

Brookdale Park to Get New Fitness Course, Additional Lighting

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Improvements are expected to be completed by the summer.

Heaven is for Real, in theaters Easter 2014
– April 16.

A new 18-station fitness course around the perimeter walking path and additional lighting are among the improvements planned for Brookdale Park.

"An ongoing initiative of my administration is to revitalize our historic Parks System and ensure our facilities continue to meet the changing needs of the community. The introduction of the lights and fitness course will enhance the public's usage of the park," Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo said.



"As the largest venue in our Annual SummerMusic Concert Series, the lights will make Brookdale Park safer and easier to navigate for concert goers. And the re-introduction of the fitness course returns a recreation opportunity that we had to remove because the old equipment could not be repaired. This fills a need that was voiced by the community and provides another feature to promote wellness and attract people here."

The 18-station fitness course will have stations located at various locations around the perimeter walking path. Each station will feature different equipment and have signage displaying how to warm up, how to perform the exercise for muscle strength or conditioning, and how to cool down after completing the exercise. Each station also will have a rubberized safety surface. The course is scheduled to be completed by the summer. An old exercise course was removed in 2012.

"Brookdale Park is a special place for me because it's the park I visited growing up and it's where I bring my children to play," Freeholder Brendan Gill said. "There has been so much improvement to Brookdale Park and all the county's parks in such a short time. Today is an opportunity to celebrate our partnerships to enhance our open space."

The exercise course was designed by the Essex County Department of Public Works, which will also monitor the project to ensure it remains on schedule.

Shauger Property Services from East Orange was awarded a publicly bid contract for \$217,338 to install the safety surface and equipment. A grant from the Essex County Recreation and Open Space Trust Fund is funding the improvements.

"We thank the County Executive for these wonderful additions to the park," said Bloomfield Mayor Mike Venezia, who was accompanied by Councilman Nick Joanow.

Also underway is a three-phase project to install roadway and pathway lighting throughout the park. The first phase included the installation of 53 light poles along the pathways in the southern section and at the three park entrances at Watchung Avenue, Grove Street and Bellevue Avenue.

The second phase includes the installation of 72 light poles around the entire length of Circuit Drive, the road through the park, and nine light poles along selected pathways. The third phase includes the installation of 23 light poles along the walking paths in the northern section of the park, and the installation of benches and trash receptacles.

"Montclair is very happy to partner with Essex County," Montclair Councilman Sean Spiller said. "We've seen tremendous improvements and the public truly benefits from the current phases of upgrades."

The lighting improvements were designed by the Essex County Department of Public Works, which also is monitoring this project.

Sita Construction, of Goshen, N.Y., was awarded the contracts for \$414,700 to perform the construction work in phase 1 and \$455,600 for phase 2. Zenith Construction from Orange was awarded the contract for \$333,190 to perform the construction work in phase 3. Funding for the lighting came from the Essex County Capital Budget and grants from the Essex County Recreation and Open Space Trust Fund.

"On behalf of the Brookdale Park Conservancy, we thank the County Executive and Freeholders for their continuous support and involvement in our community," Brookdale Park Conservancy President Mollie Smith said. "The new lights increase security and safety in the park and the decorative poles add a sophistication and class that make Brookdale more historic than ever. We also appreciate the county listening to the community, which resulted in the exercise course being returned," she added.