The Passaic County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund is designed to facilitate the acquisition of open space within the County for preservation, as well as to fund redevelopment of parks, through a designated levy on real property.

Two questions were added to the November 5, 1996 Ballot: an Open Space and Park Improvement Fund referendum and an Open Space Acquisition referendum. Both were approved by voters, and ultimately consolidated.

The Passaic County Freeholders adopted a resolution on September 3, 1997 establishing an Advisory Committee for the program. In order to generate revenues to fund the program, a resolution was adopted on February 3, 1999 authorizing the implementation of an “Open Space Tax.”

A recommendation was made for the tax rate for the calendar year 1999 to be fixed at 1 cent per $100 of assessed value.

Studies have shown that proximity to open space and parkland increases property values, while costs in terms of municipal services are relatively insignificant.

Since 2001, the Open Space Trust Fund has amassed approximately $35 million and has helped to preserve nearly 2,000 acres; in addition, the trust has funded improvements to numerous municipal and county parks.
Passaic County Petition for Plan Conformance
Highlands Council (Chester Township, N.J. – December 16, 2010)

From left: Judy Thornton, Highlands Council Liaison to Passaic County; Passaic County Senior Planner Michael Lysicatos; Passaic County Open Space Coordinator Kathleen Caren; Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier; and Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan.
Passaic County Petition for Plan Conformance
Highlands Council (Chester Township, N.J. – December 16, 2010)

From left: Passaic County Open Space Coordinator Kathleen Caren and Passaic County Senior Planner Michael Lysicatos at the December 16th Highlands Council meeting.
Passaic County Petition for Plan Conformance
Highlands Council (Chester Township, N.J. – December 16, 2010)

The Changing Geography of Passaic County

At the time of the American Revolution, Passaic County was actually part of Bergen and Essex counties, with the Passaic River forming a natural boundary between the two counties.

Named after the river which powered the factories of the American Industrial Revolution, Passaic County was formed in 1837, and was made up of seven towns.

Today, the sixteen towns of Passaic County represent a geographic cross section of New Jersey, from the historic cities of Paterson and Passaic, to rural West Milford and Ringwood.

(Courtesy: Passaic County Website http://www.passaiccountynj.org/)
Passaic County Petition for Plan Conformance
Highlands Council (Chester Township, N.J. – December 16, 2010)

in turn spurred other redevelopment projects in the area.
In June 2005, the Board of Chosen Freeholders, on the recommendation of the County Planning Board, adopted a Corridor Enhancement Program to allow for small-scale improvement placed in Passaic County by the New Jersey Commission on Historic Sites in 1932. Corridor Enhancement fees will also be used to fund improvements of the intersection of Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike and Valley Road.

Current Planning Efforts in Passaic County

Transit-Oriented Development
Madison Avenue Rail-Corridor Study
Sustainable Land-Use Planning
Transportation Element Update of Passaic County Master Plan
Historic Preservation
Restoration of NJ Historic Markers
Commemorating Revolutionary War Events
Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping
GIS Resources Website

Plan Review
County Urban Design Guidelines
Urban Design Visioning
Hamilton Street & Court House Plaza
Environmental Planning
Molly Ann Brook Watershed Management Plan

Anniversary Logo
The “PC” Monogram Design for our 80th Anniversary Logo was inspired by the beautiful iron work on the former Lincoln Street Bridge over the Passaic River in Paterson. It represents excellence in design and pride in the past with an eye to the future.

The Passaic County Planning Department would like to extend a Special Thanks to all officials and employees, past and present, who contributed to 80 years of Planning in Passaic County.

(Courtesy: Passaic County Website  http://www.passaiccountynj.org/ )