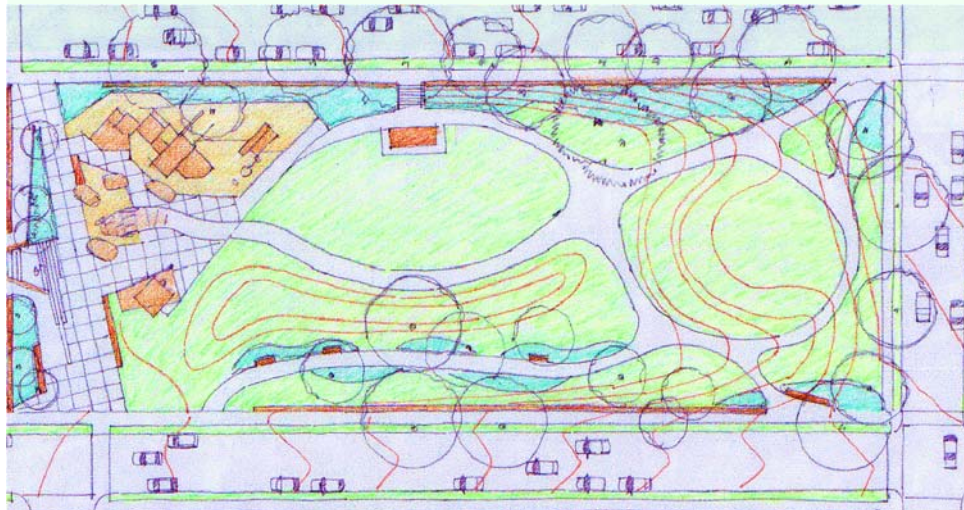


Couch Park Master Plan



**PORTLAND
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Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

Couch Park Master Plan

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October 2003



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Couch Park Master Plan

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APPENDIX

Public Involvement
Public Involvement Plan and Schedule
Meetings
Survey Results

1

Recommended



The master plan is a framework for future detailed design of the recommended park improvements. The park will be a work in progress until the recommended improvements are complete or until circumstances change enough to require a new master plan.

Principles



Trees

- The variety and beauty of the many trees in the park are it's most valuable resource

People



- The park is a community focal point that enlivens and enriches the neighborhood.

Activating the park with people and activities is the key to making people feel safe, secure and welcome in the park

There should be opportunities to come together and also to enjoy solitude and quiet

People of all ages and abilities should be able to enjoy outdoor activities in a safe and comfortable setting

Improving access, visibility and recreational opportunities will allow surveillance and encourage desirable activities



Art+ Function



- Additions and improvements should be artful and functional; in keeping with the park's quirky, informal qualities that have evolved over time.



Carved commemorative plaque embedded in pavement

Final Plan Highlights



Couch Park Master Plan

Plan Components



1. Character and ambience
2. Site organization
3. Major features
4. Access and circulation
5. Uses and activities to animate the park

1. Character and Ambience



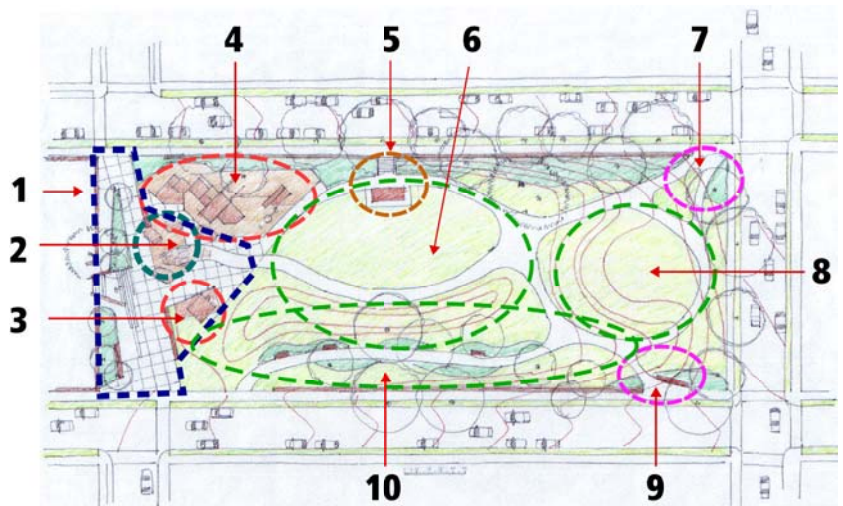
Tiles on sides of concrete planters at west end of park



The plan recognizes that people who use Couch Park enjoy it because of how it feels and looks. It is comfortable and familiar, it has accumulated remnants of its own and the neighborhood's history; it is a relatively unstructured and soft setting that is an appealing contrast to the surrounding streets and buildings; it contains a distinguished and impressive collection of large trees. The park can and must accommodate change so that it continues to enrich the characteristics and qualities of the park that are meaningful to the community.

2. Site Organization

1. Plaza
2. Young Children's Play
3. Renewed Restroom
4. Play Structure
5. Stairs and Stage
6. Open Meadow
7. North East Entry
8. "Bowl"
9. South East Entry
10. Enhanced Strolling Edge



NOTE:

The CAC discussed moving the restroom building to a more visible location. This was not pursued to concerns about cost. However, this option should not be abandoned, particularly if replacement building of better design could be constructed at a reasonable cost.

3. Major Features



Trees

Caring for the trees in the park is a priority for the community and for Portland Parks and Recreation:

- Protect existing trees
 - Prune to maintain health of trees
 - Evaluate existing irrigation system and repair if necessary to ensure optimum drainage for tree health
- Remove dead or diseased trees and replace in appropriate areas
- Remove flowering cherries around restroom to provide more light and ensure integrity of paving.
- Replant new flowering trees as designated on plan prior to removing existing trees
- Install interpretive feature to identify each tree in park
- Develop stewardship plan to ensure long term maintenance and vitality of trees
 - Include replanting program to anticipate long-term tree replacement needs.



East Side of Park

Planting large trees and regrading are recommended for the east side of the park. The additional trees will create more separation from the street and provide a more graceful transition from the street environment into the park.



The tree survey found that some of the large trees may have root disease due to either poor drainage or compaction. Careful recontouring of the slope into terraces would make it more comfortable for sitting or gathering activities, especially with more trees along the edge. Creating more definition at the entries to the park with planting, low retaining walls and other features such as a specially designed water fountain, light or sign would signal the beginning of the park environment both visually and experientially.

Couch Park Master Plan

Design Elements for West End of Park



Define Crossing

Construct ADA ramp from park up to MLC

Create informal play area for toddlers using sculptural rocks

Remove birches in planters; retain large trees

Remove concrete planters;

Create seating around play area and redefined entry plaza using low walls in interesting configurations to create small conversation and activity zones.

Some seating should be covered.

There are many seating options that could be appropriate for Couch Park, ranging from rustic to artful to simple to elegant -- a some combination.

Designing and making seating could be an opportunity for community participation, a way to incorporate history and community values into the park.



Define Crossing



Install artful bike racks near play areas & seating

Use colored paving to complement rock sculpture area and to enliven plaza

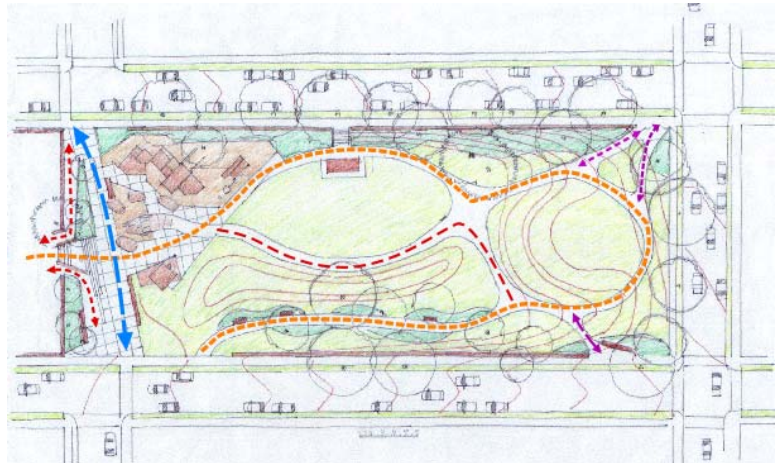
Replant flowering trees to replace cherries and birches

Add colorful planting to create a distinct entry into the park.

Clearly mark the NW 20th Street park entrance to make it clear to motorists that the street does not continue into the park



4. Access and Circulation



Add path connection along north side of park

A new path along the north side will create a complete circuit around the park.

It will be possible to stroll around the edge of the park as well as through it on the connected loop system.

It will also connect the secluded seating area to the rest of the park, which will improve visibility and open up this area of the park to more use.

Move and enlarge stairs from Hoyt Street

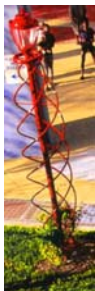
The stairs from Hoyt Street have been moved to the center of the Meadow area and made wider in order to make it a more pleasant and attractive entry point.

This new access point would also improve access to the new stage area.

West End Plaza and Street

The redesigned plaza at the west end of the park will provide convenient and direct access for pedestrians and bicyclists through the park along the NW 20th Street alignment

Improvements to the pedestrian crossings at both the south and north ends will make it safer to cross and make the entry points more visible.



Access to MLC

Access to the school (MLC) will be improved by adding an ADA accessible ramp and widening the stairs to create seating and viewing areas.

East Side Entrances

Both entry points will be better defined with planting, low walls and small "gateway" features, including signs, a drinking fountain and seating.

5. Uses and Activities



Programming Activities

Making the park a welcoming and safe place was a major priority for CAC members. Physical design alone cannot achieve this alone. Success requires that people use the park in ways that discourage activities and behaviors that make people feel unsafe or uncomfortable. CAC members recognized that this requires ongoing commitment on the part of everyone to program events and activities that will draw people into the park. The summer music concerts are one successful example.

Enlarging the stage and moving it to a more central location will increase the variety of musical venues that can be accommodated.

Other possibilities include sponsoring educational activities, art shows and active citizen participation in stewardship activities. MLC students and staff have expressed interest in programs that would allow students to participate in a variety of ways.

Reconfiguring the plaza and improving the area around the restroom will make it possible to accommodate food vendors at events and to provide additional seating.

Friends of Couch Park



A Friends group is one component of making the master plan a reality. This group could coordinate with Portland Parks and Recreation, the Neighborhood Association, police and Portland Public Schools to maintain on-going dialogue and actions that will lead to implementing the plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

Previous Plans

This section explains the purpose of the Couch Park Master Plan and summarizes both the public involvement and planning process that led to the recommended plan.

The Couch Park Master Plan will guide decision making about future park improvements and provide an overall framework for implementing individual projects identified during the planning process. The plan includes guiding principles, a conceptual design, project list, rough cost estimates and recommendations phasing, funding opportunities and stewardship.

The previous Master Plan for the park was completed in 1976. In the quarter century since then, the character of Portland and its neighborhoods has changed as the city has grown and density has increased. This has affected the demands and use patterns in the park. The 1994 Parks General Obligation Bond Measure (GOBI) funded repairs and upgrades but did not include revisions to the master plan.

Background



The park serves a wide range of ages and interests and the community values it highly. However, security problems, the need for repairs and maintenance and a variety of proposals to make changes in the park have made it evident that the existing master plan should be revised to address current needs. The Master Planning process was initiated to articulate a common understanding of the park's defining features and problems, and to develop a rational basis for designing, phasing and funding future improvements.

Public Involvement Process

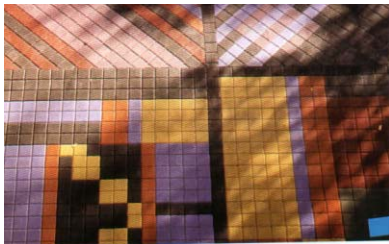
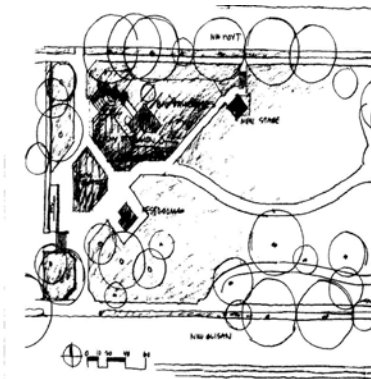


The public involvement process was designed to make sure that the final plan reflected the current and future needs of the community. There were a number of opportunities to discuss ideas and explore options in a public forum.

To accomplish these objectives PPR staff used the following strategies:

- Public announcement describing the project and the opportunity to serve on the Citizen Advisory Committee and request for applications
- Citizen Advisory Committee appointed by PPR Director Charles Jordan, to advise throughout the process. The committee was chosen to represent a variety of perspectives and interest groups in the community.
- A series of public meetings
- Project newsletter
- Two open house events to solicit input from the public.

Planning and Design Process



Following is an outline of the steps followed in developing the Master Plan;

1. *Identify Issues*

The purpose of this phase was to assess the range of ideas, opinions and visions that people have for the park and to understand how they use it. The process began with a walk through the park and a group design exercise with the Citizen Advisory Committee and others at the meeting.

2. *Assess Existing Conditions and Needs*

The assessment of existing conditions helped to focus which elements in the park needed special attention in order to meet neighborhood needs and address issues. Consultant landscape architect Julia Lundy provided a preliminary site assessment.

3. *Define Objectives and Principles*

Participants articulated these during the planning process. They establish the basic framework for how the park should look and function

4. *Develop Alternatives, Evaluate and Refine*

Participants, the Landscape Architect consultant and staff developed alternative plans for park enhancements and improvements. PPR summarized responses received by mail, at public events and during CAC meetings.

5. *Develop Recommendations and Priorities*

Staff synthesized ideas and presented a series of recommendations for park improvements. CAC members reviewed and approved plan elements and prioritized projects.

6. *Final Report*

Final report sent to CAC members, Neighborhood Association, School District, and others requesting copies.

History of Couch Park



In the 1870's and 1880's, the Couch Park site was in "Nob Hill", an elite residential area west of NW 19th Avenue with large blocks (200 ft by 400 ft.) and impressive mansions owned by prominent Portland families. C.S. Lewis built his house in 1891 where MLC now stands. Lewis' wife Clementine was the daughter of Captain Couch, after whom the park was named. After the Lewis house was demolished, the Portland School District acquired the property in 1913 and built the "new" Couch School to replace the first one built in 1882 located at NW 17th and Kearney. The block east of the school, now the park, was used as a playground.

In 1970 the Captain John Brown house (built in 1890 at 2035 NW Everett) was moved onto the north east corner of the site to save it from demolition. Private citizens donated money to restore the building as a center for senior citizens and medical services. A HUD Historic Preservation Agency grant of \$100,000 was insufficient to complete the restoration and when the additional funds couldn't be raised, the project was abandoned. By 1973 the house had been severely vandalized and was finally demolished.

Couch School became a special school in 1968 and in 1974 it's name changed to the Metropolitan Learning Center, leaving only the park with Couch's name.

Couch Park Master Plan

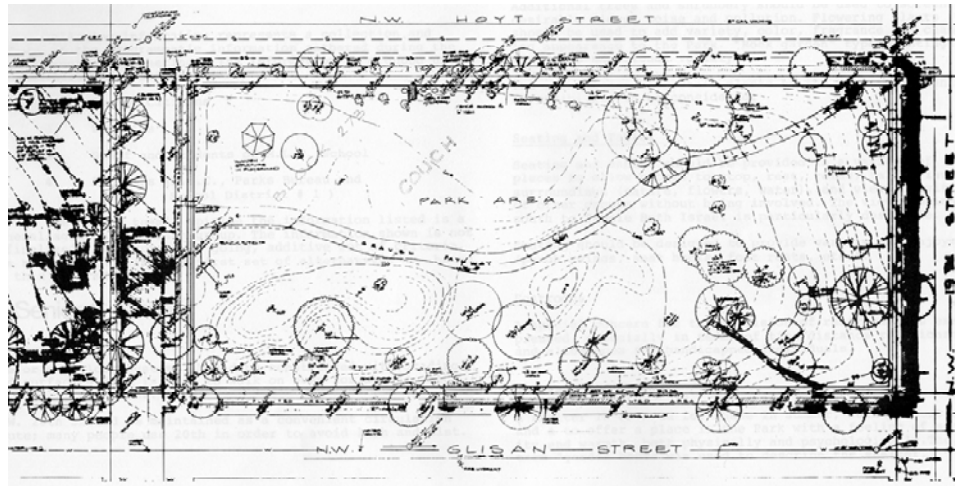
1976 Couch Park Master Plan

The Portland Development Commission commissioned a team of designers to prepare a master plan in 1975 as part of community development projects in the Northwest District. Michael Whitmore, Andrew Rice and Stephen Lebwohl completed the plan in 1976

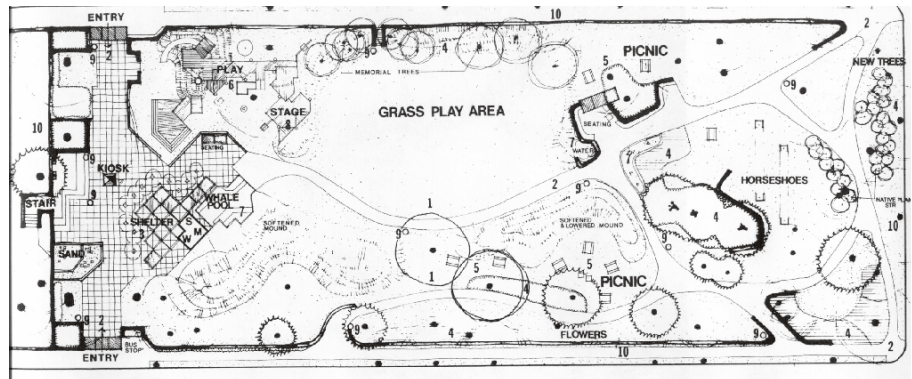
They described the plan as,

... a process which has consciously involved people who will be using Couch Park. ... The master plan should be open to change as the needs of the people in the Northwest change. Continued community contact will be invaluable in maintaining a real sense of the community's changing goals.

1976 Site Survey of Existing Conditions



Final Plan



The Master Plan recommended keeping the west end of the park open to allow pedestrian and bicycle circulation between Glisan and Hoyt and also to provide space for community events. At that time the restroom and shelter were controversial, even though community members agreed on the need for them. A water feature was proposed in the form of a Whale Pool, but was never implemented.

3

Couch Park Today



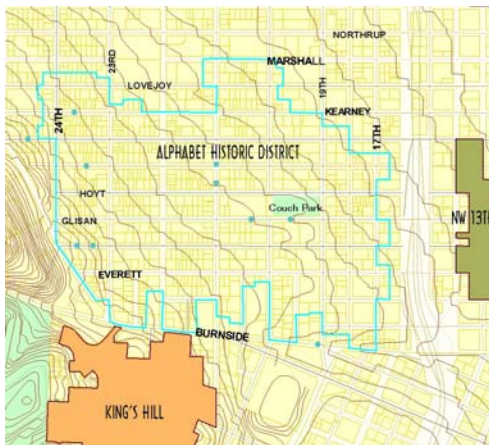
Couch Park is a neighborhood park that provides informal recreation activities for people who live and work in the area. Since the park is adjacent to the Metropolitan Learning Center it also serves as a play area for students at the school. The park is surrounded by dense urban development including residential, commercial and institutional structures. In contrast to these, the park is a quiet grassy oasis with nature trees that the community appreciates and values.

Location

NW Hoyt St
Metropolitan Learning Center (MLC)
Couch Park
NW Glisan Street



Neighborhood Context



Couch Park is located in the Historic Alaphabet District in Northwest Portland, a high density neighborhood made up of a mix of housing, employment, retail uses and institutional uses. It is 2.6 acres, situated between NW Hoyt and NW Glisan and between NW 19th to NW 20th. NW 20th has been vacated, allowing the park to extend into the old right-of-way. The Metropolitan Learning Center, a K-12 Magnet school, is adjacent to the park on the east side. The park is close to NW 21st and NW 23rd Avenues, the two main commercial spines in the district and three blocks west of the I-405 freeway. The area around the park has long been a popular residential district because it is close to downtown.

The park is zoned Open Space, a designation that includes a wide variety of recreational and other open space uses. In the blocks immediately surrounding the park land uses include high density housing, both old and new, a scattering of single family residences, offices, convenience stores and four church

Couch Park Master Plan



properties, including Temple Beth Israel, on the south side of the park. Other institutional uses nearby include William Temple House, the Northwest Cultural Center and Good Samaritan Hospital. Commercial uses are mostly concentrated along NW 21st and NW 19th Avenues.

This area has a mixture of housing types and a high proportion of multi-dwelling structures and duplexes. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the city but the population is not increasing as quickly as in many other parts of the city. There is still a high ratio of rental to owner-occupied housing, but the rental stock is decreasing. Ethnic diversity is increasing but is still less than the City overall. The percentage of households with children is low and household size is shrinking. Income levels are both lower and higher than the city's overall median income level.



In the Portland Parks and Recreation (PPR) system, Couch Park is classified as a Neighborhood Park. This park type is designed to provide nearby informal, unstructured recreational opportunities for people within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius or a ten-minute walk. Typical facilities in this type of park include play equipment, picnic tables, seating, paths, lighting and restrooms. Activities in the park and the presence of large trees make the sidewalks along and in the park pleasant pedestrian routes, although the planting strip is very narrow decreasing the buffering effect and creating stressful growing conditions for the street trees.



Couch Park is relatively small for its type compared to the older parks in the system, which are usually between 2.5 and 10 acres. The larger size allows a variety of activities to take place at the same time without conflicts. As land prices have risen and density has increased in the city, the size of inner city parks has decreased. Now, a 2 to 3 acre park is more the norm, with facilities and activities limited by both configuration and small size. Many neighborhood parks act as gathering places and become symbolic and actual centers for community life. In this, Couch Park is no exception. When parks and schools are adjacent, as in this case, PPR develops joint use agreements with the School District and recreational activities for both are coordinated. For example, MLC students regularly use the park for both organized and informal activities and MLC also serves a community school.

Couch Park Master Plan

Existing Conditions

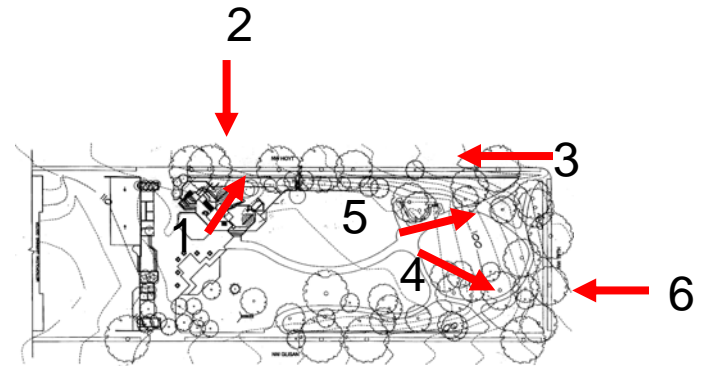
North and East Edges



- 1, View from park near play structure looking down to Hoyt Street showing grade change



2. Looking south toward park from Hoyt Street showing existing stairs, bank and low retaining wall



3. Looking west along NW Hoyt St.



4. Looking southeast across slope leading down to NW 19th



5. On path looking northeast toward NW 19th



6. Existing sign at NW 19th Entrance

Couch Park Master Plan

Existing Conditions: South and West



View 1

Looking southwest at MLC steps



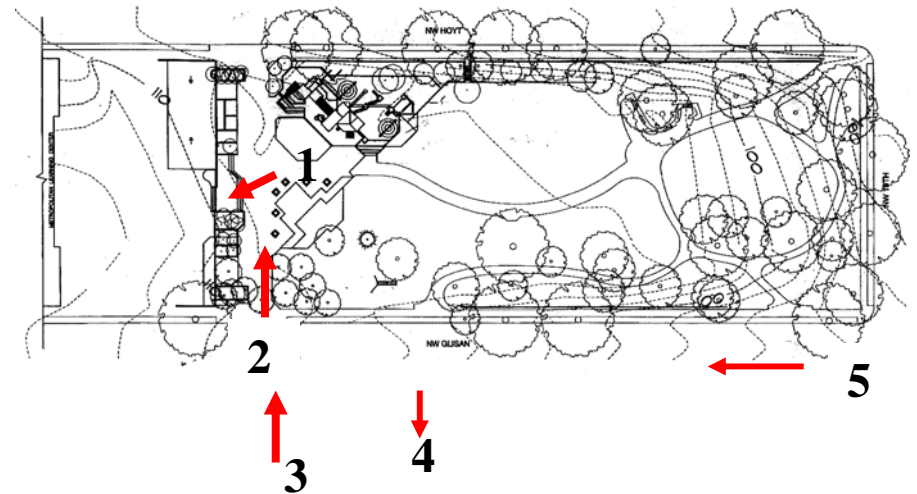
View 2

Paved area between MLC and park



View 3

Intersection at @20th and Glisan



View 4

Temple Beth Israel

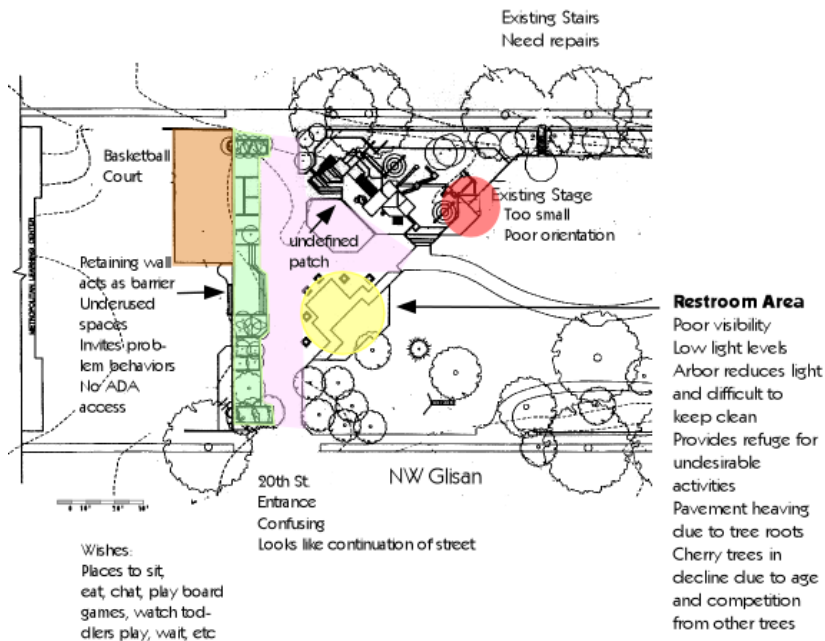


View 5

Looking west along Glisan Street



Issues



At the beginning of the planning process, PPR staff and participants discussed the character and condition of the park. The purpose of this step was to identify the park's physical resources and to find out what works and what should be changed.

Following is a compilation of the information collected and analyzed during this stage of the process.

Trees



Almost all participants and respondents to surveys agreed about the significance and value of the trees in the park. They are very important in creating a sense of separation from street and traffic, as well as providing contrast to built environment surrounding it. In the past, volunteers have prepared tree surveys and a tree map identifying the trees and some of their histories. The map is no longer in print and things have changed since it was done, so there were suggestions for updating the map to show current conditions.

A tree assessment, done as part of the master plan, identified some particular problems such as disease, drainage and soil compaction that affect tree health. Many trees need pruning to remove dead limbs and to allow more light into the park.



Trees near the restroom are overcrowded and the canopy creates heavy shade. In this area is a group of flowering cherries, which are very popular because of their spring display. Unfortunately, the trees are not in an ideal location because other trees obscure them and the paving interferes with their roots. This has caused the curbing to crack, creating a safety hazard. A better location with more room and no paving around the roots would allow the beauty of the trees to be enjoyed and ensure that they remained healthy and vigorous.

Security



The trellis structure and the number of trees around the restroom obscure views into this area, making it an attractive for undesirable activities related to drugs and prostitution. People observed that the area is dingy and it provides opportunities for undesirable or illicit activities. This is borne out by parks maintenance staff who constantly collect needles, bottles and other trash in areas that are hidden from view, such as the empty planters at the west side. The design of the restrooms also contributes to the problem due to the design of the cubicles, door locking system and drains.

Places in the park where surveillance is difficult, such as the seating area on the north east side, make people nervous and uncomfortable, so they don't go into those areas. Many people observed that the east side of the park was underused compared to the west side because of lack of visibility and poor lighting.

A Place to Gather



During the planning process Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members, neighborhood participants and staff debated whether the park needed a specifically designed space or whether the park itself should function as a gathering space. Participants also commented that the park should accommodate the needs of all ages, from young children to seniors. A group of MLC students, led by Mark Lakeman, created a small temporary gathering space near the southwest end of the park. The project was intriguing and was used informally by individuals and small groups throughout the summer of 2001. This project sparked lively interest and discussion about the importance of gathering spaces in the community.

Traffic and Safety

There are no striped pedestrian crossings across either Hoyt Street or Glisan at NW 20th. Equipment poles and other features create visual clutter, making it hard to tell where to cross either street. In addition, parked cars it difficult to see oncoming traffic before crossing. There is also a problem with wayward cars trying to turn into the park at 20th because it is not clear that the existing street doesn't continue through the park. Next to the park, NW 19th Avenue has two lanes of one-way traffic going south. Reportedly, vehicles move quickly, at or above the speed limit, making it uncomfortable for people with young children crossing the street to visit the park.

4 Alternatives

Couch Park Master Plan

Below is a summary of the steps followed to explore options for improving the park:

- Group design exercise with Citizen Advisory Committee
- Landscape Architect consultant develops three alternatives
- CAC reviews alternatives
- Public review of alternatives
- Develop preliminary plan and design studies based on public input
- Public Review and comment
- Further refinements to park plan
- Final CAC meeting to finalize priorities and recommendations
- Final Report printed and presented to City Council

Principles



The following points encapsulate the ideas and values that the CAC and other participants articulated during the planning process.

- The trees in the park define its character and are a precious resource to be cared for and protected.
- The park is a cherished focal point in the community that connects people with nature and with each other. The park should provide opportunities for coming together with others and also for enjoying quiet solitude.
- Activating the park with people and programming is a key to making sure people feel safe, secure and comfortable.
- Make changes needed to improve surveillance and minimize undesirable activities, but do not detract from the beauty and character of the park
- The park is intergenerational, providing opportunities for all ages to enjoy outdoor activities in a safe and comfortable setting
- Spaces should be organized to allow a variety of activities without undue conflicts
- Access to the park should be safe and barrier-free
- Modifications to the park should be artful as well as functional, acknowledging and celebrating its history and place in the community

CAC Design Exercise

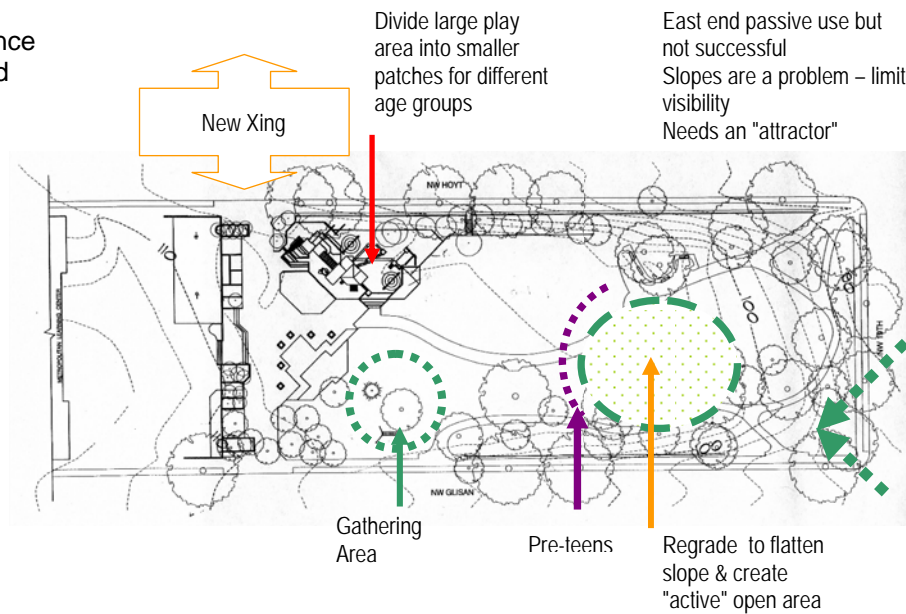
At the second CAC meeting, participants broke into 4 groups to discuss their ideas for improving the park. The resulting ideas are shown on the following pages.

Couch Park Master Plan

Summary of Work Groups

Group 1

Find the right balance between active and passive uses



Group 2

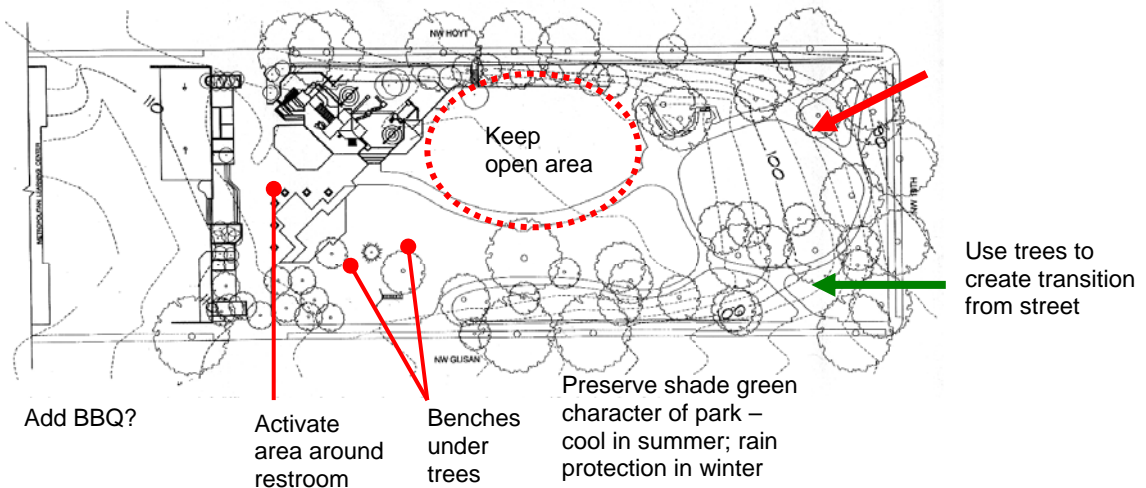
A GREEN space

Create places to play for all ages

Improve lighting along paths

Enhance walking and strolling experience.
Add or reconfigure paths to meander throughout

Create places to eat - add picnic

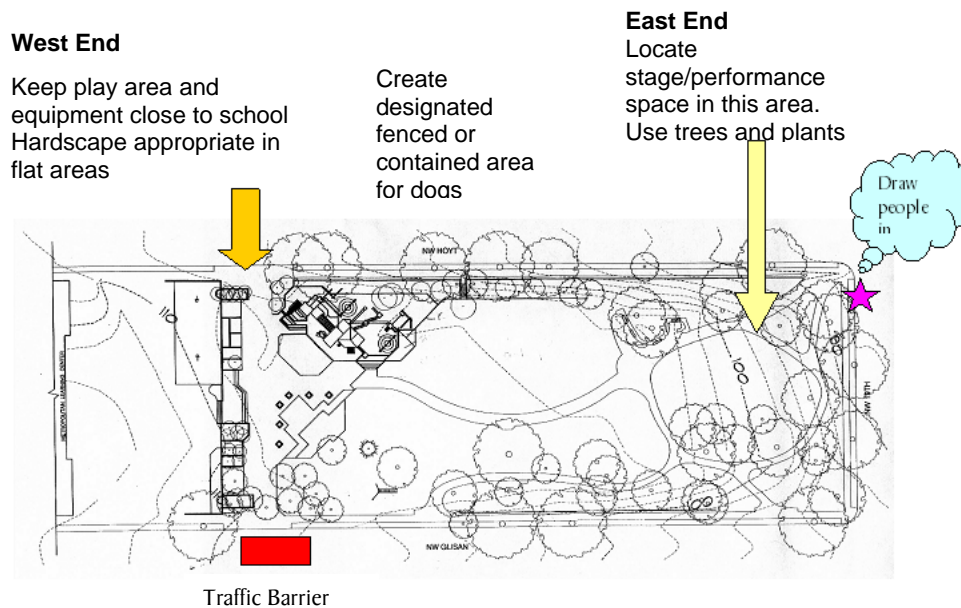


Couch Park Master Plan

Group 3

Create a series of rooms

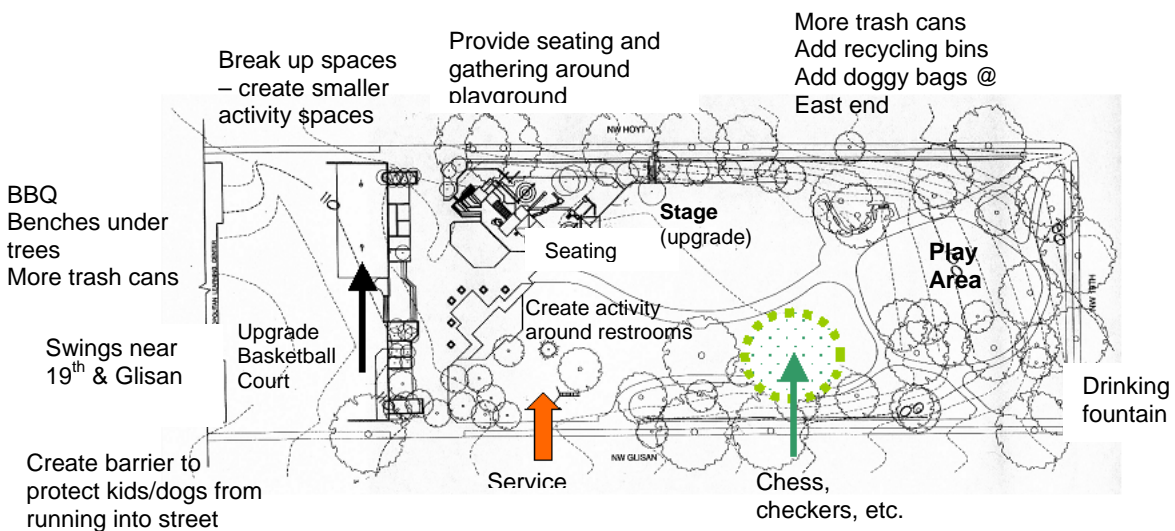
Call attention to entry points that will draw people into and through the park



Group 4

Intergenerational Park

- Create a variety of opportunities for contact
- Keep open green area



Three Different Alternatives

In response to the group exercise, some preliminary alternatives were developed to illustrate some clearly different possibilities for the park. The three options were intended to give physical form to the ideas that participants had generated. The options had another purpose, which was to stimulate thinking to make sure that we had thought broadly and imaginatively about the design of the park. For example, because it is usually difficult to imagine changes to an existing situation, we deliberately posed one option that was unstructured, without any of the existing structures or facilities, even though such an option probably not feasible. It was done to encourage people visualize the basic topographical conditions and make it easier to imagine different relationships and configurations than were already in place

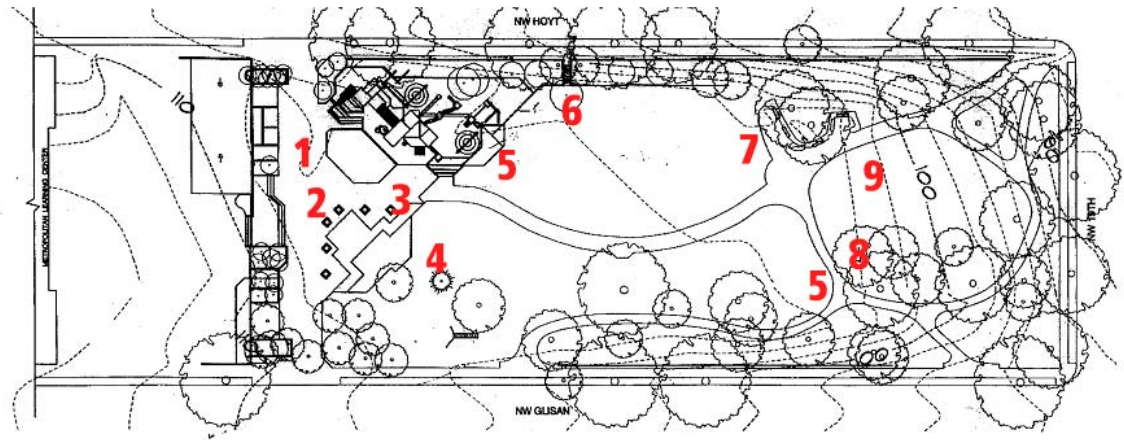
The alternatives presented to the CAC and at the first open house were:

1. Keep the park as it is (*described as the minimalist plan*)
1. Simplify the park, making it a green oasis without any of the existing structures (*described as the pastoral plan*)
2. Make the park a more urbane, structured and active space (*described as the "dressed-up" plan*)

The three early concepts are shown on the following pages. Citizen comments are summarized in the Appendix.

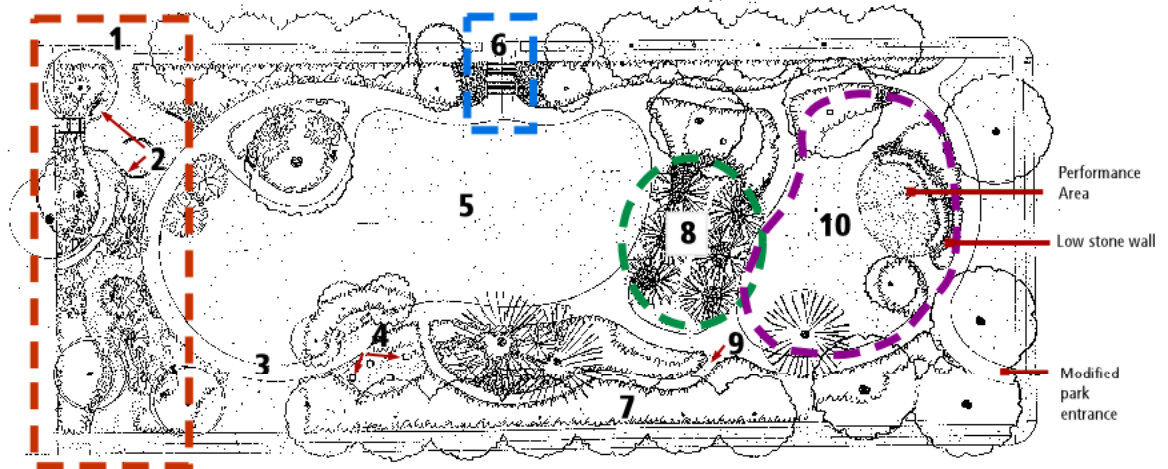
Couch Park Master Plan

Option 1



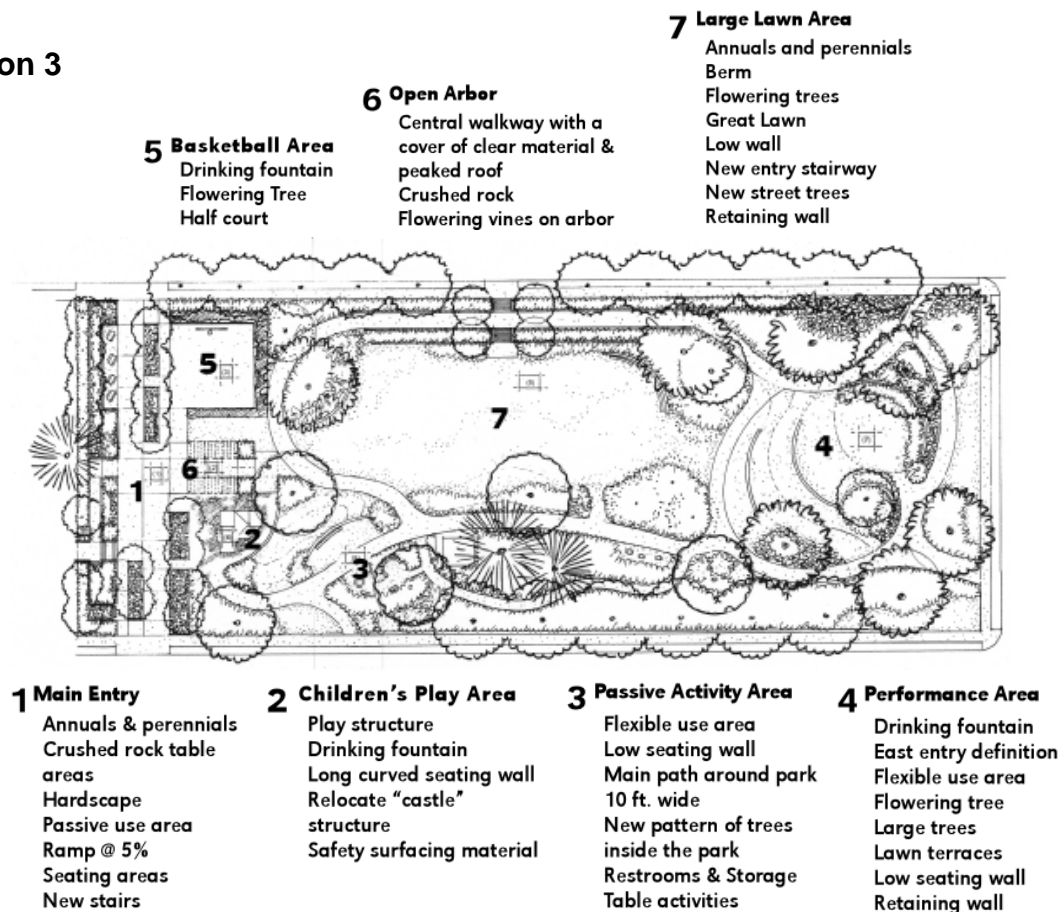
- 1** Clean, repair and level brick & concrete paving
Repair planter curbing and plant with noninvasive species
Option: pave over with brick
- 2** Remove cherries and grind out stumps
- 3** Clean roof and paint arbor structure
- 4** Change color of restroom building to blend with surroundings
- 5** Place dispensers (of new & improved design) for dog bags
- 6** Repair or replace concrete stairs
- 7** Remove existing seating and install new benches in front of wall
Option: repair existing wall seating
- 8** Remove dump of hollies
- 9** Remove holly seedling

Option 2



- 1** Play structure removed
Redesign as play area for older children
Relocate stairs up to school yard
New ADA ramp between park and school
- 2** Curved Seating
- 3** Main path around park
Narrower secondary loops
Main path is wide enough for vehicles
- 4** Gathering area with tables for games, picnicking, etc.
- 5** Open lawn
- 6** Stairs from Hoyt St moved further east
Entrance is widened, allowing view into park
Colorful perennials flanking stairs
Shrubs on both sides define the entry
- 7** New pattern of street trees
Trees placed on park side instead of narrow planting strip
- 8** Bosque of trees form separation between terraced performance area and lawn
- 9** Minor path narrower
Adds variety
- 10** East end of park modified to create performance area and similar activities.
Slope is formed into grassy terraces for sunning, viewing, etc.

Option 3



Combining and Refining Ideas

In response to the alternatives most people said they liked the overall character and feel of the park as it is and didn't want to see a dramatic change.

A general community consensus developed around the value of the trees and the importance of caring for them; improving drainage, making repairs, and adding amenities such as lighting, seating, and a drinking fountain

Comments were more varied about other ideas, such as changes to the plaza area, moving the stairs from Hoyt Street, and location of the stage,

Everyone agreed about the need for restrooms but they also recognized the problems associated with the location of the one in Couch Park. Ideally, the restrooms should be relocated to another more visible place in the park.

Developing the Recommended Plan

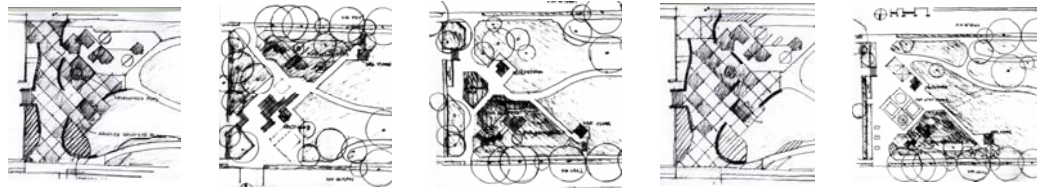
The final conclusion was that the expense of demolition and new construction would be prohibitive, at least in the foreseeable future. The CAC agreed that a combination of physical design and programming could make the area more visible and more attractive,, which would encourage more people to use this part of the park and would discourage the undesirable activities associated with drug use.

Based on public review and comments about the proposed alternatives, a basic plan was developed, with a variety of options for how individual elements should be treated. Design studies for differed areas in the park focused on:

- elements and structures that were still unresolved and about which there was less consensus.
- subareas of the park in more detail and identified various options and issues associated with them.

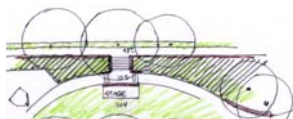
Examples:

Studies of West Side Entry and Plaza

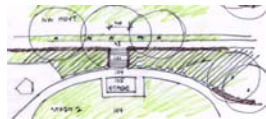


Studies of Stage and Hoyt Street Stairs

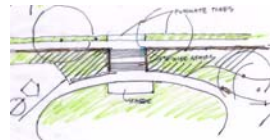
Study of East End



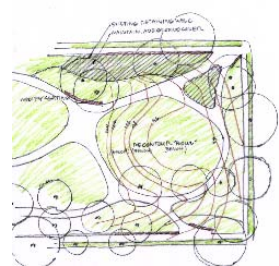
Stairs + landing at top+ stairs east and west



Landing at midpoint
Path around stage



Wide stairs with landing



Recommended Park Improvements

After the last meeting to make final decisions about the outstanding issues, the recommended alternative was agreed upon as shown in Chapter I.

5

Implementation



Phasing

CAC members felt strongly that tree maintenance and security are the first issues to address. The two are related. Pruning will improve views into park and allow more light. Removing the arbor will also create more light and make the restroom building more visible. Reducing the size of the restroom spaces and locking doors open should also discourage inappropriate use. Together these measures should encourage more use, which increases the perception of safety.

Redesigning the plaza, repaving and tree planting were second priority projects, with the exception of the cherries around the restroom. New flowering trees should be planted in a more appropriate location in the plaza before any of the existing ones are removed.

Estimated Costs



The cost estimate on the following page is intended to give a general idea of the magnitude of costs for each of the main improvement elements, as illustrated in the recommended plan. More detailed estimates will be developed during the design development phase for each element, since it is likely that the plan will be implemented incrementally as funds become available. Final costs will vary from estimates, depending upon final design decisions, when construction occurs, materials, and similar factors.

Funding



A tree survey has been completed. PPR received a \$20,000 grant from Northwest Neighborhoods Parks and Recreation Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation (known as the I-405 Fund). The grant will cover tree maintenance and repair as well as \$4000 for an interpretive sign about trees in the park.

Due to significant budget cuts to operations and maintenance and capital improvement budgets, it is unlikely that the proposed design can be funded through PPR's regular capital improvement budget. In the long term, a General Obligation Bond is one option for funding. In the meantime, other avenues will be explored, including more substantial requests to the I-405 Fund, requests for PDOT assistance to improve pedestrian crossings, community sponsors and other grant sources.

Friends of Couch Park



The Citizen Advisory Committee was enthusiastic about establishing a Friends of Couch Park Stewardship group. The group's role would include activities such as:

- Advocating for funding
- Assistance with programming
- Assistance with maintenance/cleanup
- Community Liaison

Programming



The Citizen Advisory Committee suggested increasing program at the park to encourage more activity and to provide more security. The proposed changes in the size and location of the stage, for example, can allow wider range of venues that could draw more people to concerts and special events in the park. A Friends Group could assist with organizing and sponsoring other types of events and also work with staff and students at Metropolitan Learning Center to link events and activities to children's interests

Operations and Maintenance



Changes in the design of the restroom to discourage inappropriate use have been included to reduce the amount of time required to clean and repair the facilities. Additional litter control is needed, but will increase maintenance costs.

Both new and existing paths should be wide enough for park and police vehicles to use them without damaging the turf. The initial improvement costs should be offset by reduced maintenance in the future.

Summary of Projects

Things to keep, repair and enhance	Big Components to Add	Small elements to add
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the play structure Keep the restrooms; make repairs; discourage inappropriate use Protect and care for the trees based on completed assessment report. Prepare a long term maintenance and canopy management plan Repair and/or replace seating Improve lighting for safety Assess drainage conditions and evaluate irrigation system (may be minor or major). Retain general topography and elevations in park (<i>except "bowl" at the east end</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add ADA accessible ramp from park to MLC Modifications or replacements for arbor and flowering cherries Remove concrete planters and replace with beds, seating Defined area for informal gathering (major or minor) Create separate play area for young children Separate stage from play structure and relocate Create new stairs and entry from Hoyt St. Renovate and redesign seating area at east end Recontour and reduce slope at east end to activate this part of the park Circulation – add walkway along north side of park Work with PDOT to modify pedestrian crossings @ 20th and to consider traffic calming measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mutt Mitts" Drinking fountain Better signage Receptacles for trash Picnic tables or other seating Additional seating along path Driver alert sign or marker at 20th St entrance to indicate that street does not go through.

Phasing and Estimated Costs

The plan is broken into three phases based on citizen priorities and location of projects in the park. A preliminary cost estimate for each phases is included as a guide for future funding efforts. There will be a further process for design development and preparation of construction documents when funds for projects have been identified. The list below is not detailed and will be refined through the design development process.

1 West Side Plaza \$180,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to restroom building to improve security • Remove arbor • Remove concrete planters • Construct ADA ramp and new stairs • Renovate and modify plaza area to accommodate proposed changes • Construct rock play area • Plant five flowering trees near entrance
2 Repairs and Renovations \$70,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail surfacing • Turf renovation • Irrigation system • Pruning trees • Repair seats on north side • Add lights along main path • Install additional seating along paths
3 Stage and Stairs \$40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct stairs from Hoyt Street in new location • Construct new stage at top of stairs • Construct north side connector path
4 East Side “Bowl” \$70,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant four large trees in park along NW 19th Ave. • Re-contour and reduce east slope • Add seating and new planting beds at both east entry points • Replace sign and relocate
TOTAL \$360,000	