

Frequently Asked Questions

About Penn Park

Q: What is Penn Park?

A: Penn Park is 24 acres of contiguous open space that includes athletic and recreational facilities owned and operated by the University of Pennsylvania. This new amenity lies to the east of the Levy Tennis Pavilion, bordered by Walnut Street, AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor rail line and South Street.

Q: What are the athletic facilities in the Park?

Proceeding south from Walnut Street; the Park contains Ace Adams field and Dunning-Cohen Champions field, both multipurpose NCAA regulation athletic fields; a 470- seat multipurpose stadium that is also an NCAA regulation women's softball field; and 12 tennis courts, with 200 seat viewing stands. Between these facilities are pathways, elevated bridge connections and open space for passive recreation; 530 trees adorn the landscaped pathways for walking and jogging. The Park is served by a 210-car surface parking lot bordering the north boundary along Lower Walnut Street. In addition, a security station and restrooms reside in the stadium.

Q: Is Penn Park just for athletic use?

A: Penn Park integrates athletic venues and park like spaces. It has two acres of open spaces that are agile in use and not specified for athletic use. They are: the South Lawn, an open space between Ace Adams Field and the multipurpose stadium; the Picnic Grove - an open space nestled between the Dunning-Cohen Champions Field and the multipurpose stadium and the South Green, a grass recreation field south of the Hamlin Tennis Center. All easily accessed from the West by the Paley Bridge. The multipurpose stadium, in the heart of the complex, is designed for a variety of uses and gatherings.

Q: Is Penn Park open to the public?

A: Yes. Penn Park is open to the public. Non-affiliated parties can enjoy the multiple open spaces for recreation, and use the area as a pedestrian connection for walking, jogging and biking.

While the athletic facilities exist primarily for the Penn community and its guests, they are available via permit and reservation to accommodate specific games, tournaments, and appropriate structured and unstructured games, sports tournaments, concerts, and special events. For more information on how to rent an athletic venue, or reserve a space for special events, please visit pennpark.upenn.edu

Q: Does the Park have operating hours?

A: Yes. The Park hours of operation are from 6 am to midnight. Individual facilities within the Park will be scheduled through Penn's Department of Recreation and Intramural Athletics.

Q: Is Penn Park open year round?

A: Yes, Penn Park is a year round facility. A seasonal air structure is erected over the Dunning-Cohen Champions Field to allow indoor athletic activities and practices during winter months.

Q: Does the Park have any rules and regulations for users that are different from those that apply the rest of the campus?

A: For a complete list of the Penn Park rules please visit pennpark.upenn.edu.

Q: How do I reserve a playing field or schedule an event? And how much does it cost?

A: For scheduling athletic fields please visit pennpark.upenn.edu.

Q: The Hamlin Tennis Center holds 12 courts and 200 seats. Can it be reserved for recreational use and if so, how is court time reserved?

A: It includes six competition courts and six recreational courts, team rooms, and elevated walk for viewing, and night lighting. Court time is reserved through the Department of Recreation, Intramurals and Athletics.

Q: Is the parking lot open to the public for a fee? What are the prices and hours?

A: Located at 31st and Lower Walnut Streets, the 210-space parking lot is managed by Penn Parking Services. Although some spaces are designated for Penn permit parkers, the lot is open to all vehicles on a first- come, first-served basis. The fee for visitor parking is \$8 a day, which is managed through automated pay stations located on the lot. The lot is open 24 hours and monitored from 7 am until about 12 pm.

Q: Does a Penn bus stop at Penn Park? Is there a route, schedule, and designated stops?

A: From 6 pm until the park closes at midnight seven days a week Penn Park is served on demand by the Penn Shuttle. Passengers must call 8-RIDE to request a pick up if a vehicle is not already waiting in the lot. Penn Transit has two vehicles dedicated to serving the Penn Park area after 6 pm. Passengers are taken from the park to the nearest transit stop, which is 34th and Walnut. From that location, riders may access regular Penn Transit bus and shuttle services. Walking Escorts are also available. To request a Walking Escort, call 215-898-9255 (215-898-WALK).

Q: Is Penn Park universally accessible?

A: Yes, Penn Park meets all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Q: Is the area maintained by the University?

A: Yes, the Department of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics manages and schedules the operations of the athletic and recreation venues such as playing fields and courts. A private company manages the Hamlin Tennis Center. However, the open spaces, pathways, lighting, and landscaping are managed and maintained by Penn's Division of Facilities and Real Estate Services.

Q: What are the public safety elements in the Park?

A: The Division of Public Safety provides dedicated Penn Police Officers and Allied Barton Officers patrols, as well as and Virtual Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) patrols 24X7, 365 days a year. In addition, a security kiosk is located centrally on site; providing a full time location for public safety support. There are sixteen (16) Blue Light Emergency Phones throughout Penn Park. The Penn Police phone number is 215-573-333.

Q: How is Penn Park accessed?

A: Four pedestrian access points link the park to the campus and the city: The Paley Bridge connects the complex to Franklin Field, the Palestra, and the Weiss Pavilion area which in turn creates an easy and pedestrian friendly connection to 33rd Street. The Walnut Street footbridge dramatically links the intersection of 30th and Walnut into the Park through a sweeping and elegant design. The Weave Bridge connects the Park, over the AMTRAK rail lines, to the athletic fields south of Hollenback Center. The Class of 1976 Entrance Plaza is located at 31st and Lower Walnut Street adjacent to Penn's Ice Rink at the Class of 1923 arena. 31st Street is the sole vehicular route to the Park, providing access to the parking lot along Lower Walnut Street.

Q: Are there restrooms? Where are they located, and are they public?

A: Yes. There are two restrooms at Penn Plaza between the multipurpose stadium and Hamlin Tennis Center. They are open to the public during Park hours (6 am to Midnight). Both restrooms are equipped with duress alarms. Other restrooms accessed via "PennCard" exist inside the adjacent facilities such as Levy Tennis Pavilion and the Weiss Pavilion at Franklin Field, which include gender neutral bathrooms and baby changing stations.

The Planning, Design and Construction of Penn Park**Q: How much did the construction of Penn Park cost?**

A: This \$46.5 million investment used institutional resources, and philanthropy with no public dollars. The construction of Penn Park created 233 jobs for area residents. Applying a multiplier effect, this translates to nearly a \$70 million economic impact for the City of Philadelphia.

The construction of Penn Park was supported by a diverse workforce. More than 30% of construction contracts were awarded to minority owned and women owned businesses. In addition, 34% of the skilled and laborers were minorities, and 29% were female, both exceeding our goals.

Q: How long did it take to construct?

A: 22 months. Demolition was approximately 4 months, and construction lasted 18 months.

Q: How much space does it add to Penn's campus?

A: 14 acres, which brings the total continuous acreage of Penn's campus to 283 and added a 20% increase in our green/open space.

Q: Who designed Penn Park?

A: The design of Penn Park was led by the Landscape Architecture firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Brooklyn, New York. Visit their webpage [here](#). The Park's design team also featured Leers/Weinzapfel Associates, ARUP Engineers, Pennoni Engineers, Turner Construction, and Stantec.

Q: What are the main design elements in the park?

A: In addition to the athletics and recreation fields and open spaces, large sculptural landforms organize the complex's playing fields, walkways, and public open space into distinct areas. These landforms also provide a pedestrian experience independent of the Park's athletic venues. The design creates a memorable pedestrian promenade with long views both into the park and to the city beyond.

Q: What was on the land before Penn Park?

A: The area immediately south of Walnut Street was a 14-acre surface parking facility for the U.S. Postal Service; prior to that it was used industrially.

- *In June 2003 Penn Trustee's approve a resolution for the land acquisition*
- *In March 2004 Penn signed an Agreement of Sale*
- *In summer 2004 Penn President Amy Gutmann announced the formation of the Eastern Campus Advisory Committee to begin the process of guiding redevelopment of the pending postal acquisition; and Penn retained Sasaki Associates to create a new campus development plan with special focus on this land.*
- *In June 2006, Penn Connects – A Vision for the Future, was released as Penn's development plan to guide the growth of campus for 30 years. The centerpiece of the plan is Penn Park, a new open space combining passive recreation and traditional collegiate athletic facilities that also serves to improve the gateway between University City and Center City.*
- *Penn took ownership of the land in 2007.*

Q: What kind of vegetation is planted within the park?

A: One of the appealing features of Penn Park is the return of vegetation and plant life to an area that was paved in asphalt and industrial for decades. Specific native and adaptive plants are used throughout the site to reduce irrigation requirements. Of the 530 trees found within Penn Park, some species include: Catalpa, Hackberry, Swamp White Oak, White Pine, Metasequoia, Larch, and Balsam Pine. These species were selected with specific attention to where they appear relative

to their position on the land, with trees that prefer wet soil conditions planted in the lower levels, and Hedgerow trees which are more drought resistant, planted along the top of the landforms.

Q: Is the area all grass?

A: Each of the playing fields is comprised of sustainable synthetic turf made from recycled products. The fields are pervious and storm water drains through the synthetic turf into a sophisticated under drain system which flows to a cistern. The cistern collects and filters the water, which then gets used for irrigation. The passive recreational open spaces are comprised of natural grass.

Environmental Sustainability

Q: Why does Penn Park use synthetic turf playing fields instead of natural grass?

A: Synthetic turf eliminates the need for annual re-seeding, fertilizing and mowing and reduces the use of water for irrigation. It also is permeable, allowing storm water to drain into underground cisterns for storage and subsequent reuse. This supports Penn's Climate Action Plan.

Q: What kinds of recycled materials are used in the park?

A: Shredded bark mulch, asphalt millings, and granite cobbles and curbs were utilized.

Q: How does Penn Park support the City of Philadelphia's goal of reducing storm water runoff?

A: Penn Park's self-sustaining storm water drainage and containment system collects and stores water underground. It captures the first one-inch of rainwater, decreasing the amount of storm water that goes into the city storm water system. The Park irrigates itself by draining excess water into trenches between the fields, where it is then used to sustain vegetation throughout dryer times. Additionally, vegetation was carefully selected that does not require significant maintenance and instead relies only on rainwater and the irrigation system.

Q: What are other sustainable aspects of the park design?

A: Apart from providing significant new green space and a state-of-the-art storm water management system, Penn Park uses basins to decrease runoff effects, low flow/flush faucets and toilets in the restrooms to reduce clean water consumption, and light shields on the sports lighting fixtures.

Q: Are the lights going to be used all night? Are they sustainable?

A: The sports lighting on the athletic venues is on until midnight. The path lighting and parking lot lighting is on all night.