



SPECIAL REPORT

UPDATE ON CITY WATER FOUNTAINS

RACHAEL HEISLER
CITY CONTROLLER

DOUGLAS W. ANDERSON
DEPUTY CONTROLLER

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Inspections performed by:

THOMAS L. SCUILLI, Director of Public Affairs

MICHAEL VISNICH, Materials Inspector

ROBERT DEANGELO, Contract Division Manager

KEVIN O'CONNOR, Assistant Contract Supervisor

BACKGROUND

In June 2024, news reports suggested that most of the City’s more than 200 water fountains had not been turned on. Reports indicated that the Department of Public Works had only one plumber who was responsible for turning on all of the fountains, in addition to his other duties.¹

In response, City Council passed a resolution on June 18, 2024 authorizing the Mayor and the Directors of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Department of Public Works (DPW) to enter into an agreement or agreements with licensed plumbers or plumbing firms or other entities on such terms as are necessary to alleviate the critical shortage of plumbers in the city's workforce.² Subsequent news reports indicated that the administration had declined to use plumbers from the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority but had identified a contractor who would soon be receiving a work order to turn on some of the fountains.³

FINDINGS

Inspectors from the City Controller’s office visited 20 water fountains at locations across the City from Thursday, August 1 to Tuesday August 6. Of the 20 fountains tested, inspectors found that 13 (65%) were operational, and 7 (35%) remained off.

Their findings are presented below.

LOCATION	NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE TESTED	ON/OFF
Bloomfield Pool & Recreational Center	Bloomfield	08/01/2024	ON
Anderson Playground	Schenley Park	08/01/2024	ON
Osceola Playground	Bloomfield	08/01/2024	ON
Garland Park	East Liberty	08/01/2024	ON
Liberty Green Park	East Liberty	08/01/2024	ON
Costa Court	Larimer	08/01/2024	OFF
Mellon Park	East Liberty	08/01/2024	ON
Moore Park	Brookline	08/01/2024	ON
Brookline Memorial Park and Recreation Center	Brookline	08/01/2024	OFF
Highland Park Playground	Highland Park	08/01/2024	ON
Stanton Avenue Courts	Highland Park	08/01/2024	ON
Wightman Park	Squirrel Hill	08/01/2024	OFF

¹ Sheehan, Andy. “Pittsburgh has not turned on its public water fountains. Here's why.” KDKA, 06/11/2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/pittsburgh-department-of-public-works-water-fountains-off/>.

² Enactment #424 of 2024, <https://pittsburgh.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6727401&GUID=26FBA297-7AF7-4FDA-BB89-1CE66A9A3891&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=water+fountains&FullText=1>

³ Sheehan, Andy. “Pittsburgh is still relying on one plumber to turn on its public water fountains.” KDKA, 06/25/2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/pittsburgh-public-water-fountains-update/>.

Natoli Park	Morningside	08/02/2024	ON
Heth's Park	Highland Park	08/02/2024	ON
McKinley Park	Beltzhoover	08/02/2024	ON
Woods Run at Central Avenue	Marshall Shadeland	08/05/2024	OFF
Riverview Park Playground	Perry North	08/05/2024	OFF
Jack Stack Park	Brighton Heights	08/05/2024	OFF
Jack Stack Pool	Brighton Heights	08/05/2024	ON
McBride Park	Lincoln Place	08/06/2024	OFF