

## **Environmental Impact Assessment Outline**

As part of the Green Acres funding proposal, each applicant must collect, evaluate, and present pertinent environmental information necessary to ascertain the suitability of the site for the activities proposed. Please review and consider the applicable Landscape Project maps and reports, developed by DEP Fish and Wildlife, during the preparation of the environmental assessment. Information can be found on the [Landscape Project](#) website or by emailing [Fish and Wildlife](#).

### **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

#### **a. Briefly describe the total development project**

Install a Completely Inclusive Playground within the existing municipal park known as Evesboro Downs.

Street Address: 131 EVESBORO-MEDFORD ROAD  
Township: EVESHAM TWP  
County: BURLINGTON  
Block Number: 9  
Lot Number: 9.02  
Acres: 40+/-

Evesboro Downs (Recreation and Open Space Inventory #15) contains soccer, football and lacrosse fields, winter ice for ice skating and pond hockey, wildflower meadow, and elevated instructional platform. The Open Space and Recreation Plan recommends providing an inclusive playground at this location.

#### **b. State objectives of the project**

To meet resident needs as identified through the IHC program and municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan element of the master plan by providing a new inclusive playground that is designed with standards that generally exceeds those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (AD).

#### **c. Fully describe multi-phase projects**

The playground will be constructed in one phase.

Recent Improvements to this park include:

- 2021 Construction and completion of the multi-use platform.
- 2022 Improvements including water, sewer, power and addition of new parking lot and base pad for hard standing restrooms.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Describe existing environmental features:

### **a. vegetation**

The 40-acre existing park generally consists of open fields and parking lots. Surrounding residential neighborhoods area screened-buffered with existing tree stands. The northwestern section of the site contains a wooded area surrounding a section of the North Branch Pennsauken Creek tributary.

### **b. wildlife, including State and federal threatened and endangered species and critical habitats**

According to the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife, Evesham Township is located within the Pinelands Landscape region, and Evesham Downs has two mapped critical wildlife habitats. Both the protected wildflower patch located on the eastern section, and the woodlands on the northwestern corner of the park are mapped as suitable foraging habitats for the Great Blue Heron. The Great Blue Heron is a Rank 2, Special Concern species in the state of New Jersey.

### **c. geology, topography, and soils**

According to the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife, Evesham Township is located in the western section of the “Pinelands” landscape region of New Jersey between the “Piedmont Plains” to the west and the “Atlantic Coastal” landscape region to the east.

According to NJDEP’s NJ-GeoWeb, the surficial geology consists of “Upland Gravel, Lower Phase”, and the bedrock geology consists of the Navesink Formation (Kns). The Navesink Formation consists predominantly of clayey and glauconitic sands.

The site is relatively flat, located at approximately eighty-five (85) feet above mean sea level, and is located in an area of Evesham Township that slopes gently to the northwest toward a North Branch Pennsauken Creek tributary.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Conservation Service, the Evesham Downs soil is primarily composed of “Collington fine sandy loam (ComB),” 2 to 5 percent slopes. Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water is moderately high to high (0.20 to 2.00 in/hr).

d. water resources/hydrology

According to NJDEP's NJ-GeoWeb, Evesham Township is located over the Composite confining unit (ccu) aquifer system, an "E-D"-ranked aquifer (median yield of < 25 to 100 gpm) composed of silt and clay with localized sand lenses. The confining units of the aquifer include the Shark River, Manasquan, Hornerstown, and Tinton Formations. Water in the Composite confining unit aquifers is generally good, but iron and manganese levels may be locally elevated and require chemical treatment. Calcium-bicarbonate type waters dominate.

Evesham Township averages 47 inches of rain and 13 inches of snow annually, which drains to the Lower Delaware Watershed Management Area, and the Pennsauken Creek North Branch (above NJ-Turnpike) sub-watershed.

e. historic/archeological resources

None

f. transportation/access to site

County Route 618 Evesboro-Medford Road provides vehicle and cyclist and pedestrian access to the site directly and via Phoenix Road.

g. adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding neighborhood

The adjacent land use is generally single family home residential uses.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Impacts are defined as direct or indirect changes to the existing environment, whether beneficial or adverse, that are anticipated to result from the proposed action or related future actions and uses. Any off-site impacts, such as increased traffic on neighborhood roads or increased noise levels in surrounding areas, should be described. Whenever possible, environmental impacts should be quantified (i.e., number of trees to be removed, cubic yards of cut/fill, etc.).

a. Discuss all affected resources and the significance of each impact

As the area of the park where the playground is to be installed has already been previously disturbed no resources are anticipated to be impacted; however, by utilizing an existing park it negates the need for green field development which would have associated impacts.

b. Discuss short-term and long-term project impacts

Short term impacts – provide a recreational amenity that is needed for meeting the recreational needs of the existing population.

Long term impacts – improved resident health, the playground is expected to be in place for many years and will provide for meeting the needs of various age groups and generations.

c. Discuss anticipated increase in recreation and overall use of site over time

By providing the new playground within an existing park, the park user numbers and use grounds will increase and as the new playground will be promoted through various Township communication channels to the Township 45,000+ residents' awareness of the new playground is expected to be rapid paced.

d. Identify adjacent environmental features that may be affected by the proposal

The playground will be installed in an area that has been previously disturbed and within a park that has existed for over a decade. Adjacent environmental features are not anticipated to be negatively affected. The main effect of the playground to be installed if the grant is awarded is a new recreational amenity to improve access residents to improve their health.

e. List any permits required for project and brief status (i.e., waterfront development)

None anticipated other than necessary building permits as may be required.

f. For development that would impact an undisturbed portion of the project site, the local government must submit a [Natural Heritage Data Request Form](#) to the DEP's Office of Natural Lands Management (form available through website or by writing to Natural Heritage Program, PO Box 404, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0404). Please attach and discuss the results of the search.

Not applicable the area has been previously disturbed.

g. Discuss if/how the project may be impacted by sea level rise and any related design considerations.

The project area is not anticipated to be impacted by sea level rise.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION**

a. Identify alternate sites

The Township recently adopted (12/5/2023) a new Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) that took over a year to complete. There were numerous community meetings and Planning Board Meetings. The newly adopted plan that follows NJDEP Green Acres requirements specifically

included a recommendation that an inclusive playground be installed at the Evesboro Downs park location (12/5/23 OSRP page 47).

b. Discuss alternate levels and types of development

Alternative 1: No Development

The 2+/- year master plan process identifies recreational improvements and programs at various locations that are needed to meet resident needs. As noted above, the Evesboro Downs location was identified where an inclusive playground was needed and should be provided.

Alternative 2: Install Completely Inclusive Playground within existing Park

c. Compare environmental impacts of each alternative

No park development does not support the goals and objectives of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Township Master Plan, or the input received during the numerous community meetings that were held during the development of the 12/5/2023 OSRP. Greenfield development or development at another location would result in impacts typically associated with new development and infrastructure and potentially less use of the new playground.

As noted above, the Evesboro Downs location was identified where an inclusive playground was needed and should be provided.

## **5. MITIGATING MEASURES**

Describe the measures that will be undertaken to mitigate adverse impacts

No adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of the passive park proposed. In the event, an adverse impact arise the Township will respond accordingly to address any neighbor concerns or environmental issues.

## **6. AUTHOR(S) AND QUALIFICATIONS**

**Township Engineer Remington and Vernick**