

RESOLUTION NO. 298 -2008

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE CITY OF READING CITY  
PARK MASTER PLAN.**

**WHEREAS**, in adopting a Master Plan, the City of Reading has laid out goals, policies, and objectives for the development of City Park; and

**WHEREAS**, park conditions were evaluated and required improvements within the park identified. It is intended that the Master Plan serve as the basis for further design and construction refinements as the plan is implemented; and

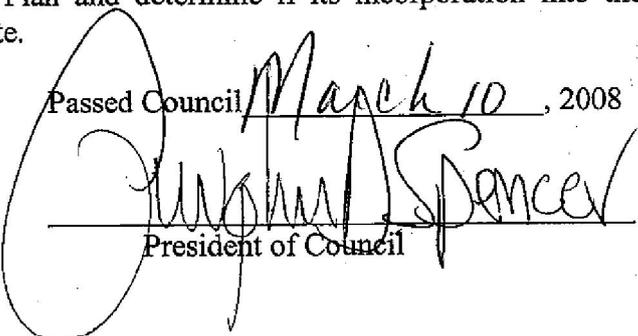
**WHEREAS**, the City Park Master Plan organizes around five major objectives: (1) maintain, protect and enhance the natural qualities of City Park, (2) emphasize the importance of reestablishing the primacy of pedestrians use of City Park, (3) re-establish lost elements of the park where practical, (4) re-establish the ability to interact with water, (5) ensure improvements do not create unreasonable maintenance demands; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Reading, in cooperation with Simone Collins Landscape Architecture, has undertaken an intensive planning process that seeks to involve all relevant parties in an open and transparent manner; and

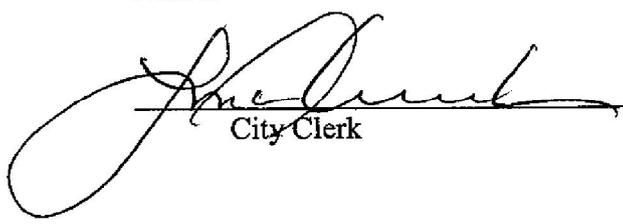
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Reading City Council, hereby endorses the City Park Master Plan submitted by Simone Collins Landscape Architecture and attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that City Council requests the City Planning Commission review the Master Plan and determine if its incorporation into the City Comprehensive Plan is appropriate.

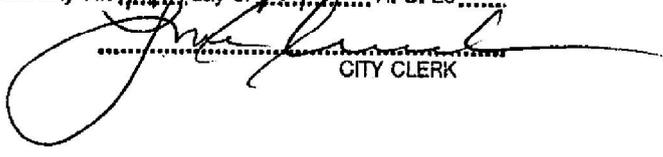
Passed Council March 10, 2008

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

I, LINDA A. KELLEHER, City Clerk of the City of Reading, Pa., do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution passed by the Council of the City of Reading, on the 10 day of March A. D. 2008. Witness my hand and seal of the said City this 11 day of March A. D. 2008.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

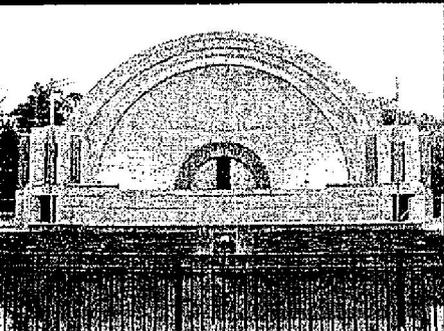


# City of Reading City Park Master Plan



Prepared for:

**The City of Reading,  
Berks County, PA**



Prepared by:

**Simone Collins  
Landscape Architecture**

# City Park Master Plan

October 2007

Prepared for:

The City of Reading  
Bucks County, Pennsylvania

This study was prepared by:



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## Chapter 1: Introduction



*City Park/Penn's Common Entrance Sign.*

City Park, originally named Penn's Common, is one of the oldest, most historic and revered public lands in the City of Reading. Reserved as a "free and public commons" in 1749, the park's history mirrors the City's. Today, the Park's continued use by residents remains an important aspect of city life.

City Park is approximately 49 acres and is centrally located at the eastern terminus of Penn Street in Reading. The park is an important gateway for visitors and a landmark and point of civic pride for residents.

### Study Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The purpose of the City Park Master Plan is to evaluate park conditions and to identify needed improvements within the park. This report details the process utilized to reach a consensus for park improvements. The Master Plan will form the basis for further design refinements, construction documents, and implementation of park improvements over the next several years.

The goal of the City Park Master Plan study is to work with the community to produce a master plan that maximizes the use and enjoyment of City Park's assets.

This goal will be pursued with several objectives in mind:

1. Maintain, protect, and enhance characteristics that make City Park a great place.
2. Re-establish the importance of the pedestrian in the park.
3. Re-establish lost elements of the park where practical.
4. Re-establish the "lost" ability to interact with water.
5. Establish a transparent, participatory, and official process for any improvements or renovations to City Park that must be adhered to regardless of the nature of the proposed improvement. The Historic Architectural Review Board should be a part of that review process.
6. Improvements to the park must not create unreasonable demands on maintenance of the park.



*The Berks County Tribute to Women Veterans sculpture.*

# Introduction

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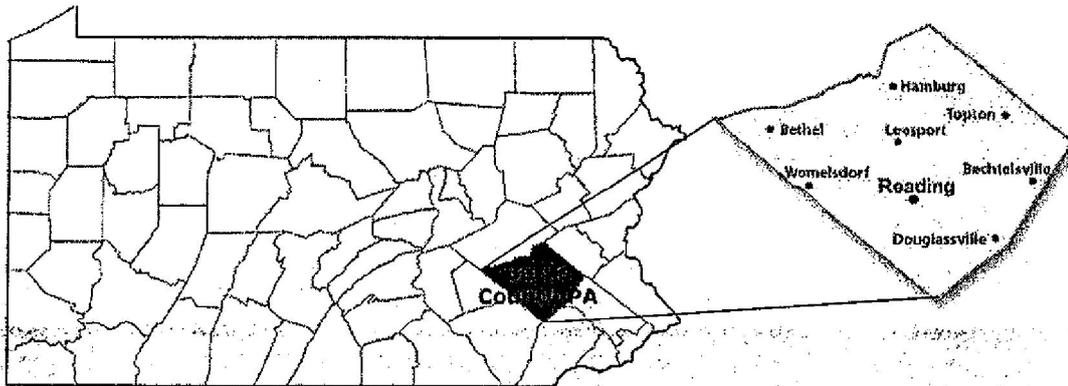


Exhibit 1.1: Regional Location Map.

## Regional Context

The City of Reading is 10.1 square miles in size and is located in the central portion of Berks County, Pennsylvania (see exhibit 1.1). The city is bounded on the west by the Schuylkill River and Highway 422, and on the east by Mount Penn (see exhibit 1.2). City Park is located at the eastern terminus of Penn Street and is bounded by 11th Street, Walnut Street, Clymer Street, Hill Road, and Perkiomen Avenue (see exhibit 1.3).



Exhibit 1.2: Site Location Map

## General Population Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Reading had a total population of 81,207. The population under 18 years of age was 24,294 and the median age of the total population was 30.6 years of age. In comparison, the average median age of Berks County was 38.4 years of age. The average household size in Reading is 2.63, with a median household income of \$26,698. The median household income in Berks County was \$50,871.

The US Census Bureau estimated that City of Reading population in 2006 was 81,183. This represents an approximate .03% decrease in population from the year 2000.

## City of Reading, Berks County

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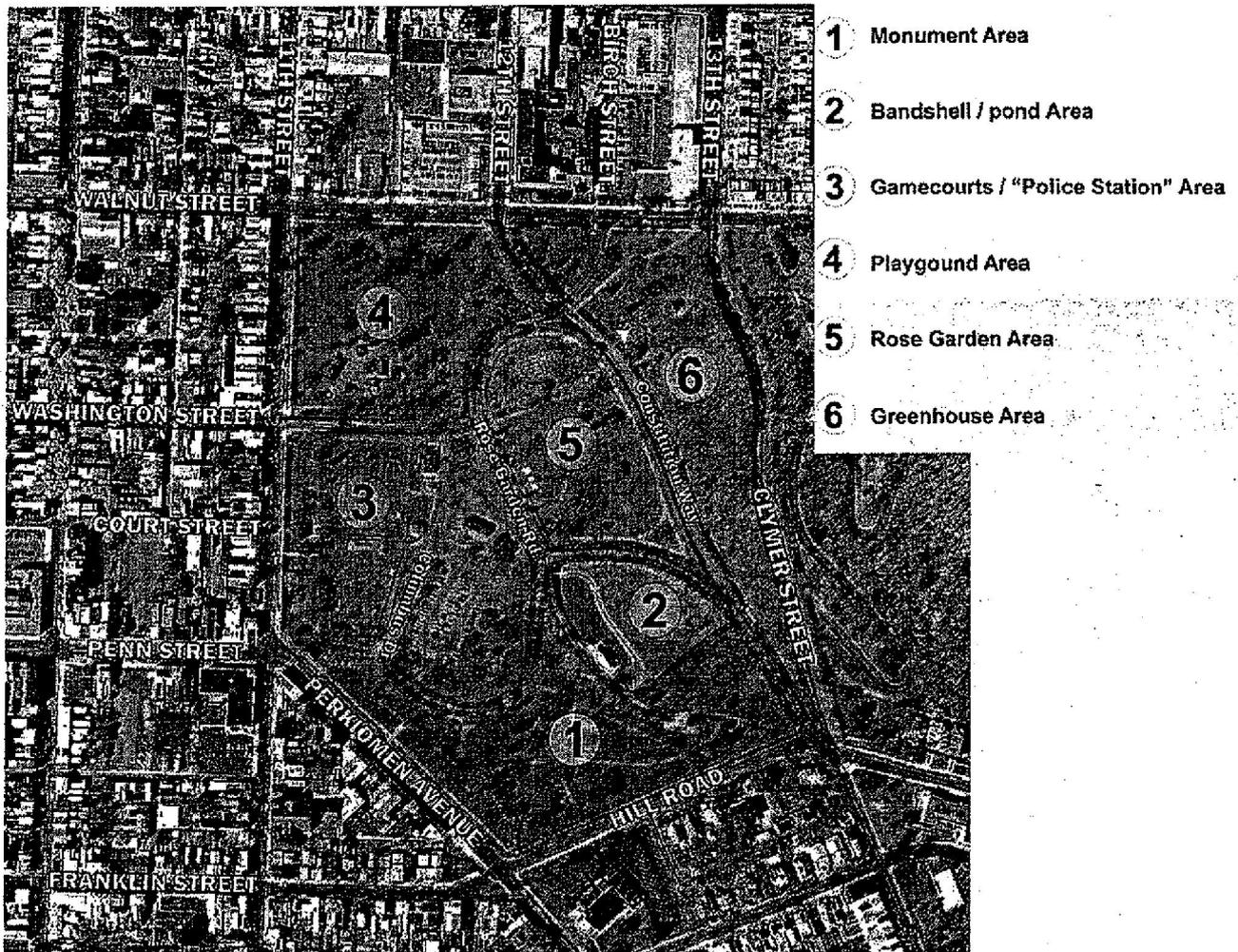


Exhibit 1.3: Zones of Park Use.

## Description of Study Area (see exhibit 1.3)

### 1. Monument Area

Located in the southern portion of the Park along Perkiomen Avenue and Hill Road, this area contains a majority of the park's statues, memorials, and monuments. The predominant use for the area is passive recreation. Pathways with several benches and limited lighting lead park patrons to the various statues, monuments, and memorials within this area of the park.

### 2. Bandshell / Pond Area

Located to the north of the Monument Area, the dominant feature of this area is a concrete bandshell built in 1939 to commemorate the volunteer fire department. Located to the front and side of the bandshell is a 0.4-acre pond. The pond is enclosed by a fence, restricting the public from interacting with the water. The primary use for the bandshell area is a summer concert series produced by Berks Arts Council. In 2007, four concerts were held at the bandshell. A large show can attract hundreds of people into the park.

## **Introduction**

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### **3. Gamecourts / "Police Station"**

Located centrally within the Park along 11th Street and Washington Street, the gamecourts are one of the two active recreation areas within City Park. The gamecourts are located on top of the historic reservoirs thus prohibiting any major structures from being located in this area. The gamecourts have a high regular frequency of use; the three tennis courts and five basketball courts have all been resurfaced within the past five years. Located centrally within this area is a 1,600 square foot open air pavilion.

Throughout the year, the Blacktop Basketball League organization youth sports program is proactive in the day-to-day operation and maintenance of this area. It also oversees the operation of the concession stand.

This area also contains three of the park's four buildings. A 2,000 square foot concession stand and restroom building associated with the gamecourts is the only restroom facility within the park. Located across Columbus Drive from the gamecourts is the "Police Station". Most recently used as a police training center, the 6,000 square foot building is currently vacant. Associated with the building is the park's only off-street parking area. The parking lot contains approximately 80 parking spaces. Located west of the gamecourts mid-block on 11th Street between Penn Street and Washington Street is the Berks County Conservation Offices. Its offices are located in the historic 3,600 square foot Water Works Building.

### **4. Playground**

Located across Washington Street from the gamecourts is the playground area. A new playground is currently under construction that includes play structures, swings, benches, and a pavilion. To the north to the playground is large open lawn area that is often used for informal soccer games.

### **5. Rose Garden**

The Rose Garden is confined by Rose Garden Road and Constitution Way. This area contains a formal allee that is on axis with Washington Street. A pavilion containing a historic drinking fountain is located at the terminus of this allee.

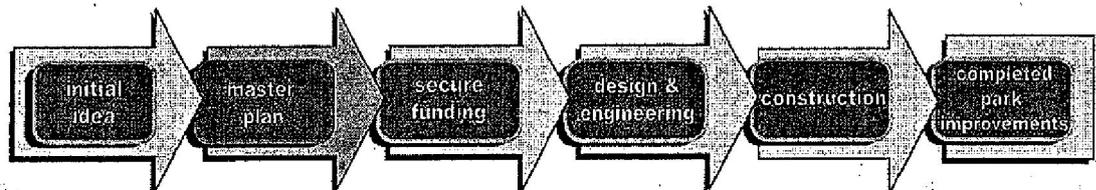
Remnants of the historic rose garden can be seen in the area north of the allee. Rose bushes are still maintained near the Policeman Memorial at the northernmost edge of this area. The remainder of this area is open lawn with mature trees. Three marble tables are located along Rose Garden Drive.

### **6. Greenhouse**

Located in the northeast corner of the park, this area is separated from the main park by Constitution Way. A 7,000 square foot greenhouse is the main feature within the area. The greenhouse is used by the City and Berks Urban Greening (BUGs) to propagate and grow plants for use in parks and civic areas. Located to the south of the Greenhouse is a open lawn area and a subsurface fallout shelter. The rest of this area is dominated by the steep topography and woodlands of Mount Penn.

## Master Plan Process/ Public Participation

Public participation is a key ingredient in the success of any community project. Public meetings are designed to inform the public of the project status; to receive input as to the desired facilities within the park; and address any questions, comments, or concerns relative to the proposed improvements at City Park.



As shown in the graphic above, the completion of the City Park Master Plan is an early stage in the process of constructing new improvements and upgrading facilities at City Park. The goal of the master plan study is to develop a consensus for what facilities and improvements should be constructed within the park, and to establish an estimate of probable construction costs that can be used for developing an implementation strategy.

The Master Plan forms the basis of future design and engineering phases of the project, when detailed design decisions are documented through the completion of construction drawings. Upon completion of these construction documents, the project can then be bid and constructed. It is important to consider that implementation of proposed improvements and upgrades will occur in phases over the coming years, as project funding is available.

The five-month master planning process began with a project kick-off meeting with City of Reading staff and park stakeholders. The planning process included three public meetings; the first of which was held on June 25, 2007 at the Penn's Common Court Apartments Meeting Room. The focus of this meeting was site programming. During the meeting, attendees were encouraged to provide input relative to the facilities and improvements that they would like to see at City Park.

Public Meeting #2 was held on July 30, 2007 and the meeting featured the presentation of the Draft City Park Master Plan. A draft plan public review period followed during which time the draft master plan report was posted on the City of Reading website for review. An additional meeting was held with City staff to review comments received regarding the draft plan. A final public meeting to present the Final City Park Master Plan was held on October 29, 2007 at the Penn's Common Court Apartments Meeting Room. (Attendance records and notes from all public meetings are included in the appendix of this report.)

# Introduction

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## Chapter 2: Site Analysis

### Data Collection / Methodology

Base-mapping information was compiled from the best available information. A majority of the base map was based on GIS data. GIS topography data was provided by the City of Reading; pathways and monument locations data was provided by the Berks County Conservancy; and roadway centerline data was downloaded from the Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) web site. This information was overlaid on orthographic aerial photography, provided by the City of Reading, for use as a base map for the master plan (see exhibit 2.1).

Base mapping data was supplemented with information gathered by the consultants from several site visits over the course of the master planning process. Additional information about the statues and memorials on site was provided by a resident volunteer from the City of Reading.



Exhibit 2.1: Aerial map of City Park.

### General Site Data

#### Existing Land Use and Zoning

City Park is surrounded primarily by residential land uses. Other land uses include light commercial and institutional. Located to the east of the park, Mount Penn is a large open space providing recreational trails and a landmark Pagoda that overlooks the city.

The 10th and Penn Elementary School is located one block west of the park and a new Junior High School is proposed in the former St. Joseph's Hospital along the northern edge of the park at 13th and Walnut Streets. The proximity of all of these land uses to City Park must be considered in the master plan to ensure that adequate and safe access and circulation are provided.

City Park is located within the P (Park) zoning district. The park is also within a designated Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) district (see exhibit 2.2). The establishment of a HARB historic district protects the City's historic architecture by requiring that all changes to the exteriors of buildings and new construction be reviewed. This process ensures that proposed development is in keeping with the historic integrity of a neighborhood.

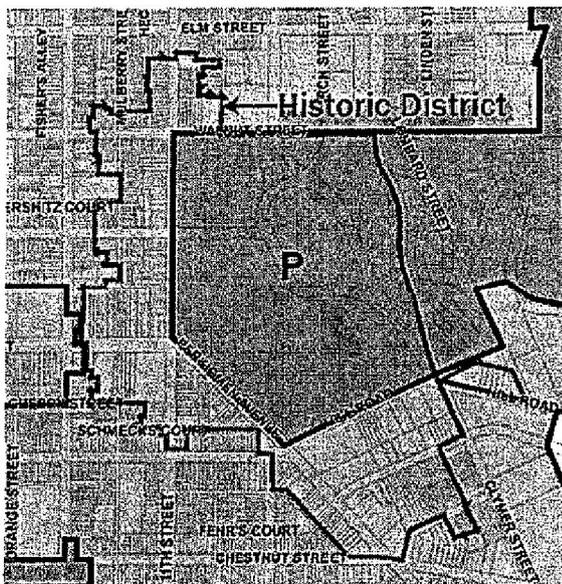


Exhibit 2.2: Zoning Map

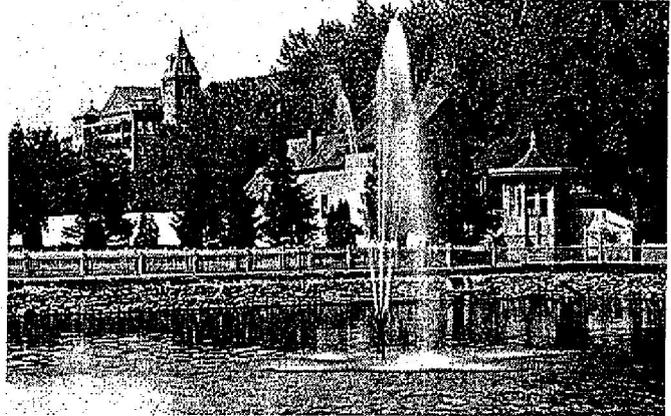
# Site Analysis

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## Historic Overview

Originally, the property of Thomas and Richard Penn, City Park was named Penn's Commons when it was purchased by the Berks County Commissioners. The park was 85 acres in size and was meant to remain public commons for the residents of Reading.

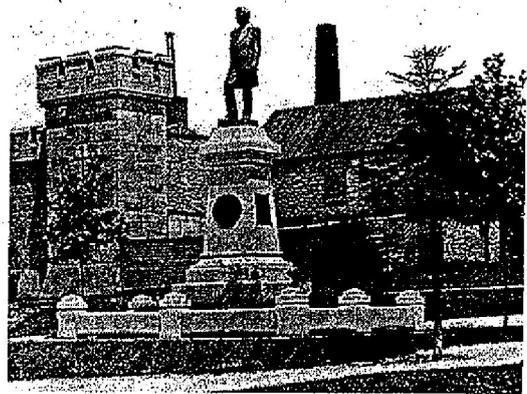
Over time, the park served the community in a variety of ways. A spring and reservoirs provided residents with fresh water for drinking and washing clothes. The common also served as a gathering place for large regional events, such as Battalion Days, during which military drills were conducted.



*View of one of the reservoirs prior to being capped.*

Throughout its history, the overall acreage of the park has diminished due to several intrusions. Those intrusions included the Reading Water Works, Berks County Prison, and the Berks County Agricultural Association's Fairgrounds. Many of the roadways and terraces throughout the park are a result of these historic uses.

Today, several historic structures and elements remain in the park including the original Water Works building (now the Berks County Conservancy headquarters), the Greenhouse, reservoirs, and monuments.



*The Frederick Lauer monument, the first monument placed in City Park.*

## Site Access and Circulation (see exhibit 2.3)

City Park is integrated into the existing city block system of Reading, providing excellent pedestrian and vehicular access to and into the park (see exhibit 2.3). Reading uses a traditional alternating one-way vehicular circulation system. Penn Street is the central east/west corridor allowing two-way traffic before terminating at City Park. North and south of Penn Street the road alternate one-way. Near the park Walnut, Court and Franklin Streets serve as the major eastbound streets, and Washington Street serves as the major westbound street. However, Walnut Street becomes two-way east of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Street becomes two-way east of 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The north/south grid alternates one-way traffic. Near the park 11<sup>th</sup> Street, serve as the major northbound street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street serve as the major southbound street.

The major business route through Reading is S.R. 422. Westbound traffic on S.R. 422 follows the western boundary of the park traveling west along Perkiomen Avenue and north along 11<sup>th</sup> Street before continuing west along Washington Street. Eastbound traffic on S.R. 422 feeds into Perkiomen Avenue from Franklin Street.

Vehicular access into the park is provided by 12<sup>th</sup> Street from the north; Washington Street from the west; and Constitution Way from the southeast.

All of the roads boarding the park have generous sidewalks on both sides of the street providing excellent pedestrian access to the park, excepting Constitution Way, which only has sidewalks on the western side of the road. Pedestrian access into the park is provided by crosswalks from 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> Street from the north; Walnut, Washington, and

## Chapter Two

Penn Street from the west; and Perkiomen Avenue, and Clymer Street from the southeast. There are also two mid-block entrances into the park. One located along Perkiomen Avenue and the other along 11<sup>th</sup> Street on access with Court Street. Due to the amount of traffic on Perkiomen Avenue, the mid-block crossing is a location of pedestrian / vehicular conflicts.

The streets within the park deviate from the city grid and take a traffic pattern reflective of the many uses that have existed within the park. This shift from the one-way grid of the city to the two-way curved roads of the park creates confusing intersections.

The transition of Walnut Street from two-way to one-way traffic at 12<sup>th</sup> street is one such intersection. The transition forces traffic heading west to enter into the park by turning left onto Birch Street (motorist that miss this turn most make a sharp left turn onto 12<sup>th</sup> Street). At the intersection of Birch Street, Constitution Way, and 12<sup>th</sup> Street only traffic heading south on 12<sup>th</sup> Street and North on Constitution Way are required to stop. This creates a dangerous intersection for pedestrians that must cross Birch Street to enter into the park –

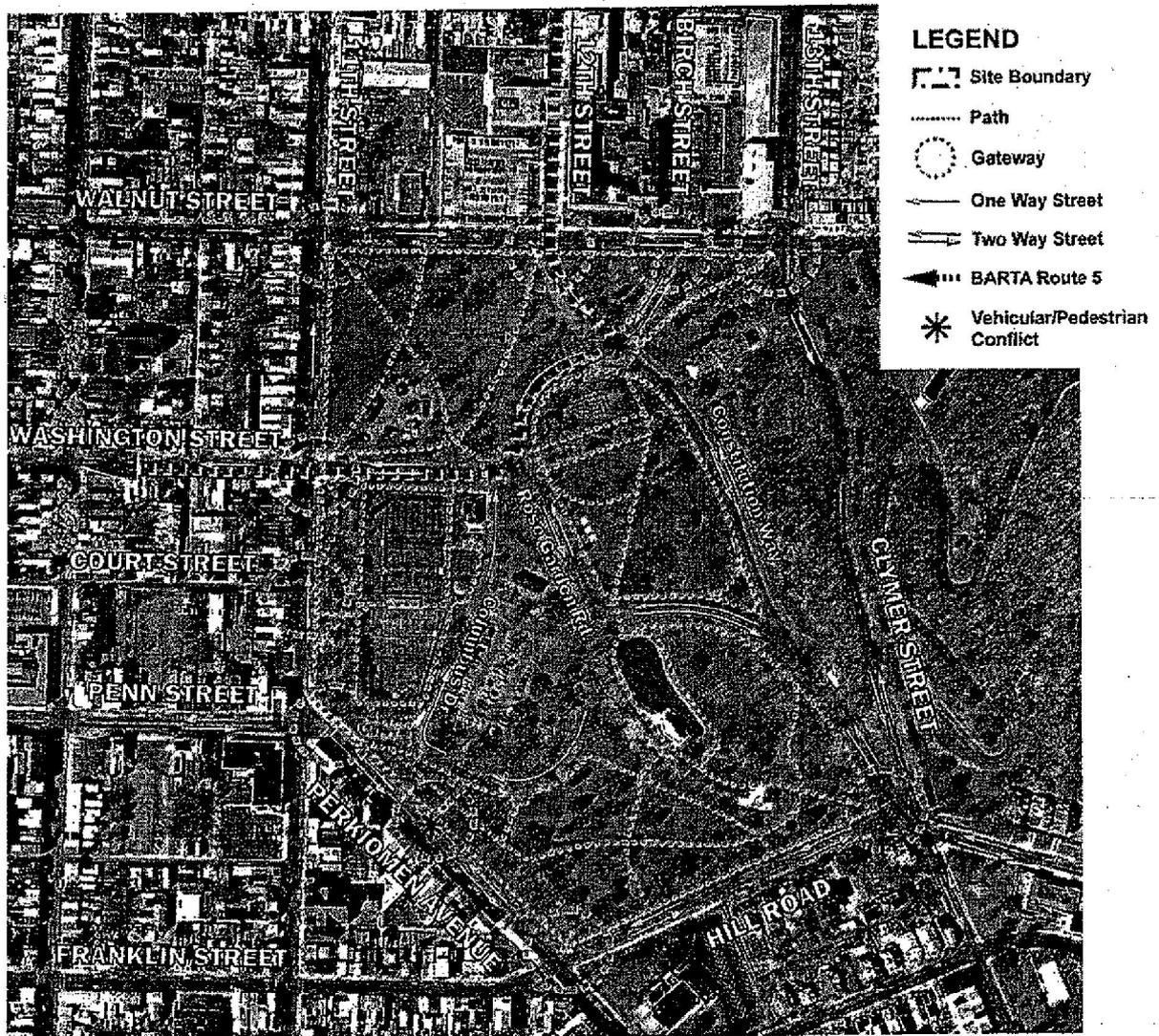


Exhibit 2.3: Analysis Map- Circulation

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City Park Master Plan

## Site Analysis

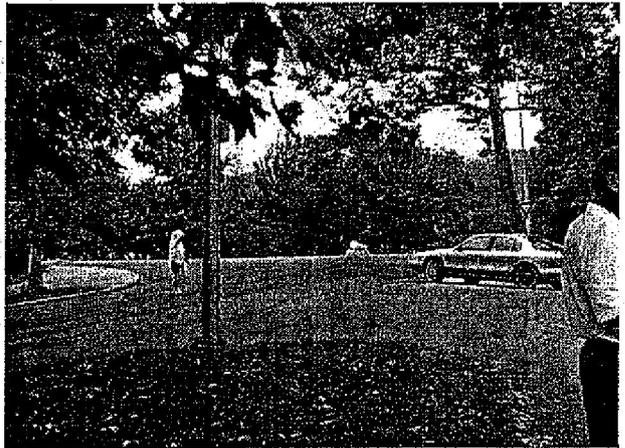
to the absence of a sidewalk on the west edge of Constitution Way.

The termination of Washington Street into Rose Garden Road is another confusing intersection. Traffic approaching this intersection is increased due to the circulation patterns along Walnut Street. The steep incline along Washington Street, and mature shade trees lining the road create bad site lines at this intersection. Adding to the confusion of the situation is the adjacent Columbus Drive intersection on Washington Street and minimal vehicular signage - the only traffic sign being a yield sign for eastbound traffic on Washington Street. During heavy traffic periods this intersection does not allow for safe pedestrian crossings due to the constant flow of vehicular traffic.



Looking northeast along Rose Garden Rd at intersection with Constitution Way

In general the majority of traffic within the park is generated from motorists wishing to cut through the park. These large vehicular traffic volumes combined of insufficient vehicular signage and poorly delineated pedestrian crossings increase the potential for pedestrian / vehicular conflicts.



Looking northeast at intersection of Washington St. and Rose Garden Rd. and vehicle turning out of Columbus Dr.

A network of pedestrian pathways leads park users into and through the site. The majority of the walkways are asphalt paving of generous width that provide pedestrian access throughout the park.

Route 5 bus route operated by Berks Area Regional Transportation (BARTA) travels through the park. The route enters the park via 12<sup>th</sup> street, turns right onto Rose Garden Road, turns right onto Washington Street, and exits the park heading west on Washington Street.

### Utilities

No utility information was available from the City. While there is storm sewer service in the park, there are no known major utilities in the park. Reservoirs are located under the basketball and tennis courts. Electrical wiring runs throughout the park to provide site lighting.

### Views

The site's terraced topography and ridgelines provide various vantage points throughout the park from which to view the park and the city (see exhibit 2.4). In addition these views, many park features are located to create terminus focal points for the city streets. These include the Volunteer Fireman Memorial located at the terminus of Penn Street, the Water Works Building located at the terminus of Court Street, and the turtle fountain at the intersection of Perkiomen Avenue and Hill Road.



Volunteer Fireman Memorial located at the terminus of Penn Street.

## Natural Features

### Topography

Due to City Park's location at the base of Mount Penn, a west to east uphill slope exists from 11th Street towards Clymer Street. Much of the site's terraced topography is the result of grading related to park development over the years. The total change in elevation between Clymer Street and 11th Street is approximately 142 feet (see exhibit 2.4).

### Hydrology

Although City Park historically served as a destination providing residents with fresh water from natural springs, currently there are no watercourses or areas of floodplain located within the park. Current hydrological features include the bandshell pond, the historic reservoirs, and an interpretive wetland demonstration garden located below the bandshell along Columbus Drive (see exhibit 2.4).



Exhibit 2.4: Analysis Map - Natural Features and Views

## Site Analysis

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Currently, the pond is poorly maintained, and access is restricted due to health and safety concerns. The City currently maintains the reservoirs under the basketball and tennis courts. The interpretive wetland demonstration garden appears overgrown and may require minor maintenance to reestablish it as an educational tool.

### Vegetation

The majority of the park site is comprised of open lawn areas with mature shade trees. There are over 500 trees in the park. Areas of understory plants are located in areas of extreme slopes. East of Constitution Way the areas of steep topography are dominated by mature woodland vegetation. (see exhibit 2.4)

## **Existing Facilities**

### Memorials and Monuments

City Park houses a collection of statues, memorials, and monuments honoring a wide range of people and events. Many of the memorials are well integrated into the layout of the park forming focal points and garden spaces. However, many of the smaller memorials have been placed throughout the park with no formal planning process leaving areas of the park to feel cluttered with memorials.

Statues, such as the police memorials, are targets of vandalism due to their remote location and poor site lighting. Due to lack of maintenance, many of the garden areas associated with the major monuments are in decline or have been replaced with lawn.

### Bandshell

Instead of serving as a central park feature the bandshell is currently underutilized and the area surrounding it is in need of improvements. The bandshell site is dominated by the existing pond. The pond separates the audience from the performers and decreases the available seating area. The area lacks proper restroom facilities and facilities for vendors.

Currently, the only events held at the bandshell are limited to the summer concert series. The Berks Art Council is finding it exceedingly more difficult each year to secure private sponsors for their summer concert series and has been forced to decrease the number of concerts. To recreate a desirable venue for concerts improvements are needed. As part of the master plan process the Berks Art Council provided a list of suggested improvements (see appendix for list). Some of these improvements include restrooms, structured seating, and the ability to have ticketed events.

### Game Courts

The gamecourts are a primary destination within City Park. Due to recent improvements the area is well used and maintained. The area is well lit and the facility is open at night during the summer months. The adjacent concession stand has been recently refurbished and provides a snack bar, small seating area, restrooms, and interior storage area for equipment and supplies. Located in the middle of the basketball courts the existing pavilion has no seating and appears underused. A quarter mile asphalt walkway acts as a perimeter to the gamecourt. The historic significance of the site as the location of the first city reservoirs is unnoticed excepting for the stone walls and rod iron railings of the water reservoirs; minor repairs are needed for both to maintain these historic references.

## Former Police Station

A visual assessment of the building's condition by an architect and structural engineer has revealed that the building is a good candidate for renovation and adaptive reuse. Minor repairs to the brick foundation and an installation of a new roof should be immediately considered to maintain this park asset. Currently, the adjacent parking lot is not perceived as a public parking lot due to the many police vehicles that are parked within this lot.

## Playground

The new playground was constructed to replace the existing playground that was in decline and posed safety and security issues. The playground site lacks its own restroom facilities and playground visitors must walk to the concession stand restrooms. However, the vehicular traffic patterns and pedestrian crosswalks do not provide a convenient and accessible route from the playground to this facility.



Exhibit 2.5: Analysis Map - Existing facilities

## Site Analysis

### Rose Garden

The formal rose garden was removed due to the high maintenance demands. The formal allee of trees contains some short lived trees and in some locations trees are missing. The terminus pavilion in this area is understated and does not reflect the rich history of the park. The drinking fountain is in need of repairs.

### Greenhouse

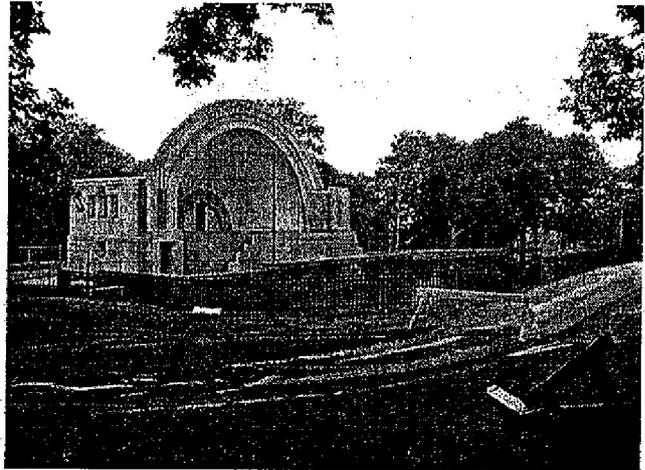
The greenhouse is separated from the park by Constitution Way. Its only access is a vehicular driveway, and there is no formal parking area associated with the greenhouse. Many park patrons feel that the greenhouse is underused and more public programs should be integrated into the use of the greenhouse.

### Lighting

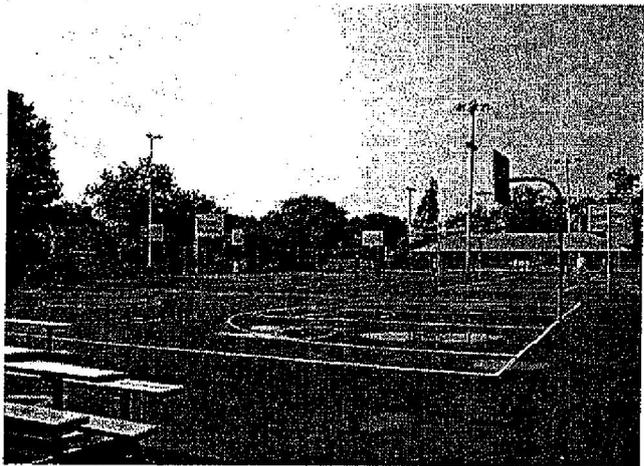
Pedestrian lighting is scattered sporadically throughout the park. The walkways adjacent to streets benefit from the street lighting. However, many walks within the park are not adequately lit. In addition, many different types of lighting fixtures have been installed over the lifetime of the park.

### Site Amenities

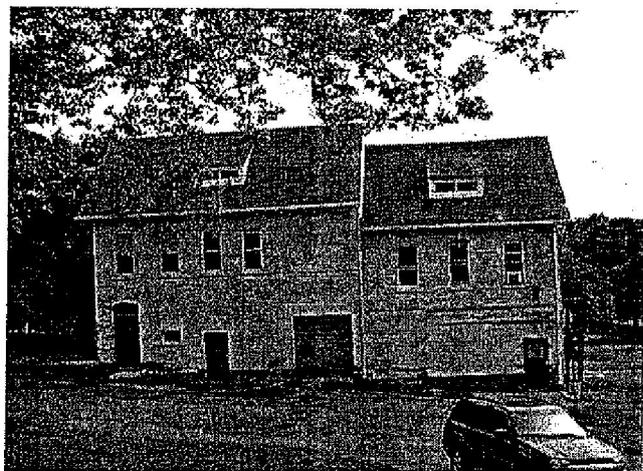
Various types of benches and trash cans are located throughout the park. Some areas of the park do not contain enough trashcans and currently there are no facilities within the park that accommodate recycling. In many cases site amenities are not properly anchored or are constructed out of materials that do not lend themselves to durability and easy maintenance. These site amenities suffer from ongoing vandalism.



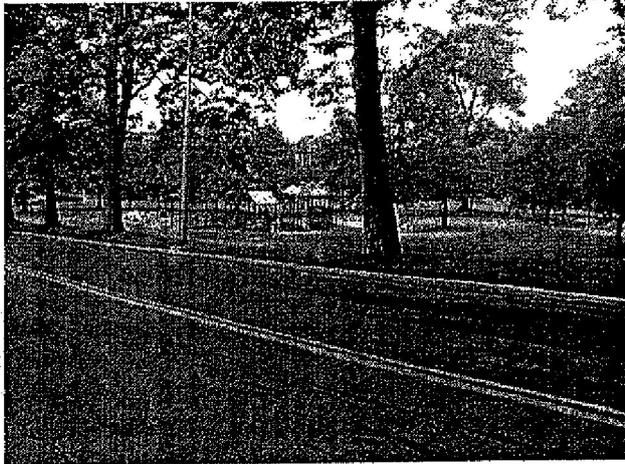
*The Bandshell and Pond.*



*Newly resurfaced basketball courts.*



*Northern Elevation of the "Police Station".*



*Newly constructed playground.*



*Terminus Pavilion with drinking fountain in Rose Garden Area.*



*Example of durable benches currently used in the park.*

### Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities for improvements to City Park are listed below:

1. Minimize the existing conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular circulation through the park.
2. Improvements to the Bandshell area can increase the use of this community resource.
3. Develop a Maintenance and Replacement Plan for the park's mature trees, one of City Park's most valuable assets.
4. Adaptive reuse of the "Police Station" offers the potential to introduce new park uses that can benefit the community.
5. Establish a 'Friends of the Park' dedicated to the implementation of park improvements

The major constraints of the park are:

1. Improvements and renovations are being made to City Park without community participation and consensus. This has resulted in some less than optimum results.
2. There is a limited budget for park maintenance.
3. The park is near its maximum for memorials and statues. A process by which new memorials are proposed and considered should be developed.
4. The existing pond is not being maintained in an acceptable fashion. The pond also acts as an obstruction between the Bandshell stage and the audience during events.

## Site Analysis

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### Chapter 3: Proposed Activities and Facilities

#### Site Program

##### Potential Uses/Suggested Improvements

During the five month master planning process, several meetings were held with City of Reading staff, community groups and the general public. In meetings with community members, a list of potential uses and suggested improvements for City Park was generated. The list included the following:

##### *Improvements to circulation*

- Create safer pedestrian crossings throughout the park
- Implement traffic calming measures
- Increase the number of parking spaces
- Improve directional/way finding signage
- Investigate possible use of the former St. Joseph's Hospital parking lot for overflow parking (nights and weekends)
- Partner with BARTA to provide shuttle bus service during events
- Close interior park roads on weekends
- Convert some park streets to one-way to improve circulation and parking
- Reconfigure walkways within the southwestern portion of the park

##### *Memorials/monuments*

- Restore statues
- Consider relocation of some memorials
- Develop a formal process for the consideration of new memorials
- Add lighting for memorials

##### *Potential reuse of the vacant "Police Station" building*

- Café
- Youth/teen center
- Elderly center
- Cultural center
- Theater

##### *Improvements to the bandshell area*

- Reduce the size of the pond to increase seating in front of the stage
- Increase the size of the pond
- Restore the pond
- Remove the pond
- Create a bridge across the pond connecting the audience with the stage
- Construct a fenced enclosure around the area in order to charge admission to select events
- Events to remain free to park patrons
- Construct stalls for vendors

## **Proposed Activities and Facilities**

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### *Landscape improvements*

- Develop a tree restoration plan
- Restore the former Rose Garden
- Create display garden plantings

### *Park furnishings/facilities*

- Restore or replace historic park elements
- Install tasteful interpretive historic signage
- Strategically place trash receptacles to discourage littering
- Place recycling receptacles in the park
- Select and install standardized site furnishings
- Construct additional restrooms
- Designate picnic areas within the park
- Better utilize the Greenhouse
- Restore/install ornamental fountains

### *Possible community partnerships*

- Blacktop Basketball League
- Berks Arts Council
- Penn's Commons Neighborhood
- City of Reading School District
- Berks Urban Greening Society
- Berks County Conservancy
- Master Gardeners
- BARTA
- PennDOT

## **Recommendations**

Based on public input the following master plan was developed (see exhibit 3.1).

### Vehicular Circulation and Parking

One of the primary objectives of the City Park Master Plan is to re-establish the importance of the pedestrian in the park. The current vehicular circulation within the park gives priority to vehicular traffic rather than the pedestrians.

The master plan proposes that changes be made to the current vehicular circulations to reduce the amount of cut-through vehicular traffic and to re-establish the importance of pedestrians. Based on collaboration between the consultant and the City, the master plan recommends the following changes (see exhibit 3.2):

- Convert Walnut Street from one-way to two-way traffic from 12th Street to 11th Street.
- Create a four-way stop at 12th St., Constitution Way, and Birch Street.
- Convert Constitution Way and Rose Garden Road from two-way to a one-way traffic flow.
- Place a stop sign at Washington Street and Rose Garden Road.
- Convert Washington Street from two-way to one-way traffic west.

These improvements will greatly help to reduce and calm the vehicular traffic that currently travels through the park. In addition the conversion of Constitution Way and Rose Garden Road to one-way will allow for the addition of on street parking. It is also recommended that the City explore closing off the park to vehicular traffic for special events and during peak weekend hours in the summer months.

In coordination with the vehicular traffic improvements, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks should be made. All current crossings should be reviewed to ensure that they are desirable and safe and that they have the appropriate vehicular signage contents. Specifically the following areas should be improved for pedestrian crossings:

- Access across Washington Street and Rose Garden Road to Improve Access to the restrooms.
- Access across Constitution Way at the Greenhouse



Exhibit 3.2: Proposed Vehicular Circulation

## Proposed Activities and Facilities

- Access across Garden Road at the Bandshell entrance.

The mid-block pedestrian crossing along Perkiomen Avenue should be removed by removing the stairway that goes into the cartway.

A copy of the traffic study and recommendations by the City Traffic Engineer in coordination with this master plan study is located in the appendix of this report.

### Monument Area

The master plan proposes the use of shrubs and perennials around the existing cluster of war memorials located in the south east corner of the park at the intersection of Constitution Way and Hill Road (see exhibit 3.3) to create a more unified setting. The plantings will reinforce the circular shape of the memorials layout while anchoring the memorial into the space. The plantings would extend uphill terminating with at a backdrop of evergreens to further enclose the space and filter views of the intersection.

In a second phase an addition garden area across the pathway would reflect the shape of the war memorial reflection garden. This space would accommodate additional war memorials (2-3). These space would open up into the Vietnam War memorial area.

Low plantings on either side of the Vietnam memorial will help to frame the space. Lawn would be maintained at the base of the steps and low plantings will be added to create lawn walkways leading to the memorial.

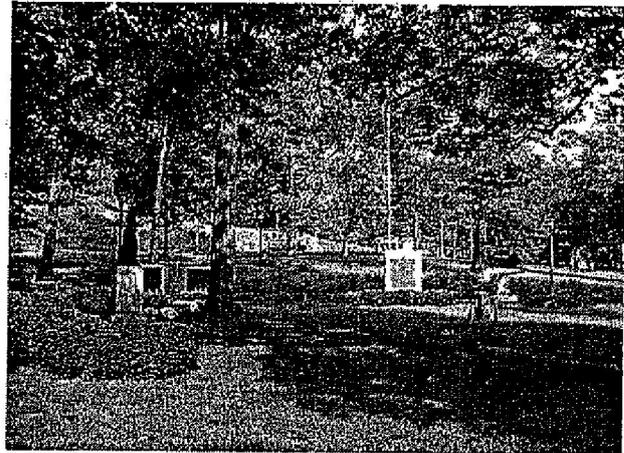
### Bandshell

The Bandshell Area is currently underused. The City Park Master Plan identifies many changes for the Bandshell area that will help to reestablish it as a unique and well used feature in the park.

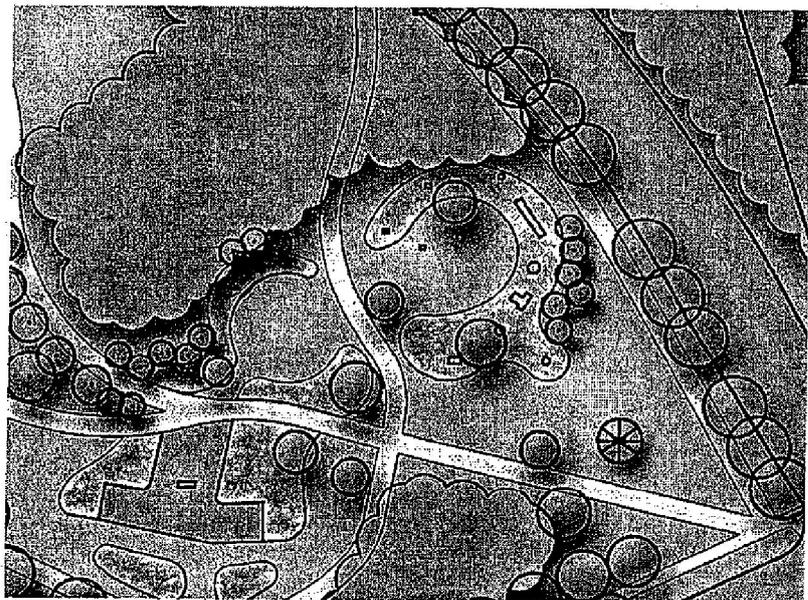
In order to create a space that is a desirable destination during special events as well as every day, the master plan suggests creating a terraced amphitheater (see exhibit 3.4). This will provide more sitting space during concerts and bring the audience closer to the performers.



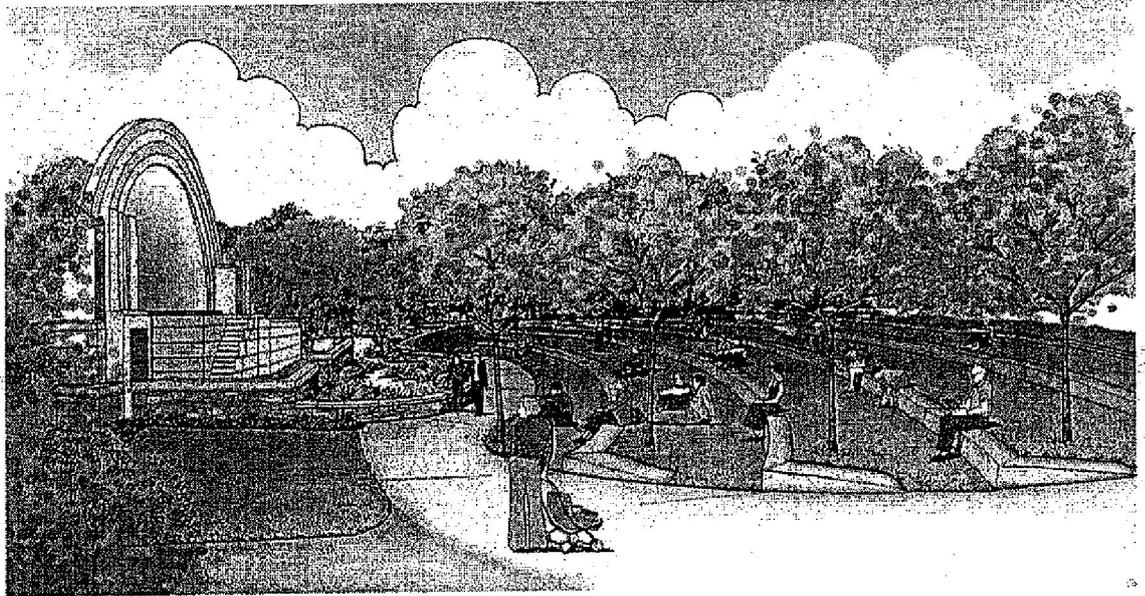
*Existing war memorials appear scattered in the landscape.*



*A photo simulation illustrates new plants to unify the Monument area.*



*Exhibit 3.3: Plan Enlargement - War Memorial Reflection Garden.*



Concept sketch of the proposed Amphitheater.

Fencing, with removable gates, around the new amphitheater, will provide for the option of holding occasional ticketed events at the bandshell. Existing and new fencing will be used to prevent access into the bandshell—the final fence layout must be determined to control pedestrian access into the bandshell. Service access would be restricted to the driveway directly behind the Bandshell. The master plan proposes minor reconfiguration to the driveway alignment to accommodate plantings around the pond. The driveway would terminate to the south of the bandshell where a new service area would be provided. The use of collapsible bollards would prohibit public vehicular access into this area. New restrooms are proposed at the intersection of Constitution Way and Rose Garden Road.

In 2005, FX Browne was retained by the city to assess restoration of the pond. As part of the Master Plan process the FX Browne report: *The City Park Pond Restoration Plan & Dredging Feasibility Study, July 2005* was reviewed, a copy of the report can be found in the appendix of this report. The major recommendations of FX Browne's study were:

- Restoring the pond hydrology by redirection spring flow back into the pond;
- Dredging the pond of sediment;
- Repairing cracks in the existing pond liner;
- Developing a wetland forebay to trap sediment for maintenance;
- Adding riparian plantings to filter stormwater.

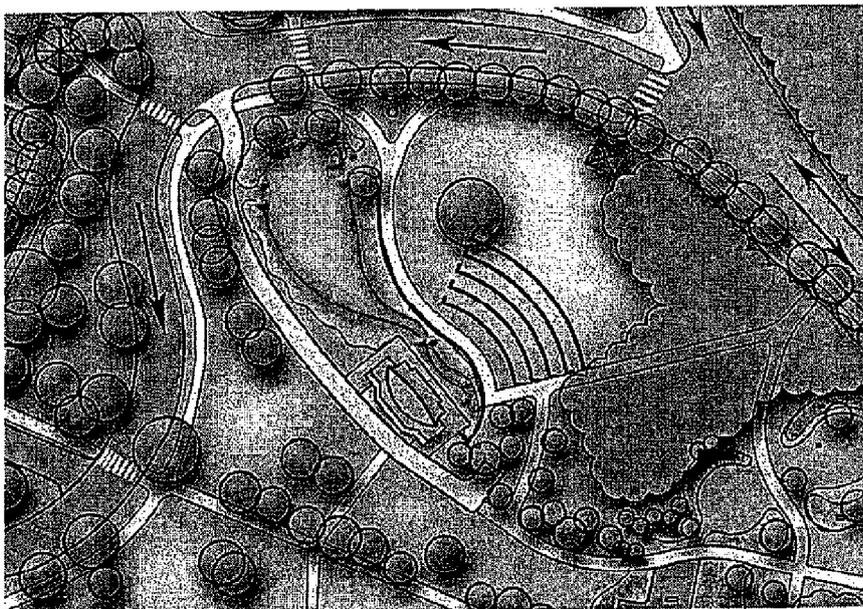
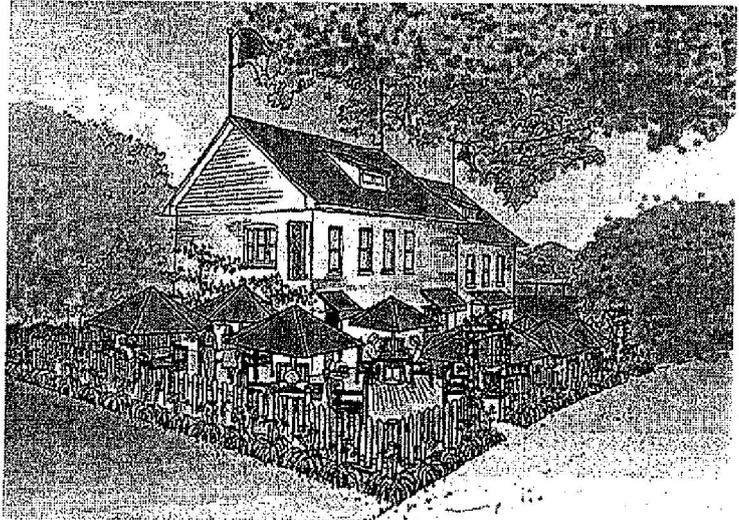


Exhibit 3.4: Plan Enlargement - Bandshell Site

The design of the Bandshell and

## Proposed Activities and Facilities

Pond area consider the recommendations of FX Browne's study. The new pond configuration would be reduced in size to help minimize maintenance demands. A small stream with low plantings would originate from in front of the stage area and would feed the pond. Wetland plantings would be located north of the bandshell where the stream enters the pond. A low seat wall would separate the stream and pond from the amphitheater and open lawn. The historic fountain head on the bandshell wall should be repaired and integrated into stream system. The new pond would have wetland and meadow plantings to help maintain water quality. The existing pond would be removed and vegetation would be used to control access to the pond. Towards the northern end of the pond some areas of lawn would be maintained to allow people to approach the water's edge.



Concept sketch of the proposed Café at the "Police Station".

The pond improvements and structured seating will create a destination point that will ensure that the space is well used on a daily basis for picnics, sunbathing, and water play.

In addition to the physical improvements at the bandshell the City of Reading should explore additional uses for the bandshell such as seasonal movie nights in the park or increase marketing towards local dance, theater, and private groups to generate more activity in the park and revenue for its use.

### Gamecourt / "Police Station" Area

Few improvements are currently needed for the game court area. The existing asphalt loop walkway should be signed as a quarter mile loop. Additional benches could be located along the walkway. Picnic or game tables should be added to the pavilion area.

The master plan proposes that the "Police Station" be rehabilitated (see exhibit 3.5). It is recommended that part of the ground floor be used for community activities such as a café with outdoor seating. The remainder of the building could serve one of many uses such as a youth/elderly center, cultural center, group meeting space or performing arts center.



Exhibit 3.5: Plan Enlargement "Police Station" Site.

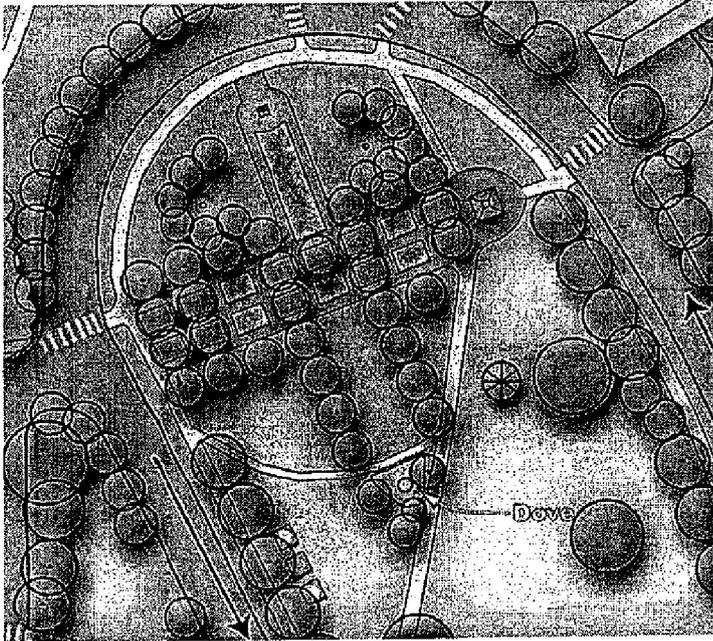
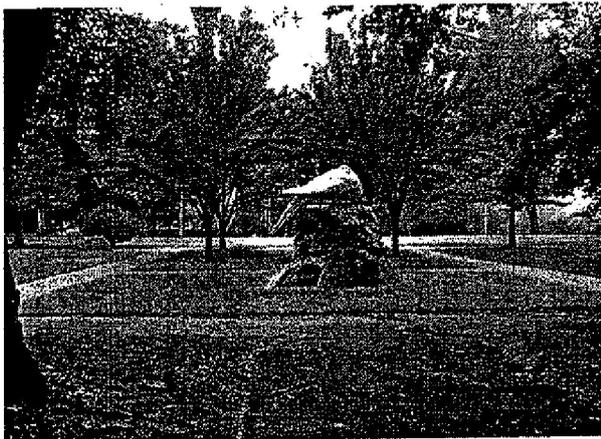


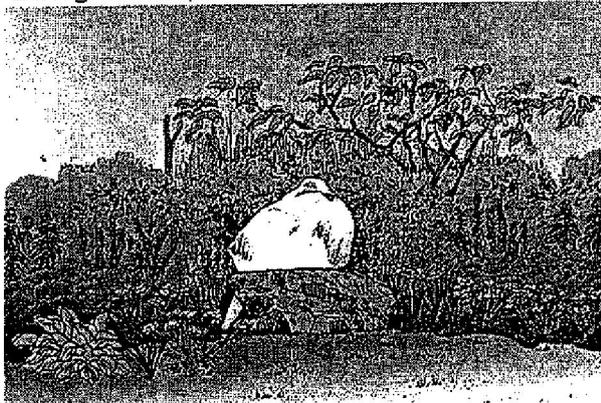
Exhibit 3.6: Plan Enlargement - Rose Garden Site.

The master plan proposes that the existing parking lot be reconfigured. Planting Islands will allow for shade trees to be added into the parking lot. A vehicular drop-off is proposed as part of the site improvements for the "Police Station". A new entrance at the east end of the parking lot provides additional vehicular access.

With the redevelopment of the "Police Station" the flow of pedestrian traffic will increase between the game courts and the "Police Station". This area should become predominately pedestrian and closed off to vehicular traffic. Collapsible Bollards should be installed at the new parking lot entrance and Washington Street to prohibit vehicular traffic along the majority of Columbus Drive. The remained of Columbus Drive would become two-way to allow for vehicular ingress and egress into the parking lot.



Existing Dove Sculpture.



Concept sketch of proposed Dove Sculpture garden.

### Rose Garden

The reestablishment of the historic formal rose garden is not recommended due to the maintenance demands of such gardens. In its place the City Park The Master Plan proposes creating a formal geometry through the addition of walkways, trees and, bed areas (see exhibit 3.6). Along the existing allee in the bed areas new trees would replace the declining trees. Additional trees planted to the outside of the walkways would reinforce the existing allee.

A new planting bed with walkways connecting the existing allee to the existing Policeman Memorial is proposed. Low maintenance ornamental grasses, flowering shrubs, and perennials would be planted within the beds created by the walkways to add seasonal interest and color. An allee of trees would continue the axis of the new walkway into the southern lawn area. The Dove Sculpture would be relocated to create a focal point at the end of the new allee. The restored Dove Sculpture would be lowered and placed in a garden setting. The addition of a low ornamental fence around the garden would prevent easy access to the statue.

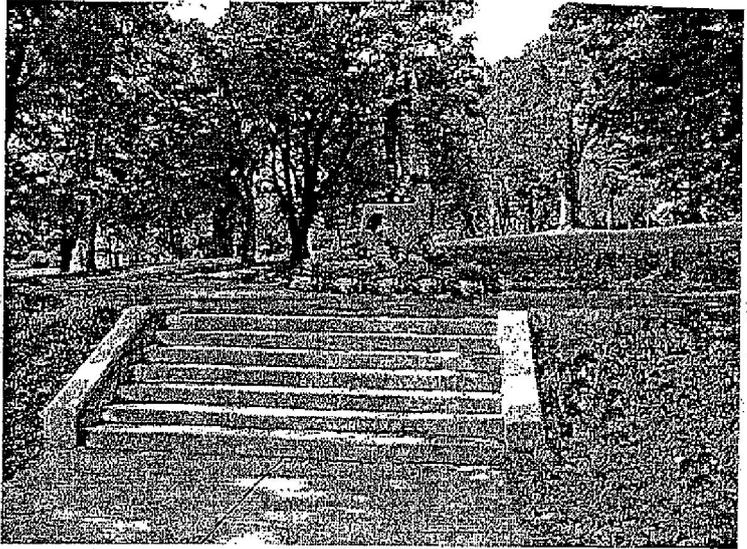
A new pavilion is proposed to replace the existing structure at the eastern end of the allee. The architecture of the new structure should reflect the rich history of the park. The pavilion would incorporate seating and the central drinking fountain would be refurbished.

## Proposed Activities and Facilities

As part of the Master Plan Study an option was explored to relocate the Policeman Memorial to a more prominent spot at the Perkiomen Avenue and Hill Road Park entrance (see page 24). This would create the opportunity for the design of a new memorial or art piece in its absence.

### Green House / Dog Park

In order to incorporate the Greenhouse into City Park the city should coordinate with local senior citizens groups, the School District, and Master Gardeners groups, and other interested community organizations to develop a greater public involvement in the Greenhouse. The maintenance of the rose garden area could involve these community groups.



*A photo simulation of proposed relocation of the Policeman Memorial to the Hill Road and Perkiomen Ave Park Entrance.*

A dog park is proposed for the open lawn area east of the Greenhouse. Approximately one-eighth of an acre in size the fence area will provide a safe place for owners to let their dogs play and interact with other dogs. The additional activity will help to incorporate this area back into the park.

In addition, circulation improvements in the area of the Greenhouse will provide better vehicular and pedestrian access. A new parking lot (9 spaces) would be accessed from the Greenhouse driveway to provide off-street parking for both the Greenhouse and a proposed Dog Park. A new sidewalk along the eastern edge of Constitution Way from the Greenhouse to the existing Rose Garden Road sidewalk would provide access into this area from Walnut Street. The creation of a pedestrian walkway from the Rose Garden Area to the new sidewalk would connect this area to the rest of the park.

### Site Infrastructure

Both the park stormwater system and electrical system are in need of updating. There is currently little to no plan information regarding the park utilities. The Master Plan recommends updating both the stormwater and electrical utilities within the park. Preliminary allowances for this work were generate as part of the Probable Cost of Development (See Chapter 4—Implementation).

Consideration was given to park walk ways and their current alignments. Generally, the current walkway conditions and alignments provide for safe access throughout the park. It was specifically requested that attention be given to the southwestern area of the park. At this time the alignment and condition of walkways does not warrant redesign of this area.

### Site Lighting

There is currently lighting throughout the park, mainly in the areas of the playground, basketball courts, and war monuments. The master plan estimates additional lighting in areas without existing lighting based on a light spacing of one-hundred feet. A standard light fixture should be selected and unlit areas of the park shall be lit. Over time existing light fixtures should be upgraded to the park standard fixture.

## Chapter Three

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### Site Furnishings

A standard bench type and trash / recycling receptacle type should be selected for the park. These site furnishings should be durable and anchored in place. Trash receptacles should be placed throughout the park; specifically at park entries, along major pedestrian thoroughfares, and at activity areas. Recycling receptacles should be placed at major site entries and key activity areas. The existing green metal benches located in the memorial area are well regarded by the public, attractive, and weather well; this bench model and a corresponding trash receptacle should be considered for the park standard.

### Park Implementation Plan

Target low cost improvements/ programs that involve the public in the process and create a large impact. Programs/projects could include:

- Public Services day to plant spring bulbs at park entries;
- Close vehicular traffic in park on Weekends;
- Formation of a "Friends-of-the-Park" organization; and







































