



# 2015 Municipal Public Access Plan

Town of Secaucus  
Hudson County, New Jersey



# Draft Municipal Public Access Plan

## Town of Secaucus Hudson County, New Jersey

Adopted by the Planning Board of the Town of Secaucus  
Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(7) and –(8)

*A Sub-Element of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element  
of the Secaucus Master Plan*

\_\_\_\_\_, 2015

*Prepared by:*

---

Brian M. Slaugh, PP, AICP  
New Jersey Professional Planner License No. 3743

---

Andrea Malcolm, PP, AICP  
New Jersey Professional Planner License No. 5319

CLARKE CATON HINTZ, PC  
100 Barrack Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608  
(609) 883-8383

A signed and sealed original is on file with the Office of the Town Clerk

## **Town of Secaucus Council**

**Hon. Michael Gonnelli, Mayor**  
**Hon. James Clancy, Councilman**  
**Hon. Robert Costantino, Councilman**  
**Hon. Mark Dehnert, Councilman**  
**Hon. Gary Jeffas, Councilman**  
**Hon. William McKeever, Councilman**  
**Hon. Susan Pirro, Councilwoman**

**Michael Marra, RMC, Town Clerk**  
**David Drumeler, Esq., Town Administrator**  
**Chasan, Leyner & Lamparello, P.C. Town Attorneys**

## **Town of Secaucus Planning Board**

**Hon. Michael Gonnelli, Class I**  
**William Sallick, Class II**  
**Hon. Susan Pirro, Class III**  
**Joseph Pagano, Chairman, Class IV**  
**Leonard Adis, Class IV**  
**Doug DePice, Class IV**  
**Thomas Flanagan, Class IV**  
**John Hugerich, Class IV**  
**Barbara Warth, Class IV**

**Alternate**  
**Deborah Santoro**

**Marie Eck, Planning Board Secretary**  
**Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt & Fader, LLC, Board Attorneys**

## *Table of Contents*

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Description of Municipality</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Public Access to Tidal Waterways and Lands</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Authority for Municipal Public Access Plans</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Municipal Public Access Plan Process</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Secaucus Master Plan Goals and Objectives</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>State of New Jersey Public Access Goals</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Existing Public Access</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Map 1. Secaucus’ Tidal Waterways and Adjacent Public Lands .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Proposed Municipal Public Access Locations and Improvements</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Table 1: Summary of Proposed Municipal Public Access Locations and Improvements.....	<b>10</b>
Map 2. Proposed Municipal Access Locations and Improvements .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Community Needs Assessment</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Implementation Plan</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Recommended Public Access Improvements</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Municipal Tools for Implementation</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Implementation Schedule</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Appendix A. Public Access Locations and Improvements.....	<b>16</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP) outlines the Town’s vision for providing public access to tidal waters and shorelines within the municipal boundary, which includes the Hackensack River and tidal creeks and marshlands. These waterways are an important ecological and recreational resource for the municipality and the region.

The MPAP has been developed in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-8.11), in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Upon receiving approval from DEP, the MPAP will be incorporated in the Master Plan, as a sub-element of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element.

As detailed in the MPAP, Secaucus provides public access to tidal waterways from municipal parks and open space areas, and from the municipally-owned bridge on Meadowlands Parkway. Public access is also provided within Secaucus from at parks and open space areas owned by other governmental entities, including the Secaucus Board of Education, the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (“Authority”, formerly the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission), and Hudson County. The Town also collaborates with the Authority and Hudson County to provide public access along the Hackensack River via the Hackensack Riverwalk pathway.

The Town’s online community needs assessment indicates a high level of satisfaction with the appearance and quality of the Town’s waterfront parks, as well as the recreational opportunities provided at these parks. At the same time, however, the community needs assessment survey indicates a desire for additional trails, elevated walkways, fishing piers, bike paths and boat, canoe and kayak access and/or launch facilities, as well as more picnic areas, grilling facilities shaded areas, and restroom facilities.

Secaucus protects and ensures public access to tidal waterways and shores through preservation and maintenance of Town parks and open space lands, facilities and amenities, and through the maintenance of Town roads, bridges, parking areas, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities which provide connections to these public access locations and facilities.

Secaucus will implement the MPAP goals and objectives for public access by continuing to preserve and maintain existing public access locations and facilities. Recommended improvements to public access include enhanced signage and public access information; review of parking availability, ADA compliance and restroom feasibility; completion of the Hackensack Riverwalk, reconstruction of the Meadowlands Parkway Bridge, municipal acquisition of open space, and exploring the promotion of public access via tourism or arts festivals.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of the MPAP by Secaucus enables the municipality to better plan, implement, maintain, and improve the provision of public access to the Hackensack River and other tidal waterways for its residents and visitors. The development and implementation of this MPAP supports the state's policy of local determination of public access locations and facilities, while safeguarding regulatory flexibility and potential funding opportunities for Secaucus.

The MPAP begins with goals and objectives for public access, followed by a description of public access locations, and an assessment of practical limitations to public access at these locations. The MPAP also provides a summary of the community public access needs assessment. The final portion of the MPAP focuses on implementation planning, including a discussion of implementation tools and strategies and recommended steps for maintaining and enhancing public access locations and facilities.

### Description of Municipality

Secaucus is nearly an island surrounded by the Hackensack River, Penhorn Creek and Chromakill Creek. As described in the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the municipality has 20 parks and conservation areas, as well as two community facilities devoted to recreation and leisure, with many of these locations also providing public access to tidal waterways.

The town is part of the Meadowlands area, and the Authority currently has jurisdiction over zoning and development approvals in Secaucus, except for a small area centered on the Town's central business district. However, under the recent legislation that consolidated the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, the control of zoning and development review may be assumed by municipalities upon a determination by the Authority that the local master plan, zoning regulations, codes and standards are in conformance with those of the Commission. The Town anticipates assuming this control by no later than the beginning of 2016.

The town's population is presently estimated at 18,311,<sup>1</sup> with residential development primarily located in the northern portion of the town, along with several retail centers. The southern area of the Town contains a major transit center and is largely developed with commercial and industrial uses.

### Public Access to Tidal Waterways and Lands

Public access in Secaucus is provided by the municipality and includes direct access via a boat ramp and fishing pier, as well as indirect (visual) access to waterways from municipally owned park and open space, and from the municipally-owned bridge that carries the Meadowlands Parkway over the railroad tracks. The Town is also collaborating with both the Authority and Hudson County to complete segments of the Hackensack Riverwalk,

---

<sup>1</sup> As of July 1, 2013. U.S. Census Bureau (<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/dmograph/est/mcd/hudest.htm>)

Authority and Hudson County to complete segments of the Hackensack Riverwalk, providing paved pathways along the edge of the river from Mill Creek Point Park in the north end of Secaucus to Laurel Hill Park in the south end of the Town.

Map 1, *Secaucus' Tidal Waterways and Adjacent Public Lands* depicts all the tidal waterways within the municipality and all municipal lands adjacent to these waterways. For reference purposes, Map 1 also depicts lands owned by other public entities within Secaucus that are located along tidal waterways, including lands owned by the Secaucus Board of Education, the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and Hudson County.

### **Authority for Municipal Public Access Plans**

Public rights of access to and use of the tidal shorelines and waters, including the ocean, bays, and tidal rivers in New Jersey are based in the Public Trust Doctrine. Through English common law and various judicial decisions, the right of use upheld by the Public Trust Doctrine has been incorporated into many state constitutions and statutes, allowing the public the right to all lands, water and resources held in the public trust by the state, including those in New Jersey.

The authority for a municipality to develop a MPAP is derived from the Coastal Zone Management Rules, *N.J.A.C. 7:7E*, adopted by DEP on November 5, 2012. The development and implementation of this MPAP supports the policy of local determination of public access locations and facilities, while safeguarding regulatory flexibility and potential funding opportunities for Secaucus.

### **Municipal Public Access Plan Process**

On January 15, 2015, representatives from Secaucus met with DEP staff to begin the public access planning process. The MPAP has been developed in collaboration with the DEP, the Secaucus Planning Board, municipal staff, and community groups. The MPAP was presented to the Planning Board on [date] and was approved for submission to the DEP on [date].

Upon receiving approval from the DEP, the MPAP is proposed to be adopted and incorporated as a Sub-Element of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (*N.J.S.A 40:55D-28* - see Appendix B for the Planning Board's draft resolution of approval.) Public notice of the MPAP final approval by the DEP will be provided in the DEP Bulletin.

Upon approval of the MPAP by the DEP and incorporation into the Master Plan, Secaucus will be responsible for ensuring that public access to tidal waterways along the municipality's shorelines is provided in accordance with this plan. For each new public access project, Secaucus will provide DEP with a letter confirming its consistency with this MPAP. Any permit issued by the DEP will reflect this and ensure that public access requirements are satisfied in accordance with this MPAP. Per *N.J.A.C. 7:7E -8.11(j)4*, Secaucus is required to submit a progress report on plan implementation to DEP within five (5) years from date of the MPAP adoption.

The MPAP addresses all required sections as prescribed by the Coastal Zone Management Rules, *N.J.A.C. 7:7E*, adopted by DEP on November 5, 2012.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the MPAP is to establish a plan to maintain and enhance public access to and along tidal waterways and their shores.

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 7:7E-8.11(d)*, the MPAP includes the following goals for public access:

1. Maintain all existing public access to the maximum extent practicable.
2. Maintain safe and adequate public access for fishing.
3. Provide clear and informative signage for public access locations.

### Secaucus Master Plan Goals and Objectives

In addition to establishing the goals for public access noted above, the MPAP is intended to be consistent with and to further the following goals and objectives related to open space and recreation that were established in the 2009 Land Use Element and expanded in the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Secaucus Master Plan:

#### 2009 Land Use Plan Element (pp.3-4)

##### GOAL: PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

*Preserve the natural heritage of Secaucus for future generations*

##### OBJECTIVES

- *In conjunction with the NJ Meadowlands Commission, work towards the restoration of important wetlands areas at the edges of the municipality.*
- *In partnership with Hudson County, continue with the creation of the Hackensack Riverwalk.*
- *Look for opportunities to improve the stream corridors of the Penhorn and Cromakill Creeks.*

##### GOAL: ENVISION SECAUCUS'S FUTURE

*Build on Secaucus's existing assets to maintain a community with a stronger connections and well balanced amenities.*

##### OBJECTIVES

- *Look for opportunities to acquire additional open space based on the Town's population increases through redevelopment, especially for leisure and recreational purposes.*



**2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element (p. 4)****OBJECTIVES**

- *In partnership with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, develop a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes standard conservation easement language to be inserted as part of the conditions approving applications for development. A conservation easement provides an additional level of protection of environmentally sensitive lands.*
- *In partnership with the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, develop a Memorandum of Understanding and rules that establish incentives for the creation of public open space amenities. These amenities could include such items as a pocket park, extensions of the Hackensack Riverwalk, and open space connections to public roadways.*

A new objective related to public access is recommended as follows:

**PUBLIC ACCESS OBJECTIVE:**

- Develop standard public access easement language for use by the Planning Board to be inserted as a condition or an approval of an application for development.

This will address the ability of Secaucus to directly require reasonable public access requirements as part of its new review capability.

**State of New Jersey Public Access Goals**

Through the New Jersey Coastal Zone Management Rules at *N.J.A.C. 7:7E-1.1* (c), the State of New Jersey establishes a broad set of coastal protection goals, including the following specifically addressing public access:

- Effectively manage ocean and estuarine resources through sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries, as well as through the safe and environmentally sound use of coastal waters and beaches.
- Provide meaningful public access to and use of tidal waterways and their shores.
- Preserve public trust rights to tidal waterways and their shores.
- Preserve and enhance views of the coastal landscape to enrich aesthetic and cultural values and vital communities.
- The enhancement of public access by promoting adequate affordable public facilities and services.
- Create and enhance opportunities for public access to tidal waterways and their shores, on a non-discriminatory basis.
- Maintain all existing public access to, and along tidal waterways and their shores.

- Provide opportunities for public access to tidal waterways and their shores through new development.
- Provide public access that does not create conditions that may be reasonably expected to endanger public health and safety, damage the environment, or create significant homeland security vulnerability.

Secaucus' Municipal Public Access Plan embraces and reflects these goals and will help preserve, protect, and enhance the public's ability to access the Public Trust lands which surround the Town.

## EXISTING PUBLIC ACCESS

### Municipal Public Access Locations

As shown on Map 1, the municipal parks and open space areas which provide public access to the Hackensack River and tidal marshlands are concentrated at the northern end of the town, in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup> A brief description of each of the municipal public access locations is provided below, with numbers corresponding to the key on Map 1. For a more detailed inventory of the facilities at each municipal public access location, see Appendix A.

TROLLEY PARK (1) sits at the northern terminus of Paterson Plank Road at the bank of the Hackensack River. The park has a looped walkway to the river's edge and playground. It is adjacent to open space associated with the Riverview Court development and is anticipated to be a way station on the Hackensack Riverwalk.

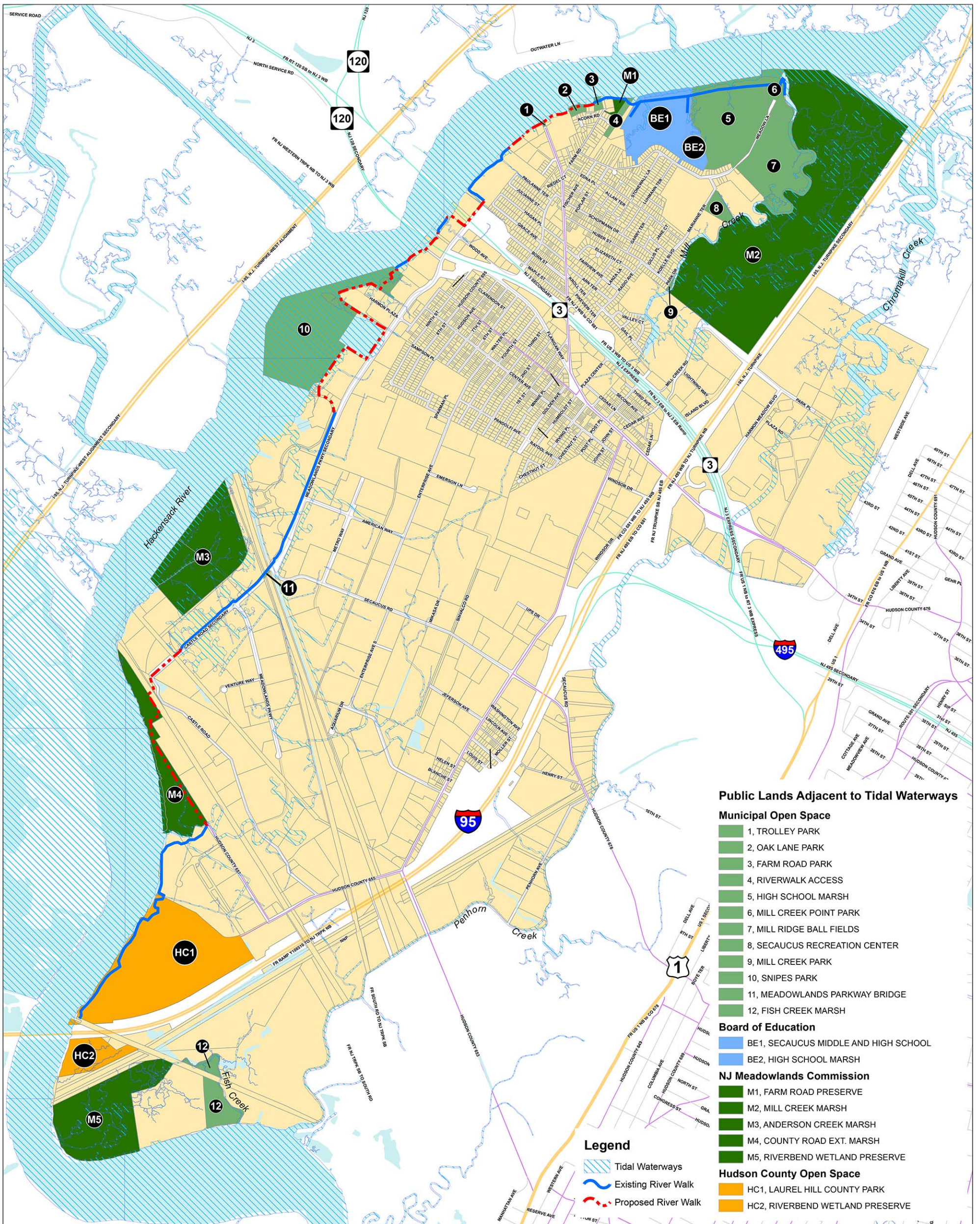
OAK LANE PARK (2) – This park was acquired by the Town in 2013 and is currently unimproved. The purchase of this site will allow the continuation of the Hackensack Riverwalk and will complement nearby Farm Park. Access is gained from Oak Lane.

FARM ROAD PARK (3) – The park contains a portion of the Hackensack Riverwalk and an accessible playground. Access is from Farm Road. On the east, the park borders the former Laminations-by-Estelle factory and parking lot sites, a property that is proposed to be acquired by the Town for open space.

RIVERWALK ACCESS (4) – This municipally-owned open space provides access for users and maintenance workers of the Riverwalk from the end of Farm Road and is located in between Acorn Park and the Secaucus High School.

---

<sup>2</sup> - The one municipally-owned property located adjacent to tidal waters at the southern end of the town, Fish Creek Marsh, is not accessible from any roads and is designated for conservation purposes; as such it is not included as a public access location.



**Public Lands Adjacent to Tidal Waterways**

- Municipal Open Space**
- 1, TROLLEY PARK
  - 2, OAK LANE PARK
  - 3, FARM ROAD PARK
  - 4, RIVERWALK ACCESS
  - 5, HIGH SCHOOL MARSH
  - 6, MILL CREEK POINT PARK
  - 7, MILL RIDGE BALL FIELDS
  - 8, SECAUCUS RECREATION CENTER
  - 9, MILL CREEK PARK
  - 10, SNIPES PARK
  - 11, MEADOWLANDS PARKWAY BRIDGE
  - 12, FISH CREEK MARSH
- Board of Education**
- BE1, SECAUCUS MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
  - BE2, HIGH SCHOOL MARSH
- NJ Meadowlands Commission**
- M1, FARM ROAD PRESERVE
  - M2, MILL CREEK MARSH
  - M3, ANDERSON CREEK MARSH
  - M4, COUNTY ROAD EXT. MARSH
  - M5, RIVERBEND WETLAND PRESERVE
- Hudson County Open Space**
- HC1, LAUREL HILL COUNTY PARK
  - HC2, RIVERBEND WETLAND PRESERVE

- Legend**
- Tidal Waterways
  - Existing River Walk
  - Proposed River Walk

Tax Data Source: New Jersey Association of County Tax Boards 2013  
 Parcel Source: NJGIN Tax Parcels for Hudson County 2013  
 Open Space Source: Secaucus Parks & Trail Guide 2013

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.



**Clarke Caton Hintz**  
 Architecture  
 Planning  
 Landscape Architecture

**Map 1: Tidal Waterways & Adjacent Public Lands**  
 Town of Secaucus, Hudson County, NJ November 2015 Draft Map

HIGH SCHOOL MARSH (5) – The actual wetland is divided in ownership between the Town and the Secaucus Board of Education. This is the larger parcel of land located in between the High and Middle School building and Mill Creek Point Park. It is intended for conservation purposes; however, the Riverwalk path system is located along its northern edge with the Hackensack River.

MILL CREEK POINT PARK (6) – Mill Creek Point Park provides a sweeping vista of the Hackensack River at the north end of Secaucus, and is the northerly terminus of the Hackensack Riverwalk. The park provides direct access to the water via a boat launch and fishing pier. The park also features a playground, a discovery trail, and a dog park. The parking area for Mill Creek Point Park is located at the terminus of Mill Ridge Road.

MILL RIDGE BALL FIELDS (7) – One of the Town’s largest active recreation sites, it provides views of the Hackensack River and the Mill Creek Marsh. Mill Creek Marsh is a reconstructed tidal wetland fed by Mill Creek and is the largest area of marshland in the Town. The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission has constructed 1.2 miles of trails through the southern end of the marsh for public use.

SECAUCUS RECREATION CENTER (8) – Though a community facility rather than a park, the recreation center is the focus of recreational programming for many activities in Secaucus and is located at 1200 Koelle Boulevard. Behind the recreation center there is a meditation garden which provides views of the Mill Creek Marsh.

MILL CREEK PARK (9) – This small park is located at the end of Huber Street and Park Drive. Seating areas at the park provide views across the Mill Creek Marsh.

SNIPES PARK (10) – Snipes Park is a facility held jointly by the Town and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. Much of the park is occupied by the Hackensack River and adjoins the Meadowlands Hospital and Clarion Hotel at the end of Harmon Plaza Drive. Access to the land portion of the park is from the central parking lot of Harmon Plaza. The park includes trails and seating areas.

MEADOWLANDS PARKWAY BRIDGE (11) – This municipally-owned bridge carries the Meadowlands Parkway over the rail road tracks and a canal that extends from the Hackensack River. The bridge is included as a public access location as it affords views of the river and tidal marshlands, and because it provides an important link in the Riverwalk system, connecting the nearby Harmon Cove and Harmon Cove Tower neighborhoods with the municipal public access locations to the south.

### **Public Access Locations Provided by Other Government Entities**

Public access to the Hackensack River and its tributaries is also provided within Secaucus by other governmental entities, including the Secaucus Board of Education, Hudson County, and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. For reference, the location of these non-municipal public access sites is provided on Map 1 and a brief description of the non-municipal public access locations and facilities is provided below:

SECAUCUS MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL (BE1) – This Board of Education site is located in the north end of the Town on Mill Ridge Road and on the south bank of the Hackensack River. The Hackensack Riverwalk traverses the northern property line; the school is a key part of the pathway’s north section.

HIGH SCHOOL MARSH (BE2) – The Board of Education also owns an area of tidal wetlands on a triangular-shaped parcel immediately adjoining the school parcel as well as the Town’s part of the wetlands. The close proximity of the marshes provides valuable student learning opportunities for ecological and biological studies.

FARM ROAD PRESERVE (M1) – Though not officially named, this property is located to the west of the high school on the Town’s Riverwalk Access parcel. Part of the northern section of the Hackensack Riverwalk has been constructed adjacent to the river bank. The land is owned by the Authority and intended for conservation purposes.

MILL CREEK MARSH (M2) – This conservation site is owned by the Authority and is the largest open space parcel in the Town. A recreation trail for wildlife viewing accessible from the Mill Creek Mall parking lot from behind the A.C. Moore store and provides vistas across the wetland.

LAUREL HILL COUNTY PARK (HC1) – This County park at the south end of the Town provides a boat launch on the Hackensack, canoe and kayak rentals, playgrounds, and public restrooms. The park also provides access to the southern segment of the Riverwalk. The County is about to begin reconstruction work on the Riverwalk in this area, which will include new concrete piers that can be used for fishing.

## PROPOSED MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCESS LOCATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Table 1 below summarizes the municipal locations and improvements that would continue to be maintained by the Town of Secaucus to provide public access to the Hackensack River and its tidal creeks and marshlands. As noted in the table, an expansion of Farm Road Park may be possible through the purchase of the former Laminations-by-Estelle factory site and adjacent parking lot site, two properties proposed to be acquired by the Town as outlined in its *Open Space and Recreation Plan* Element. The acquisition of this site would allow for completion of a segment of the Riverwalk, and the existing factory parking lot could be used to provide parking for a trail head to the Riverwalk. The table also notes the possible future improvements to public access through construction of additional segments of the Hackensack Riverwalk, and the possible siting of a canoe and kayak launch at Snipes Park. The improvements are discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Plan section of this report, and are shown on Map 2, *Proposed Municipal Access Locations and Improvements*.

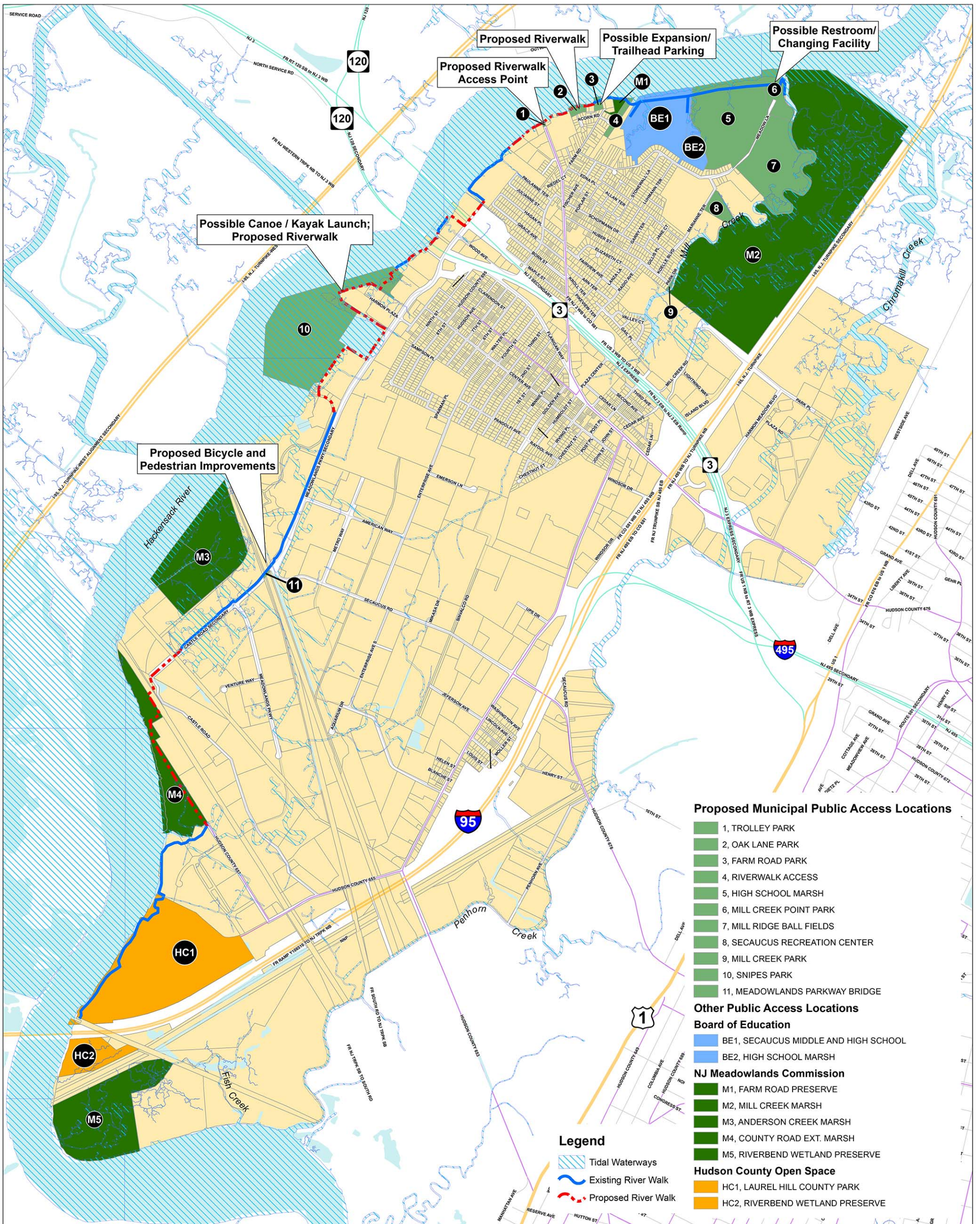
**Table 1: Summary of Proposed Municipal Public Access Locations and Improvements**

Location Name	Public Access Improvements	
	Existing	Proposed
Trolley Park	Seating	Riverwalk Access Point
Oak Lane Park	Passive Recreation	Riverwalk Construction
Farm Road Park	Riverwalk, Seating, Playground	Trailhead and parking
Riverwalk Access	Riverwalk	Completion of missing sections as feasible with involvement of County and NJS&EA
High School Marsh	Riverwalk	
Mill Creek Point Park	Parking, Riverwalk Access, Boat Launch, Fishing Pier, Playground	Restroom/changing facility
Mill Ridge Ball Fields	Parking, Recreational Fields	
Secaucus Recreation Center	Parking, Meditation Garden	
Mill Creek Park	Seating	
Snipes Park	Parking, trails, seating areas	Kayak/canoe launch, Continuation of Riverwalk
Meadowlands Parkway Bridge	Riverwalk	Widening during replacement for bicycle and pedestrian use

### Limitations on Municipal Public Access

The detailed table in Appendix A identifies several practical limitations on municipal public access sites, including the following:

- Limited on-site and/or on-street parking for municipal public access sites.
- No restroom facilities are provided at municipal public access sites, except at the Secaucus Recreation Center.
- While there are several ADA compliant playground facilities at public access sites, the status of ADA compliance with regard to parking and walkways needs more detailed review.
- Signage for parks and open space areas does not identify waterfront access/recreational facilities.



**Proposed Municipal Public Access Locations**

- 1, TROLLEY PARK
- 2, OAK LANE PARK
- 3, FARM ROAD PARK
- 4, RIVERWALK ACCESS
- 5, HIGH SCHOOL MARSH
- 6, MILL CREEK POINT PARK
- 7, MILL RIDGE BALL FIELDS
- 8, SECAUCUS RECREATION CENTER
- 9, MILL CREEK PARK
- 10, SNIPES PARK
- 11, MEADOWLANDS PARKWAY BRIDGE

**Other Public Access Locations**

**Board of Education**

- BE1, SECAUCUS MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
- BE2, HIGH SCHOOL MARSH

**NJ Meadowlands Commission**

- M1, FARM ROAD PRESERVE
- M2, MILL CREEK MARSH
- M3, ANDERSON CREEK MARSH
- M4, COUNTY ROAD EXT. MARSH
- M5, RIVERBEND WETLAND PRESERVE

**Hudson County Open Space**

- HC1, LAUREL HILL COUNTY PARK
- HC2, RIVERBEND WETLAND PRESERVE

**Legend**

- Tidal Waterways
- Existing River Walk
- Proposed River Walk

Tax Data Source: New Jersey Association of County Tax Boards 2013  
 Parcel Source: NJGIN Tax Parcels for Hudson County 2013  
 Open Space Source: Secaucus Parks & Trail Guide 2013

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.



**Clarke Caton Hintz**

Architecture  
 Planning  
 Landscape Architecture

**Map 2: Proposed Municipal Public Access Locations & Improvements**

Town of Secaucus, Hudson County, NJ November 2015 Draft Map

- All of the municipal public access locations are open year-round; however, the parks and open space areas are only open during daylight hours and sites and facilities may be temporarily closed during inclement weather.
- Only one municipal public access site (Mill Creek Point Park) provides a boat launch and fishing pier; however there is a boat ramp and fishing pier at Laurel Hill Park, owned by Hudson County, and there exists a large public boating center, River Barge Park and Marina, located across the Hackensack from Mill Creek Point Park, in Carlstadt.

There are also jurisdictional and land use constraints that affect the Town's ability to provide public access to waterways in Secaucus. The majority of Secaucus is under the regional zoning control of the Authority and the portion under Secaucus' jurisdiction does not include any waterfront areas. Development of privately-owned land along the waterfront has not been subject to municipal review and approval. This situation is anticipated to change within the time frame for review and adoption of this document and publication in the DEP Bulletin. The Town will be able to resume local control over the development process in the near future.

With regard to land use constraints, there are a number of large industrial, commercial and transportation uses that physically impede public access to waterways, particularly in the southern portion of the Town. At the same time, however, there are sizable public parks and open space areas owned by the Authority and Hudson County that provide public access at a regional level and which present opportunities for collaboration/expanded access via projects such as the Hackensack Riverwalk.

## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In August 2015, the Town completed an online community needs assessment to evaluate existing municipal waterfront parks and recreational facilities, and to help identify potential issues and improvements for public access to the waterfront.

In general, the survey responses indicate that the community is very satisfied with the appearance and quality of the Town's waterfront parks, as well as the recreational opportunities provided at these parks, including playground facilities and paths and walking trails. At the same time however, the survey responses indicate a desire for more trails, elevated walkways, fishing piers, bike paths and boat, canoe and kayak access and/or launch facilities. Additionally, survey responses identified a need for more picnic areas (including areas with grills), more natural or man-made shade and restroom facilities. Other waterfront issues and concerns noted by the survey responses include flooding, the protection of open space and water access, illegal dumping, dog waste, and mosquito control.



## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Preservation and Maintenance of Existing Public Access

Secaucus protects and ensures public access to tidal waterways and shores through preservation and maintenance of Town parks and open space lands, facilities and amenities, and through the maintenance of Town roads, bridges, parking areas, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities which provide connections to these public access locations and facilities.

Maintenance needs at parks and open space areas that provide public access include clearing of parking areas and walkways, emptying trash receptacles and removing debris, maintaining existing vegetation, replacing vegetation as needed, maintaining and/or repairing signs, lighting, seating and other structures and equipment as needed. This maintenance is provided by the Secaucus Department of Public Works, with the necessary funding allocated in the annual budget.

### RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

The following public access improvements are recommended:

1. Completion of Hackensack Riverwalk Segments. Collaborate with the NJ Sports and Exposition Authority and Hudson County to complete the missing segments of the Hackensack Riverwalk on municipally-owned lands, including Trolley Park, Oak Lane Park, and Snipes Park; and privately-owned lands where feasible. The preferred method is through public access easements. Construction and maintenance would be addressed on a site-by-site basis. At Trolley Park, a landing area/access point on the Hackensack River could be established to enhance access and use of the Riverwalk from the water.
2. Farm Road Park Expansion. Pursue municipal acquisition of the adjacent Laminations factory site and parking lot properties as recommended in the Open Space and Recreation Element. Collaborate with Authority and Hudson County to provide a parking area and trailhead to the Riverwalk at this location.
3. Restrooms. Investigate the feasibility of providing temporary or permanent restrooms at Mill Creek Point Park. If feasible, restrooms should include changing rooms for kayakers and canoeists.
4. Snipes Park Boat Launch. Investigate the feasibility of providing a boat launch for kayaks and canoes along the western shoreline of Snipes Park. This location appears to be shielded from the strong currents that would occur along other areas of the shoreline along the Hackensack River. Parking is available for Snipes Park at the central parking lot of Harmon Plaza.
5. Meadowlands Parkway Bridge. Provide a dedicated pedestrian/bicycle path over the Meadowlands Parkway bridge as part of the future bridge reconstruction. An extension of the existing sidewalk/pathway system along the Meadowlands Parkway

- (which is also utilized for the Hackensack Riverwalk in the vicinity of the bridge) to link with public access sites to the north (Snipes Park) and south (Hudson County sites, including County Road Extension Marsh and Laurel Hill Park) should also be considered, including a study of the feasibility of crossing the rail road tracks to the south of the bridge, which is major impediment to the completion of the Riverwalk.
6. Signage. Enhance signage at public access locations, including collaboration with the Authority and Hudson County to provide additional signs to guide the public to and along the Hackensack Riverwalk. Consider providing additional directional signs at key intersections (e.g. wayfinding signs), and interpretative signs at public access locations regarding environmental, historic, scenic or cultural resources.
  7. Parking. Review availability of on-street parking for Trolley Park, Oak Lane Park, Farm Road Park, Riverwalk Access, High School Marsh, Mill Ridge Ball Fields, and Mill Creek Park.
  8. ADA Compliance. Review status of ADA compliance for public access seating and pathways, including the Hackensack Riverwalk.
  9. Public Access Information – Provide information about public access locations and facilities via Town online and print communications.
  10. Waterfront Arts/Tourism. Consider promoting public access locations and amenities in the Town’s art and recreation programs.

## MUNICIPAL TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- I. Conservation Techniques. The Open Space and Recreation Plan discusses several methods for preserving open space that are also relevant to preserving public access. These methods include:
  - a. Purchase or Donation of Development Rights – Development rights may be separated from a property and sold or donated to governmental agencies or conservation organizations to preserve visual access to waterways.
  - b. Conservation and/or Public Access Easements – The dedication of a conservation and or public access easement can preserve lands for visual or direct access.
  - c. Site Design Techniques – Designing site development to preserve open space and public access should be encouraged.

To employ these techniques, the Town is seeking to develop standards and guidelines in its land development regulations.

2. Funding of Public Access Improvements.
  - a. Municipal Public Access Fund – At this time, Secaucus does not intend to establish a Municipal Public Access Fund. The Town intends to explore other public and private funding options as listed below.
  - b. State Funding – Green Acres Program provides low interest loans and grants for open space acquisition and development of lands for recreation/public access.
  - c. New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. In the past, the NJ Meadowlands Commission has funded and constructed public access improvements, including those at Mill Creek Park, and has required waterfront developers to install segments on property being developed.
  - d. Hudson County. The County is currently funding construction of improvements to the Riverwalk at Laurel Hill County Park.
  - e. Donations of lands and funds – Funding of public access land acquisition and improvements may be available through donations from land trusts, corporations, and recreation/civic organizations.

## IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The Town will continue to maintain existing public access locations and facilities, with on-going maintenance provided by the Secaucus Department of Public Works. The implementation schedule for the recommended public access improvements identified in the Implementation Plan will depend upon the availability of funding. However, it is anticipated that the approximate timing and sequencing of the recommended improvements, would be as follows:

1. Short-Term Improvements (1 – 2 year timeframe)
  - Provide online public access information
  - Review and enhancement of public access signage
  - Review of parking availability at public access locations
  - Review of ADA compliance at public access locations
  - Investigate feasibility of temporary restrooms at Mill Creek Park.
2. Mid- to Long-Term Implementation Projects (2 – 10 year timeframe)
  - Promotion of waterfront tourism
  - Completion of Riverwalk segments
  - Meadowlands Parkway Bridge
  - Snipes Park Boat Launch
  - Farm Road Park Expansion

## Appendix A. Public Access Locations and Improvements

Map Number and Name	Street	Signs**	Parking Type	Parking Number	Fishing	Playground
1. Trolley Park	Paterson Plank Rd.	Yes	Street	tbd	No	Yes
2. Oak Lane Park	Oak Lane	Yes	Street	tbd	No	No
3. Farm Road Park	Farm Road	Yes	Street	tbd	No	Yes
4. Riverwalk Access	Farm Road	Yes	No	tbd	No	No
5. High School Marsh	Meadow Lane	Yes	No	tbd	No	No
6. Mill Creek Point Park	Meadow Lane	Yes	Yes	tbd	Yes	Yes
7. Mill Ridge Ball Fields	Meadow Lane	Yes	Street	tbd	No	No
8. Recreation Center	Koelle Blvd	Yes	Yes	tbd	No	No
9. Mill Creek Park	Park Dr.	Yes	Street	tbd	No	No
10. Snipes Park	Harmon Plaza	Yes	Yes	tbd	No	No
11. Meadowlands Pkwy Bridge	Meadowlands Pkwy.	No	No	tbd	No	No

\* - Sign identifies site, only.

tbd = to be determined as part of the Public Access Implementation Study

Map Number and Name	Park	Pier	Boat Launch	Rest-Room	Riverwalk	Seating	H_C*	Shoreline	Access Type
1. Trolley Park	Yes	No	No	No	Proposed	Yes	tbd	River	Physical
2. Oak Lane Park	OS	No	No	No	Proposed	No	tbd	River	Visual
3. Farm Road Park	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	tbd	River	Visual
4. Riverwalk Access	OS	No	No	No	Yes	No	tbd	River	Visual
5. High School Marsh	OS	No	No	No	Yes	No	tbd	River	Visual
6. Mill Creek Point Park	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	tbd	River	Visual
7. Mill Ridge Ball Fields	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	tbd	Creek/Marsh	Visual
8. Recreation Center	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	tbd	Creek/Marsh	Visual
9. Mill Creek Park	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	tbd	Creek/Marsh	Visual
10. Snipes Park	Yes	No	No	No	Proposed	Yes	tbd	River	Visual
11. Meadowlands Pkwy Bridge	No	No	No	No	Proposed	No	No	River	Visual

\* - Handicapped accessible facility

No locations permit swimming or sell food/drinks; badges and surfing not applicable