



TOWN OF TUSTEN

Natural Resources Inventory and Open Space & Recreation Plan

Public Engagement Plan

June 2024



Town of Tusten

Natural Resources Inventory, Open Space Plan and Recreation Plan

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Introduction

Background

The Town of Tusten has undertaken an effort to develop a Town-wide Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), Open Space and Recreation Plan. The NRI will identify key environmental and open space resources within the Town, updating the 2011 Natural Resource & Open Space Inventory. This includes wetlands, wildlife habitats, flood zones, forests and more. The Open Space and Recreation Plan will build upon the NRI and establish a vision for a Town-wide network of open spaces, implementing a key recommendation of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The plan will create a roadmap to ensure an appropriate balance of open space, public access and natural resources. The plan will define conservation tools, strategies as well as specific resource protection within the Town.

The planning process is being guided by the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) and will include a robust public engagement component to gather input from residents, visitors, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders in the community.

Project Team

The project team for the NRI & Open Space Plan includes Town Staff, the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), the Consultant Team, and additional project partners.

The **Town of Tusten** will ultimately adopt the Natural Resources Inventory and Open Space Plan. Representatives of the Town of Tusten include:

The **Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)** is made up of five (5) members selected by the Tusten Town Board. The members are listed in alphabetical order below:

- **Jane Luchsinger**, Deputy Supervisor, CAC Chair
- Cathleen Breen
- Alexandra Climent
- Bernie Lohman
- Donovan Sylvest

The **Consultant Team** will assist the Town and the CAC throughout the planning process through the facilitation of meetings, preparation of materials, publicity, and public engagement. MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C. (MJ) has been selected by the Town to facilitate the planning process.



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Additional Project Partners:

Peter Manning (Genius Loci) will serve as the project liaison and will be responsible for aiding project facilitation and communication among project partners.

Additional support and technical assistance will be provided by Sullivan County Planning and Real Property Services Departments and the Delaware Highlands Conservancy.

Funding for the effort has been provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund 2023 and the Upper Delaware Council.

Scope of Work

This effort involves the following work tasks:

- Task 1: Project Coordination
- Task 2: Natural Resources Inventory
- Task 3: Open Space Plan
- Task 4: Public Engagement
- Task 5: Implementation

Public Engagement and Planning Process Overview

Overview

This Public Engagement Plan for the project outlines a variety of outreach and engagement activities designed to inform the public and gather input. Input is critical to making informed decisions that are supported by the Town residents and parks and recreation users.

This plan has been developed to define a communication channel between the public, the Town, applicable regulatory agencies, and the Project Team throughout the duration of the effort. This plan aims to achieve this communication by sharing information with the public regarding the planning process, and by providing a variety of occasions for the public to provide input at key milestones throughout the process. The following community participation activities are anticipated in this effort:

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- ❖ Project Website
- ❖ Social Media
- ❖ Community Visioning Survey
- ❖ Key Stakeholder Meetings
- ❖ Public Meetings (3)

A preliminary schedule for each of these outreach activities is outlined below.

Outreach Activity	Date
Project Website / Social Media Outreach	Ongoing
Community Visioning Survey	Summer 2024
Key Stakeholder Group Meetings	Fall 2024
Public Meetings (3)	Summer 2024, Fall 2024, Winter/Spring 2025

Opportunities for Public Participation

A variety of methods will be utilized to inform the public about the process and gather input. Opportunities for public participation include:

- ❖ Project Website
- ❖ Social Media
- ❖ Email Communication
- ❖ Community Visioning Survey
- ❖ Key Stakeholder Group Meetings
- ❖ Public Meetings (3)

Website

MJ will develop and manage a project website throughout the duration of the project. The website will include project updates, materials, as well as a feedback form to keep the public engaged and informed. A link to the project website will be placed on the Town's website (www.townoftusten.org). The project website and social media venues will be used to provide updates throughout the process and share materials. The website will also include a comments form to allow the public to share their thoughts throughout the project. This is just one of several ways of gathering community input



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throughout the process. The intent is to reach all interested stakeholders using a variety of outreach methods. Materials available on the website may include, but not be limited to the following:

- ❖ Upcoming Engagement Opportunities
- ❖ Surveys
- ❖ Meeting Materials
- ❖ Comment Form

The website is located at the following link: www.TustenOpenSpaceRecreation.com

In addition to the project website, announcements of public engagement opportunities will also be posted through the Town website at: www.townoftusten.org.

Social Media

The Town will utilize its social media outlets, such as Facebook, to advertise public engagement activities.

Email Communication

To keep the public informed of upcoming engagement opportunities, community members may sign up to receive emails through the project website.

Community Visioning Survey

Date: TBD Summer 2024.

Purpose: The purpose of the Community Visioning Survey is to gather feedback on the community's vision and goals for Open Space in the Town of Tusten. It is anticipated this survey would be opened for public input at Public Workshop #1.

Platform: The survey will be shared on the project website and the Town of Tusten website. In addition, hard copies will be made available. Survey flyers will be posted at key locations throughout the Town to raise awareness of the survey.

Publicity:

- ❖ Posting to project website



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- ❖ Posting to Town website
- ❖ Flyer for Town and Committee to distribute and post to social media
- ❖ Survey flyers and hard copies available at key locations throughout the Town

Key Stakeholder Group Meetings

Date: TBD Fall 2024.

Purpose: The Project Team will organize meetings (virtual or in person as appropriate) with key stakeholders and partners in small group settings. To the extent possible, stakeholder meetings will be coordinated with other scheduled public engagement activities. After these meetings and interviews are conducted, findings will be summarized, reviewed, and discussed with the CAC. These conversations will be helpful in understanding the needs, opportunities and vision of the broader community.

Platform: (TBD) Stakeholder Group Meetings will be held in-person or web-based.

Publicity:

- ❖ Invitations will be made to those whose experience with a specific issue warrants a targeted discussion. Invitees will be determined in consultation with the CAC and may include local land trusts, environmental groups, landowners, citizen groups, etc.

Public Workshop #1

Date: TBD Summer 2024.

Purpose: The purpose of the first Public Workshop will be to introduce the project to the public, present the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) component of the project and share draft mapping. The workshop will include a brief presentation and an overview of the purpose, scope, and schedule of the project. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the Natural Resources Inventory mapping and natural resources. It is anticipated that the Community Visioning survey will be launched during this event.

Platform: TBD. The platform will be chosen in consultation with the Town and CAC in an effort to maximize public participation. The workshop may be held in person or via an interactive, web-based webinar.



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Publicity:

- ❖ Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, cable, and radio.
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations, and businesses.
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town

Public Workshop #2

Date: TBD Fall 2024.

Purpose: The purpose of the second Public Workshop will be to gather input on the community's vision and needs for Open Space and Recreation in the Town of Tusten. The workshop will include a brief presentation and an interactive session to gather input. The session will also serve as a forum for participants to provide information about their open space needs and identify opportunities and constraints to further inform the Open Space & Recreation Plan.

Platform: TBD. The platform will be chosen in consultation with the Town and CAC in an effort to maximize public participation. The workshop may be held in person or via an interactive, web-based webinar.

Publicity:

- ❖ Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, cable, and radio.
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations, and businesses.
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town

Public Workshop #3

Date: TBD Winter/Spring 2025.

Purpose: The final public workshop will present the Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan and mapping. The workshop will include a presentation and an overview of the final vision, goals and strategies for the plan. The public will have an opportunity to provide comments on the plan.

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Platform: TBD. The platform will be chosen in consultation with the Town and CAC in an effort to maximize public participation. The workshop may be held in person or via an interactive, web-based webinar.

Publicity:

- ❖ Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, cable, and radio.
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations, and businesses.
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town