



Part 2—Parks & Recreation Facilities

City of Washington & the Borough of East Washington
Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan

Part 2 – Parks & Facilities

Public Parks Inventory

The first step in completing the City of Washington and the Borough of East Washington Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Recreation Plan was to conduct an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities to gain a better understanding of what recreation the area already offers. Field views of each park and recreation facility were conducted during the summer of 2011. Public parks and recreation facilities are shown on Map 2.1.

The City of Washington owns and operates six parks and recreation facilities. Washington Park is the only community park, which is designed to serve the recreation needs of the entire community. The City operates three neighborhood parks (7th Ward, 8th Ward, and Park and Dewey), which are designed to serve their surrounding neighborhoods. The City also owns Ramage Field, an informal ball field. The Borough of East Washington owns one park, which is a neighborhood park.

Washington Park

Washington Park is located in Ward 5 in eastern Washington. A 270-acre community park, Washington Park offers a variety of facilities and activities for families and children of all ages. The park is in a primarily residential neighborhood and is adjacent to Washington Park School, which houses grades K-6. The entrance to the park is Dunn Avenue off East Maiden Street. Park hours are from 8am to 10pm between April and October and 8am to 5pm between November



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and March. Facilities include a swimming pool, tennis courts, several pavilions including the Stone Pavilion and the Main Pavilion, baseball fields including P.O.N.Y. Field, T.W.I.S.T. softball fields, and a log cabin and history center. In addition, Washington Park is also home to the Vernon C. Neal Sportsplex, which opened in 2004 and is operated by the Brownson House. An indoor sports facility, it offers a sports turf surface for fall and winter, a multi-purpose hard floor for spring and summer, changing rooms, restrooms, storage rooms, a party/meeting room, vending machines and video games, and a concession area.

In 2011, the City annexed 78.9 acres from South Strabane Township that is a part of Washington Park. This area is mostly wooded, but has access to Clare Drive. While a master site plan was completed for Washington Park (see Part 6—Master Site Plans), an inventory and analysis of existing conditions was completed as part of the recreation plan and can be found in Appendix B-1.

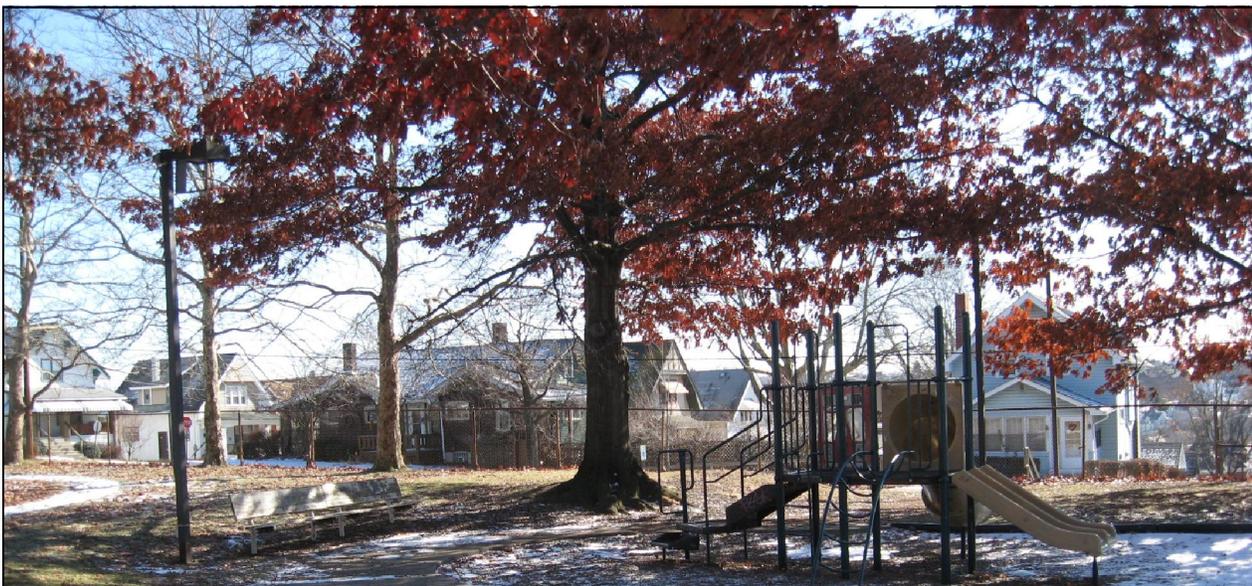


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7th Ward Playground

The 7th Ward Playground is located at the corner of Donnan Avenue and Second Street in a single-family residential neighborhood. Categorized as a neighborhood park, 7th Ward is 1.5 acres and offers a deck hockey court, a separate asphalt play area, a pavilion, playground equipment, and open space with a walking loop. There is no on-site parking.

While a master site plan was completed for the 7th Ward Playground (see Part 6—Master Site Plans), an inventory and analysis of existing conditions was completed as part of the recreation plan and can be found in Appendix B-2.



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8th Ward Playground

The 8th Ward Playground is located at the corner of Broad Street and Baird Avenue in a single-family residential neighborhood. Similar to the 7th Ward Playground, it is categorized as a neighborhood park, although it is smaller at 0.4 acres. The 8th Ward Playground is completely fenced in and offers a basketball court, pavilion, and a playground. There is no on-site parking.

A complete inventory and analysis of the facilities within the playground can be found in Appendix B-3.



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Park and Dewey Playground

The Park and Dewey Playground is located near the corner of SR 18 and Dewey Avenue in a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood, although it is adjacent to a commercial business. At 1.2 acres, Park and Dewey is a neighborhood park that offers a stream along the western edge of the park, a pavilion, basketball court, and playground. A small parking lot is available off SR 18 and an ADA accessible ramp provides access from Dewey Avenue.

A complete inventory and analysis of the facilities within the playground can be found in Appendix B-4.



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Ramage Field

Ramage Field is located off Meadow Avenue and surrounded by mostly industrial uses. The site is four acres and offers a large, open field. Ramage Field is fenced on two sides with an existing backstop for baseball or softball. The field is accessible via Woodland Avenue, although there is no signing. Parking is available on-site.

A complete inventory and analysis of the facilities within Ramage Field can be found in Appendix B-5.



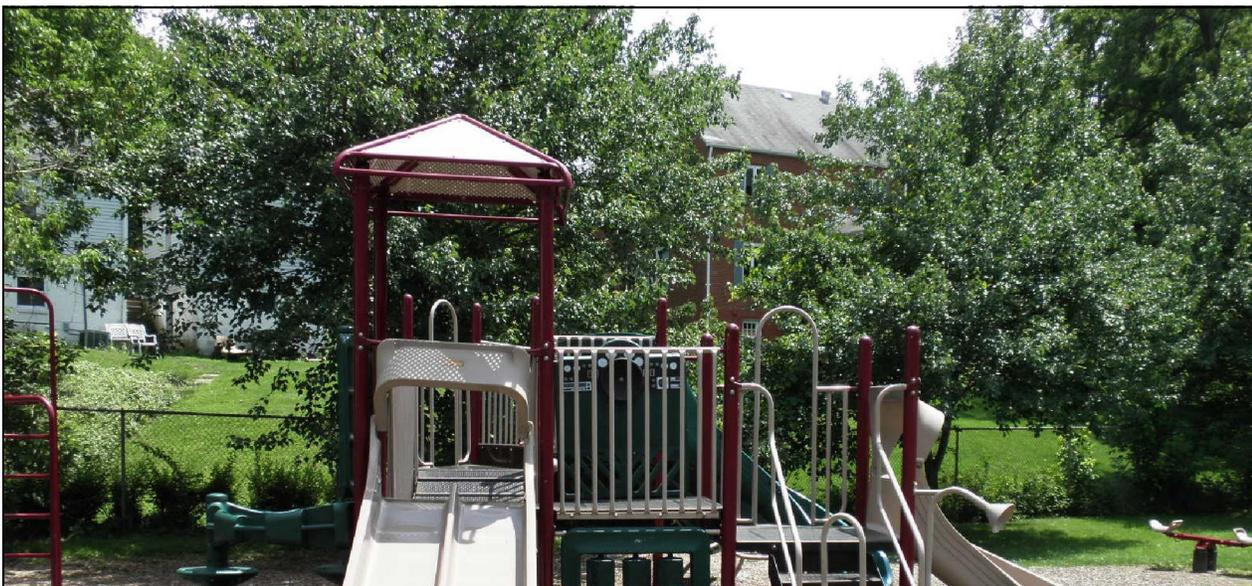
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Borough of East Washington Park

The Borough of East Washington Park is the Borough's only park. Located off Thayer Street, it is surrounded by a single-family residential neighborhood. At one-acre in size, the park is a neighborhood park. The park is an open area that features a pavilion and playground with a variety of play equipment and benches scattered throughout the site. There is no parking on-site, however, on-street parking is available on Thayer Street.



A complete inventory and analysis of the facilities within the park can be found in Appendix B-6.



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Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In 1992, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 became effective. This federal law prohibits disability-based discrimination by states, local governments and private entities (such as restaurants or child-care centers) that provide public accommodation. For purposes of this section, it applies to new and existing play areas. The ADA offers no specific definition of what makes a playground “accessible;” however, a nationally recognized industrial standards organization, the American Society for Testing and Materials, has written guidelines in response, originally published in 1993, and revised several times since. Assistive Technology Partners developed a publication that summarizes the ADA guidelines as they apply to parks and recreation; providing recommendations on how to address providing ADA accessible play areas. The following is taken from that publication (<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschool/programs/atp/Documents/Playground%20Accessibility.pdf>).

The ADA specifically requires that “each service, program or activity conducted by a public entity, when viewed in its entirety, be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities.” The law covers “both indoor and outdoor areas where human-constructed improvements, structures, equipment or property have been added to the natural environment.” Some important components to keep in mind while determining if playgrounds are ADA accessible include the following:

-  **Accessible Playgrounds:** An accessible playground is one that offers a range of play experiences to children of varying abilities. This does not mean that each and every feature or event must be usable by every child. For example, a playground that offers swinging, sliding, climbing and manipulative or interactive experiences must provide comparable experiences for all. But, if it has several slides and two or more swings, it is considered accessible if children with disabilities can use one of the slides and one of the swings.
-  **Accessible Paths:** An accessible route of travel to the play area must be provided. This should include an accessible protective surfacing to each structure or freestanding event that is intended to be used by children with disabilities. The access route should be at least 5 feet wide to allow two wheelchairs to pass. In addition, a turnaround/parking space at least 5 feet in diameter should be provided next to any playstructure that requires transferring from a wheelchair onto the structure.
-  **Age-Appropriate Transfer Points:** Physical therapists estimate that 40 to 60 percent of wheelchair users can and will transfer out of their chairs onto a playstructure. Some children may need help initially. Depending on age, children in wheelchairs need a transfer point between 11 and 18 inches in height to make this transfer by themselves. Grab bars or other devices should be provided. Once these children are on the playstructure, steps no higher than 8 inches will let them move about and play with their peers. Such steps should be at

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least 14 inches deep and 24 inches wide to accommodate children of various ages and sizes.

 Ramp Design: Ramps provide another way for children to access an elevated deck. They should be at least 36 inches wide, at no more than a 1:12 slope, and they must have handrails and curbs. To reduce circulation conflicts and abuse, ramps should be no more than 12 feet long between level landings. Landings should be at least 5 feet in diameter to let two wheelchairs pass and to allow a child in a wheelchair to turn around. Accessing the structure from an earth beam with a ramp can minimize the number of ramps and landings as well as the space and amount of surfacing needed to gain height. The accessible route of travel can begin outside the play area, continue up the beam at no more than a 1:20 slope, and finish with a short ramp or bridge to the playstructure. This design approach is less expensive and more attractive than a network of ramps and landings.

 Sufficient Deck Space on Playstructures: If children can roll their wheelchairs onto an elevated deck, the deck must be at least 5 feet in diameter so the wheelchairs can turn around. If a transfer point is available on the deck, provide a space of at least 30 by 48 inches beyond the turning space for parking. However, leaving an unoccupied wheelchair on an elevated deck is a potential hazard to other users, and is not recommended except in special supervised areas.

Each of the public parks and recreation facilities provided by the City of Washington and Borough of East Washington were inventoried and assessed for ADA compliance. The park inventories contained in Appendix B document items that are not in compliance and recommendations to bring the sites into compliance are included in the Analysis and Recommendations section of this report, beginning on page 2-21.

All new play areas and equipment (constructed after March 15, 2012) will need to meet the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design "2010 Standards" or "Standards". The 2010 Standards set minimum requirements – both scoping and technical – for newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities (<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAStandards.pdf>).

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School, Nonprofit & Private Parks Inventory

In addition to the public parks and recreation facilities, the quasi-public and nonprofit parks and recreation facilities were also inventoried. These facilities compliment the public facilities offered and help to meet the recreational needs of the residents. Field views of each park and recreation facility as well as interviews with the owner/operator were conducted during the summer of 2011. School, nonprofit, and private parks and recreation facilities are shown on Map 2.1.

-  Brownson House—nonprofit
-  Lemoyne Center—nonprofit
-  Vernon C. Neal Playground—nonprofit
-  Washington Area Senior Citizen Center—nonprofit
-  Washington School District—school
-  Washington and Jefferson College—private
-  Elmhurst Swim Club—private
-  Faith Christian School—private

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Brownson House

Founded in 1926, the Brownson House, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that offers recreational and educational programs to the region. The Brownson House operates several facilities, including the Vernon C. Neal Sportsplex (located at Washington Park). The main site is 1.8 acres, located in the western end of the City on Jefferson Avenue, at the intersection with McAdam Avenue. Facilities at this location include a large, two-story building that includes a small gymnasium and several community rooms. Next to the main building is an indoor field house, featuring a large gymnasium, along with an outdoor field. A large parking lot is located across Jefferson Avenue.



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vernon c. Neal Center (VCN) Playground

The VCN Playground is located next to the Brownson House parking lot between Allison Avenue and Tube Alley. The playground is 0.5 acres and features a pavilion, a playground, and a variety of play equipment. Owned and operated by the Brownson House, the playground is surrounded by mostly single-family residences.



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Lemoyne Center

The Lemoyne Center is located at 200 North Forrest Avenue in the Borough of East Washington in the Highland Ridge neighborhood. First established in 1956, it is one of the oldest organizations serving the minority community in the region.

The Lemoyne Center offers an indoor gymnasium, community meeting room, pavilion, outdoor basketball court, and a playground. It is also home to Community Action Southwest Head Start and Early Head Start.

The Center has plans to expand their recreation facilities to include an indoor pool, additional community rooms, a new playground, a senior fitness trail, a larger pavilion, horseshoe pits, bocce court, and an intergenerational sports arena.



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Washington School District

Washington School District, which serves the City of Washington and the Borough of East Washington, operates two schools: Washington Junior/Senior High School (located at 201 Allison Avenue in downtown Washington) and Washington Park School (located at 801 East Wheeling Street next to Washington Park).

Washington Junior/Senior High School offers indoor facilities, including a large gym, small gym, cafeteria, weight room, library, art room, computer labs, and a technology education room. However, they do not have any outdoor facilities. Washington High School Stadium is located at 496 Tyler Avenue and includes a football field and track.

Washington Park School offers indoor facilities as well, including an auditorium, two multipurpose rooms, two cafeterias, a library, six computer labs, an art room, a technology education room, and two science rooms. Outdoor facilities include a living classroom trail system, an obstacle area, a fenced in pond, wetlands, bird nesting boxes, a large amphitheatre area with stage, a playground, and a basketball court.

Washington School District facilities are open to the public for use when not used by the school.



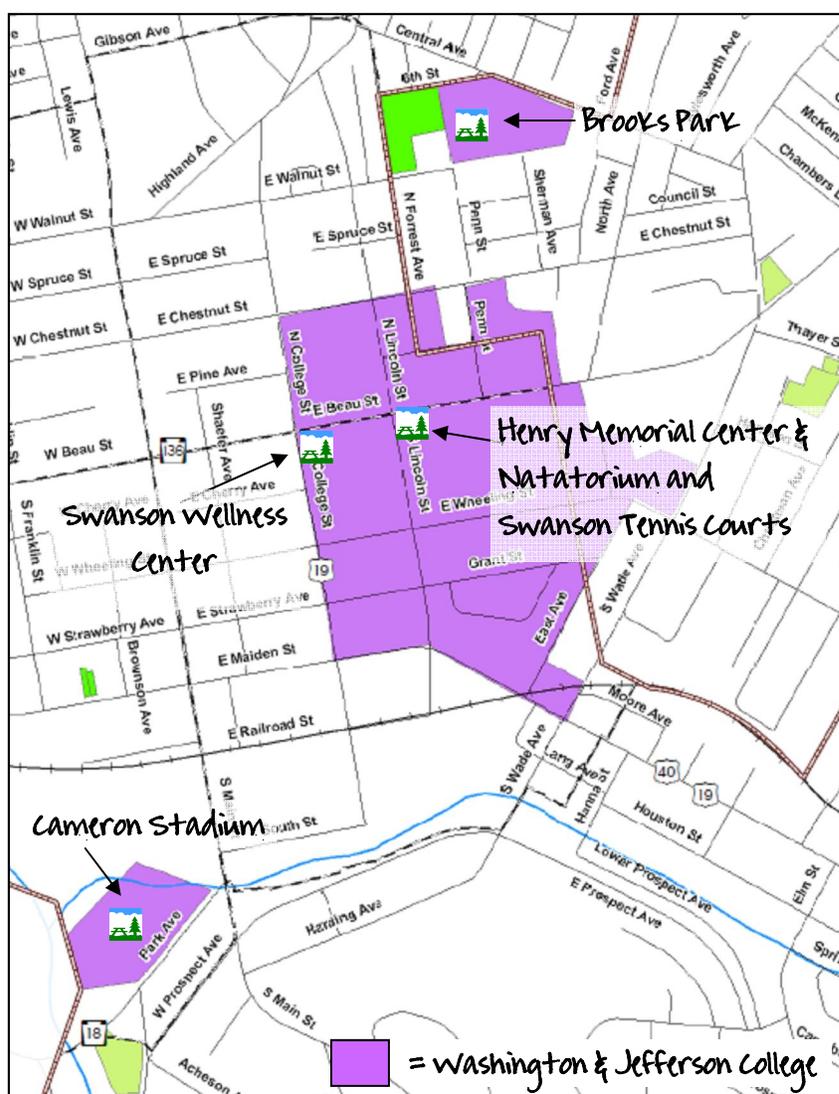
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Washington & Jefferson College

Washington and Jefferson College offers numerous recreation facilities throughout the City of Washington and Borough of East Washington. Many are open to the public for use, especially during the summer.

-  Brooks Park—softball field
-  Cameron Stadium—football field, field hockey, track and field
-  Henry Memorial Center—performance gymnasium for volleyball, basketball, and wrestling; auxiliary gym for basketball, handball courts; wrestling practice room
-  Henry Memorial Natatorium—swimming, diving, and water polo
-  Janet L. Swanson Tennis Courts—four tennis courts
-  Ross Memorial Park & Alexandre Stadium (located by Consol Energy Park in North Franklin Township)—7.5 acre multi-purpose facility for soccer, lacrosse, and baseball
-  Swanson Wellness Center—exercise area, weight room, three-lane indoor track

Figure 2.1—Washington and Jefferson College Recreation Facilities



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Faith Christian School

Faith Christian School is located at 524 East Beau Street in the Borough of East Washington. The school is a private institution that uses the old Washington High School building. Indoor facilities include nine classrooms, a gymnasium, and an auditorium. Outdoor facilities include a playground, soccer field, and a trail.

Washington Area Senior Citizens Center

The Washington Area Senior Citizens Center is located at 69 West Maiden Street adjacent to the Washington Municipal building. The center is open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM to any persons 60 or older. They have approximately 2,000 members and the center offers a variety of programs. Approximately 80 to 100 seniors attend the center each day.

Elmhurst Swim Club

Elmhurst Swim Club is a private swimming pool located on Wilmont Avenue in the Borough of East Washington. Facilities include a 25 meter 5-lane pool with a diving area, a kiddie pool, concession stand, changing rooms/restrooms, outdoor brick barbeque, and a pavilion. Annual membership fees are \$85/adult, \$70/junior, and \$65/child. The pool is open between Memorial Day and Labor Day from 11am-9pm Monday through Friday and 10am-9pm on weekends and holidays.



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Analysis & Recommendations

Goal #1: Provide parks and recreation facilities and equipment that adequately meet local needs.

The first goal focuses on the providing parks and recreation facilities in the City and Borough that meet local needs. Quasi-public (nonprofit) and private facilities help to meet the recreational needs and were taken into account while developing recommendations; however, specific improvements were only identified for publicly-owned parks and facilities as part of this plan. Recommended improvements to Washington Park and 7th Ward Playground are included in Part 6—Master Site Plans and all recommendations for the pool are included as part of the Pool Feasibility Study, which can be found in Appendix H.

Strategy II: Improve 8th Ward Playground

Overall, the playground and facilities are in fairly good condition. Recreational features are missing from some structures and additional maintenance is needed to improve the site. There is ADA accessibility to the playground, although accessibility to the various facilities needs to be improved. Recommended improvements include the following:

1. Construct ADA accessible pathways from the walkway to each of the facilities
2. Replace missing basketball hoop on the court
3. Repair or replace the water fountain
4. Cover exposed electric wires in the pavilion
5. Provide annual maintenance of facilities to ensure compliance with current safety standards, as listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: 8th Ward Playground Improvements

Facility	Improvement
Playground	Replace missing section of plastic border
Buck-a-bout	Replace missing seat
	Cover exposed concrete
	Remove grass from play area; replenish wood carpet
Walkway	Cover exposed concrete along walk outside of play area

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Strategy 1.2: Improve Park & Dewey Playground

The Park & Dewey Playground provides a nice setting near a stream with a variety of facilities. Overall, the equipment in the playground is in fairly good condition, although there are some broken and missing facilities. There are a few items that need to be improved to address liability issues, such as the rebar used to hold the playground border in place is sticking up creating a potentially hazardous condition and a manhole is approximately one foot above ground level. ADA accessibility is provided to the playground from Dewey Street via a ramp; however, there are still improvements that are needed to the various facilities. Recommended improvements include the following:

1. Construct ADA accessible pathways throughout the park from the entrances to each of the facilities
2. Repair the roof on the pavilion and cover the exposed metal pipe
3. Update the entrance ramp from Dewey Road to be ADA compliant (needs landing areas every 30')
4. Provide annual maintenance of facilities to ensure compliance with current safety standards, as listed in Table 1.2.

Facility	Improvement
<i>Playground Areas</i>	<i>Increase the use zone around the playground</i>
	<i>Repair/replace broken swing seats and replace broken sections of plastic border around the play area</i>
	<i>Resurface the playground areas with manufactured product rather than regular wood chips</i>
	<i>Replace or remove the exposed concrete footing around the missing spring animal</i>
	<i>Address rebar supports in Trex border around the large play structure that create a safety hazard</i>
	<i>Repaint swing posts and replace swing mats under the swings</i>
<i>Basketball Court</i>	<i>Repair/resurface basketball court and backboards</i>
<i>Park Benches</i>	<i>Replace missing benches throughout the park</i>
	<i>Repair broken benches</i>
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	<i>Address safety hazard created by the manhole (approximately one foot (1') above grade, creates a trip hazard) in the back of the park. Consider fencing off.</i>

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Strategy 1.3: Improve Ramage Field

Ramage Field provides an opportunity for the City to accommodate a need for an outdoor multi-purpose field. One of the constraints with regards to recreation in the City is adequate outdoor space. With some improvements, Ramage Field could help to fill this void. Recommended improvements include the following:

1. Install a park sign at the entrance
2. Install wayfinding signs from Jefferson Avenue to the entrance to Ramage Field
3. Improve parking area and access road
4. Create a multi-purpose sports area that accommodates baseball/softball, soccer, and similar sports
5. Eliminate ball field #2 and corresponding backstop
6. Provide annual maintenance of facilities to ensure compliance with current safety standards, as shown in Table 1.3.

Facility	Improvement
<i>Ball Field Complex</i>	<i>Repair sections of broken fencing</i>
	<i>Remove poison ivy and other trees, shrubs and vines from fencing</i>
<i>Ball field #1</i>	<i>Repair 10' fence</i>
	<i>Skin the base lines or entire infield</i>
	<i>Install player benches</i>
	<i>Replace backstop</i>

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Strategy 1.4: Improve the Borough of East Washington Park

The Borough of East Washington Park is a nice neighborhood park that provides a great open space with a variety of playground structures, picnic and sitting areas. The biggest issue is the fact that it does not meet ADA requirements and therefore, is not accessible to all residents. Recommended improvements include the following:

1. Replace park rules sign
2. Create a small parking area at the Thayer Street entrance
3. Develop an ADA accessible pathway around the perimeter of the park that provides access to the pavilion, playground, and other facilities and equipment
4. Replace the infant swing with an updated model that is compliant with current safety standards
5. Replace the existing Port-a-John with an ADA model
6. Provide annual maintenance of facilities to ensure compliance with current safety standards, as shown in Table 1.4.

Facility	Improvement
Playground	Replenish the wood carpet underneath the playground
	Extend the safety zone around the see-saw
	Remove weeds from the wood carpet area
Swinging Gate	Needs proper surfacing material
	Create appropriate use zone
Swing Set	Install swing mats
	Replenish wood carpet
	Create appropriate use zone
Lawn Care	Remove weeds along the fence line

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Strategy 1.5: Provide recreation areas in each neighborhood

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sets standards for the number of parks and facilities recommended for municipalities. In 1983, their publication, “Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines,” provided extensive tables using a population baseline to determine how many fields, parks, facilities, etc. are needed in a community. The tables indicated the population size needed to support specialized facilities, such as, various types of fields and courts. In 1996, NRPA released another publication, “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines.” In this publication, NRPA altered its standards by allowing municipalities to document a need and support for a facility rather than using population as a basis. The new standards make it easier for municipalities to construct recreation facilities that their residents need. However, in order to provide a baseline, the old standards are often used as a comparison.

The NRPA established a classification system for community parks based on the size and use of the facilities within that park. Table 1.5 depicts the classification system and where the City and Borough parks and recreation facilities are classified. Although Washington Park is the only “true” community park, the Brownson House and Lemoyne Center fall under that classification as they are intended to serve the entire community, despite their smaller size.

Classification	Description	Size Criteria	Service Area	Current Park
Mini-Parks (Tot-Lots)	Geared for a small neighborhood within walking distance to residential areas	2,500 sq ft to 1 acre	Less than 1/4 mile	VCN Playground
Neighborhood Park	Intense recreational activities such as fields, courts, play equipment, picnic areas. Easily accessible. Geographically central to specific neighborhood(s).	5 acres, minimum; 5-10 acres optional	1/4 to 1/2 mile	7th Ward Playground 8th Ward Playground Park & Dewey Borough Park
Community Park	Areas for large use zone facilities (community center, pool, sports complex, etc.). Active and passive use areas. Centrally located.	As needed; Usually 25 acres or more	1 to 2 miles	Washington Park Brownson House Lemoyne Center
Special Use	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs	Variable—dependent on specific use	Variable	Ramage Field

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The mini-parks and neighborhood parks' service areas are shown on Map 2.2. The existing parks serve almost the entire City and Borough; however, there are a few areas unserved. A portion of the 7th Ward, north of I-79, is unserved by a park. The VCN Playground is classified as a mini-park and therefore, does not serve an area as large as the other playgrounds. In addition, many residents noted that the VCN Playground is often closed and therefore inaccessible to local residents. The Highland Ridge Elm Street Organization identified the need for a small park within their neighborhood, which is the northern part of the 6th Ward, near the Lemoyne Center. While a priority for the City and Borough is to maintain the existing parks and recreation facilities, a long-term goal is to have a park or playground in each neighborhood. As such, the following recommendations have been developed:

1. Work with the Brownson House to extend the hours of the Vernon C. Neal Playground so it is more accessible to the residents.
2. Partner with the Highland Ridge Elm Street Organization to identify a suitable location for a mini-park.
3. Determine a location for a new mini-park in the 7th Ward neighborhood west of I-79.

Strategy 1.6: Incorporate green design and conservation principles into parks and recreation facilities.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation offers numerous resources and publications to help communities and organizations achieve green and sustainable practices in their parks and recreation efforts (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/resourcesta/index.htm>).

In 2007, DCNR put forth a publication entitled "Creating Sustainable Community Parks: A guide to improving quality of life by protecting natural resources." The publication serves as a guidebook for park staff to who wish to enhance the natural resources of parks and make maintenance processes more environmentally-sound. There is a push to ensuring that local parks provide more than "barren vistas of mowed turf grasses, ornamental trees, and pavement" and rather, offer trees, wildflowers, and other native vegetation.

The City and the Borough should ensure that their parks and maintenance personnel have this publication and keep green design and conservation principles in mind during all stages of recreation planning and development. In addition, the following is recommended:

1. Provide recycling bins in each park.

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2. Utilize native plants and materials.
3. When feasible, use non-impervious surfaces for parking areas and court surfaces.
4. Develop rain gardens in each park.
5. Utilize bio-swales and other natural methods for stormwater management.
6. Remove invasive trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and grass (Japanese Stilt grass)

Strategy 1.7: Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections

Pedestrian and bicycle connections are extremely important within a community, particularly in terms of connecting people to parks as well as providing areas for people to engage in recreational walking, running, and biking.

While there are no trails (outside of Washington Park) in the City or the Borough, they do have an extensive sidewalk system. Within the downtown, the sidewalks have been upgraded through the Main Street improvement program while PennDOT has replaced the sidewalks along US 40/ Chestnut Street during the rehabilitation project. The Washington/East Washington Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (2012) recommended that the City and Borough develop a

Figure 2.2: Washington WalkWorks Route



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sidewalk improvement/maintenance plan that would address improvements to the sidewalk network with regards to safety and accessibility. It also recommended that the City institute the “WalkWorks Campaign” which is a program designed to increase walking opportunities in communities sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The Washington WalkWorks Trail is approximately one mile and includes historic sites along the route.

One item that was raised repeatedly during the planning process was the idea to develop an off-road trail between the City/Borough and Washington Park. Currently, the only formal access to Washington Park is via Dunn Avenue off of East Wheeling Street. There are informal trails that that residents felt should be formally developed as trails. To do so, the City and Borough should first identify and contact landowners to determine their level of interest in such a project.

Recommendations to improve the Washington Park Trail and pedestrian access to Washington Park from East Maiden Street are included in Part 6—Master Site Plans.

Recommendations to improve the connectivity of residents to parks and recreation, as well as improve the overall walkability of the project area, are as follows:

1. Develop a formal trail that connects the Borough of East Washington Park to Washington Park.
2. Develop a formal trail that connects Lockhart Street to the Washington Park School.
3. Develop a signed walking/biking route throughout the City and Borough that provides a safe path to Washington Park
4. Implement the Washington WalkWorks Campaign
5. Develop and implement a sidewalk maintenance plan in the City and Borough

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Figure 2.3—Potential Trail Connections

