



*Exceptional Parks, Greenways,
and Community Experiences*

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What's Happening in Legion Park?



Park neighbors and visitors to the area may have noticed the baseball field has been closed at the town's oldest park, Legion Park, located in a neighborhood off Old Statesville Road and surrounded by Legion, Church, and Spring Streets. The reason: dangerous sinkholes developed in the outfield caused by a serious drainage issue.

In late 2020, a decades-old, 36-inch-wide, stormwater drainage pipe that runs beneath the ballfield and trail failed. The pipe was too small to handle the amount of stormwater flowing to it from the nearly 18-acre area it serves. The drainage area extends from north of the Chair Factory to the south at Town Hall/Catawba Avenue. Through the years, more impervious areas like rooftops, parking lots, and roads were constructed within the drainage area creating higher volumes of stormwater. Over time, the increased water levels grew too large for the pipe and caused the headwall to fail and the pipe to collapse. This resulted in numerous sinkholes forming in right field and outside of the fence. Due to the risk of further sinkholes developing and the potential for underground voids to develop around the pipe, the baseball field was closed for the safety of park visitors.

In 2021, engineers performed a study of the entire drainage area to determine how best to handle the increased levels of stormwater. They determined a dual pipe system would be necessary to allow stormwater to pass without damaging the field. However, this approach alone would result in the also undersized pipes downstream from the park being compromised by the increased water flow. To avoid the high cost of replacing many pipes along the drainage way, the decision was made to create a holding pond in Legion Park that will retain stormwater on site and allow it to slowly drain so as not to overtax the drainage system downstream.

The considerable repair cost for this project, estimated to be at least a half million dollars, is included in the Parks and Recreation FY23 budget request currently under consideration by the Cornelius Town Board. If approved, the project could be underway this fall with the field reopening in the fall of 2023.



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