The Easton Pocket Parks Vision Plan is a community-driven plan for seven under-served neighborhood-scale parks in the City’s West Ward and South Side. Developed during the throes of COVID-19, the Plan centered on an inventively re-imagined public engagement process.
The engagement process utilized a diversity of tools: a website, social media and press campaigns, signage, and public art installation. The team also delivered activity packets to community groups, held socially distant outdoor meetings, and sponsored giveaways to involve all.
“Pinwheels in the Park” activated each of the parks with a public art installation of more than 1,500 colorful pinwheels for two weeks in August 2020, inviting residents to visit and see these neighborhood spaces in a new way.
The planning team designed custom, bilingual, weatherproof signage for each park to define its identity (as no signage previously existed) and direct visitors to www.eastonpocketparks.com to explore the project survey, contests, activities, in-depth information, and 360° park views.
“Pinwheels in the Park” activated public spaces in a time when communal gathering was impossible, and many were seeking respite in these neighborhood-scale parks. The art piece allowed people of all ages to explore and enjoy this intervention at their own pace.
During a time overshadowed by political turmoil, racial injustice, and suffering of COVID-19, the intervention celebrated the beauty of connection in the small spaces we sometimes overlook, signifying hope and sparking a sense of joy and community even in isolation.
Over two weeks in October 2020, a series of “Pop into the Parks” evening discussions was held in each of the parks, offering residents the chance to share candid feedback during small, masked, socially distant conversations in their own neighborhoods.
To help capture the perspectives and wishes of youth for their community parks, a Scavenger Hunt and “Draw Your Dream Park” Contest were held in partnership with local youth, community services, and education groups. Children of all ages submitted entries.
A lively social media campaign was implemented throughout the course of the project. The team leveraged the social media profiles across a range of platforms of both the City and project partners to promote the plan's public engagement events and opportunities for community feedback.
The design for 7th Street Park responds to residents' desire for it to remain a green, flexible space for play and relaxation. Neighbors requested to maintain the park in cooperation with the City, and asked for gardens for productive planting.
Residents surrounding Bushkill Park indicated a desire for seating and programming to activate the narrow, tucked-back parcel. A re-framed lawn with planting and natural play structures creates a space for movie nights – perfect for young families along the block.
Jackson Street Park's hazardous trees are removed to open up sight lines, and a hillside slope is converted to natural play with a slide structure. The existing pavilion is refurbished with seating, games, and places for additional events and programming.
The multi-phased plan for this park integrates a new community center, which has already been partially funded by the City since the master plan’s release. Spaces for play, games, and enhanced amenities provide a place for people of all ages.
Raspberry Park is re-defined with amenities that activate the former blacktop lot, providing space to skate, slide, climb, and play basketball. Shade trees and native gardens provide ecological amenities, while natural play enhances use of the adjacent upper lot.
The planning process revealed Nesquehoning as the location of a Civil War–era Black burial grounds. The team advised for no active use of the parcel, and recommended further study, research, and engagement to uncover Nesquehoning’s past and plan its future.
LINKS

Project Website: https://www.eastonpocketparks.com