

KEARNY TOWN REDEVELOPMENT OF RECREATIONAL COMPLEX

STATE PROGRAM: New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Bank

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: Town of Kearny, New Jersey

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$12.4M



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Town of Kearny used a creative approach to address contamination and redevelop the Gunnell Oval Recreational Complex into a modern artificial turf sports complex. The site was contaminated with historic fill materials beneath its natural grass cover, creating polluted runoff that would flow into the nearby tidal Kearny Marsh. This area also experienced frequent flooding and surplus backflow within the Kearny Marsh ecosystem. Due to strong community engagement between the mayor, town council, and the public, along with multiple funding sources, the town was able to construct and redevelop the Gunnell Oval Recreational complex. The New Jersey Water Bank provided Kearny with a \$12.4 million CWSRF loan for the project, thereby creating a savings of \$3.2 million. The town also received over \$3.6 million in state grants.

The project involved installing an engineered cap over the historic fill to minimize exposure to the contaminated materials and reduce polluted runoff into the Kearny Marsh, which brought the project into compliance with the State's water quality requirements. Additional environmental benefits include improved stormwater management to minimize the frequent flooding in residential and industrial neighborhoods. This is achieved through the direct collection of runoff through the artificial turf underdrain system, improved discharge capabilities through the construction of a new stormwater outfall, elevated ground levels to 100-year flood levels, and on-site retention systems. An estimated 200,000 gallons of stormwater can be stored under the playing fields. Lastly, the project provides additional recreational opportunities through its multi-sport facility including various regulation-sized fields for baseball, softball, soccer, football, and a skate park. Through available financing options, Kearny took the steps to address this area's long-standing public health, environmental, and recreational needs through one, multi-faceted project.

To read more about this case study, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/pisces-2022-compendium.pdf>.