

Federal Lands to Parks ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Park Name: Thomas A. Edison Park
Former Federal Property Name: Raritan Arsenal
GSA Control No: D-NJ-440C

Project Description:

Middlesex County proposes to make physical improvements to the Thomas A. Edison Park in Edison Township to address existing needs and future population growth. These improvements are identified in the County's master plan titled, Middlesex County: Community, Innovation, and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan (Middlesex County, 2022).

The park and existing athletic complex consist of baseball fields, tennis courts, a track, several soccer fields, a playground, and a model airplane field. The proposed project, termed the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park, would require the removal of all existing park facilities and some existing vegetation

Site improvements would include the installation of protective netting and fencing, performance lighting, and bleachers; a fieldhouse for concessions, restrooms, and maintenance equipment; remote comfort stations and concessions; pedestrian pathways; parking for 1,350 cars; and a playground. The proposed Site Plan is attached.

Specifically, the concept for the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas A. Edison Park includes:

- Ten multi-sport synthetic fields lined for lacrosse, soccer, and rugby
- Three multi-sport synthetic fields lined for baseball, lacrosse, soccer, and rugby
- Sixteen hard surface tennis courts
- A championship synthetic field and track with large grandstands
- 500-foot diameter natural grass, recreational cricket field
- Protective netting, performance lighting, and bleachers
- Fieldhouse for concessions, restrooms, and maintenance equipment
- Comfort stations throughout the park
- Pedestrian pathways
- Parking for 1,350 cars
- A playground

A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
1. Geological resources: soils, bedrock, slopes, streambeds, landforms, etc.		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> No long-term impacts to soils or geology are expected as a result of the construction of the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park. The topography of the proposed Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park would be similar to that of the existing site; therefore, no substantial impacts to geology and soils would result. Additionally, no blasting or alteration of the underlying geology is anticipated to be required, resulting in no long-term impacts to geology within the study area. Stormwater management systems would be installed to promote the settling of eroded particles, resulting in no long-term impacts to water quality during the operational phase of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>Short-term construction activities associated with excavation for the installation of the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park would result in land and soil disturbance. Land disturbance has the potential to result in soil erosion as exposed soil can be washed or blown by water and wind, respectively. Unmitigated soil erosion can impact local waterways by increasing the sediment load and the potential for erosion is greater in areas with soils exhibiting a severe erosion hazard potential. To address this potential effect, Middlesex County would comply with the New Jersey Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act (N.J.S.A. 4:24-39 <i>et seq.</i>) and apply BMPs to control soils over the long-term. Specifically, temporarily exposed soils would be permanently stabilized at the conclusion of project construction. Given that any potential impact to soils will be successfully mitigated, negligible adverse impacts to soils, bedrock, slopes, streambeds, landforms are anticipated.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
2. Air quality.		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> An assessment was conducted to evaluate the effects on air quality as a result of the vehicle parking improvements to support the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park on both a local and regional level. It was determined that the Project would improve traffic congestion conditions within the project area, resulting in an anticipated reduction of vehicle operational emissions; consequently, both localized and regional air quality conditions are anticipated to benefit from the Proposed Project. Therefore, operation of the Project would be in compliance with the State Implementation Plan and have no negative impacts to air quality.</p> <p>Construction would result in short-term, intermittent air quality impacts around proposed parking areas due to the operation of construction equipment, vehicles, and privately-owned vehicles. Site clearing, grubbing, and grading would result in localized increases in particulate matter. However, by application of dust management best management practices (BMPs) such as regular watering, construction of the Project would have negligible impacts to air quality.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
3. Sound (noise impacts)		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> As part of the Project's planning process, a traffic noise assessment was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set forth in NJDOT's Traffic Noise Management Policy and Noise Wall Design Guidelines (Noise Policy). This assessment evaluated the effects on noise as a result of the vehicle parking improvements to support the Project on both a local and regional level. Existing conditions were modeled using 2023 traffic counts while future conditions were modeled using 2028 traffic estimates.</p> <p>It was determined that future noise levels are anticipated to increase slightly between the 2023 Existing Condition and the 2028 Future Condition. However, all roadway changes are proposed within the Middlesex College campus away from residences; therefore, noise impacts are anticipated within Middlesex College, yet not within Thomas A. Edison Park or the surrounding residential neighborhoods. As such, noise impacts can be characterized as negligible.</p>						

A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
4. Water quality/quantity		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> While surface and groundwater water quality and quantity impacts could result due to the proposed project, the implementation of mitigation procedures, as outlined below, would result in negligible adverse impacts.</p> <p>Additional impervious surfaces for turf sports fields and parking areas have the potential to increase runoff during storm events, change water temperatures, cause sedimentation and turbidity, and impact nutrient concentrations in surface waters. Potential impacts to surface waters would be minimized as stormwater associated with new impervious surfaces would be directed to stormwater management facilities to treat the stormwater prior to discharge to local surface waters. Middlesex County would maintain and monitor the implemented BMPs to minimize potential impacts to surface water quality. Additionally, short-term construction activities would result in the disturbance of land, potentially resulting in soil erosion and sedimentation of waterways and wetlands. These water resources, as well as any surface conduits to the aquifer recharge area, have the potential to carry contaminants and sediment into the groundwater and nearby surface waters. These impacts are typically successfully controlled or minimized through the implementation of an approved Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Plan and the installation of accepted SESC countermeasures.</p> <p>During construction of the project, groundwater quality degradation has the potential to occur as a result of spills or leaks of oil containing and oil storage equipment. The potential for such impacts to groundwater would be addressed proactively by Middlesex County enforcing equipment and material staging requirements noted in the NJPDES General Permit 5G3 for Construction Activity Stormwater. Middlesex County and their contractors would comply with the Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8) and apply strategic use of BMPs.</p> <p>The project would increase impervious surface area, potentially causing a long-term decrease in groundwater recharge rates, an increase in stormwater runoff, and introduction of additional automotive pollutants (i.e., oil, fuel) at the location of the proposed parking lot. Areas with higher groundwater recharge rates are assumed to have the highest potential for contamination and a reduction in recharge rates as a result of increased impervious surfaces. While the Project study area is largely comprised of land with a recharge rate of 0 inches per year, potential impacts to the groundwater aquifers would be minimized as stormwater associated with new impervious surfaces would be directed to stormwater management facilities to treat the stormwater prior to recharge into the groundwater. Middlesex County would maintain and monitor the implemented BMPs to minimize potential impacts to water quality and groundwater recharge.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
5. Stream flow characteristics	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> No direct impacts to streams are anticipated as a result of the project. The project area has a riparian zone associated with the nearby regulated water features and impacts to this riparian zone are anticipated to result from construction. Approximately 0.1 acres of riparian zone are anticipated to be disturbed by proposed temporary and permanent regulated activities; however, these impacts would have no impact on stream flow characteristics. As a result, no negative impacts are anticipated.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
6. Marine/estuarine	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> According to the NJDEP Surface Water Quality Standards, streams within the area of the Project are classified as Freshwater 2 Non-Trout/Saline-Estuarine 1 (FW2-NT/SE1). The dual designation indicates water where a boundary between fresh and saline water exists somewhere along the watercourse due to tidal influence. The FW2 designation indicates these freshwater tributaries are not considered to have exceptional or unique ecological, recreational, or water supply significance, and NT identifies surface waters that are generally not suitable for trout.</p> <p>While the NJDEP Surface Water Quality Standards classify the waters within the Project area as Saline/Estuarine, no waterways are located within the Project's limit of disturbance; therefore, no adverse</p>						

impacts are anticipated. Potential surface water quality impacts to offsite waterways, and mitigation for those impacts, is discussed in question 4.						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
7. Floodplains/wetlands		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> Floodplains extend into the Project's limit of disturbance. All activities proposed within the flood hazard area would be conducted in accordance with the NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules. This would be demonstrated in the NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Permit application during the permitting phase.</p> <p>The only regulated features under the NJDEP Freshwater Wetland Rules within the Project's limit of disturbance are headwater ditches and swales; therefore, no impacts to wetlands are expected. The total area of wetland transition area disturbance is anticipated to be 0.04 acres; therefore, the impact to wetlands is anticipated to be negligible. Any potential impacts to floodplains and wetlands would be minimal since they would be mitigated by NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Permit compliance.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
8. Land use/ownership patterns; property values; community livability		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> According to the 2015 NJDEP land use/land cover GIS dataset, the largest percentage of the Project area, 84 percent, is used for recreational purposes. Forested cover accounts for 13 percent of the Project area, while the remaining 3 percent of land is characterized as urban. As a result of the Project's construction, the acreage of recreational land would increase while forested and urban land would decrease. Specifically, approximately 10.5 acres of forested land would be impacted for construction of the Project. While land use within the park will change, land use patterns within the surrounding area would not be impacted, resulting in a negligible impact.</p> <p>Implementation of the Project would not result in any residential displacements. As a result, there would be no direct impact to property ownership or ownership patterns. The Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park Project could positively impact surrounding residential property values, as proximity to the destination athletic complex could be a draw for potential home buyers.</p> <p>Currently, Thomas A. Edison Park is one of the busiest in the County; as such, the need for more active recreation opportunities within the County is recommended. Based on existing park demand and future growth forecasts for Edison Township, the Project is responsive to the needs of Middlesex County residents, students, and those within the local community. The Project would support the health and wellbeing of its users and support a regional presence and destination as an athletic complex; therefore, the Project is expected to positively impact community livability.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
9. Circulation, transportation	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> No roadway changes or other transportation improvements are proposed as part of the Project; therefore, adverse impacts associated with circulation or transportation are not anticipated.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
10. Plant/animal/fish species of special concern and habitat; state/federal listed or proposed for listing	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> According to the NJDEP Landscape Project maps, no habitat for State or Federal threatened or endangered species is located within the Project's limit of disturbance. As a result, no adverse impacts are anticipated to plant, animal, or fish species of special concern and habitat for State and Federal listed or proposed for listing.</p>						

A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
11. Unique ecosystems, such as biosphere reserves, World Heritage sites, old growth forests, etc.	X					
<i>Explain:</i> No unique ecosystems, such as biosphere reserves, World Heritage sites, or old growth forests are present within the Project site; therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated.						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
12. Unique or important wildlife/habitat		X				
<i>Explain:</i> No unique or important wildlife or habitat are present within the Project area. As stated in question 10, according to the NJDEP Landscape Project maps, no habitat for State or Federal threatened or endangered species are located within the Project's limit of disturbance. A wooded wetlands located outside the Project's limit of disturbance are mapped on the NJDEP Landscape Project maps as foraging habitat for yellow-crowned night heron, a State threatened species, and snowy egret, a Special Concern Wildlife Species. Preliminary discussions with the NJDEP have indicated that the preferred habitat for foraging by yellow-crowned night heron is coastal wetlands; therefore, these wetlands may not provide preferred foraging habitat for this species. Though the project will not impact State and Federal Listed Threatened and Endangered Species habitat, the Division of Watershed Protection and Restoration (DWPR) – T/E Unit will provide comments to address any potential impacts to State and Federal Listed Threatened and Endangered Species during the permitting phase.						
As stated in question 7, no regulated freshwater wetlands are found within the Project's limit of disturbance, though disturbance of 0.04 acres of wetland transition area is anticipated. As per the NJDEP Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act Rules, a wetland transition area is defined as an upland area adjacent to a freshwater wetland which minimizes adverse impacts on the wetland or serves as an integral component of the wetlands ecosystem.						
Considering no impact to habitat for State or Federal threatened or endangered species is anticipated and a minimal impact of 0.04 acres to wetland transition area is anticipated, adverse impact to unique or important wildlife or habitat can be categorized as negligible.						
13. Unique or important fish/ habitat	X					
<i>Explain:</i> According to the NOAA Fisheries Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Mapper, EFH is documented within the Project area. However, no Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) or EFH Areas Protected from Fishing (EFHA) were identified by the NOAA Fisheries EFH Mapper Report. Though EFH habitat is documented within the Project area, no streams or waterways will be impacted by the Project; therefore, no adverse impacts to unique or important fish or fish habitat are anticipated.						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
14. Introduce or promote invasive species (plant or animal)	X					
<i>Explain:</i> All temporarily disturbed areas would be restored to their previously existing condition and elevation or to the condition depicted in the Landscape Plan. Temporarily disturbed areas would be reseeded with native species in accordance with an approved Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan from the Freehold Soil Conservation District. As no invasive species would be introduced to the site as a result of the Project, no adverse impacts are anticipated.						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
15. Recreation resources, including parks, open space, conservation areas, rec.		X				

trails, facilities, services, opportunities, public access, etc. (Most conversions exceed minor impacts)						
<p><i>Explain:</i> The Project will expand the recreational uses of Thomas A. Edison Park in order to meet the demand and future growth forecasts for Edison Township. The Project would be constructed almost entirely on two parcels of New Jersey NJDEP Green Acres-encumbered lands on Block 395, Lots 1.23 and 1.01. The Project would expand uses of the current park by adding new sports fields, comfort stations, pedestrian walkways, and additional parking. In addition to active recreation, current visitors utilize the park for more passive recreational activities, such as walking and birding. The loss of open space to accommodate the proposed Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas A. Edison Park project, and increased associated foot traffic, would have a slight negative impact on passive recreation and birding opportunities. Therefore, negligible adverse impacts associated with recreational resources are anticipated.</p> <p>As recreational facilities, services, and opportunities will be expanded in response to the needs of Middlesex County residents, students, and those within the local community, the impact to recreational facilities can be viewed as beneficial. All facilities would remain completely open and accessible to the public.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
16. Accessibility by populations with disabilities.	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> All walking trails, buildings, and fields associated with the Project have been designed and would be built to be ADA compliant by all applicable laws; therefore, no adverse impacts to accessibility by populations with disabilities are expected.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
17. Overall aesthetics, special characteristics/features	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> The Project would result in changes to the visual environment by introducing new visual elements or removing or replacing existing elements. Generally, the Project will result in a reduction of vegetation and grass athletic fields. The replacement of these fields with synthetic and evenly distributed fields will provide the park user with an uninterrupted crisp and clear view of the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park. The existing vegetation to the north and south of the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park will provide a relatively diverse view of man-made and natural landscape components; thereby, positively impacting the visual quality. The 500-foot diameter natural grass recreational cricket field would be located west of the ten proposed multi-sport synthetic fields. The circular design of this field adds complexity of shapes to the Athletic Fields' and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park design and will enhance the visual quality.</p> <p>Although the Project would result in changes in views throughout the impacted section of Thomas A. Edison Park, these changes would not constitute an adverse impact. No unique visual resources are expected to be adversely affected; however, the loss of grass fields interspersed with trees would impact the observer's visual experience of the area. To mitigate for this impact, a landscaping design plan would be developed to specifically outline the locations and types of permanent tree and shrub plantings. The existing vegetation along with the new landscaping would provide a more diverse view of man-made and natural landscape components; thereby, positively impacting the visual quality.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
18. Historical/cultural resources, including landscapes, ethnographic resources, viewsheds, etc.		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> The Project area is located within the Edison Facility Historic District (also referred to as the Raritan Arsenal Historic District), which was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1992 (7/15/1992). The period of significance for the historic district is from 1918, when the arsenal was</p>						

established, to 1964, when the arsenal was closed. Thomas A. Edison Park was developed in the mid-1970s and has no association with the historic district, other than being located within its boundaries; therefore, it is not considered to be historically significant. It is a modern park and does not contain any potentially significant historic buildings or structures. One element 50 years or older was identified in the proposed area of action: a series of simple concrete culverts that date from the mid-20th century. These culverts probably date from U.S. Army occupation of the site and would have been part of the Army's general improvement of the stormwater drainage of Raritan Arsenal. The culverts are standard mid-20th century culverts and lack distinguishing characteristics, such as inscribed dates or markings of any sort. As a result, they are not considered contributing elements to the Edison Facility Historic District. Potential stormwater management concerns would be addressed through stormwater management measures. Stormwater management measures would be designed to provide erosion control, groundwater recharge, stormwater runoff quantity control, and stormwater runoff quality treatment.

Although the Project is located within the boundaries of the NRHP-eligible Edison Facility Historic District, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has confirmed that the Project only has a low potential to affect historic and archaeological remains. Consequently, SHPO does not recommend further consideration prior to permit issuance. As a result, no adverse impacts to archaeological resources are anticipated as a result of the Project.

A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
19. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure	X					

Explain: According to the Middlesex County Open Space Report, sports events and picnics generated the greatest number of visitors to County parks in 2019. Through permitting fees, events generate revenue that help maintain park facilities. The introduction of thirteen multi-sport synthetic fields, sixteen hard surface tennis courts, a championship synthetic field and track with grandstand seating, and a 500-foot diameter natural grass cricket field is expected to result in an increase in revenue generated for the County through events permitting fees to help maintain the expanded park facilities.

The Project is expected to be a local and regional sports destination and, in addition to the direct impact to the County through revenue generation, the Project has the potential to positively impact local businesses and restaurants by bringing new clientele to the area. The sports complex would accommodate parking for 1,350 vehicles, indicating a considerable volume of visitors are expected to visit the Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park. Two microbreweries are located within the 500-foot study area, and over a dozen restaurants can be found within 3 miles from the Proposed Project, particularly along U.S. Route 1. An increase in visitors to Thomas A. Edison Park can be expected to positively impact these food and beverage service establishments. Therefore, it was determined that the Project would not result in adverse impacts, as beneficial impacts to the region's economy are anticipated.

A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
20. Minority and low-income populations	X					

Explain: An environmental justice analysis consistent with Federal guidance was conducted to determine whether disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations would result from implementation of the Project. For the purposes of this analysis, the study area is defined as those census blocks that are located within the study area used to determine impacts associated with air quality, noise, and traffic. All group blocks within the study area met the criteria designations for both the 1997 CEQ guidelines, as three census blocks contained populations in which minority populations exceed 50 percent of the population, and one census block contained over 50 percent of families who identify themselves as living below the poverty line.

Analysis of the long-term impacts associated with traffic and air quality indicate that roadway changes associated with the Project would improve traffic congestion conditions within the project area, resulting in an anticipated reduction of vehicle operational emissions and a resulting improvement in both localized and regional air quality conditions. Additionally, roadway improvements associated with the Project will take place

within the Middlesex College campus and therefore away from residential properties. As a result, existing and future noise impacts are not expected to impact Project area residential communities; therefore, impacts on minority and low-income and minority populations associated with Project are not expected.						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
21. Energy resources (geothermal, fossil fuels, etc.)		X				
<p><i>Explain:</i> Construction of the Project will require the use of energy resources. If temporary electricity hookups are required, energy would be provided by Public Service Electric and Gas Company. The use of gasoline powered portable generators would also be possible. During the operational phase of the Project, the following Project components would require electricity: restrooms, remote comfort stations and concessions, fieldhouse for concessions, and performance lighting. The electricity would be provided by Public Service Electric and Gas Company through the company's basic generation service. The Project's energy consumption is expected to result in negligible adverse impacts.</p> <p>Additionally, no known energy resources are present within the project area; therefore, no direct adverse impact to energy resources are anticipated.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
22. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies	X					
<p><i>Explain:</i> According to the 2020 US Census Tract Reference Map, no Federal or State American Indian reservations are located within the project area; therefore, no impact to tribal land use plans are anticipated. The compatibility of the Project with surrounding land uses and its consistency with local zoning and master plans were evaluated with the Township of Edison Master Plan, Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the Township of Edison's zoning map. It was determined that the Project would not result in any changes to the area's zoning or land use patterns. By building upon existing park facilities, the Project would maintain existing zoning and land use patterns while supporting projected population growth within the Township of Edison and Middlesex County.</p> <p>The Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan of 2022 outlines several Middlesex County Destination 2040 planning goals that the Project supports. One specific goal aims to "assure that adequate recreational facilities are available to meet the needs of residents." Feedback from public engagement studies indicate that Middlesex County residents are interested in more open spaces and parks, including additional amenities in parks, youth activities, pathways, and improved maintenance of existing park facilities. The Project would assist the County in meeting this goal while addressing community needs by adding new sports fields, comfort stations, pedestrian walkways, and additional parking. Therefore, the Project is consistent with the Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan.</p> <p>The Township of Edison Master Plan outlines the need for active and passive recreation within the planning district the Project study area is located within, PD 5. Specifically, the future land use plan designates Thomas A. Edison Park to be used for public park and recreation purposes, a use the Proposed Project would fully support. Therefore, the Project is consistent with the Township of Edison Master Plan.</p> <p>Overall, no adverse impacts to agency or tribal land use plans or policies are anticipated.</p>						
A. IMPACTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	None/NA	Negligible	Minor	Moderate EA/EIS required	Major EA/EIS required	More Data Needed to Determine
23. Other important environmental resources associated with the proposal that should be addressed						
<i>Explain:</i>						

B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?		X	
<p><i>Explain:</i> Significant impacts on public health and safety are not anticipated. Currently, Thomas A. Edison Park is one of the busiest in Middlesex County; as such, the need for more active recreation opportunities within the County is recommended. Based on existing park demand and future growth forecasts for Edison Township, the Project is responsive to the needs of Middlesex County residents, students, and those within the local community. The Project would support the health and wellbeing of its users; therefore, the Project is expected to positively impact the surrounding community. The increase in park usership could increase the potential for emergencies associated with sporting events; however, local police and emergency services will continue to manage these events, as consistent with existing operations.</p>			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands, wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; prime farmlands; wetlands (E.O. 11990); floodplains (E.O 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X	
<p><i>Explain:</i> The Project will not impact refuge lands, wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks, sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. The Project is located within the boundaries of the NRHP-eligible Edison Facility Historic District, yet the Project is considered to have no adverse effect on the historic district and any contributing buildings associated with the historic district.</p> <p>The Project will improve upon existing park recreation features in order to meet the needs and demands of the surrounding community. For example, the Project would be responsive to the popularity and demand within the surrounding area's Indian American population for a cricket field. Cricket teams and leagues are expected to draw from both the local community and Middlesex College students; therefore, the Project would include a 500-foot diameter natural grass recreational cricket field. In addition, the project would include ten multi-sport synthetic fields lined for lacrosse and soccer; three multi-sport synthetic fields lined for baseball, lacrosse, and soccer; a championship synthetic field and track with large grandstands; a playground; and sixteen hard surface tennis courts.</p> <p>The Project is located within the 500-year floodplains for the Raritan River. During the permitting phase of the Project, the flood hazard area would be determined, and all activities proposed within the flood hazard area would be conducted in accordance with the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules. This would be demonstrated in the NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Permit application during the permitting phase, thereby resulting in no significant impacts to floodplains.</p> <p>The Project is located within the New Jersey Coastal Plain Aquifer System sole source aquifer; however, impacts to groundwater, as a result of long-term operational effects or short-term construction effects, are not anticipated. Middlesex County and their contractors would comply with the Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8) and apply strategic use of BMPs. While the project would increase impervious surface area; potentially causing a long-term decrease in groundwater recharge rates, an increase in stormwater runoff, and introduction of additional automotive pollutants (i.e., oil, fuel) at the location of the proposed parking lot; potential impacts to the groundwater aquifers would be minimized as stormwater associated with new impervious surfaces would be directed to stormwater management facilities to treat the stormwater prior to</p>			

recharge into the groundwater. Middlesex County would maintain and monitor the implemented BMPs to minimize potential impacts to water quality and groundwater recharge.			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)]?		X	
<i>Explain:</i> As no significant environmental effects are anticipated to result from the Project, it follows that no highly controversial environmental effects are anticipated.			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		X	
<i>Explain:</i> An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared in accordance with New Jersey Executive Order No. 215 to examine the effects on the natural and built environments that could potentially result from the construction of the Middlesex County Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park project. As per EO 215 guidelines, this EIS provided a description of the proposed project, a description of the environment prior to the implementation of the project, methods of promoting appropriate environmental design and methods of mitigating adverse environmental impacts, strategies for avoidance of adverse impacts, and an alternative to the proposed project. The EIS was not prepared in accordance to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); therefore, the EIS did not follow the NEPA review process, it was not subject to a public review period, and the process did not end with the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).			
During this EIS Preparation process, no highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks were identified.			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		X	
<i>Explain:</i> Significant environmental impacts are not anticipated as a result of the Project. Since significant environmental impacts would not result from the decision to approve this Project proposal, no precedent could be established which would result in potentially significant environmental effects in the future.			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		X	
<i>Explain:</i> An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared in accordance with New Jersey Executive Order No. 215 (EO 215) to examine the effects on the natural and built environments that could potentially result from the construction of the Middlesex County Athletic Fields and Buildings in Thomas Edison Park project. As a part of this process, direct, indirect, and cumulative consequences were identified for all environmental resources investigated. During this process, no individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects were identified.			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA	Yes	No	Maybe

If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...			(need more data)
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office. (Attach SHPO Comments)		X	
<p>Explain: The Project area is located within the boundaries of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible Edison Facility Historic District (also referred to as the Raritan Arsenal Historic District). The Edison Facility Historic District was determined eligible for the NRHP in 1992 (7/15/1992), and the period of significance for the historic district is from 1918, when the arsenal was established, to 1964, when the arsenal was closed. Two buildings that date from the arsenal's occupation of the project area are extant on Patrol Road, Standard Magazine No. 465 and Standard Magazine No. 466. Both buildings are located outside the area of proposed action.</p> <p>Thomas A. Edison Park was developed in the mid-1970s and has no association with the historic district, other than being located within its boundaries; therefore, it is not considered to be historically significant. It is a modern park and does not contain any potentially significant historic buildings or structures. One element 50 years or older which was identified in the area of proposed action is a series of simple concrete culverts that date from the mid-20th century. These culverts likely date from U.S. Army occupation of the site and would have been part of the Army's general improvement of the stormwater drainage of Raritan Arsenal. The culverts are standard mid-20th century culverts and lack distinguishing characteristics, such as inscribed dates or markings of any sort. As a result, the culverts aren't considered contributing elements to the Edison Facility Historic District., and the proposed action would not be considered to have an adverse effect on the historic district and any contributing buildings associated with the historic district. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has confirmed that the proposed action only has a low potential to affect historic and archaeological remains. Consequently, SHPO does not recommend further consideration prior to permit issuance. As a result, it was determined that there is minimal potential for significant archaeological resources to be impacted by the Proposed Project.</p>			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
8. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X	
<p>Explain: According to the NJDEP Landscape Project maps, no habitat for State or Federal threatened or endangered species are located within the Project's proposed limit of disturbance. As a result, no adverse impacts are anticipated.</p>			
B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
9. Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		X	
<p>Explain: The Project will remain in compliance with all Federal, State, local, and tribal laws imposed for the protection of the environment. In order to ensure compliance, permits, approvals, and/or coordination with agencies required to construct the Proposed Project include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: NJDEP Executive Order No. 215 (EO 215) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) All departments, agencies, and authorities of the State, or projects funded by the same, are required to prepare and submit to the NJDEP an Environmental Assessment (EA) or EIS in support of major construction projects. Projects with anticipated construction costs in excess of \$3 million are subject to the preparation of an EA, while projects with both construction costs in excess of \$5 million and land disturbance in excess of five acres are subject to the preparation of an EIS. As project construction cost would exceed \$5 million and</p>			

land disturbance would be more than five acres, the Project requires preparation of an NJDEP EO 215 EIS. Preparation of an EIS pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was not required; therefore, the EIS prepared was not done so in accordance with the NEPA review process.

Freshwater Wetlands Permit

The New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:7A) govern activities within freshwater wetlands, transition areas, and/or State open waters (SOWs). The Project would result in unavoidable impacts to freshwater wetlands, freshwater wetland transition areas, and SOWs; therefore, a Freshwater Wetland permit would be required.

Flood Hazard Area Permit

The New Jersey Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13) govern activities within flood hazard areas and the 100-year floodplain. The objective of these rules is to minimize potential damage to public or private property, to protect and enhance the public's health and welfare by minimizing the degradation of water quality from point and non-point sources discharging into the flood hazard area, and to protect wildlife and fisheries by preserving and enhancing water quality and the environment associated with the floodplains. A Flood Hazard Area Permit is required for the construction, installation or alteration of any structure or permanent fill along, in, or across, the channel or floodplain of any watercourse. This permit is also required for any alteration of, or discharge into the watercourse itself. The Proposed Project will impact a regulated stream and its associated riparian zone; therefore, a Flood Hazard Area Permit will be required.

New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) General Permit 5G3 for Construction Activity Stormwater

A stormwater construction general permit is required under the NJDEP NJPDES program. This authorization applies to point source stormwater discharges from construction activities (e.g., clearing, grading, excavating) that disturb one acre or more. The Proposed Project would disturb more than one acre of land; therefore, a stormwater construction general permit would be required.

Stormwater Management Approval

If a project or activity meets the definition of a "major development", then the project or activity shall comply with the Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8). "Major development" means any development that provides for disturbing one or more acres of land, creating one-quarter acre or more of regulated impervious surface, creating one-quarter acre or more of regulated motor vehicle surface, or the creation of a combination of impervious surface and regulated motor vehicle surface that totals an area of one-quarter acre or more. Disturbance for the purpose of this rule is the placement of impervious surface or motor vehicle surface or exposure and/or movement of soil or bedrock or clearing, cutting, or removing of vegetation. Projects undertaken by any government agency which otherwise meet the definition of "major development", but which do not require approval under the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 *et seq.*, are also considered "major development". As the Proposed Project would result in the disturbance of more than one acre of land and would create new impervious surfaces of one-quarter acre or more, the project must comply with the Stormwater Management Rules.

Freehold Soil Conservation District Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Plan Certification

Approval of development by all public agencies is conditioned upon approval of a plan for SESC. Certification is required for any activity that disturbs more than 5,000 square feet of surface area of land. Certification is also required for demolition of structures, construction of parking lots, public facilities, operation of mining or quarrying activities, and for clearing or grading of land for other than agricultural or horticultural purposes. Public facility means any building, pipeline, highway, electricity, telephone, or other transmission line; or any other structure to be constructed by a public utility, municipality, county, or State, or any agency or instrumentality thereof. The Proposed Project would disturb more than 5,000 square feet of surface area of land; therefore, an SESC plan certification would be required.

B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		X	

Explain: An environmental justice analysis consistent with Federal guidance was conducted to determine whether disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations would result from implementation of the Project. For the purposes of this analysis, the study area is defined as those census blocks that are located within the study area used to determine impacts associated with air quality, noise, and traffic. All group blocks within the study area met the criteria designations for both the 1997 CEQ guidelines, as three census blocks contained populations in which minority populations exceed 50 percent of the population, and one census block contained over 50 percent of families who identify themselves as living below the poverty line.

Analysis of the long-term impacts associated with traffic and air quality indicate that roadway changes associated with the Project would improve traffic congestion conditions within the project area, resulting in an anticipated reduction of vehicle operational emissions and a resulting improvement in both localized and regional air quality conditions. Additionally, roadway improvements associated with the Project will take place within the Middlesex College campus and therefore away from residential properties. As a result, existing and future noise impacts are not expected to impact project area residential communities. As such, disproportionately high and adverse impacts associated with Proposed Project on minority and low-income and minority populations are not expected.

B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
--	-----	----	---------------------------

11. Limit access to access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?		X	
---	--	---	--

Explain: Access to the site would not be limited as a result of the Project. Access for ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners would remain completely accessible, as it is presently. Additionally, construction of the Project would not disrupt the physical integrity of the site any greater than construction of the former Raritan Arsenal and existing Thomas A. Edson Park facilities. As such, the Project would not significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of Indian sacred sites.

B. MANDATORY CRITERIA If your FLP proposal is approved, would it...	Yes	No	Maybe (need more data)
--	-----	----	---------------------------

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area, or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?		X	
--	--	---	--

Explain: All temporarily disturbed areas would be restored to their previously existing condition and elevation or to the condition depicted in the Landscape Plan. Temporarily disturbed areas would be reseeded with native species in accordance with an approved Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan from the Freehold Soil Conservation District. As no invasive species would be introduced to the site as a result of the Project, no adverse impacts are anticipated.

E. OTHER INFORMATION

(Please answer the following questions/provide requested information.)

- **Are personnel preparing this form familiar with the site?**
Yes, personnel preparing this form have studied the site using GIS data, historical reports, and aerial imaging. Personnel were provided field data by onsite personnel to gain an understanding of site conditions in order to prepare this form.
- **Did personnel conduct a site visit? (If yes, attach meeting notes or additional pages noting when site visit took place, who attended, etc.)**
Personnel preparing this form did not conduct a site visit. As stated above, the form was completed using data provided by onsite personnel and additional desktop data sources .
- **Is the project covered in a previous or associated NEPA document?**
This project is not covered in a previous or associated NEPA document; however, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared in accordance with New Jersey Executive Order No. 215 to examine the effects on the natural and built environments that could potentially result from the construction of the Proposed Project.
- **If so, document name:** Not applicable.
- **Is the project still consistent with the associated NEPA document? (If no, you may need to prepare plan/environmental assessment [EA] or environmental impact statement [EIS].)**
The project is still consistent with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared in accordance with New Jersey Executive Order No. 215. This EIS was not prepared in accordance to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- **Is the environmental document accurate and up-to-date? (If no, you may need to prepare plan/EA or EIS.)** Not applicable.

FONSI ROD (Check) Date approved: Not applicable.

- **Are there any interested or affected agencies or parties?**
The Proposed Project is located within two parcels of property which are encumbered by the NJDEP Green Acres Program; therefore, coordination with the NJDEP Green Acres Program was conducted throughout the Project planning process. Further coordination with the NJDEP during a permitting pre-application meeting and during the New Jersey Executive Order No. 215 EIS submission and review process.
 - **Did you make a diligent effort to contact them?**
 - Yes, Middlesex County and/or their consultants were successful in coordinating with all relevant State agencies. Two meetings took place in reference to the NJDEP Green Acres Program. A meeting between Middlesex County and the NJDEP Green Acres Program took place on January 25, 2023, and an NJDEP Green Acres Program – Change in Use Public Meeting took place with the general public on March 2, 2023. A pre-application meeting was conducted with the NJDEP on December 7, 2022.
- **Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed?**
Yes, Middlesex County and/or its consultants coordinated closely with all relevant State agencies throughout the course of the Proposed Project.

(If yes, attach additional pages re: consultations, including the name, dates, and a summary of comments from other agencies or tribal contacts.)
Meeting minutes from NJDEP pre-application meeting on December 7, 2022, are attached.
- **Are there any connected, cumulative, or similar actions as part of the proposed action? Is this proposal part of a larger project?**

The Proposed Project was planned in consideration of the projects outlined in the *Middlesex County: Community, Innovation and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan*. While the details of the projects outlined in the plan have been refined and modified, the attached *Strategic Investment Plan* details the other actions to be taken by Middlesex County to address the current needs and future growth of the College while incorporating opportunities to integrate County programs and facilities that can enhance the trajectory of Middlesex County.

(If yes, attach additional pages detailing the other actions.) See the attached Middlesex County: Community, Innovation and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWERS

The following individual(s) provided input in the preparation of the environmental screening form. List all reviewers including name, title, agency, field of expertise. Keep all environmental review records and data on this proposal in compliance file for any future program review and/or audit.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name: Alison Cucco | Title: Environmental Planner |
| Agency/Company: AECOM | Date of Inspection: NA |
| Phone No.: 732-564-3659 | Email address: alison.cucco@aecom.com |
| 2. Name: Timothy Hand | Title: Planning Department Manger |
| Agency/Company: AECOM | Date of Inspection: NA |
| Phone No.: 732-718-3285 | Email address: timothy.hand@aecom.com |

The following individuals conducted a site inspection to verify field conditions.

List name of inspector(s), title, agency, and date(s) of inspection.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Name: John Freeman, PE | Title: Executive Vice President\Director of Public Services |
| Agency/Company: Najarian Associates | Date of Inspection: June 20, 2023 |
| Phone No.: 732-389-0220 | Email address: jfreeman@najarian.com |

H. SIGNATURES

By signing the form below, you affirm the following: you have either completed a site visit or are familiar with the specifics of the site; you have consulted with affected agencies and tribes; and you, to the best of your knowledge, have answered the questions posed in the checklist correctly.

Applicant Certification of ESF

I certify that a site inspection was conducted for each site involved in this proposal and to the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this Environmental Screening Form (ESF) is accurate based on available resource data. All resulting notes, reports and inspector signatures are stored in the applicant's NEPA file for this proposal and available upon request.

Signature:  Date: 9-13-23 AS

Typed Name, Title, Agency: Ronald Sendner, County Engineer, Middlesex County

~~~~~  
**National Park Service Environmental Recommendation**

*On the basis of the environmental impact information for this proposal as presented in Part B, Justification for Acquiring Property, and in this ESF, I recommend the following NEPA pathway:*

- This proposal qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion (CE).
  - CE Item #
  - Explanation:
  
- This proposal requires an Environmental Assessment (EA). The applicant will be notified and provided the EA template and supporting documentation.
  
- This proposal may require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). NPS guidance will be provided to the applicant.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_, **Federal Lands to Parks Program**