



**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
**COUNTY OF ESSEX**  
**PARK DEVELOPMENT- IRVINGTON PARK**

**1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

*a. Briefly describe the total development project*

The Essex County Parks Department is seeking to complete upgrades to the soccer and softball fields at Essex County Irvington Park. The proposed scope of work includes improvements to the lighting and bleachers at the two softball fields, as well as lighting for the soccer field.

*b. State objectives of the project*

The project seeks to complete much-needed upgrades to Irvington Park, specifically at the softball fields and soccer fields, which are heavily used by local public schools, youth athletics associations, and adult sports leagues. The objective of this project is to create a modernized, inclusive, and safer facility for park users.

*c. Fully describe multi-phase projects*

Not applicable, as this is not a multi-phased project.

**2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

*Describe existing environmental features:*

*a. Vegetation*

Irvington Park is a 25-acre open space resource in Irvington, New Jersey. There are many trees planted throughout the property, including along the park perimeter and all walking paths. There are several lawn areas, with minimal vegetation throughout.

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

The park is home to a variety of non-migratory birds and is a known flyover for various species of migratory birds travelling along the North American Flyway. Further, the environment in Irvington Park supports a variety of mammalian quadrupeds, such as foxes, raccoons, chipmunks, and

squirrels. There are no known state or federal threatened or endangered species or critical habitats within the park, which is located in a densely populated and heavily developed urban area.

*c. Geology, topography, and soils*

The topography of Irvington Park is flat and there is a pond in the northwest corner of the site. There are no other noteworthy geological or topographical features at Irvington Park.

*d. Water resources/hydrology*

A small, 1.65-acre pond is located in the northwest corner of the site. This pond is fed by an artesian well provides fishing and model boat sailing.

*e. Historic/archeological resources*

There are no known historic or archeological resources in the park.

*f. Transportation/access to site*

The park is accessible via NJ Transit Bus routes 37, 90, and 107, with northbound and southbound stops located at the northeast and southeast corners of the park. Adjacent land uses are primarily dense residential and commercial.

*g. Adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding neighborhood*

The surrounding neighborhood is composed of dense residential uses.

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

*a. Discuss all affected resources and the significant of each impact*

Minor environmental impacts are expected to take place at Irvington Park as a result of this project. The project will temporarily affect resources such as noise levels and park accessibility. However, these impacts are short-term and manageable through proper mitigation measures. In the long term, the proposed upgrades will significantly improve the park's usability, safety, and appeal, benefiting the community and aligning with the County and State's sustainability goals.

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

The Irvington Park upgrades will have both short-term and long-term impacts, with the long-term benefits far outweighing any temporary disruptions. In the short-term, portions of the soccer and softball fields will be closed while construction improvements are being made. However, in the long-term, the upgrades will greatly enhance the park's usability and appeal. Improved

lighting will allow for evening games and events, while upgraded bleachers will provide safer and more comfortable seating for spectators. These changes are expected to increase park usage and foster greater community engagement. Energy-efficient lighting will reduce operational costs and promote environmental sustainability, contributing to the park's long-term functionality and ecological health. Any disturbed vegetation will be restored with native plantings, ensuring the park's natural beauty is preserved.

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

The County anticipates that use of the project site will continue to increase over time, particularly after the proposed improvements are completed. Essex County and the Township of Irvington have both experienced significant growth in population in recent years. It is necessary to accommodate this population growth, coupled with a low rate of new park development in Irvington, which is one of the most densely populated communities in the state and has minimal property available for open space development. As such, it is anticipated that the current rate of growth in usage at Irvington Park will continue, making the proposed upgrades even more essential to complete.

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

There are no adjacent environmental features that will be affected by the project. The area surrounding the project site is composed of residential areas. The proposed activities are confined to an area of the park where softball and soccer fields already exist, and therefore, there are no anticipated impacts outside of the primary project site.

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

At this time, the County of Essex does not foresee permits needed for this project.

*f. For development that would impact an undisturbed portion of the project site, the local government must submit a Natural Heritage Data Request Form*

Not applicable. The project is not being completed in an undisturbed portion of the site.

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

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

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

*a. Identify alternative sites*

The facilities at Irvington Park are in dire need of improvements and enhancements. Failure to complete these necessary improvements and enhancements can potentially result in a reduction in usability at the Park, as well as deterioration in safety conditions. Therefore, an alternative site for the proposed improvements does not exist.

*b. Discuss alternate levels and types of development*

No alternative levels or types of development have been identified for the proposed field renovations.

*c. Compare environmental impacts of each alternative*

No alternative levels of development have been identified for the proposed renovations, therefore, there are no alternatives to compare.

## **5. MITIGATING MEASURES**

*a. Describe the measures that will be taken to mitigate adverse impacts*

The County of Essex is dedicated to ensuring that Irvington Park is cared for with the utmost of respect and diligence. In this spirit, the County resolves to take all proper measures and precautions during and after the course of work to ensure that the surrounding environment is not negatively impacted. These measures and precautions include, but are not limited to, the erection of silt fencing during and after construction, the proliferation of soil and sediment controls, scheduling and staging efforts to minimize overall disturbance, and significant landscaping activities that include the replanting of any flora whose removal is required for the completion of work. Additionally, the County is committed to comply with any and all rules and regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and/or other regulatory agencies regarding building, remediation, and environmental conservation, and to the attainment of all necessary permits for building, remediation, and environmental conservation, as needed.

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

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