



Open Space

Open space has been one of the defining characteristics of Westchester County since the County was organized in 1683. As we look forward to Westchester's 350th anniversary, open space continues to be a celebrated aspect of the County's environment. As part of the County Planning Department's Westchester 2033 initiative, County Government will continue to build on its past open space preservation efforts to ensure that our treasured open spaces, whether they are scenic vistas, lush woodlands, parks or recreational areas, will continue to be a defining characteristic of our County for generations to come. We also seek to increase public awareness of the County's open spaces and look for ways to improve access for all.

Open Space Inventory and Map

The most recent open space mapping and inventory initiative was undertaken by the County in 2006 which resulted in the publishing of our [Open Spaces map](#) . As part of the Westchester 2033 initiative, Planning Department staff has done extensive outreach to municipalities and land trusts to update this inventory which is now available online as an [interactive map of open spaces](#) . While this map remains a work in progress, as we continue to get feedback from local governments and land trusts, substantial portions of the map have been updated to present-day conditions.

The open space inventory and map contains 12 categories of open space within two broader categories:

- **Definite Elements of Open Space**—public or private lands permanently protected from development such as dedicated parkland, nature preserves, cemeteries, etc.
- **Areas of Open Space Character**—parcels not permanently protected from development (e.g. golf courses, campuses, private schools, estates or farmland and forests) which contribute to the open space character of an area. This category also includes places of public assembly.

In addition to showing an inventory of the County's open spaces, this online mapping tool is also designed to help improve access to the County's open spaces. By viewing the online map, you can see the locations of open spaces with trails and recreational facilities as well as the locations of train stations, Bee-Line bus routes and parking and access points.

Open Space policies, priorities and strategies

New York State, Westchester County and its 45 municipalities have a long history of open space preservation combined with robust public access to open space resources. The Westchester 2033 Open Space initiative includes a summary of existing policies as well as sub-regional and municipal profiles that can help inform decision-making with future open-space planning and preservation efforts, including the potential update of the County's 1999 Open Space Policy document.

The sub-regional and municipal profiles also provide good summaries of the open spaces available in each area for the public to enjoy, including links to the open space map that show how each open space area can be accessed by transit, automobile, or by linkages to adjacent open space areas.