

Environmental Impact Assessment Outline

OUTLINE

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

- a. Briefly describe the total development project

The City of Hoboken is seeking Jake's Law funding to complete Phase 1 of the Church Square Park Vision Plan implementation, which includes replacement of all playground equipment designated for ages 0 to 5 with an inclusive play area, along with improvements that would create a dog run buffer and replace the lawn.

- b. State objectives of the project

The objectives of the project are to improve open space resources in Hoboken and provide more inclusive play environments for young children as more and more families move to Hoboken.

- c. Fully describe multi-phase projects

Not applicable.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- a. Vegetation

The site is currently developed as a park with lawn areas, trees, and sparse shrubbery.

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

Wildlife includes animals typical of an urban environment, including squirrels and birds.

- c. Geology, Topography, and Soils

The site is flat and most developed, with some areas preserved as grass lawn.

- d. Water Resources/Hydrology

There are no water resources at the site.

- e. Historic/Archeological Resources

The Fireman's Monument located within Church Square Park is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places as part of a thematic nomination. The monument will not be impacted by the project in any way. The entire park footprint is within the Hoboken Historic District, which is eligible but not listed on either register.

- f. Transportation/access to site

The project site is close to Hoboken Terminal, the busiest transit terminal in the State of New Jersey. Hoboken Terminal offers multi-modal connections to rail, rail rapid transit, light rail, ferry, bus, taxi, and shuttle services. More than 60,000 transit users pass through Hoboken Terminal every day. Also, the Hoboken HOP Shuttle Bus services follows a continuous route throughout Hoboken between the hours of 7am and 8pm. Each Shuttle Bus stops at any intersection when flagged. There are also NJ Transit bus stops near the project site.

The site is accessible to Hoboken residents via walking or bicycling. Existing roadway infrastructure is configured using complete streets principles, which allows for safe accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. Much of the surrounding road infrastructure is outfitted with bike lanes and many pedestrian crossings in the area have recently been upgraded with new signage, striping, traffic calming, and other safety features. There are Citi Bike stations located at or near the site that allow for the public to borrow bicycles.

g. Adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding neighborhood

Adjacent land uses are primarily dense residential and mixed-use residential commercial properties that are commonly found throughout Hoboken. The area surrounding the project site is heavily populated and there are various multi-story, multi-unit housing structures nearby. Due to this housing density, there are well over 10,000 residents of the immediate surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, there are houses of worship, the Hoboken Free Public Library, and Hoboken Middle School on adjacent lots (across streets), creating a true community center aesthetic to the park.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION

a. *Discuss All Affected Resources and the Significance of Each Impact*

The project will replace existing play equipment for children ages 0 to 5 with inclusive play equipment.

b. *Discuss Short Term and Long Term Project Impacts*

There are no short-term impacts as the existing children's play area can be kept open until the new 0-5 playground is completed. Long-term impacts include new play equipment and a more inclusive play environment for children of all ages and abilities. The footprint or layout of the park is anticipated to change minimally.

c. *Discuss Anticipated Increase in Recreation and Overall Use of Site Over Time*

The project will replace existing play equipment with inclusive play structures that will allow for children of all abilities to benefit from enhanced recreational facilities.

d. *Identify Adjacent Environmental Features that May be Affected by the Proposal*

There are no adjacent environmental features that will be affected by the proposed project.

e. *List Any Permits Required for Project and Brief Status*

The following permits may be required for the project:

- Hudson-Essex-Passaic Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan Certification

f. *Potential Impact of Sea Level Rise*

As a coastal community that is heavily impacted by current and future impacts of climate change, the site is vulnerable to sea level rise. Hoboken has heavily invested in coastal resiliency, including through resiliency parks and other green infrastructure to minimize the impact of flooding on the community.

4. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

a. Identify alternate sites

The project site has been developed as a public park for more than 100 years. Hoboken is densely populated with high land values. Acquiring property for open space development is challenging. There are no alternative sites available for the proposed project, which seeks to replace existing play equipment with an inclusive play space.

b. Discuss alternate levels and types of development

The only alternative is to leave the aging equipment in place, which poses hazards to existing users and limited access to individuals with varying abilities.

c. Compare environmental impacts of each alternative

There environmental impacts of each alternative vary minimally.

5. MITIGATING MEASURES

Describe the measures that will be undertaken to mitigate adverse impacts

There are no adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the project.

6. AUTHOR(S) AND QUALIFICATION

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