ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

February 2026

Union Field, City of Camden, NJ
Green Acres Grant Application
Portion of Block 741, Lot 1.01

Prepared For

City of Camden

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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 the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, during the preparation of the environmental assessment. Information about the Landscape Project can be found at www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/landscape/index.htm or by emailing the Division at www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/contactform.htm.

OUTLINE

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

a. Briefly describe the total development project:

The City of Camden is proposing the following improvements as part of the Union Field Improvements project:

- Construction of a running track composed of 3,030 square yards (SY) of poured-in-place hot mix asphalt surfacing overlain by a synthetic running surface.
- Construction of a new playground system and sensory play areas with all new equipment.
- Construction of 6,400 square-foot (SF) poured-in-place rubber protective surfacing with an underdrain to support the new playground.
- Installation of a new lighting system and irrigation system for the track and field.
- Construction of an ADA-accessible concrete walkway connecting the existing asphalt parking area to the proposed track and playground.
- Construction of enclosed, PVC-coated chain-link fences to surround the new playground and track.
- Stormwater and landscaping improvements.

b. State objectives of the project:

The main objective of the project is to revitalize and enhance the existing field with the installation of a running track, a new inclusive playground, an ADA-accessible walkway, stormwater improvements, and landscaping improvements. These improvements to the park's recreational facilities will help to improve recreational opportunities for all age groups, encourage community engagement and youth development, and support the physical and mental well-being of the surrounding community. The construction proposed is expected to have a minimal impact on the environment.

c. Fully describe multi-phase projects:

The proposed improvements are to be completed in one (1) phase.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

a. Vegetation:

Union Field consists of urban, recreational land use. The site is generally bordered by a parking lot to the northwest, high-density residential housing to the north, forested wetlands to the east and south, and a community center and playground to the southwest. The proposed project will take place within previously disturbed areas of the site, which are currently comprised of a fenced-in baseball field surrounded by grassy lawn areas that are presently utilized as football and soccer fields. Therefore, impacts on natural resources will be minimal.

b. Wildlife:

Common wildlife observed on the site include small animals such as birds, squirrels, rabbits, etc. According to the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife, there are no State or federal threatened or endangered species or critical habitats indicated at, or within fifty (50)-feet of the site.

c. Geology, topography and soils:

The Site is located within the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province of New Jersey. Surficial geology at the Site is identified as the Cape May Formation, Unit 2 (Qcm2). According to NJ-Geoweb, the Cape May Formation, Unit 2 is generally comprised of very pale brown, yellow, reddish yellow, white, olive yellow, and gray sand; pebble gravel; minor silt, clay, peat, and cobble gravel. The bedrock geology underlying the site is the Magothy Formation (Kmg). The Magothy Formation is white fine-to-coarse-grained quartz sand, locally gravelly. In the upper part of the formation there is thin interbedded dark-gray clay or clay-silt with wood fragments.

The bedrock aquifer underlying the site is the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy aquifer system (prma). According to the NJDEP Land Use Management and New Jersey Geological Society, the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy aquifer system is composed of "interbedded sand, gravel, silt, and clay separated into lower, middle, and upper aquifers. Includes the Raritan confining unit composed of interbedded sand, silt, and clay with primary intergranular porosity and permeability. Water is fresh, moderately hard with a near-neutral pH. Salinity increases towards the coastline near the Delaware and Raritan Bays. Elevated iron and manganese are common. Calcium and magnesium levels decrease and sodium and potassium levels generally increase to the southeast."

The project area is relatively flat and located at an elevation ranging between approximately six (6) and eight (8) feet above mean sea level. The site generally slopes to the east/southeast towards a tributary of Newton Creek. The nearest surface water body is a tributary of Newton Creek, which is located approximately two hundred twenty (220) feet to the south of the site, generally flowing to the west towards the Delaware River.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Conservation Service, 100% of the site's soils are composed of "Holmdel fine sandy loam, zero (0) to two (2) percent slopes (HodA)." The capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water is moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr).

Holmdel fine sandy loam, zero (0) to two (2) percent slopes (HodA) profile:

- Ap – zero (0) to ten (10) inches: fine sandy loam
- AB – ten (10) to fourteen (14) inches: fine sandy loam
- BA – fourteen (14) to twenty-one (21) inches: sandy clay loam
- Bt – twenty-one (21) to thirty-four (34) inches: sandy clay loam
- C – thirty-four (34) to sixty (60) inches: stratified loamy sand to sandy loam

d. Water resources/hydrology:

According to NJDEP's NJ-GeoWeb, Union Field is located over the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy aquifer system (prma), an "A"-ranked aquifer (median yield of more than five hundred (500) gpm). A-ranked aquifers are classified as high-capacity aquifers suitable for potable water supply.

The City of Camden averages approximately forty-eight (48) inches of rain and nineteen (19) inches of snow annually, which drains to the Lower Delaware Watershed Management Area, specifically the Newton Creek (LDRV-Kaighn Ave to LT Ck) watershed.

e. Historic/archeological resources:

According to NJDEP's NJ-GeoWeb, the proposed project area is located in the Fairview Historic District, with a designation status defined as "Listed" since approximately November 19, 1974. The project area is not defined as a Historic Archaeological Site.

f. Transportation/access to site:

Union Field is accessible via:

- The parking lot entrance to the west of the site along South Merrimac Road; and
- The construction of an ADA-accessible concrete walkway, connecting the asphalt parking area to the proposed track and field, will be included in this phase of park improvements.

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

Union Field is located in a predominantly residential, recreational, and commercial area of the City of Camden, generally bordered by a parking lot to the northwest, high-density residential housing to the north, forested wetlands to the east and south, and a community center and playground to the southwest.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION

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

The proposed project will take place within previously disturbed areas of the site, which are currently comprised of a fenced-in baseball field surrounded by grassy lawn areas, that are presently utilized as football and soccer fields. Therefore, impacts on natural resources will be minimal.

d. Discuss short-term and long-term project impacts:

A short-term impact would include construction activities on the site for the duration of the project. Traffic will be minimized and construction vehicles will park on the site during field replacement work.

Improvements to the existing sports field will allow for improved recreational opportunities for the surrounding community. The construction of an ADA-accessible concrete walkway,

connecting the main parking area to the proposed track and playground, will allow for more park visitors. Ultimately, the proposed field improvements are anticipated to result in long-term increased usage of the field area by people of all age groups.

e. Discuss anticipated increase in recreation and overall use of site over time:
Currently, the recreational field and playground areas at Union Field are underutilized due to their small size and lack of amenities. The construction of a new track will allow for the accommodation of different sports and age groups. The new playground, with additional benches, will allow for the accommodation of more guests. The construction of sensory equipment will allow for more inclusive play for children. Once the new track and associated playground are installed, recreational use at Union Field is expected to increase.

d. Identify adjacent environmental features that may be affected by the proposal:
No adjacent environmental features will be affected by the proposed field replacement project.

e. List any permits required for project and brief status (i.e., waterfront development):
The permits required are a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit from the Camden County Soil Conservation District, a Flood Hazard Area Verification, and Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit (IP) under the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, at N.J.A.C. 7:13.

f. National Heritage Data Request Forms:
The proposed project will take place within disturbed areas of the site, which are currently comprised of a fenced-in baseball field surrounded by grassy lawn areas, that are presently utilized as football and soccer fields. Therefore, a Natural Heritage Database Report is not required for this project.

g. Discuss if/ how the project may be impacted by sea level rise and any related design considerations:
According to review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Panel 34007C0038F, effective 8/17/2016 for the City of Camden, the project area is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area, specifically Zone AE. In accordance with the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, at N.J.A.C. 7:13, the NJ State Flood Elevation has been determined to be nine (9) feet. Therefore, the project may be impacted by sea level rise and is regulated pursuant to the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, at N.J.A.C. 7:13, as mentioned above.

4. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

a. Identify alternate sites:
The existing site, Union Field, is in a predominantly residential, recreational, and commercial area of Camden City. There are several vacant and recreational properties within the City of Camden where redevelopment could take place; however, as the purpose of this project is to improve the current sports field with a track and playground, there are not many parks in need of a track and playground upgrades with enough free space to accommodate these features.

b. Discuss alternate levels and types of development:
The alternative for the poured rubber playground surface would be sand, pea gravel, or wood mulch/chips. The running track could be alternatively composed of pervious concrete. The concrete sidewalk could be composed of gravel. Alternatively, a path connecting the parking area to the track and playground could have been completely forgone.

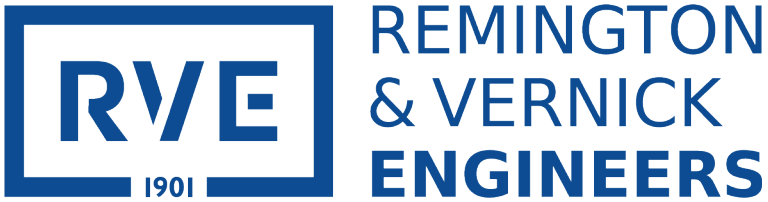
c. Compare environmental impacts of each alternative:
Installing sand, pea gravel, or wood mulch/chip playground surface would create a more pervious surface to drain stormwater runoff. However, these alternative surfaces would require more maintenance, have less fall protection, and/or are susceptible to splintering.

Constructing the running track with pervious concrete offers great infiltration capabilities, however, designers may want to limit units with large openings containing aggregate for paths or parking areas that require ADA-accessibility and use by bicyclists and the elderly. Additionally, pervious concrete requires more maintenance, as sediment clogging and freeze damage is common. Therefore, asphalt with a synthetic running surface is more durable, with an ability to reduce surface runoff while maintaining ADA-accessibility.

The path connecting the playground and parking lot provides a safe walking area for park visitors traveling to the playground from the parking area. A walkway constructed of gravel or wood chips would result in lower environmental impact. However, gravel and wood chips are not ADA-accessible and would require more maintenance.

5. MITIGATING MEASURES

The project will meet all applicable requirements outlined in the Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in New Jersey and a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit will be obtained by the Camden County Soil Conservation District, prior to the commencement of the proposed project. Additionally, operation and maintenance manuals will be produced for this site to ensure that future adverse environmental impacts are avoided or minimized.



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