



**ARTS, HISTORY
& HISTORIC RESOURCES**



Garretton Homestead. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

ARTS, HISTORY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Arts, culture, and history play important roles in defining and strengthening communities. Arts and cultural facilities can serve as anchors in communities by jump-starting downtown revitalization, supporting ancillary businesses, and ensuring long-term stability. Similarly, historic resources are fundamental to a community's identity and knowledge of its past and serve as the county's historical foundation. They serve not only as reference points, but as educational tools and tourist attractions. The economic benefit of these resources to a community is undeniable—both visitors and Bergen County residents that utilize these facilities often frequent other local establishments, benefiting the broader Bergen County economy.

Bergen County strives to attract and maintain exciting arts and cultural resources while preserving important sites and structures that underscore the county's rich history. The Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs (DCHA) and the Division of Economic Development, along with other County agencies, are charged with attracting, promoting, and maintaining various arts, cultural, and historic resources for residents and visitors alike.

Bergen County offers a large range of arts and culture amenities. From large venues such as the Bergen Performing Arts Center (bergenPAC), to smaller niche arts venues such as the HACPAC, the opportunities for artists and arts-lovers in Bergen County abound. Bergen County's expansive geography creates some challenges, however, with multiple arts districts scattered around the county's 70 municipalities and no concentrated arts district. However the growing and ongoing county-wide re-grant program which brings New Jersey School Council on the Arts grant funding to more than 70 non-profit groups in all areas of the arts and Division-sponsored arts events and awards programs are building a united following. Many municipalities host events, including art exhibits and festivals, throughout the year to highlight their downtowns and central business districts, as well as arts and other local activity centers.

Similarly, Bergen County has a rich history, dating back to the Native Americans, continuing through the American Revolution, Industrial Age, and into the current era. Numerous preserved homes such as the Campbell-Christie House in **River Edge** and Garretson Farm in **Fair Lawn** demonstrate historic architecture and details of life in Colonial America.

This element strives to catalog arts, culture, and historic resources for several reasons. First, and most simply, to compile a list of such assets. Second, this element will provide the county with a resource that will permit a wide-angle view of its arts and cultural scene to discover common threads and trends that may be conducive for collaboration in terms of arts promotions. Third, this element will identify a clear path forward through the identification of goals, objectives, and recommendations for the trajectory of arts, culture, and historic resources. Such a path should include increased arts participation, prioritizing historic resources, using the arts to generate economic activity, and tapping into the arts and history of the county to promote regional tourism.



Ramapo College. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs



Camp Merritt Memorial Monument. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

EXISTING RESOURCES

Bergen County houses a rich assortment of arts and cultural opportunities, as well as historic resources. With almost 500 “arts, entertainment, and recreation establishments,” Bergen County has the most community arts facilities in the state. Bergen County’s history spans that of Pre-Colonial indigenous American cultures, pre-revolutionary settlements by the Dutch and later the English, and the post-colonial events that followed. Bergen County contains over 450 sites on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and approximately 272 sites on the National Register of Historic Places. Bergen County maintains a listing of art galleries, museums, performance venues on the County website. Discover Jersey Arts, a cosponsored project of the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts maintain a website, JerseyArts.com, which serves as a central clearinghouse of information related to the arts, providing arts-related news, information on events, contact information for cultural organizations, and a virtual gallery of works by local artists. For local history, the Bergen County Historical Society’s website contains examples from their museum collection as well as a list of upcoming events.

ARTS & CULTURE

Bergen County currently contains over 20 museums, 9 performance venues, dozens of galleries, and numerous performance companies and arts education programs. These venues range from bergenPAC to small theaters. There are a multitude of venues where children and adults can explore and practice all forms of art and expression. These include the Art Center of Northern New Jersey in **New Milford**, the Art School at Old Church in **Demarest**, and the Ridgewood Art Institute (est. 1935) in **Ridgewood**. There is also increasing attention to, and appreciation of, arts that focus on the cultural traditions of different communities, including that of Native Americans and Asian Americans.

A challenge for the Bergen County arts community is that because the county is so large (containing 247 square miles), arts venues can be scattered, and in some cases isolated. However, certain clusters are developing. **Englewood** and **Ridgewood**, for example, have a growing gallery scene. **Ridgefield Park** is home to Art Mora, a Korean gallery. **Hackensack** is increasingly seeing an arts presence, and Leonia has an organization, Sculpture for Leonia, to promote public sculpture locally. The Fort Lee Film Commission promotes **Fort Lee**’s history as “the birthplace of the American Film Industry” and works to preserve the films made in the Borough during the early twentieth century. The newer Barrymore Theatre plays many of those old films as well as other short films. The Edgewater Arts Council is a non-profit organization of volunteers created to broaden awareness of visual and performing arts and crafts. The organization provides fine arts for display, presents concerts and music festivals, and hosts informal lecture-discussions on the arts. In addition, ArtsBergen, an initiative of the Northern New Jersey Community Foundation, is an arts alliance designed to promote collaborative activities between artists and arts organizations, non-profits, businesses, developers, and municipal leaders in the communities where they live and work.

Each fall, Bergen County hosts its Art in the Park Show and Concert at Van Saun County Park in **Paramus**. This event, which first began more than 50 years ago, features local artists from across Bergen County, with a juried show that evaluates six different art categories: acrylics and oils; drawings, prints, pastels; mixed media; traditional photography; digital photography; and watercolors. For high school students, the annual Teen Arts program is the largest in-person teaching event in the state.

ENTERTAINMENT & SHOPPING

When it comes to large-scale entertainment events, Bergen County has two primary venues: MetLife Stadium, which is home to the New York Giants and New York Jets of the National Football League, and also provides year-round space for concerts and other events; and the Meadowlands Racetrack including sports betting, which hosts thoroughbred and harness horse racing. The recent completion of a third venue, American Dream (formerly known as Xanadu), serves as a shopping and entertainment center with the potential to host various arts and cultural events.



Fort Lee Film Commission Poster. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs



Aviation Hall of Fame and Museum. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

MUSIC, FILM & PERFORMING ARTS

The Bergen Performing Arts Center (bergenPAC), located in **Englewood**, is northern New Jersey's busiest nonprofit, 501(c)(3) performing arts center, hosting over 200 world class performances and over 150,000 patrons annually. bergenPAC also provides innovative arts and educational programs through their Performing Arts School for students from ages 3 months to 21 years, with classes in performing arts, outreach programs throughout the state, and programming for children with special needs.

In addition to bergenPAC, there are several additional performance venues throughout the county, plus many other school auditoriums and community centers that are used for performances. The recently completed Hackensack Performing Arts Center (HACPAC) in downtown **Hackensack** provides an indoor live stage, as well as an outdoor space at Atlantic Street Park for live performances and outdoor film screenings. Overpeck County Park in **Leonia** has an outdoor amphitheater for warm-weather performances. The Barrymore Theater, part of the Modern in **Fort Lee**, opened in 2022 and contains a 260-seat cinema, and an attached film museum operated by the Fort Lee Film Commission. In addition to the venues themselves, Bergen County hosts many well-established theater groups, such as Skyline Theater in **Fair Lawn**.

EDUCATION

The Bergen County Teen Arts Festival is a celebration of the alliance of the arts and youth and is staged at Bergen Community College. It is founded on the belief that the arts are an essential language that provides an indispensable means of self-expression to middle and high school students. Through workshops in all the arts disciplines, the Festival strives to engage each student at a deeper level of artistry and professionalism. The Festival provides the opportunity for students to validate themselves as artists by spending a day in the company of other artists who participate in a myriad of creative fields on many levels.

Poetry Out Loud is a free national program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts that encourages high school students across the country to learn about great works of classic and contemporary poetry through memorization and recitation.

Bergen County has a number of private non-profit and for-profit art schools, such as the Demarest-based Art School at the Church. The Art Center of Northern New Jersey in New Milford is another Fine Arts School and Gallery providing instruction for children and adults in the creative arts. The Art Center aims to be accessible to all, including the disadvantaged and the disabled.

Bergen Community College promotes the arts through several avenues. Gallery Bergen, the College's art gallery, exhibits artwork from students, faculty, artists and the community, provides opportunities to present art that engages a diverse audience, and seeks to create an inviting environment for experiencing and participating in visual art. In addition, the College offers instruction in both the visual and performing arts. Ramapo College also has a multitude of arts offerings, including a sculpture studio.





MUSEUMS & CULTURAL CENTERS

The diversity of museums found in Bergen County provide residents and visitors with exposure to world-class art and interactive exhibits for all ages. The county's large and diverse population benefits from the many cultural centers and museums which bring the community together.

For example, the Korean Community Center in **Tenafly** provides programming about Korean culture and heritage. Another example is the Puffin Cultural Forum in **Teaneck**, a gallery and performance space which creates awareness of human rights and justice issue through community programming, arts workshops, guided gallery tours, and theater presentations. The adjoining Teaneck Creek Conservancy offers outdoor sculpture along with walking paths and meditation areas.

From a history perspective, Ridgewood Historical Society provides the Old School House Museum. North of that is the Mahwah Museum with its Les Paul collection. Ho-Ho-Kus has The Hermitage and New Bridge Landing houses multiple historic buildings with regular programming. There is also the Aviation Hall of Fame in **Teterboro** and the Belskie Museum of Art & Science in **Closter**.

Hopper Goetschius House Upper Saddle River Historical Society Museum. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

HISTORIC CHURCHES & CEMETERIES

Gethsemane Cemetery in **Little Ferry** was a 19th century burial site for the African American residents of **Hackensack**. The site also played an important role in early New Jersey civil rights legislation, when the family of Samuel Bass, sexton of Hackensack's First Baptist Church, challenged the segregation of burial areas following his death in 1884, after they were denied the request to bury him in the Hackensack Cemetery. Legislation ending this practice passed three months later. The Pascack Reformed Church, originally built in 1813 is one of the oldest church buildings in Bergen County. Its cemetery, established following the founding of the church later expanded into a neighboring site, which contained an additional three cemeteries, with legible stones containing inscriptions from the 18th century, some of which are written in Dutch. One of these cemeteries was used by early African American families, and several sites contain the remains of Native Americans. The French Huguenot Cemetery in **New Milford** is locally recognized as the oldest county cemetery. Another cemetery, Blauvelt Cemetery in **Harrington Park**, contains a grave marker dated to 1722.

Church on the Green or the First Reformed Church and its accompanying cemetery in downtown **Hackensack** is known as the final resting place for many local luminaries, as well as the significant burials of Revolutionary War general Enoch Poor and Richard Varick, a mayor of New York City and aide de camp and Secretary to George Washington.



Gethsemane Cemetery. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs



ARCHITECTURE

Old homes and structures of exceptional status are preserved for the historic insight they provide. Four county-owned structures are listed on both the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places: the Bergen County Courthouse, the Campbell-Christie House (operated by the Bergen County Historical Society and the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission), Garretson Farm (operated by volunteers of the Garretson Forge and Farm Restoration), and the Wortendyke Barn. Garretson Farm also has an adjoining heirloom garden, where visitors can learn about gardening and help harvest food which is donated to local food pantries. Similarly, Wortendyke Barn in **Park Ridge** educates visitors about another form of Dutch architecture specifically used for barns. The Hackensack Water Works in **Oradell**, also owned by Bergen County, offers the opportunity to learn about innovation in water filtration methods that were invented on the site in the early twentieth century, later influencing water supply and delivery practices nationwide.



Baylor Massacre Site. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

MILITARY HISTORY

Bergen County played a significant role in American military history. Washington Spring in **Paramus** served as part of an encampment for George Washington's Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and is now a historic site located in Van Saun County Park. Much of the surrounding area was known as part of the Grand Forage. Bergen County was also part of Washington's Retreat Route and the Rochambeau Trail. The Baylor Massacre Burial Site in **River Vale**, memorializes the site of a brutal surprise attack by the British Army on Continental forces during the American Revolution. Fort Lee Historic Park, part of Palisades Interstate Park, served as a fort and encampment for Continental forces during the American Revolution. This park provides information on the role of the site and how it was intended to protect New York City and the Hudson Valley from British forces, before ultimately being abandoned following the British invasion and occupation of the area. The Hendrick Van Allen House in **Oakland** served as a temporary headquarters for George Washington in July 1777. The Camp Merritt Memorial Monument in **Cresskill** marks the center of a significant World War I embarkation camp, through which more than one million U.S. soldiers passed on their way to the battlefields of Europe.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Bergen County's history spans that of pre-colonial indigenous American cultures, pre-revolutionary settlements by the Dutch and later the English, and the post-colonial events that followed. Bergen County contains numerous sites on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as historic preservation committees and commissions, historical societies, and four Certified Local Government municipalities. There are three national landmarks, including The Hermitage in **Ho-Ho-Kus**, the Radburn Historic District in **Fair Lawn** (See the Land Use and Housing Element for more information on Radburn), and the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House, a privately-owned home in **Tenafly**. Palisades Interstate Park is also a national landmark. The Campbell-Christie House in **River Edge** was constructed around 1774, is listed on both the National and State Registers and is now located within the Historic New Bridge Landing, which contains numerous other historic buildings from the area which are open to the public, with tours, events, and other programming. The county recognizes the educational and recreational value of preserving the stories, records and structures of its past. The DCHA, within the Bergen County Department of Parks, serves as the primary source for historic preservation matters. The DCHA encourages public participation in Bergen County heritage through the celebration of historic events associated the nine historic sites owned by the county, and other educational programs and special events. In addition, the county contains numerous historic sites and museums owned and operated by municipalities, non-profits, and private entities. For example, the Northwest Bergen History Coalition is a group of historical organizations that work collaboratively to foster an appreciation and understanding of northwest Bergen County and New Jersey history, and to encourage both children and adults to learn about this history.



Kearny House in Palisade Historic Park. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Preserve and protect our cultural & historic resources

What is it?

Cultural and historic resources include illustrative architecture, archaeological remains, and cultural places or things that have made a significant contribution to our local, state, and national history and identity. These resources may be associated with events or persons significant in our past; or embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or represent the work of a master; or otherwise possess high artistic values. These resources have yielded, or may be likely to yield, important information about our culture and history. Cultural and historic resources include, but are not limited to, districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and the knowledge about them and contained within them. It should be noted that this language is not specific to Bergen County but is part of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

What will it do?

Preserving and protecting our cultural and historic resources helps to ensure that they are not destroyed, modified, or encroached upon in any way that endangers their significance.

Why should the county pursue it?

Cultural and historic resources are both invaluable and irreplaceable. The cultural and historical resources of an area help define the people living there and give the community a unique identity that set it apart from any other place. Preserving our cultural and historic resources for future generations helps assure the continued preservation of the places, objects, and knowledge of our culture.

Easton Tower. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs



Garretton Homestead. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 1.1: Provide and strengthen resource protection

Help prevent the destruction of, modification of, or encroachment upon cultural and historic resources. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting the enactment of ordinances, deed restrictions, and other legal measures.



Objective 1.2: Minimize the impacts of development

Work with and encourage municipalities to ensure development near or affecting cultural and historic resources considers and attempts to minimize the impacts of excess noise, vibration, odor, traffic, and other negative effects. In some cases, mitigating these impacts affords greater enjoyment of the sites, and in more significant circumstances, the control of vibration or other pollutants prevents the physical deterioration of historic structures.

Objective 1.3: Increase preservation funding and incentives

The Historic Preservation Trust Fund is a financial resource the county encourages municipalities and non-profits to use to purchase properties and other historic resources. Increasing funding will help preserve more historic sites through their purchase. Increasing preservation incentives may assist and encourage those who want to preserve culture and history by leveraging their own assets and efforts. The Division also oversees granting of funds from the Open Space program's historic element, which can be used by municipalities and non-profits to repair and purchase historic properties.



Objective 1.4 Encourage the use and re-use of appropriate sites

Adaptive re-use allows sites to continue to be operated, inhabited, or otherwise used in a way where its cultural and historic character remains intact, thereby preserving it for the enjoyment of future generations. Often, outdated uses such as industrial mills or old schools can find new uses while preserving the integrity of the original building. Identify funding, development incentives and creative partnerships that pursue this approach to preservation.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 2: Stimulate the economy with arts, culture and history

What is it?

Stimulating the economy with arts, culture and history means using these three areas to encourage and invigorate economic activity.

What will it do?

This goal will use existing and future arts, culture, and historic locations, programs, and activities as points of economic stimulus.

Why should the county pursue it?

Stimulating the economy with arts, culture, and history can provide many benefits and take advantage of a mutually beneficial relationship. Local businesses can service the patrons of nearby arts, culture, and historic amenities. These visitors, in turn, have secondary places to visit and spend time and money. As the popularity of a destination increases, so does the growth potential for other local businesses, and increase overall economic activity. Economic growth can ensure a prosperous future for the county and its residents.



Art in the Park in Van Saun County Park. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 2.1: Develop and promote arts, culture, and heritage tourism

In coordination with the tourism goals and objectives established in the Economic Vitality Element, the benefits of tourism, and especially the county's strong position to promote its cultural heritage resources as a tourist destination, should not be overlooked. Developing arts, culture, and history tourism requires a comprehensive strategy that could involve community enhancements and beautification; increased availability of programming and activities; and marketing these places and programs to visitors and customers. Key in this effort is establishing relationships between the travel, lodging and dining industries and the arts, cultural and history organizations to coordinate their marketing efforts into tourist packages so that concerts, historic house tours, festivals, and other events go from a daytime visit to a multi-day affair involving one or more overnight stays. The county can play a role to convene these groups and assist them in planning a coordinated tourism marketing campaign that can be adapted to the season. Once a year, the Tenafly Nature Center hosts New Jersey's official Tall Ship, the A.J. Meerwald, for themed sailing trips on the Hudson River and along the Palisades that focus on New Jersey history, art, music and nature. NJ Transit has worked with towns along the Jersey Shore to establish special transit fares coupled with beach passes in an effort to encourage the use of the North Jersey Coast Line to get to the beach in the summer. A similar program could be created for the Pascack Valley and Main/Bergen lines, offering a variety of historic and cultural destinations in downtowns with train stations and that feature local restaurants, inns and hotels.

Bus tours could be created along the same theme that enable stops at several cultural and/or historic sites along the way.

New Jersey's Heritage Tourism Master Plan, adopted in 2010, shows that despite prior efforts to emphasize the importance of heritage tourism, the opportunities of capitalizing on this asset remain relatively untouched as compared to neighboring states. Bergen County was ranked as one of New Jersey's counties with a high density of potential cultural and heritage tourism sites, which suggests that an aggressive heritage tourism strategy for Bergen County could yield multiple benefits. In nearby Morris County, the County's Destination Marketing Organization focused its efforts by showcasing the four National Historic Landmarks, and how they connect to contemporary issues as a way to attract a wider audience.

Objective 2.2: Include arts, culture and history in economic development

Development and redevelopment around an existing arts or culture destination, or development that incorporates space for the arts, culture or history can serve as a catalyst for additional economic development. Developers should be encouraged, and perhaps incentivized, to include space for the arts in their development plans. Explore unique ways to incorporate local arts and artists into new development, such as through ground floor gallery spaces, artist housing, or the incorporation of locally curated art/sculpture in parks or plazas.



Campbell-Christie House Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 2.3: Downtown revitalization

Increasing participation in the arts should be considered as part of any downtown revitalization effort. This objective is also included in the Economic Vitality Element. Visitors attending performing arts or gallery events will often spend additional time and money locally when shopping, dining, and other attractions exist nearby. A vibrant downtown can provide a unique sense of place for communities, and can yield numerous benefits.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 3: Increase the awareness of and participation in arts, culture, and history

What is it?

Increasing local participation in the arts includes volunteering, educating, advising, supporting, and promoting arts, culture, and history.

What will it do?

This goal will create more opportunities for involvement in arts, culture, and history, and will raise awareness of these opportunities and the existence of Bergen County's arts, culture, and history.

Why should the county pursue it?

Increasing awareness of, and participation in, arts, culture, and history can enrich individual lives and collectively make society more educated, creative, and expressive.





Hackensack Performing Arts Center. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 3.1: Hold and publicize events and activities

Events are an effective way to increase awareness and involvement in arts, culture, and history. Publicizing these events is equally important. The county should provide for, and support, events for a wide range of ages, interests, and themes. These events should be widely publicized, not only through traditional means such as signage and community bulletins but also online platforms (including social media). Other methods and media identified as part of a strategy to reach a wider audience should be explored.

Objective 3.2: Increase educational opportunities

Offering educational opportunities, including classes, lessons, lectures, and demonstrations, can give more people the opportunity to learn more about Bergen County arts, culture, and history. As with events, the county should provide and promote opportunities that target a wide range of ages, interests, and themes.

Objective 3.3: Use technology to increase engagement

Arts and history sites are often clustered or located along corridors; linking them into a themed experience or “day tour” through technology could enable people with another way to discover and appreciate Bergen County. Art galleries, historic homes, or other themed topics could be incorporated into a smart phone application for visitors to utilize as part of a self-guided walking or driving tour, where information at each stop along the way can guide visitors without the expense or limitations of in-person guides. Use of virtual reality tool at historic sites can teach and engage students and adults about life in a different time period, and county-developed passport programs can expand teaching about local history in schools and youth groups.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 4: Make Art, Cultural, and Historic Resources more Accessible

What is it?

Improving convenient access to the arts reduces barriers for involvement.

What will it do?

Increasing the accessibility of art, cultural and historic resources will encourage greater participation, by bringing the arts to all corners of the county, at reasonable cost, and without intimidation, regardless of age, ability, or background.

Why should the county pursue it?

Making art, cultural, and historic resources more accessible will provide opportunities for increased participation and enjoyment. These actions can increase knowledge, stimulate curiosity, and generate economic activity.



Fort Lee Historic Park. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 4.1: Improve transportation access to activities, events, and sites

Improving transit accessibility is important to increasing engagement in the arts. This objective relates to the recommendations outlined in the Transportation and Mobility and the Economic Vitality elements, which seek to enhance all forms of mobility throughout the county, including but not limited to bus service, extension of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail, implementation of a robust Complete Streets program to accommodate users of all abilities, and the recommendation to evaluate the viability of local bike share programs in order to promote cycling. Providing convenient access to places of interest will encourage participation. Similarly, the county should ensure ADA accessibility.



Objective 4.2: Remove economic and social access barriers to activities, events, and sites

Beyond providing transit access, increasing the ability of people to visit sites and participate in programming should also include programs with affordable price points, an evaluation of existing operating hours in relation to the lifestyles and limitations of the intended audience, and addressing any unintended or perceived barriers to the arts that would depress participation. The cost to attend or participate in some programs, particularly those in the performing arts, may preclude those with limited budgets. The County should consider programs to set aside a limited number of tickets for county residents on fixed incomes or other limitations. Determining appropriate operating hours consider those with non-traditional or long work schedules. For example, a venue that is typically open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm may benefit from occasional evening or Saturday hours to serve working parents.

Preconceptions about the arts, and the types of people that patronize these activities, requires critical reconsideration and attention. Exposure to the arts should be universal. Arts in the classroom or in after school programs are an early and easy way to accomplish this. Outreach to a variety of populations, traditionally underserved populations, and non-English language speakers should extend beyond event promotion. Instead, the county should engage in a sustained dialogue with different communities in order to identify particular interests, specific barriers to participation, and other areas for improvement.

Objective 4.3: Coordination with different ethnic and cultural communities

Bergen County has experienced sizable diversification in its population, including growing populations of Asian and Latin Americans, and is also home to a distinct Native American community in the Ramapo Mountains area. Each of these communities bring unique arts and culture elements to the county that could be shared and celebrated. Coordination with the artists and arts organizations already existing in these and other communities should be prioritized to provide the public with opportunities to learn more about the diversity and history of Bergen County.

Objective 4.4: Digitize the county's historic inventory

The county's historic inventory is available primarily to those who visit in-person. Technological innovations and increasing internet access and literacy create opportunities for improved access. Digitizing the historic inventory of Bergen County—the scanning and photographing of maps, documents, and historic items—will preserve the history indefinitely against the aging of time, as well as create a digital library for historians and curiosity seekers alike to learn about the area without causing potential harm or overuse to any documents. Digitizing these places and relics will advance the objectives of increasing participation and preserving history, through virtual tours for those interested in visiting the site remotely. The goal here is not to dissuade actual in-person visits, but to better broadcast these historic assets in order to encourage future visits. For those unable to visit, it will still educate them about the history and culture of Bergen County. The increased use of augmented reality technology and other smartphone-based applications can also provide additional context for those visiting the site in person. In nearby Paterson, the Mill Mile app provides visitors with a self-guided walking tour of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park that is narrated by residents, historians, actors and athletes, allowing them to visit and learn about the area on their own pace and schedule. The Division has already begun to use a Guide by Cell program (cellular phone guidance tool) that allows visitors to use their smartphones to “visit” eight of the county-owned sites. Expansion of this program to include sites not owned by the county, as well as the incorporation of additional features such as virtual/augmented reality (such as pointing a phone at a site pulls up historic imagery of the same place) could help attract more users and foster greater interest and appreciation for history and historic preservation.



Camp Merritt Memorial Monument. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 5: Grow and Support Arts, Culture, and History Organizations

What is it?

Support for arts, culture, and history organizations can include a combination of accommodative policies and/or financing, innovative programs, and other creative methods to help such organizations. Growing organizations means increasing their abilities, capacities, and resources so they can better fulfill their respective missions.

What will it do?

This objective seeks to increase and/or train their staff of arts, culture, and history organizations, increase their funding and capabilities, expand their focus and scope, and foster their growth and achievement.

Why should the county pursue it?

Arts, culture, and history organizations in the county are the primary means of protecting and preserving community character and are directly responsible for implementing many of the preceding goals and objectives. Supporting and growing these organizations will help accomplish these goals, particularly by increasing awareness and participation in our arts, culture, and history.



Hackensack Performing Arts Center. Source: Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

Objective 5.1: Facilitate planning and integration with government at all levels

The county should provide a framework for arts, culture, and history organizations to share their own goals and objectives with government agencies which may be able to provide financial or programmatic support. Understanding and evaluating the goals and objectives of these organizations may improve the efforts of individual municipalities and county agencies to direct their own cultural and arts efforts and plans. The arts, culture, and history organizations located within the county are the primary means of promoting, protecting and preserving these assets, and local governments are well-served to partner with these groups to offer appropriate support.



Objective 5.2: Increase funding for organizations

Increasing funding for non-profit arts, culture, and history organizations through incentives programmatic grants, and other means should be a county arts priority. Helping non-profit arts organizations achieve many of the goals and objectives outlined in this plan will benefit the county as a whole and will allow such organizations to expand their programs and responsibilities and broaden their reach.



Objective 5.3: Coordinate and partner with other organizations

Pursue and promote active relationships between organizations with shared goals for various programs and other initiatives. Sharing resources may allow organizations to accomplish more together than they would individually by leveraging existing resources to make them more effective, make each organization aware of the other's plans and capabilities, and help organizations to focus on what they do best or what may be their greatest need.



Kayaks. Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development