

A Different Kind of Mayor:

**Recreation and Open Space
for Every Hoboken Resident**

**A Tested, Trusted
Leader for Hoboken**



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INTRODUCTION

Recreation and open space are at the heart of Hoboken's quality of life.

Our parks, playgrounds, and recreation programs don't just provide places to play – they connect neighbors, protect our waterfront, and strengthen our community across every generation.



“Hoboken is only just over one square mile. We don't have the luxury of building a sprawling sports complex on “ten acres out by the highway” because that doesn't exist. Our challenge is unique: **meeting all of our community's needs within the three dimensions of the city.** Recreation and open space are central to those needs.”

- Tiffanie Fisher, Councilwoman and Candidate for Mayor

Over the past two decades, Hoboken has expanded its open space dramatically. But we've never built a true **strategic, recreation vision** – relying instead on one-off wins that don't meet long-term needs.

That's why I am putting forward this plan that lays out how Hoboken can meet the needs of kids, teens, adults, and seniors within our limited footprint – and at its core is one clear promise: to deliver a new, modern **Recreation & Community Center** before the end of my first term as mayor.

As a Different Kind of Mayor, I will make recreation and open space a true citywide priority – one that delivers for every resident.

Thank you for reading. I welcome your feedback as we shape this vision together.

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What Recreation Means for Hoboken

Recreation isn't just sports – it's everything we do outside of work and school that keeps us healthy, connected, and engaged. It is physical, social, cultural, and intellectual activity that brings people together and improves quality of life.

In Hoboken, that means:

- ✓ **Active Recreation** – sports, fitness, and exercise for participants of all ages (basketball, soccer, tennis, pickleball, cycling, running).
- ✓ **Passive Recreation** – unprogrammed space like lawns, walking paths, and waterfront seating – places to relax, recharge and observe nature.
- ✓ **Quiet Recreation** – calm activities led by residents or small groups: reading, chess, yoga, meditation, or community gardening.
- ✓ **Accessible Recreation** – facilities and programs designed for differently abled residents, ensuring inclusion across every age and background.



- ✓ **Cultural & Intellectual Recreation** – arts programs, theater, music, storytelling, and classes that nurture creativity and lifelong learning.
- ✓ **Spectator & Participant Recreation** – opportunities both to play and to gather as a community to watch and cheer (games, movies, concerts).
- ✓ **Spaces from All Providers** – a healthy mix of public facilities, private gyms and studios, nonprofit programs, and commercial recreation opportunities.

A true recreation policy for Hoboken must embrace all these dimensions – and ensure they are available equitably throughout our city.



Policy & Priorities: **A New Recreation & Community Center**

- ✓ **TOP PRIORITY: Build a New Recreation & Community Center** with gyms, pools, teen and senior gathering areas, and flexible community rooms. **Plans finalized by end of 1st year, open by end of my 1st term as Mayor.**



WHAT RESIDENTS ARE SAYING & WHY IT MATTERS

In March, **344 people responded** to my survey on Hoboken's priorities as we run out of space. Recreation and open space ranked 3rd & 4th as overall needs (behind parking and public transit), but 1st & 2nd for uses of city owned land. **The message is clear: residents want recreation and open space at the center of Hoboken's future.**



The Multi-Service Center is vital but outdated and no longer meets our communities' needs. It has a gym used for youth sports and pickleball, an outdoor roller rink, and a Senior Room that supports daily programs and activities. It also houses multiple city departments, the Hoboken Public Library Annex, and two non-profits providing health care and subsidized day care for low-income families.

By the numbers (NRPA) Hoboken lags behind: no summer camp, limited senior programs, no offerings for differently-abled residents, and no pool.

- 1 rec center per 32,000k people → Hoboken has 60,000+.
- 83% offer summer camps, 77% offer senior programs and 67% offer programs for differently-abled residents.
- 49% outdoor/32% indoor pools



PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF: 2 PATHS CONVERGING

Two years ago, Hoboken began the process of redeveloping the Multi-Service Center, holding public meetings and advancing design concepts. But the effort stalled when real challenges arose – like how to maintain critical services during construction.



Last year, I joined a steering committee with the Hoboken Community Center to explore a partnership with the City **to redevelop the former YMCA at 1301 Washington**, a historic, community treasure, idle over a decade.

Building on HCC's existing plans, this effort led to a Memorandum of Agreement signed in May to **start this process**.

These two paths have converged into a “once in a lifetime” opportunity: to create two recreation centers, two pools, and a staged plan that ensures continuity of critical services while Hoboken finally builds the modern facilities our residents deserve.

- 1. Complete the Uptown Community Center (former YMCA).** Partner with schools, the library, and others to advance this **smaller-scale facility**, providing temporary space for MSC services during construction (leasing other space if needed).
- 2. Build a New Downtown Recreation & Community Center.** With services temporarily relocated, redevelop the site into **Hoboken's modern, flagship hub**, returning the services once completed.

As Mayor, I will dust off these plans and act on them immediately. If the YMCA project advances, Hoboken will gain two centers and two pools. If it does not, we will still solve displacement through temporary locations and deliver the main downtown facility without interruption.

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Policy & Priorities: A Recreation Community Advisory Board

- ☑ **Create a Recreation & Community Advisory Board** made up of residents representing Hoboken’s diverse needs – families, teens, seniors, adults and differently-abled neighbors.

In a city as diverse and densely populated as Hoboken, residents deserves a real voice in how recreation is run. And neighbors have been asking for this for a while.

“We have no place for teens to hang out.”
“3,500 PICKLEBALL players and nowhere to play!”
“DAMON MURRAY FIELDHOUSE IS ALWAYS CLOSED!”
“I have an issue with a coach – who can I speak to?”

“Why aren't there more non-sport programs for kids?”
“There are no uptown senior programs.”
“HOBOKEN NEEDS A POOL!”
“We need a summer camp for kids!”
“How can we have a program limited to just 30 kids?”

“MY 11 YEAR OLD COULDN'T PLAY RECREATIONAL BASKETBALL WITH ALL HIS FRIENDS.”
“Two traveling soccer programs take all the fields!”

Today, recreation decisions are made by a small handful of City Hall staff – most of whom don’t live in Hoboken including one who lives in Virginia! This leaves residents, parents, and coaches frustrated when programs are full, fields seem mismanaged, or services don’t meet community needs.

A New Recreation Community Advisory Board would:

- **Advise on programming**, facilities, and capital priorities.
- **Serve as a trusted sounding board** for concerns and complaints.
- **Guide tradeoffs** like field use, program capacity, and scheduling so decisions are balanced, fair and reflect the needs of the community.
- **Be appointed by Mayor and City Council**, with staggered, 2-year terms.

As Mayor, I will create Hoboken’s first Recreation & Community Advisory Board so that residents – not just City Hall insiders – shape the future of our programs and facilities.

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Hoboken has many other opportunities to expand and improve recreation and open space.

As Mayor, I'll deliver on the following priorities to strengthen access for every resident.

- ☑ **Open More Access Through Shared Services** with our schools, with Stevens, neighboring towns, and private businesses to open more access to gyms, pools, and fields for broader public programming.
- ☑ **Launch a Summer Camp & Open Swim in 2026** in partnership with schools, Stevens, and neighboring towns – hiring staff locally and creating seasonal opportunities for teens.
- ☑ **Create Four-Season Recreation** with a seasonal dome over one of Hoboken's athletic fields, like 1600 Park, to allow year-round use.
- ☑ **Broaden Senior Services** citywide with expanded programs to reach more 55+ neighbors.
- ☑ **Provide Recreation for Differently Abled Residents** with inclusive programming across all ages and abilities.
- ☑ **Complete Hoboken's Open Space Commitments** already promised — including 800 Monroe, Cove Park, Maritime Park, Monarch, and Church Square Park.





- ✓ **Install More Shade Structures in Public Spaces** so playgrounds and recreation areas have cooling features and are safe and usable year-round.
- ✓ **Work with Developers** to secure spaces in new projects for recreational and community uses.



- ✓ **Support the Hoboken Cove Boathouse** to expand kayaking, paddling, and water safety programs, giving residents even more ways to enjoy the Hudson River.
- ✓ **Modernize Registration Systems** and permitting with simple, transparent, mobile friendly tools.
- ✓ **Create a Citywide Seating Network** with the Hoboken Business Alliance to introduce more small, single-seat fixtures across neighborhoods, making it easier to rest, walk and travel across our city.
- ✓ **Grow Community Gardening** with additional sites, building on the success of the 3rd & Jackson garden.
- ✓ **Continue Upgrading Existing Parks** to ensure they are multi-use, accessible, and welcoming for both active and quiet recreation.

As Mayor, we will conduct a Recreation Needs Assessment – evaluating programs, space, facilities, and population makeup to target investments where they’re needed most and make the right choices for our community.



Recreation and open space have been central to my work since day one.

From adding parks to protecting our waterfront to strengthening youth programs and senior services, I've consistently fought to make Hoboken a place where every resident can play, gather, and connect.

Hoboken City Officials Close Deal On Monarch Waterfront Site



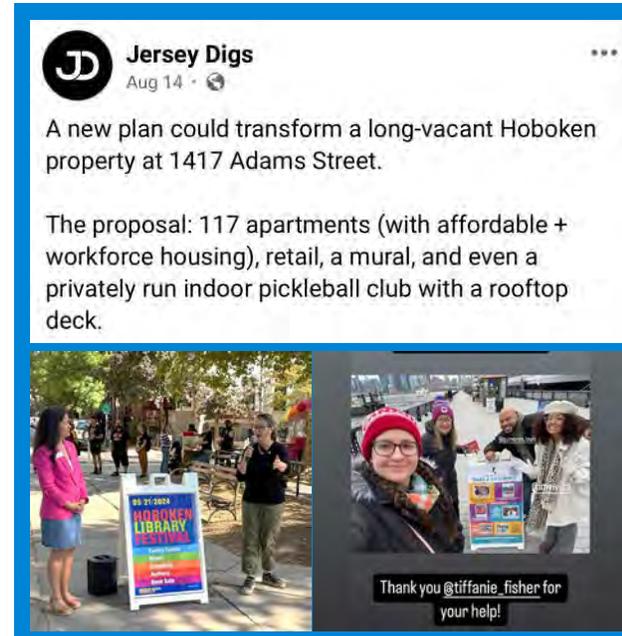
- ✓ **Protected and expanded open space** by supporting every new park, securing Monarch and Union Dry Dock waterfront sites for public use, making open space central to the North End Plan, leading the design of Cove Park, and ensuring active fields at NW Park.
- ✓ **Improved everyday recreation** by repairing and upgrading parks, dog runs, and walkways; adding shade structures and bike lanes.
- ✓ **Strengthened youth sports** by working with parents to stabilize Hoboken's soccer program, pushing back against efforts to exclude kids from a football program, defending basketball courts at Church Square Park, and helping families navigate coaching issues.
- ✓ **Supported seniors across the city** by ensuring the Senior Center stays open during MSC redevelopment, adding Saturday buses to Walmart, helping expand fitness programs uptown, and demanding stronger funding in every budget cycle.



“In 2017, when I learned NW Park was planned as 100% passive, I felt our “field space” crisis was being ignored. I pushed back, and out of that came the multi-use field and basketball courts - used every day by many. **The difference between leaving a fingerprint – and leaving a handprint.**”



- ✓ **Expanded new opportunities** for adult recreation by advocating for pickleball in SW Park, under the viaduct, and in new developments, including securing space for a soon-to-be-built private pickleball club.
- ✓ **Strengthened community partnerships and programming capacity** working with the Hoboken Community Center board on a new recreation center, supporting Community Lifestyles' summer camps and programs for kids in the HHA, promoting Hoboken Public Library's programming, and founding the HBA to bring more sponsored community events to Hoboken.



TeamTiffanie City Council candidates bring their own **deep Hoboken recreation and open space credentials** (left to right):

- **Diane Imus** (6th Ward): Advocated for 1600 Park Soccer field and served on Hoboken's Arts Advisory Council.
- **Liz Urtecho** (At-large): Runs fitness programs for the City of Hoboken Senior Services.
- **Carter Craft** (At-large): Board member of the Hudson Co. Open Space Trust Fund and Hoboken Cove Boathouse; volunteer boating instructor introducing Hoboken kids to the Hudson River.
- **Dave Mello** (At-large): Former Councilman who built Southwest Park, 7th & Jackson Park, and the Damon Murray Gym.



Together, **Diane, Liz, Carter** and **Dave** are parents of 12 children who grew up in Hoboken's recreation programs – **giving them firsthand experience with the city's needs.**"

CONCLUSION

Recreation and open space aren't extras— they are central to Hoboken's quality of life for every generation. Hoboken deserves a mayor who treats these as essential, not optional. That's what I've delivered as your Councilwoman – and that's what I'll deliver as your Mayor.

I haven't just talked about recreation and open space— **I've fought for them.** I've pushed for parks, built partnerships, expanded programs, protected our waterfront, and made sure residents had a real voice. My record is one of results, not rhetoric: ensuring fields, courts, and programs serve our kids, seniors, and families today while planning for the facilities we'll need tomorrow.

As Mayor, I'll build on that record and bring:

- ☑ **New facilities that meet demand** – two recreation centers, modern fields, and space for both active and quiet recreation.
- ☑ **Programs for all ages and abilities** – from summer camps and senior activities to inclusive options for differently abled neighbors.
- ☑ **Partnerships that expand capacity** – working with schools, nonprofits, developers, and the library to open more doors for Hoboken residents.
- ☑ **A community-first process** – where residents shape priorities, and recreation serves the whole city, not political agendas.

A Hoboken where recreation is accessible, affordable, and available year-round.

Recreation and open space are the heart of Hoboken. ❤️

The promise I will bring as **A Different Kind of Mayor - to put residents first, expand recreation citywide, and deliver the modern facilities and programs Hoboken families, kids, and seniors deserve.**