

# THE CITY OF SUMMIT

N E W J E R S E Y

CITY HALL 512 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE SUMMIT, NJ 07901

## Environmental Impact Assessment

### 1. Description of the Proposed Project

- a. *Briefly describe the total project development* – The City of Summit is proposing the replacement of the existing Mabie Playground with fully inclusive and ADA accessible play structures, additional sensory friendly play features, swings, park benches, trees, shrubbery, and safety surfacing for the use by Summit residents, as well as others visiting Summit. The proposed location is right in the heart of Downtown Summit, located conveniently by the Summit Train Station, Broad Street Parking Garage and Elm Street Parking Lot.
- b. *State objectives of the project* – The objective of this project is the construction and installation of a brand new playground on the site of the existing Mabie Playground that will be the City's first fully ADA accessible, intergenerational, and sensory friendly playground and park.
- c. *Fully describe multi-phase project* – The installation and completion of the project will be completed in one phase following the completion of the Village Green Master Plan's final phase.

### 2. Description of the Environment

#### Describe existing environmental features:

- a. *Vegetation* – The current surfacing of the basketball courts and the playground would be replaced. The basketball courts would be replaced with similar asphalt and the wood fiber playground would be replaced with playground safety surfacing. There would also be a limited amount of grass disturbed and converted to playground safety surfacing. Majority of the area remains undisturbed.
- b. *Wildlife, including State and federal threatened and endangered species and critical habitats* – Considering there is an existing playground on site, there would be a very limited impact, if any to the wildlife in the area. This Park already falls in an area where wildlife presence is minimal.
- c. *Geology, topography, and soils* – Current geology, topography and soil to remain unaffected.
- d. *Water resources/hydrology* – N/A
- e. *Historic/archeological resources* – The Mabie Playground parks has been a Summit park space since the 1900's. In 1926, the park was dedicated to Hamilton Wright Mabie. The playground was modernized in 1997-1998. The park has a monument area dedicated to Mr. Mabie. There is no other known historic or archeological resources on site.

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- f. Transportation/access to site – This site is easily accessible by all. It falls adjacent to the City of Summit's NJ Transit Train Station. The NJ Transit Bus Lines also have four bus stops within a quarter of a mile. The site offers ample transportation routes for access. The site is also in the heart of downtown Summit, falling right outside of the Central Retail Business District. The Park also has a close proximity to the City's middle school and a local pre-school.
- g. Adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding neighborhood – The site is an existing playground. The park is surrounded by a condominium development on one side, a county road (Summit Ave) with local business on another. Adjacent areas include the additional two acres of Summit's Village Green. The Village Green area is used as a passive park for the community. It is also the site of all the City's special events. Within walking distance is also Summit Middle School, Central Presbyterian Church, The Summit Train Station, Summit Library and Summit YMCA. Within the adjacent Village Green scape, there are pathways, lighting, benches and art displays.

### 3. Environmental Impact 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* – The impact of affected resources will be extremely minimal. No trees will be affected by this project. Conversely, we will be adding shrubbery and an additional line of trees between the park and the condominium development. The wood fiber chips will be replaced with playground safety surfacing and a small grassy area will be replaced with additional playground safety surfacing. No affected resource impact is anticipated to be significant.
- b. *Discuss short-term and long-term project impacts* – Short term impacts to the area would be a temporary closure during the construction. Long term impacts would be increased shrubbery in the area. No wildlife is expected to be misplaced. Short and long term impacts will be minimal.
- c. *Discuss anticipated increase in recreation and overall use of site over time* – While the new park will likely attract more individuals to the park, including additional individuals with special needs who may have not been able to use the facility before, considering that this is the site of a current playground that is heavily accessed by the greater Summit community, the increase will be negligible.
- d. *Identify adjacent environmental features that may be affected by the proposal* – There are no adjacent environmental factors to be affected given this is an existing park/playground area and the surrounding area is residential as well as county roads.

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- e. *List any permits required for project and brief status (i.e., waterfront development) - appropriate construction permits from the municipality*
  - 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.
  - g. *Discuss if/how the project may be impacted by sea level rise and any related design consideration:* The elevation of the property and lack of wetlands or surface waterbodies on site indicate that there would be no impact on the proposed site due to future sea level rise.
4. Alternatives to the Proposed Action
- a. Alternative Sites – Due to this playgrounds age and that many of the existing pieces cannot be replaced makes the Mabie Playground site the ideal location to build Summit's first fully inclusive, intergenerational playground. Two locations that were considered are by the Summit Community Center at 100 Morris Ave and Briant Park. Briant Park is a county park, and not Summit owned. The Summit Community Center would require substantial gravel/soil movement to level the site. Mabie playground is an existing site, making it more environmentally feasible as we own the site and would not require soil movement to meet the appropriate grade.
  - b. Alternative levels and types of development – Lighting, seating and play strictures currently exist on site. The site plan is compliant with the Village Green Master Plan that was developed by the City in the 2000's.
  - c. Environmental impact comparison – Compared the the existing site, environmental impact remains the same.
5. Mitigating Measures - Limiting construction and disturbance to only those areas necessary for the completion of the proposed project will mitigate adverse impacts to the limited wildlife use of the area as well as the vegetation.. Given that the area was historically a park with wood fiber surfacing, this replacement will not longer be needed. To reduce any noise pollution, additional trees are being planted as part of the plan.
6. Authors and Qualifications