

Borough of Little Silver

Settled 1667

Incorporated 1923



What is the Sickles Park Project?

In July 2016, the Mayor and Council retained the services of professional consultants from Suburban Consulting Engineers, Inc. and initiated a multi-month process to develop a comprehensive plan to serve as the roadmap to rehabilitate the Borough existing parks, open spaces and fields. The Suburban Consulting Engineers completed an inventory and conducted inspections to determine which, if any were in disrepair, what was salvageable, and which may not meet current codes and standards. As a result, the **"Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan"** was organized and recommendations for improvements were made to the Mayor, Council, Administration, Recreation Committee and residents. The plan had nine project recommendations to ensure Little Silver parks and recreation facilities continued to support our community. The redesign of Sickles Park was one of the nine recommendations. Below are key takeaways from the report on Sickles Park:

- The backbone to the redesign, the configuration of Harrison Ave. is essential in achieving not only a more streamlined traffic pattern but a more expansive open space footprint. The recommendation focused on eliminating the western branch of the roadway which currently serves as both an entrance and exit and expanding the eastern branch that currently serves exclusively as an entrance. The elimination of the western branch of Harrison Ave provides the potential to expand the walking track, expand the popular playground, provide a separate picnic area, and add an additional parking lot in the reconfigured space.
- Reconfiguration of the roadways; elimination of the existing exit to consolidate with a new entry; enabling the park to better facilitate truck traffic and heavy traffic times.
- Shifting of the new entrance/exit to allow more room between the barns and roadway: allowing for a sidewalk and more useable areas of the park.

- The park reconfiguration will include expanded parking to accommodate increased parking needs during high park demand times.
- Provide a new way to support the Community Garden and ensure the park maintains sufficient green and shade space.

For more details on the **Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan** click here.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sh2BD2fePL9j64uc601YJUGgSMoJW-fl/view?usp=drive_web

Why is the Sickles Park Project happening now?

The Sickles Park project recommendations were reviewed and approved in 2017. Funding for the project was being secured when Covid interrupted the process. In 2022, the Council re-reviewed the project and solicited input from residents. Based on feedback from the community, the plan was modified to provide additional parking and an enhanced roadway, while maintaining the aesthetics and function of the park. In addition, a suggestion was brought forward to re-configure the existing parking lot to have a one-way entrance and one-way exit. The current parking lot entrance would be closed, and additional parking spaces would be gained from this realignment to include the relocation of the flagpole to a more advantageous location and the gaining of additional parking spaces.

How is the town funding the Sickle's Park project?

The cost of the project is being paid primarily from 2 main sources: Grants from the Monmouth County Open Space Program (one grant already awarded, second grant is pending) and as a budget item in our own Municipal Open Space account. The total cost estimate is \$527,000.

What is the status of the Project?

The second Monmouth County grant application has been submitted and is pending with the expectation that a response will be received by November 2023. If the grant is awarded, we would expect to begin work in the Spring of 2024. The updated engineering drawings are available here for review.

How do the revisions impact our green space?

Providing a variety of parks, recreational areas and green spaces is a key priority for borough residents and the governing body. Little Silver's approach to green

spaces continues to evolve as new guiding principles and best practices are provided from accredited sources. As such, the approach to Sickles Park is being adjusted. The original park was designed with many non-native specimens, as well as specimens with shorter life spans (e.g. 20 years). While some specimens in the current park will be removed, the plan will replace all removed specimens with native plants, focusing on plants with longer life spans. The portion of the road - way that is being removed will become green space. The proposal plan ensures Sickles Park will have more trees and plants than the current park; guaranteeing the park will continue to thrive for decades to come.

What's next?

The project is in the final phases of review and development. Based on feedback, the town has requested a traffic study to be conducted by The Monmouth County Engineering and Road Dept. Additionally, when additional information is gathered to include traffic data, there are plans to host both an interactive workshop and onsite review of the proposed plans; providing residents to understand the scope of the project and offer feedback. If you would like to participate in these community sessions, [click here to sign up for Little Silver Constant Contact](#).