized a community-driven approach by training local stakeholders – including residents, public works staff, police officers, and planners – in CPTED methods.

Paterson has faced significant challenges with gang-related violence, drug activity, and a high rate of vacant properties in the targeted corridors. The goal of the CPTED audit was to:

- Identify environmental design elements located near high criminal activity areas.
- Engage community members in assessing and improving their neighborhoods.
- Develop actionable recommendations to enhance safety and aesthetics.

Study areas included North Main Street, East Main Street, Rosa Parks Boulevard, 10th Avenue, Ellison Street, and Market Street. Each corridor was assessed using the 12 principles of CPTED, with a primary focus on natural surveillance, territoriality, image, and incompatible land use.

Key steps in the process included:

- Training CPTED teams: Community members received training to conduct safety audits and identify environmental concerns.
- Conducting corridor audits: Teams assessed factors such as lighting, visibility, signage, and land use.
- Community workshops: Public meetings were held to gather input and discuss potential improvements.

Beyond safety, the audit emphasized the importance of creating inviting public spaces. Recommendations included:

- Greening vacant lots: Transforming abandoned spaces into community gardens or pocket parks to promote community ownership and deter illicit activities.

- Improving lighting: Installing pedestrian-scale lighting to enhance visibility and safety during nighttime hours.
- Enhancing streetscapes: Adding trees, benches, and decorative elements to create more welcoming environments.

The CPTED initiative led to several possible developments:

- Increased community participation: Over 370 volunteers contributed more than 1,100 hours to implement CPTED solutions.
- Revitalized public spaces: Projects like the transformation of a blighted lot into the “Green Acre” community garden demonstrated the potential for environmental design to foster community pride and reduce crime.
- Policy integration: Findings from the audit informed city planning efforts, including the First Ward Re-development Plan, ensuring that CPTED principles were incorporated into broader urban development strategies.

Another major outcome was the development of a CPTED Toolkit for Paterson, designed to be applied citywide and adaptable for other urban communities. While quantitative crime reduction data was limited, qualitative feedback indicated improved perceptions of safety and increased community engagement. This locally grounded initiative provides a practical foundation for applying CPTED strategies to parks and green spaces in Paterson.

### Case Study 3: Lower Kinnear Park CPTED Project (2014)

Located on the edge of Seattle’s densely populated Queen Anne Hill neighborhood, Lower Kinnear Park was once a neglected, underutilized, and unsafe public space. The park’s poor visibility, overgrown vegetation, and limited access points made it a hotspot for drug activity and violent crime. In response, the City of Seattle, in partnership with Friends of Lower Kinnear Park and HBB Landscape Architecture, launched a CPTED-based enhancement plan in 2010, which was fully implemented by 2014.

The park’s redesign focused on four core CPTED principles: natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance. It also emphasized incorporating thoughtful aesthetic and landscape design to make the space more inviting and engaging.

#### Natural Surveillance

- Dense, overgrown vegetation was selectively cleared or thinned to improve visibility throughout the park.
- Sightlines between pathways, entrances, and gathering areas were opened to ensure users could easily see and be seen – deterring potential criminal activity.

#### Access Control

- Entrances were consolidated and redesigned with clear paths and signage to direct foot traffic through

visible, well-lit zones.

- Fencing and plantings were used to subtly discourage off-path shortcuts and unauthorized access, without making the park feel fenced-in or unwelcoming.

#### Territorial Reinforcement

- New wayfinding signage, decorative fencing, and well-maintained trails clearly marked the park as a shared, civic space.
- Design features such as distinctive paving, native plant beds, and seating areas helped define zones for passive and active recreation – reinforcing positive use.

#### Maintenance and Image

- New lighting was installed along pathways and near entrances to extend safe park use into the evening hours.
- Routine landscaping, litter removal, and the restoration of historic park elements improved the park’s overall image and sense of care.

Beyond CPTED interventions, the project introduced several landscape and recreational improvements to encourage more community use:

- Interpretive signage highlighted the park’s ecological and cultural history, adding an educational layer to the park experience.
- The natural landscape was preserved where possible, while native plantings and pollinator-friendly gardens were introduced to enhance biodiversity.
- Seating areas, small lawn spaces, and improved walking trails supported casual use, rest, and passive recreation.

Within one year of implementation, the park saw a reported 20% decrease in crime and a noticeable increase in both daytime and evening use. Community members expressed a renewed sense of safety and pride in the park, which was once widely avoided.

The success of Lower Kinnear Park shows how CPTED principles, when paired with thoughtful design and community input, can reclaim long-neglected spaces. The project also serves as a model for transforming small urban parks into multifunctional, welcoming, and secure environments without relying on overly punitive or exclusionary measures.

### Case Study 4: Hoboken, NJ – Plastic-Free Hoboken Campaign (2019)

In 2019, the Hoboken Green Team launched the “Plastic-Free Hoboken” campaign in response to growing concerns over plastic pollution cluttering sidewalks, parks, and waterfront areas. This grassroots initiative aimed to reduce single-use plastics through a mix of public education, policy advocacy, and hands-on cleanup efforts. The campaign worked closely with local schools, civic organizations, and businesses to build a community culture of sustainability.

Key strategies included organizing volunteer-led cleanups, offering environmental education in classrooms, and publicly recognizing businesses that adopted sustainable practices. The Green Team also played a leading role in the passage of Hoboken’s plastic bag ban ordinance, which restricted single-use bags in retail settings and encouraged the use of reusable alternatives.

The Green Team led dozens of volunteer-powered cleanup events throughout Hoboken, targeting parks, sidewalks, and transit-adjacent areas. Cleanups were often paired with placemaking activities, such as:

- Art and signage installations promoting environmental messages, many designed by local students.
- Brightly branded cleanup stations stocked with gloves, reusable bags, and litter grabbers in public gathering spaces.
- Use of “before and after” visuals that illustrated how even small-scale cleanups could dramatically improve the look and feel of a space.

One of the campaign’s most significant achievements was helping to pass Hoboken’s plastic bag ban ordinance, which restricted the distribution of single-use plastic bags in retail settings. The law was paired with a citywide education campaign that made sustainable options visible and accessible, featuring:

- Reusables stations at community events and local libraries, where residents could borrow or exchange tote bags.
- Branded signage in storefronts signaling participation in the Plastic-Free campaign.
- Wayfinding-style window decals that turned retail corridors into sustainability corridors – using design to reinforce the city’s values and shift consumer behavior.

Within the first year, plastic bag litter in public spaces declined by 68%, and volunteer participation in cleanup events increased by 40%. The campaign’s focus on accessible, local actions made environmental stewardship tangible and engaging for residents. The campaign also gave Hoboken’s parks and plazas a visual uplift, with cleaner pathways, more engaged users, and fewer overflowing bins – directly contributing to the city’s broader placemaking and livability goals.

## Case Study 5: Los Angeles, CA – Green Alleys Program (2015–Present)

Launched in 2015 by the City of Los Angeles in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the Green Alleys Program is an initiative that reimagines forgotten, underutilized alleyways into vibrant, environmentally resilient community assets. Focused especially in South Los Angeles (an area disproportionately impacted by disinvestment, pollution, and limited access to parks) the program addresses a complex set of urban issues: stormwater runoff, climate vulnerability, public safety, and lack of green space.

The key aspect of the Green Alleys approach is the idea that even narrow, overlooked corridors can be multifunctional public spaces. Each alley is redesigned with both aesthetic appeal and ecological performance in mind:

- Permeable pavement: Replaces traditional asphalt to allow stormwater to soak into the ground, helping recharge groundwater and prevent localized flooding.
- Native and drought-tolerant plantings: Lush planting beds with California native species enhance biodi-

versity, support pollinators, and provide much-needed greenery.

- Solar-powered lighting: Energy-efficient lights improve visibility and safety while reducing energy costs and emissions.
- Colorful murals and community art installations: Created by local artists, these works reflect the identity and culture of each neighborhood, transforming alleys into visually stimulating public spaces.

The Green Alleys Program has emphasized community involvement. Residents participate in visioning sessions, design walks, and workshops to shape the look, function, and feel of their alleyways. Priorities often include:

- Enhancing safety and lighting.
- Reducing illegal dumping and improving alley cleanliness.
- Incorporating culturally relevant art and signage.
- Defining roles for ongoing maintenance and community stewardship.

Since the program’s launch, dozens of alleys have been transformed, yielding wide-ranging impacts:

- Improved stormwater management: Alleys now help capture and filter millions of gallons of rainwater annually.
- Reduced urban heat island effect: Shaded surfaces and reflective materials lower temperatures in previously overheated corridors.
- Increased pedestrian use and safety: Well-lit, attractive alleys are more commonly used by children, seniors, and families.
- Stronger community identity: Public art, gardens, and cleaner pathways elevate the experience of everyday spaces, turning infrastructure into neighborhood landmarks.

The Los Angeles model shows how small-scale interventions – when planned with and for the community – can deliver outsized benefits. A Green Alley initiative in Paterson could help address environmental justice goals while enhancing walkability, neighborhood pride, and public health.

# Paterson Literature Review

## Introduction

Urban green spaces play a crucial role in community well-being, public health, and environmental sustainability. However, disparities in access to these spaces have been widely documented, with low-income and minority communities often facing barriers to equitable green space availability. This literature review examines existing research on urban park accessibility, environmental justice, public health implications, crime prevention strategies, and stormwater management, offering insights relevant to the Paterson Parks Project. The goal is to establish a foundation for evidence-based policy recommendations to improve park equity, utilization, and community impact in Paterson, New Jersey.

## Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice

The research paper titled “Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities ‘just green enough’” by Jennifer R. Wolch, Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell analyzes the critical relationships among urban green spaces, public health, and environmental justice. Their research indicates that disparities in the availability of urban parks exacerbate health inequalities, disproportionately affecting low-income and minority communities. The authors expand on this, stating how “access is often highly stratified based on income, ethno-racial characteristics, age, gender, (dis)ability, and other axes of difference” (Wolch et al., 2014).

They further emphasize that urban green spaces significantly contribute to improved health outcomes through increased opportunities for physical activity, mental relaxation, social interactions, and improved air quality. Their findings suggest that urban green space inequities are not merely incidental but deeply rooted in historical and contemporary urban planning decisions, highlighting the urgency for targeted interventions. The authors expand on this, highlighting how class is deeply influential over the maintenance of green spaces. In the United States, “people of color and low-income earners typically occupy the urban core and/or low-income inner ring suburbs where green space is either scarce or poorly maintained” (Wolch et al., 2014). On the other hand, wealthier Americans often occupy suburban spaces, where “green space is abundant, well-serviced, and well-maintained” (Wolch et al., 2014). The inequities in the maintenance of green spaces highlights the importance of environmental justice as a planning priority. The results of revitalizing green spaces in urban areas can “improve attractiveness and public health, making neighborhoods more desirable” (Wolch et al., 2014).

The authors highlight an important issue that can arise as a result of increasing green spaces in low-income, urban neighborhoods. While increasing green space can improve public health, social cohesion, and environmental quality, it can also make neighborhoods more attractive to higher-income residents and developers. This increased desirability can drive housing costs up, leading to gentrification—a process where longtime residents, particularly those from marginalized communities, may be displaced due to rising rents and property values (Wolch et al., 2014). This phenomenon is referred to by the authors as the urban green space paradox. This paradox may result in longtime residents being forced to either move to less desirable neighborhoods with similar ‘park poverty’ issues, or remain in their neighborhood, but struggle with higher rents, financial instability, or substandard living conditions. There are also possible public health consequences of this paradox. Displacement and housing instability have well-documented negative health effects, which include: mental and emotional stress from displacement or financial strain, reduced access to healthcare and social support networks, continued ‘park poverty’ issues if displaced residents

move to areas with equally poor green space access (Bentley et al., 2012, Centers for Disease Control, 2011, Wolch et al., 2014).

The authors propose community-based participatory planning processes combined with strategic policy shifts to address environmental injustices effectively. However, they acknowledge that increasing urban greenery in marginalized communities can lead to unintended consequences, such as green gentrification, where park improvements make neighborhoods more desirable and inadvertently drive up property values. This process can result in displacement of the very residents such projects are intended to benefit. As a response, the authors suggest a ‘just green enough’ approach (Wolch et al., 2014), in which green space projects are designed to improve environmental and social equity without triggering speculative real estate investment and displacement. This strategy aligns closely with the Paterson Parks Project’s objectives to enhance park equity and community health while mitigating the risks associated with gentrification.

## Equity and Accessibility in Park Distribution

The article titled “A complex landscape of inequity in access to urban parks: A literature review” by Alessandro Rigolon provides an extensive review of socioeconomic and racial disparities affecting urban park accessibility. The distribution of urban parks is a crucial determinant of equitable public health and environmental justice outcomes. Research has consistently demonstrated that low-income and minority communities have less access to parks, fewer recreational facilities, and lower park quality compared to affluent, predominantly white neighborhoods (Rigolon, 2016). Rigolon’s extensive review of urban park distribution reveals that while some disadvantaged communities may live in close proximity to green spaces, these parks often suffer from poor maintenance, lack of amenities, and overcrowding. The study underscores how systemic inequities in urban planning have led to persistent disparities in park access, reinforcing patterns of environmental injustice (Rigolon, 2016).

One of Rigolon’s key findings is that while proximity to parks is sometimes better in lower-income and minority neighborhoods, park acreage and park quality tend to be significantly lower in these areas. This discrepancy highlights the need to look beyond simple geographic access and instead examine the usability and adequacy of park spaces (Rigolon, 2016). His research supports a data-driven approach that combines Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping with demographic analysis to assess inequities in park access. This method allows planners to identify areas with the greatest need for investment and intervention, a strategy that aligns directly with the Paterson Parks Project’s goals. By utilizing GIS-based assessments, Paterson can map disparities, allocate resources effectively, and develop targeted policy solutions that prioritize historically underserved neighborhoods.

Complementing Rigolon’s findings, the Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore Index (n.d.) provides a comprehensive national benchmark for evaluating park access and quality across U.S. cities. The index ranks municipalities based on proximity, park acreage, funding, and equity, offering a valuable tool for cities like Paterson to measure their park system’s strengths and weaknesses. According to the ParkScore Index, 83% of Paterson residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, a figure that exceeds the national median (55%) and the median for the 100 most populous U.S. cities (74%). This suggests that proximity to parks is not a primary barrier to access in Paterson. However, despite this relatively high accessibility, only 5% of Paterson’s land is allocated to parks and recreation, significantly below the national median of 15%. This disparity indicates that while many residents live close to parks, these spaces may be small, overcrowded, or lacking adequate recreational infrastructure. Further analysis of park access by demo-

graphic group highlights the need for targeted equity-based interventions. The lowest-income residents in Paterson (85%) are slightly more likely to live near a park than high-income residents (79%), which aligns with Rigolon’s findings that proximity alone does not equate to park equity (Rigolon, 2016). Leveraging the insights from this index, Paterson can assess its current park accessibility, identify service gaps, and advocate for equitable resource allocation.

A critical takeaway from both Rigolon’s research and the ParkScore Index is that improving park equity requires intentional planning and targeted funding mechanisms (Rigolon, 2016). Simply increasing park availability without addressing maintenance, amenities, and safety concerns will not close the gap in accessibility. Strategies such as dedicated funding for park improvements in underserved neighborhoods, policy mandates for equitable park investments, and community-driven planning processes can help ensure that all residents benefit from high-quality green spaces (Rigolon, 2016). The Paterson Parks Project aims to integrate these evidence-based approaches, using GIS mapping and participatory engagement strategies to advocate for sustainable and equitable park development.

### **Crime Prevention and Public Safety in Urban Parks**

Urban parks serve as vital community spaces for recreation and social interaction, yet concerns about crime and safety often deter park usage. The journal article by the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) titled “Effects of Crime Type and Location on Park Use Behavior” (Marquet et al., 2020) has shown that crime—both actual and perceived—can significantly impact park attendance, with violent crimes near parks being the most deterrent (Marquet et al., 2020). A study conducted in Greensboro, North Carolina, found that increased crime near homes, within parks, and along the routes to parks was associated with reduced park use (Han et al., 2018). Notably, violent crimes had a stronger negative effect on park visits than property crimes, with adults being more likely than younger individuals to avoid parks in high-crime areas. Similarly, low park ratings were strongly correlated with higher crime rates around parks, indicating that safety concerns shape public perception of urban green spaces.

Further analysis revealed that crime hotspots around parks discouraged routine visitation, leading to underutilization of park facilities. The study’s results suggest that even when parks are physically accessible, crime levels and fear of crime present significant psychological barriers that reduce park engagement (Han et al., 2018). These findings emphasize the importance of crime prevention strategies in park planning, particularly in cities like Paterson, where public safety concerns influence recreational behavior.

However, emerging research also challenges the assumption that parks inherently foster crime. A report from the University of Illinois Human-Environment Research Laboratory argues that well-maintained parks can reduce neighborhood crime and increase social cohesion (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001). The study found that green spaces near residential areas promote social interactions, leading to stronger community ties and informal neighborhood surveillance. When public parks are thoughtfully integrated into community design, they can foster a sense of safety rather than vulnerability. The study further revealed that neighborhoods with significant greenery experienced 56% fewer violent crimes and 48% fewer property crimes than areas with barren spaces (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001). This finding suggests that investing in park infrastructure, proper lighting, clear sightlines, and community programming can enhance both safety and park usage.

For the Paterson Parks Project, implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles—such as improving lighting, enhancing natural surveillance, and incorporating community stewardship—can help mitigate crime risks while encouraging greater public engagement. Additionally, community-driven programming, such as neighborhood watch groups and active park-based recreation, can reinforce safety measures while fostering a sense of ownership among residents. By addressing both actual crime rates and perceived safety concerns, the project can help create safer and more welcoming urban green spaces for all residents. However, it is important to note that CPTED has been criticized for its potential to reinforce exclusionary practices (Marzabali et al., 2016).

For the Paterson Parks Project, it is essential to approach CPTED strategies with caution and adaptability. Rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all model, a community-driven CPTED approach—where residents actively participate in shaping park safety measures—can prevent exclusionary practices and ensure that security interventions serve all residents equitably. Additionally, integrating CPTED with other crime prevention strategies, such as community-based programming, increased park activation, and equitable investment in park infrastructure, can enhance both safety and accessibility without reinforcing exclusionary urban design patterns.

### **Environmental Sustainability and Stormwater Management**

Urban stormwater management is a critical issue affecting cities like Paterson, where aging infrastructure, increased urbanization, and climate change contribute to frequent flooding and water pollution. Traditional gray infrastructure—which relies on concrete pipes, storm drains, and sewage treatment plants—often fails to adequately manage stormwater runoff, leading to flooding, erosion, and contamination of local waterways (Denchak, 2022). As an alternative, green infrastructure presents a more sustainable approach, using natural processes to capture, filter, and absorb rainwater, reducing the strain on municipal systems and improving overall environmental quality.

Green infrastructure encompasses a variety of stormwater management techniques, including rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, green roofs, and urban tree canopies (Denchak, 2022). These solutions mimic natural hydrological processes, allowing rainwater to infiltrate the ground instead of overwhelming storm drains. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 10 trillion gallons of untreated stormwater runoff—containing raw sewage, heavy metals, and toxic chemicals—enters U.S. waterways each year, exacerbating pollution and environmental degradation (“Stormwater Management Practices at EPA Facilities,” 2024). Cities that implement green stormwater strategies not only reduce flooding but also enhance water quality, improve air quality, and promote climate resilience (Denchak, 2022).

For Paterson, where stormwater flooding remains a persistent challenge, integrating green infrastructure into urban park planning can provide multiple benefits by mitigating flood risks, improving water quality, reducing costs, and enhancing climate resilience. Green infrastructure slows and absorbs excess rainfall, reducing the frequency and severity of urban flooding—Philadelphia’s green infrastructure initiatives have already prevented nearly three billion gallons of stormwater from overwhelming sewer systems annually (Denchak, 2022). By filtering out contaminants instead of funneling polluted runoff into rivers and streams, strategies like bioswales and vegetated filter strips effectively capture heavy metals, oil residues, and bacteria, preventing water pollution. Additionally, green infrastructure offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional stormwater systems, with cities like Philadelphia finding that retrofitting impervious surfaces with green solutions costs 75% less than expanding conventional sewer infrastructure. As climate change intensifies, bringing more frequent and severe storms, flood risks are projected to rise by

45% by the end of the century (“Stormwater Management Practices at EPA Facilities,” 2024). By reducing stormwater volume and cooling urban areas, green infrastructure not only protects Paterson’s residents from flooding but also strengthens the city’s resilience against extreme weather events.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) oversees stormwater management programs, requiring municipalities like Paterson to obtain stormwater permits to control runoff pollution, as stormwater accounts for up to 60% of the state’s water pollution. The NJ Clean Water Act mandates best management practices (BMPs), including public education, green infrastructure incentives, and stormwater treatment improvements, to reduce contamination and enhance urban water resilience. By integrating BMPs into park development plans, Paterson can strengthen compliance with NJDEP regulations while ensuring that new and existing green spaces serve as both recreational assets and flood mitigation tools (“Stormwater Management, Storm Drains and Watersheds,” 2025).

## Conclusion

Urban green spaces play a vital role in public health, social equity, and environmental sustainability, yet disparities in access, quality, and safety undermine their benefits, particularly for low-income and minority communities. Research shows that proximity alone is insufficient if parks are unsafe, poorly maintained, or underfunded. While park investments improve urban livability, they also risk green gentrification, requiring a “just green enough” approach to prevent displacement (Wolch et al., 2014). Additionally, crime concerns further limit park usage, with hotspots near parks deterring visitors (Marquet et al., 2020). Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can enhance safety, but its limitations—including inconsistent implementation and exclusionary effects—must be addressed through community-centered strategies (Marzabali et al., 2016). Moreover, in flood-prone cities like Paterson, green infrastructure solutions such as bioswales, permeable pavements, and rain gardens offer cost-effective stormwater management, reducing pollution and climate risks while complying with NJDEP regulations (Denchak, 2022; “Stormwater Management, Storm Drains and Watersheds,” 2025). The Paterson Parks Project can use these insights to guide equitable park development, integrating accessibility, safety, and sustainability to create resilient and inclusive green spaces that enhance public health and community well-being.

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