



Piping Rock Park Project Information Updated August 2018

Concept Development History:

Starting in early 2014, the Recreation Commission and Recreation Director evaluated recreational needs within the Borough for a new multi-purpose Soccer, Field Hockey, Lacrosse, and Football Field. Later in 2014 the Borough Council, at the recommendation of the Recreation Commission and Recreation Director, developed concept plans for Piping Rock Park for the purposes of submitting a grant application to the Monmouth County Recreation and Open Space Program. The project consisted of the removal of the existing baseball/softball field to allow for the installation of a synthetic turf multi-purpose field, walking paths, spectator bleachers, and relocated 9/11 Memorial. That application was awarded a \$250,000 grant from Monmouth County Parks and Recreation. After that grant was awarded, the baseball and softball communities voiced their concerns over the loss of the field at Piping Rock Park.

In 2015, the Borough made a phase 2 application for Piping Rock Park which consisted of all the improvements of the 2014 application plus a synthetic turf baseball/softball field, new playground, expanded parking in the Carton Street and East River Road parking lots, and additional walking paths. That application was also funded by Monmouth County Parks and Recreation with a \$137,000 grant award. After the award of the grant, the community raised concern over the installation of a synthetic turf field and the potential of environmental health risks.

The Mayor and Council made the decision to change from synthetic turf to natural grass and solicit an amended approval from Monmouth County Parks and Recreation. Based on the concerns raised by the public, the County was willing to allow a change in the grant application, but required the submission of a revised concept plan.

The Borough retained Yorkanis & White to perform a boundary and topographic survey of Piping Rock Park so that a new concept plan could be developed. The new concept plan eliminated the synthetic turf in favor of a natural grass multi-purpose field and relocated the baseball/softball field to where the tennis courts currently exist. The existing memorials in Piping Rock Park would still be relocated to new locations within the park. Walking paths, a new playground, and the expanded parking in Carton Street and East River Road parking lots were still incorporated into the new concept plan. The Borough received Monmouth County approval for the plan revisions in February 2018.

In April of 2018 a geotechnical investigation and analysis was conducted to determine existing soil and drainage characteristics. The engineered plan was developed and a preliminary construction cost estimate was generated allowing the introduction of a funding Ordinance in May 2018 by the Mayor and Council. By June 2018, the plans were developed enough to allow the Borough to host an Open House for properties previously noticed in 2015 of changes to the plans.

As with many Borough projects, the improvements at Piping Rock Park have evolved since their inception in 2014. This evolution is typical considering the process of taking a project from concept plan to engineered plans and based on feedback the Mayor and Council have received from the community. The final plan has been further revised to incorporate much of the community feedback. A 180' x 330' multi-purpose natural grass playing field to accommodate soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, and practice football will be constructed on the western side of the Park. The

existing baseball/softball field will be rotated 45° and relocated approximately 60' to the west. This reconfiguration will accommodate a 46/60 baseball/softball field with a 250' outfield. This is similar to the current size, which accommodates all user groups except the "Pony" League, which currently plays at Riverside Park. This plan change allows the existing tennis courts to remain. The existing 911 Memorial near E. River Road will remain in its current location. The KDM 911 Memorial will be relocated to align with the new baseball/softball field and will be prominently featured as you enter Piping Rock Park from Carton Street. While construction is underway, the memorial will be stored in the Department of Public Works building. Walking paths will traverse the park connecting the East River Road, Carton Street and Forrest Avenue entrances. All the facilities, including walking paths, will meet current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. A new playground will be installed on the west side of the tennis courts, just north of the current playground. The existing hedges on East River Road and vegetative buffer and fences between the Ridge Road properties are being preserved. The East River Road parking lot will be expanded to provide additional parking with ADA compliant parking facilities. The Carton Street parking lot will be reconfigured to accommodate the new field layout. Traffic circulation will be changed to one-way to make for an overall safer environment.

August 2018 FAQ

1. *Has the Borough obtained Monmouth County Parks & Recreation approval for the current plan?*

Yes, the Borough Engineer met with the Grants Program Director and obtained approval for the current plan.

2. *Will the existing tennis courts remain in Piping Rock Park?*

Yes. Based on the community feedback and support to preserve the existing tennis courts, the plan has been reconfigured so the tennis courts remain intact.

3. *Will the tennis courts remain open during construction?*

For safety precautions, the tennis courts may need to be temporarily closed based on specific construction activity.

4. *Will synthetic turf be used for any of the field space in Piping Rock Park?*

No, based on the community feedback synthetic turf will NOT be utilized.

5. *Will the existing 911 Memorial nearest East River Road be preserved?*

Yes, the existing 911 Memorial nearest East River Road will be preserved. It is our intent to keep the existing memorial and paver area in its current condition. The existing benches will be replaced to coordinate with new benches being installed throughout the park.

6. *Where will the Keith D McHeffey (KDM) Memorial be located?*

The KDM Memorial will be relocated to align with the new baseball/softball backstop (similar to its current location). The KDM Memorial will be prominently featured within a landscaped area behind home plate as you enter the park from Carton Street.

7. *Will the existing hill be preserved?*

No, to accommodate the proposed park grading, the hill will need to be leveled. The proposed grading provides for a fully ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant walkways and accessible park elements.

8. *Is the existing playground preserved in the current plan? If not, where will the playground be located?*

While the existing playground has been a wonderful addition to the park since its construction during the McHeffey Foundation renovations, it is currently in need of replacement and conflicts with the current park layout and grading. The proposed plan will construct a new playground to the west of the existing tennis courts and just north of the current playground equipment.

9. *Is a walking path through the park proposed?*

Yes, a fully ADA compliant walkway will traverse the park providing access to all park elements. The walking paths will offer access to/from East River Road, Carton Street and Forrest Avenue.

10. *What are the anticipated traffic and parking impacts with the new plan?*

Based on the existing and proposed park configurations, there are no anticipated impacts to vehicular traffic volume or parking demands. Traffic volume is dependent on the number of game events and/or practice events simultaneously or back-to-back scheduled in a park. With shared field space, only one team sporting event/practice can occur at a time. This is no different than the current park accommodations.

11. *What are the expanded East River Road parking lot impacts?*

The expanded parking area on East River Road has been scaled back from prior plan iterations to provide an evergreen buffer between the adjoining property at 137 East River Road. The parking lot will egress at the newly constructed driveway apron on the southeastern corner of the park. The parking lot on East River Road currently has 8 parking stalls. The newly revised plan will provide 10 more parking stalls including ADA compliant parking facilities. A stop condition will exist for all traffic exiting the East River Road Parking lot. Appropriate line of sight distances will be established for vehicles leaving the park based on industry accepted engineering standards.

12. *Can a centralized pedestrian entrance be provided from East River Road?*

Yes, a centralized pedestrian entrance from East River Road has been added to the current plan where the existing parking lot exit drive is located. Full height curbing and decorative bollards will be located to prevent vehicular access yet allow for pedestrian entrance to the park.

13. *Can any of the existing trees in the park be preserved?*

Yes, a number of the existing trees throughout the park are being preserved. While trees cannot be maintained within the playing field area, we have evaluated which trees can be preserved based on the current park plan and which of those trees should be preserved

based on their current health and condition. As a result, we will attempt to preserve a number of trees along the north property line and much of the existing trees and vegetation along the south side of the park (back of the Ridge Road properties). We will also preserve the privet hedges along East River Road and will be planting a similar hedge row along Carton Street. Additional tree plantings and landscaping will occur as part of the proposed project, but will also occur over time as the park matures.

14. *Can the existing vegetative buffer and wisteria along back of Ridge Road properties be preserved?*

In further review of the project, we have determined the existing fence and vegetative buffer along the south side of the park can remain intact. The existing fence is in good condition and does not require replacement.

15. *Can gates be provided from Ridge Road properties into Piping Rock Park?*

Given the ability to preserve the fence and existing vegetation, the ability to add gates is not practical.

16. *Can biking paths be provided within Piping Rock Park?*

We do not propose any biking specific paths within Piping Rock Park. The paths are wide enough to accommodate children (and parents) bicycle riding through the park. The Carton Street parking lot, when not in use, is a great place to allow children an opportunity to ride their bikes without vehicular traffic.

17. *What happens to the existing lights? Is there new lighting proposed in the project?*

The existing lighting within Piping Rock Park is owned and operated by the American Youth Football Program (formerly Pop Warner). Any impacts to the electrical wires servicing the existing lights will be repaired or replaced. No lighting improvements are being proposed by the Borough.

18. *Why did the Borough stockpile soil in Piping Rock Park?*

We recognize the inconvenience the soil stockpile presents to adjoining property owners. An opportunity to acquire inexpensive clean Rumson soil, which meets the physical requirements for good field design and drainage, presented itself during the construction project underway at the high school. The soil stockpile will be utilized early in the construction process, minimizing the duration of its presence. Purchasing this soil from the High School Project saved Rumson Taxpayers in excess of \$50,000 on the Piping Rock Park Improvement Project.

19. *What is the construction schedule?*

If a successful bid is received and awarded, we estimate construction should begin within two weeks from the award of contract and the project should be substantially complete by year end.

20. What is the project cost?

The Consulting Engineer is still developing engineering plans based on the most recent sketch. With prior plan iterations, the estimated construction cost for the Piping Rock Park Improvement Project was \$750,000. We believe this remains a reasonable estimate, but will have an update once plans are further developed. The Bond Ordinance adopted in May 2018 allows for funding the project (construction and consulting engineering services) through general funds, recreation funds, and the use of Monmouth County Grants. Through the two applications made, the Borough received \$387,000 in grant funding for the improvements to Piping Rock Park. The Monmouth County Grant program is reimbursement based, which requires the Borough to budget for the full project cost and obtain reimbursement at the completion of the work.

21. How many children are enrolled in the Recreation Program?

Overall Recreation Program services 3,800 non-adult participants. Based on the facilities offered at Piping Rock Park (excluding Tennis and passive recreation), the following recreation programs will share time at Piping Rock Park and other Borough parks:

- Baseball & Softball 360 participants
- Soccer 500 participants
- Lacrosse 180 participants
- Field Hockey Clinic 30 participants
- Flag Football 500 participants

These are Borough-wide approximate participation numbers and vary slightly year-to-year. These numbers do not include Men’s Softball, American Youth Football, Rumson Middle School, or Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School usage.

22. What are the age groups for field use?

The fields will continue to be used by all age groups. The Borough Recreation Department has programs which serve children ages 5 through 13 (K to 8). Additionally, young children will enjoy the new and safer playground. The park will still be used by other age groups including Men’s Softball, Recreation Sponsored Sports Clinics, and occasional use by the Rumson Middle School and Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School.

23. Will travel sports utilize the field over recreation programs?

No, for at least the past 15 years, recreation sports (both children and adults), school sports, and travel sports have used Piping Rock Park’s fields. This mixture of usage will not change as a result of the improvement project.

24. Is there availability of existing park land or the option to purchase land for playing field construction?

The Borough is always interested in the acquisition of additional open and recreation space. We regularly evaluate the Borough Parks to confirm they meet the needs of our community. New park improvements are undertaken to meet the increased demands of our Recreation Programs. Unfortunately, at this time there is limited available open/vacant land for the creation of new parks or expansion of existing parks. Through the recommendations of our

Recreation Commission, we will continue to evaluate facility configurations in all of our parks to best meet the needs of our community.

25. *Can a community garden be incorporated into the design?*

The need for a community garden was brought to our attention by one of the park's neighbors. This is a great idea for our community. Unfortunately, the various configurations of Piping Rock Park do not accommodate the addition of a community garden. The Mayor and Council, with the support of our Borough Staff, will investigate other opportunities to create a community garden in the Borough.

26. *Will food trucks and vendors be allowed in Piping Rock Park?*

No food trucks or vendors of any type are permitted within any Borough Park.

27. *Will Piping Rock Park be used for tournaments?*

Due to Piping Rock Park only having accommodations to play a single sport at a given time, the park does not lend itself to hosting tournaments with multiple games going on at the same time.

28. *Will buses for teams be utilized for games/practices?*

We do not anticipate any buses utilizing the parking lots to transport teams. Since most teams are local, players are typically brought to the park via family members or carpooling with other teammates.

29. *Can a gathering plan be added into the Piping Rock Park design?*

The most popular gathering place within Piping Rock Park once the project is complete will be around the new playground and existing 911 Memorial. Park benches will be installed surrounding the playground and along walkways throughout the park.

30. *What NJDEP approvals are required?*

No NJDEP permit approvals are required for the proposed Piping Rock Park Improvement project.

31. *Can people use the fields/park when sports are active?*

Currently, when games or practices are going on people can use other areas of the park including the playground or grass areas not within the field of play. This will not change with the park improvements. We hope and expect younger children to use the playground and other areas while older children are playing in the organized games or practices.