



Mill Park Project Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Notes

Tuesday, November 2, 2021 – 4:00pm – 6:00pm, held on Zoom.

PAC Members present: Amy, Andrew, Audrey, Barbie, Heather, Jasmine, Kari, Mohammad. **PAC Members not present:** Anne, Ayan, Erin, Francis, Juanita, Kari, Pyae, Trevor.

PP&R Staff: Maija Spencer, Robin Johnson-Craig, Melissa Arnold. **Mayer Reed:** Jeramie Shane, Joanna Schwartz.

Agenda/Introductions: Heather Craig has joined the PAC. She is the new interim principal at Mill Park Elementary, so she is replacing Michael Cruz. The rest of the group introduced themselves.

Review: revised goals: Maija shared the PAC goal statement. These goals were shared as a draft at the last meeting. The group made some changes, and they were shared by email to the full PAC in advance of this meeting.

- **Decision:** The PAC members presented all support these goals, shown by a “yes” in the chat. These will now be the final PAC goals:

PAC Goals: How will we define success?

1. Feedback is collectively gathered from our East Portland community and different voices are sought out beyond the PAC membership throughout the design process.
2. The park is a space that will create joy and pride for everyone and connect to the broader Mill Park community.
3. All ages, ability levels, and cultures will come together in this space to create community.
4. Flexible space is provided for a wide range of activities, including birthday parties, sports like Chin-lone and soccer, places of serenity, places of respite, relief from nature’s elements, music, and community festivals.
5. The park connects the community to nature, gardening, art, and play.
6. The design removes barriers to the park’s use by ensuring safety, accessibility, and inclusion.

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Community Gatherings

- Maija reviewed the comment summary report from Community Gathering #1 in August.
- An online multi-lingual meeting will be held online with the DMA on Tues, November 16. Interpretation will be available in Arabic, Chinese, Karen, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. There will also be an online survey in English.
- Maija asked the group if there would be interest in having an online meeting for English speakers. PAC members said not likely. It can be hard to get people to attend online meetings and suggested something in person or a simple way to vote on your favorite design. Make it easy - stickers or texting or calling. The Midland Library might be a good place to share info. Could also send home info with Mill Park Elementary School students.

Presentation of three concepts

Joanna gave a presentation of the 3 design concepts: Ellipse, Oasis, and Paseo. Robin noted that one important issue for the PAC to consider is parking. It is anticipated that adding only 8-9 parking spaces could add significant expense, as it would trigger land use reviews which add time and cost to a project. It could mean less park amenities as a tradeoff. We also have heard that more green spaces and nature are important to the community; adding more paving doesn't seem to fit that goal. As we have seen this past summer, East Portland had higher temperatures than other parts of the city due to large paved areas and lack of tree canopy.

Small groups breakout for Q&A and discussion

The meeting was broken into two small groups, so people could discuss the presentation and design.

Group #1: Joanna, Maija, Alex, Jasmine, Mohammad, Audrey, Heather:

What's missing from Alex's boards about Mill Park stories:

- Didn't see Slavic/Russian community which has a large population nearby
- Alex noted he has covered the Slavic Festival, the presentation only showed a small number of images. You can view all the images and stories at <https://www.instagram.com/millparkstories/>
- Jasmine noted they have families that attend their church from several different African countries including Libya and the Central African Republic who live nearby
- The Mill Park principal noted that the top languages spoken at the school are Spanish, Somali, and Burmese. Many of the Somali families live at Lincoln Woods.

Art:

- Like the murals art option a lot – would be great to use local artists, involve kids
- Water features can also be art. Likes the interactive water feature (pump) at Ventura Park's playground as it encourages kids to work together and interact with each other.
- The art wall shown is great, too, as it is tactile.
- Musical play equipment – like chimes – can add art to a play area.
- It sounds like the performance space wasn't a priority at the community meeting? It was noted that the picnic/gathering areas could double as a performance space.

Design comments/questions:

- Will the fields be artificial turf or grass? Answer: grass.
- Like the chin lone fields – important to represent the Burmese community that uses the park now. It looks like the Ellipse concept does not feature one (but could possibly be added).
- Will the soccer fields have painted lines/goals? Probably not – idea to keep the field area available for flexible uses. People could bring cones and could mark lawns for special events.

- Good to keep distinction of school vs. park
- Jasmine – likes #3 but is concerned it brings more pavement and may be very hot in summer. Appreciated Robin’s comments in presentation about the parking – East Portland doesn’t need more pavement. Prefers #2 because of the large trees, chin lone spaces, shade, exercise nodes in two areas that could allow two different fitness uses at once, bigger community garden.
- Mohammad – likes #3 – reflects a lot of the community. Places for kids, picnic areas, keeps kids close. Art – might be lots of fencing so like idea to turn it into art.
- Audrey – likes #3 – lots of lawn, like trees/shade in #2. Not many people have AC in hot summers. Trees provide shelter from rain as well. L
- Heather – too new to project to comment, likes the splash pad for the community.
- Alex – likes #3 for the visibility.

Group #2: Jeramie, Robin, Melissa, Amy, Andrew, Barbie, Kari:

- Paseo – sparked interest right away, different, so much going for it. Garden is a little small. Not so symmetrical – makes it interesting and opportunity to discover.
- Allows lot of things to happen simultaneously.
- Good for community events to have multiple spaces, but central pathway.
- Shade cover. Like layout of #3 but like the big trees from #2. That feels like a priority from the surveys. Saw shade feature in playground. How much of these designs are flexible – what can be moved around? Big shady tree coverage seems important with lots of apartments around it.
- Oasis – Jeramie explained that spending would be focused on purchasing large trees to start with (so shade will come faster) – and a selection of trees that will provide larger canopy.
- Robin noted concern to not add too much tree canopy – for safety/visibility and for gardens, grass in fields.
- Like path in Paseo for safety of school kids.

- Can splash pad be multiuse area for the rest of the year, when it is not super hot? It was noted that Gateway Discovery has good example of this.
- Paseo – shade could come from the picnic shelter, not just trees. Need to make large enough.
- Feels encouraging to walk or roll into Paseo. Village atmosphere. Given all entrances are long and kind of weird, need inviting feel.
- Could bigger trees be put into Paseo? Jeramie clarified that the type of trees on the promenade shown are columnar trees, tall to create visual alignment and complement linear space. Could look at changing – move closer to paving and use bigger trees. It can be hard to maintain lawn under big trees.
- The entrance from 122nd could have a different landscaping style in Paseo – showing a different lawn already.
- Most big trees in the park now are firs which do not cast much shade and drop big limbs.
- Look at climate resilient trees, like oaks, that don't need a lot of water.
- Will irrigation be added? Yes, for landscaping areas and especially to help establish new plantings and trees.
- East Portland has many practical working families. Paseo is practical in that it provides a good route to school.
- Gathering spaces are really important – like the big central space in Paseo.
- Like multi-age play spaces next to each other for families.
- Paseo seems to address how park is being used today. Chin lone court is important. Likes 2 lawns for different games – saw lots of volleyball this summer. Different groups can use the park at the same time. Like central lawn but it could limit to 1 activity at a time.
- Was there a sense from the community meeting how much garden would be used? Not really but PP&R Community Garden staff say there is demand, and we have heard gardens are important to immigrant/refugee communities.
- Could more community garden be added to Paseo? Many don't have yards. Yes, could look at splitting garden to maintain access from apartments.
- Priority is for the families living nearby in apartments, especially kids. Thrilled by all the designs, but Paseo seems best for kids and families

walking to school. Would be a lovely walk. The park is most for people living nearby so parking may not be as necessary, especially given cost and what it may bring.

- Fencing between school and park? Like the idea of a creative barrier. Concern with 1 entry point between the two – could be a blockade and people have to walk farther to get somewhere. Maybe boulders that limit but still allow access.
- Most parking will happen on Lincoln St – which could be a long walk if carrying things in.
- Would like drinking fountains.
- Dog poop bags? Robin noted that PP&R doesn't provide these per plastic bag policy, people need to bring these.

Report back to the large group:

- Kari – likes #3 with more trees like #2.
- Amy – likes Paseo. Two spaces. Talked about trees, access to get things to the park.
- Mohammad – likes Paseo – good for kids, family gatherings.
- Jasmine – likes Oasis – green/garden, working to depave other areas of neighborhood, room to be separated or together, different exercise options.
- Andrew – likes Paseo – multiple areas for activities, safe route to school. Add more community garden space to Paseo. Need more shade and water fountains for drinking.
- Audrey – likes Paseo – multiple multi-purpose spaces, central walkway. More shade – request from community, lack of AC for many. More garden area. Parking – don't see justification for it, only if it adds accessibility.
- Heather – likes Paseo. Bring community together. Very inviting. Would like bigger garden – would like to participate as school, more shade.
- Barbie – likes Paseo. Provides a safe route to school for kids in apartments. Shade – maybe add to rest areas. Appreciates Alex's work with Instagram.

- Art? Like idea of stamped concrete – using different languages to spark interest and conversations. Artistic fencing – all designs have a lot of fencing, so use as opportunity for art. Interactive features, musical play equipment. Community participation in art – perhaps fencing offers opportunities to do this.
- Parking – be sure to be clear in presentation materials to broader community about the parking tradeoffs. PAC benefited from hearing about the impacts.
- **Decision:** The PAC reached consensus to support moving these designs forward to the community. All commented “yes” in chat.