

# Splash Pad at Gateway Park Possible for Summer 2020

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Key Pen Parks scored an impressive 10th place position with a grant proposal to develop a Splash Pad at Gateway Park. A total of 91 park agencies applied under the competitive grant program managed by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The final ranking, made official Oct. 17, all but ensures Key Pen Parks will move forward with its nearly \$1 million proposal to develop a 3,300 square foot splash pad as part of their Phase 3 master development plan.

The grant was approved under the RCO's Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and will provide up to \$497,800 of state capital funds to complete the splash pad, which will be adjacent to the playground, pavilion and restrooms already in use at the 72-acre Gateway Park in Wauna. It will also be the only aquatic facility in the area where persons with disabilities can get into or play in the

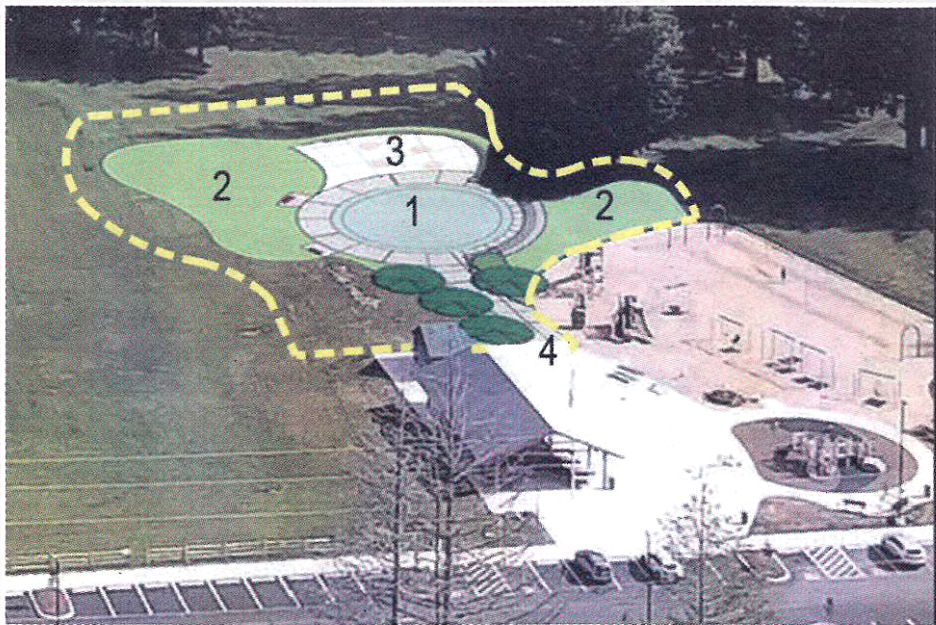
water unassisted on an accessible surface.

"If everything goes according to plan, we could be turning dirt about this time next year for a splash pad, provided the state capital budget is approved by Legislators on time," said Scott Gallagher, executive director of Key Pen Parks. "We cannot move dirt until we have a signed agreement with the Recreation and Conservation Office."

Gallagher expects the official grant agreements to go out for signatures by the end of July 2019. The agreements will be presented to the Key Pen Parks Board of Commissioners in August or September. He said that once the signed agreements are received by the RCO, an official Notice to Proceed should follow.

"We are already at the 60 percent design phase and will be at 100 percent design by the time these funds become available," Gallagher said. "We will be ready with our permits in hand and ready to go out to bid."

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New 3,300 sq.ft. splash area (1) with adjacent grass sunning lawns (2) and paved picnic court (3) will be first accessible waterplay area in the area. *Graphic courtesy: Key Pen Parks*

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“Our thought process is to try to have the construction move forward in late fall or winter of 2019 in order to open the splash pad for late spring or early summer of 2020,” Gallagher said. “Our challenge now is timing.”

Key Pen Parks is already coming to the table with \$374,000 from its existing capital budget for the splash pad project. Also secured is a commitment of \$65,800 from Pierce County Council Member Derek Young’s office—from monies collected in real estate excise taxes that can only be used to fund capital improvement projects. Included in the grant application to the RCO was approximately \$3,000 in donated labor from volunteer groups such as the Boy Scout Troup No. 222 to help with plantings.

“This is where the Key Pen Parks Foundation together with the public can help raise funds to close the \$50,000 gap in cash donations needed to meet the matching funds required under the RCO grant agreement,” said Gallagher.

A splash pad was one of the key program needs identified by the community while

developing the master plan for Gateway Park in 2015, according to the application. Key Pen Parks noted in their grant request that health and wellness benefits are already being realized since the construction of Gateway Park Phase 1 in 2017. The park is used almost continuously by young families and even crowded on weekends. Adding the spray park will continue to increase the health and well-being of the community as more recreation opportunities are provided.

“People have asked me how a splash pad could possibly cost a million dollars,” said Dianna Home, a member of the park foundation board. “I assure them much of the money is for the cost of labor, materials and work you’ll never be able to see from the top of the splash pad when it’s all finished,” she said.

“Our community is so excited; they can hardly wait for that splash pad to open,” Home said. “There’s such enthusiasm and generosity in this amazing community, we’re up to the challenge.”

Ready, set, splash.

More info at [www.keypenparks.com](http://www.keypenparks.com)