

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared to address the

NJDEP GREEN ACRES PROGRAM JAKE'S LAW PLAYGROUND FUNDING APPLICATION

For The

VOLUNTEER'S PARK IMPROVEMENTS

**Block: 287, Lot: 1
Borough of South River
Middlesex County, New Jersey**

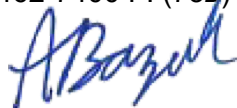
For

**The Borough of South River
48 Washington Street
South River, NJ 08882**

Prepared by:



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INTRODUCTION

This environmental impact assessment has been prepared as part of the Green Acres Program: Jake's Law Playground Funding Application submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements as found at N.J.A.C. 7:36 to review environmental conditions onsite necessary to determine the suitability of the project site for the proposed development.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

- a. Volunteer's Park is an approximate 1.5-acre municipal park located on Bryan Street in the Borough of South River, Middlesex County, New Jersey. Existing park facilities include a hockey field, basketball court, and playground/swing set.
- b. The proposed improvements include:
 - Inclusive playground area with various swings, slides, jungle gyms and other inclusive play structures. The playground dimensions are 124' 5" x 75' 3" and it will be installed in the area of the existing swing sets.
 - Fitness court in area of existing hockey field.
 - Shade structure.
 - ADA accessible asphalt walking path.
 - Dedicated handicap parking spot on Bryan Street.
 - General landscape improvements.
- c. The objective of the project is to enhance the recreational experience of residents using the park playground. The residents of South River Borough will be provided with upgraded, inclusive park features to allow for present and future enjoyment. Environmental impacts will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
- d. This project is not a multi-phase project.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- a. Vegetation
The vegetation of the project site consists of maintained lawn and several mature trees. The project area is currently functioning as an existing woodchip play area with a swing set. The park also includes a hockey field and basketball court opposite to the proposed inclusive playground.



b. Wildlife

Wildlife onsite consists of typical species in the urban/suburban regions of New Jersey including white-tailed deer, gray squirrels, rabbits, racoons, foxes, small rodent species, and a variety of avian species among others. According to a review of the NJDEP's GeoWeb Online GIS Resource, there are no threatened or endangered species located within the proposed project site. A nesting colony for Yellow-crowned Night-heron is located outside of the boundaries of the project area however, project improvements will not impact habitat for this species as all proposed work is located within previously developed park. A Natural Heritage Database Search for the project site was requested on December 31, 2024.

c. Geology, Topography, and Soils

The project site is underlain by the Raritan Formation. The lithology of the Raritan formation consists of clayey silt overlying quartz sand. The surficial geology consists of Weathered Coastal Plain Formations with a lithology of exposed sand and clay of Coastal Plain bedrock formations. This includes thin, patchy alluvium and colluvium, and pebbles left from erosion of surficial deposits.

The USDA Websoil Survey online resource shows the proposed work area to be within an area overlain by Galloway, clayey substratum – Urban land complex (GaokB) and Downer – Urban land complex (DouC). Descriptions of the soil profiles are provided below:

Galloway, clayey substratum – Urban land complex – 2 to 6 percent slopes and no hydric soil rating. A typical profile consists of 0 to 27 inches of silt loam, 27 to 48 inches of very channery silt loam, and 48 to 80 inches of weathered bedrock.

Downer – Urban land complex – 5 to 10 percent slopes and no hydric soil rating. A typical profile consists of 0 to 13 inches of loamy sand, 13 to 30 inches of sandy loam, and 30 to 60 inches of stratified gravelly sand to sandy clay loam.

d. Water Resources/Hydrology

The South River and its tributaries are located to the northeast and east of the project site. The tributary nearest the site is located about 1,600 FT northeast of the park according to NJ GeoWeb. These waterways are designated as FW2-NT/SE1. No portion of the project work will take place within the Flood Hazard Area of these waterways. The project site is located within the Lower Raritan, South River, and Lawrence Watershed Management Area.



e. Historic Archaeological Resources

A review of the NJDEP's GeoWeb GIS Database revealed the project site is not located within any archaeological grid, historic district, or historic property. There will be no impacts to historic resources.

f. Transportation and Site Access

Volunteer's Park can be accessed from Bryan Street or Herbert Street. There is a parking area along a stone road off of Prentice Avenue. The proposed construction of the inclusive playground will only impact site access during construction.

g. Adjacent Land Uses and Surrounding Neighborhood

The project site is located within the suburban neighborhood of South River Borough. Land use on the project site consists of previously developed recreational land with an existing basketball court, hockey field, and swing set. According to NJ GeoWeb's Land Use Layer, the areas immediately surrounding the park consist of residential, single unit, medium density housing. South River Elementary School and High School are located about ¼ mile west of the project site. The Washington Monumental Cemetery is located ¼ mile northwest of the project site. Deciduous forest, recreational, commercial, and transportation land uses exist in the general vicinity of the project site.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION

a. Affected Resources

Proposed improvements on site include the construction of an inclusive playground within the developed area of an existing park. The project aims to increase recreational use and access to the playground for the surrounding community. Due to the location of the proposed improvements in a previously developed portion of the park, there are no anticipated impacts to the surrounding area or resources. Tree removal will consist of eight (8) trees surrounding the playground and walking path, four (4) of which are dead, two (2) of which will be removed for walkways, and two (2) which have exposed roots and presents a tripping hazard. The removal of these trees will help ensure the safety of the residents using the park and playground.

b. Short-term and Long-term Impacts

Short-term impacts will include those associated with the temporary construction efforts that will occur as a result of project improvements. This includes limited/restricted access to the playground and a temporary increase in noise and traffic levels to the playground during construction. No long-term impacts are anticipated.



c. Recreation/Site-use

It is anticipated that the proposed recreational improvements will encourage further use and enjoyment of the park and increase site-use.

d. Affected Environmental Features

There are no anticipated impacts to adjacent environmental features. No regulated areas are located within the project site. There are no proposed impacts to threatened or endangered species due to the location and scale of the project.

e. Permits

No NJDEP permits will be required for this project.

f. Natural Heritage Database Request

The proposed project will not impact any undisturbed portion of the project site. A Natural Heritage Database Search for the project site was requested on December 31, 2024 and results are expected on January 31, 2025. The results will be forwarded once received.

g. Sea-level Rise Impacts

This project will not be impacted by sea-level rise as there are no bodies of water within the immediate vicinity of the project site.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

- a. Due to the small scope of the project and the location of the project improvements within a previously developed area of the park outside of any areas regulated by the NJDEP, no real alternatives exist for this project. Another location on site was considered for the playground, however due to the scope of the work and location of the existing swings, the current location was most feasible. Land use of the site will not change and improvements will enhance the recreational opportunities of the park.
- b. The “no-build” alternative for the proposed improvements would not meet the goals of the project to provide inclusive recreational opportunities for the surrounding community.

MITIGATING MEASURES

All necessary best management measures will be taken to mitigate any potential adverse impacts to the project site and surrounding area. A total of eight (8) trees will be removed from the project site, including four (4) dead trees, two (2) trees which will be removed for walkways, and two (2) trees with exposed roots, to ensure the safety of park visitors. The project site is located outside of any regulated areas.



FINDINGS

- The proposed project will not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment.
- The proposed improvements will enhance recreational opportunities for the local population.

AUTHOR(S) AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Haley Wilmot, Associate Scientist, CME Associates
- Austin Bazuk, Associate Project Manager, CME Associates



Appendix A: Map Graphics



LOCATION MAP

Volunteer's Park Improvements

LOCATION: Bryan Street & Johnson Place

MUNICIPALITY: Borough of South River

BLOCK: 287 **LOT:** 1

COUNTY: Middlesex County

FILE NO: 115.SR00200.I01



CONSULTING AND MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS

8141 BORDENTOWN AVENUE, PARLIN, NEW JERSEY 08869 — 1460 ROUTE 9 SOUTH, HOWELL, NEW JERSEY 07731



U.S.G.S. QUAD MAP
Volunteer's Park Improvements

SHEET: South Amboy Quadrangle
LOCATION: Bryan Street & Johnson Place
MUNICIPALITY: Borough of South River
BLOCK: 287 **LOT:** 1
COUNTY: Middlesex County
FILE NO: 115.SR00200.I01



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3141 BORDENTOWN AVENUE, PARLIN, NEW JERSEY 08859 1460 ROUTE 9 SOUTH, HOWELL, NEW JERSEY 07731



TAX MAP

Volunteer's Park Improvements

SHEET: 41

LOCATION: Bryan Street & Johnson Place

MUNICIPALITY: Borough of South River

BLOCK: 287 **LOT:** 1

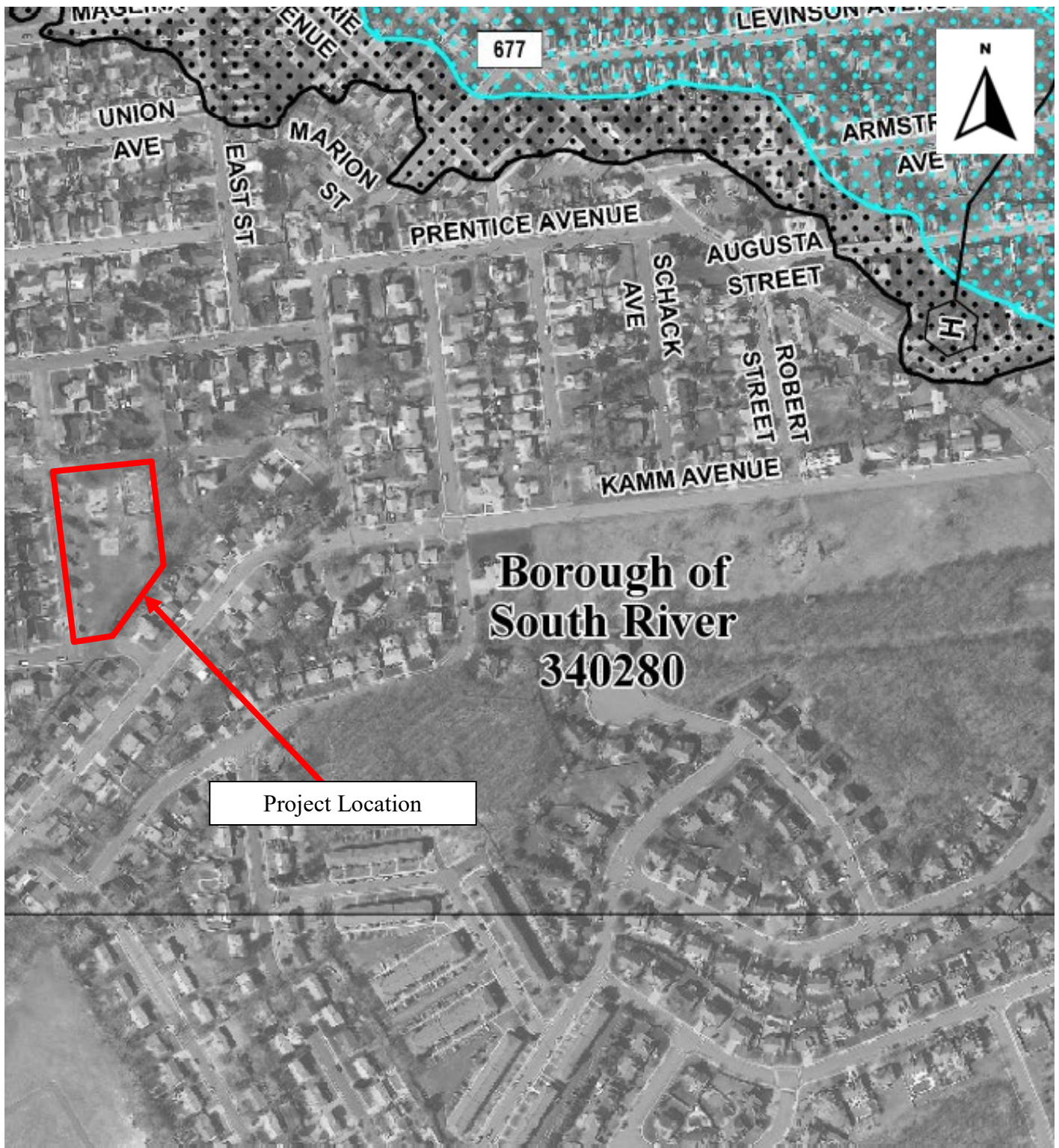
COUNTY: Middlesex County

FILE NO: 115.SR00200.101



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Project Location

FEMA MAP

Volunteer's Park Improvements

PANEL: 153G

LOCATION: Bryan Street & Johnson Place

MUNICIPALITY: Borough of South River

BLOCK: 287 **LOT:** 1

COUNTY: Middlesex County

FILE NO: 115.SR00200.I01



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Legend:

- Galloway, clayey substratum – Urban land complex (GaokB)
- Downer – Urban land complex (DouC)
- Downer – Urban land complex (DouD)
- Evesboro sand (EveD)

Notes:

- 0 to 5 percent slopes, somewhat poorly drained
- 5 to 10 percent slopes, well drained
- 10 to 15 percent slopes, well drained
- 10 to 15 percent slopes, excessively drained

SOIL SURVEY MAP
Volunteer's Park Improvements

LOCATION: Bryan Street & Johnson Place
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COUNTY: Middlesex County
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