



## Mill Park Project Advisory Committee Meeting #2 Notes

Monday, July 26, 2021 – 4:00pm – 6:00pm, held on Zoom.

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

**PP&R Staff:** Maija Spencer. **Mayer Reed:** Anna Chen, Jeramie Shane, Joanna Schwartz, Tim Strand.

**Agenda/Introductions:** Maija reviewed the agenda. She noted that Robin Johnson Craig could not attend due to family issues. Everyone introduced themselves and shared their favorite park to visit and why. This will help us think about what we want the experience to be like at Mill Park.

- Tim – Forest Park
- Joanna – Forest Park, Northgate Park
- Jeramie – Eastbank Esplanade
- Anna – Buckman School
- Mohammad – Mill Park
- Andrew – Gateway Discovery Park
- Erin – Creston (her kids), Westmoreland
- Amy – Powell Butte
- Francis – Powell Butte
- Audrey – Mt. Tabor, Gateway Discovery
- Jasmine – Forest Park
- Maija – Peninsula Park

**Confirming goals** – Maija draft a list of goals based on everyone’s ideas about how measure success shared at the first meeting and asked the PAC to suggest any changes or additions. She noted from the word cloud that “community” was the clear theme.

The additions below are highlighted in red text.

### Administration

1120 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 858  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
503-823-PLAY (7529) | Fax 503-823-6007

**PORTLANDPARKS.ORG**  
Commissioner Carmen Rubio  
Director Adena Long



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. *(make standalone goal)*
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.

All PAC members in attendance expressed support for this set of goals. The updated goals will be shared with the full PAC for any additional feedback, and we will adopt these goals at meeting #3.

**Presentation by Mayer Reed** – Mayer Reed presented the information that will be shared at the August 3 community event and was sent to the PAC prior to this meeting. The presentation included:

- Review of the project schedule and phases
- Transportation access – shows ½ mile and 1 mile radius around the park. Asks how people will get to the park and which park entrance will they use.
- Nearby park amenities – what is provided at other nearby parks, what is needed at Mill Park to complement that? PAC member commented that soccer, basketball, climbing/sliding/agility play, and accessible play are most important to their families when choosing a park to visit.
- Community/cultural amenities nearby – map showing different businesses, nonprofits, and religious facilities.
- Francis requested that Burmese be added to the languages shown on the board. There may not be time to add it for this first meeting, but PP&R and Mayer Reed will look to do this for the 2<sup>nd</sup> community meeting. Maija

noted that Division Midway Alliance staff will provide Burmese interpretation at the August 3 meeting.

- The PAC was asked to complete the following sentences:
  - I will feel welcome at Mill Park if:
  - When I visit Mill Park, I want to:
- Amy:
  - I will will welcome when entrances (especially on Lincoln) are clean and the paths are maintained.
  - When I visit Mill Park, I like to walk around and see the different activities people are engaged in.
- Andrew:
  - I will will welcome when I hear the sound of people enjoying themselves after walking in.
  - I like to get away from the city when in the park.
- Audrey:
  - I will feel welcome at Mill Park if the park is well used and there are a variety of other people there enjoying it.
  - When I visit Mill Park, I want to walk/jog the paths, find shade and places to sit, picnic, and play in open fields.
- Jasmne:
  - I will feel welcome at Mill Park is everyone is welcome at Mill Park.
  - When I visit Mill Park, I want to sit and read for a while before my littles are bored and need my help finding fun!
- Mohammad:
  - I feel welcome at Mill Park, if I can do the things that I love.
  - When I visit Mill Park, I want to relax and have fun! He added that he likes to play soccer, meet friends, read a book while watching his sister plays, and enjoy the fresh air.
- Nang:
  - I will feel welcome at MP if there is a park where I can spend time with kids and watch them playing peacefully.
  - When I visit MP, I want to feel safe in the park with kids while waiting for parents to come pick them up. I also like to enjoy time alone.

- Francis – agrees with Mohammad and Nang. Notes that a lot of kids are in the area and wants the Burmese community to be included.
- Alex Chiu is a mural artist working on the project with Mayer Reed. This isn't a common process to bring in an artist this early. He will be bringing his artistic perspective and also bring in an understanding of the community. He will help develop artistic themes that are incorporated into the whole park design, such as elements of the paving, water feature, or picnic shelter.
  - Alex has spent past 5 years doing public art projects with a community engagement focus, starting with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave MAX stop.
  - He will be collecting stories about the community and history to build a lookbook for the project. He will be meeting with different community members to hear their stories, including the PAC. He has gift cards for participants to La Osita in Plaza 122.
  - He has been living in Powellhurst-Gilbert for past 6 years and just moved near the Midland Library a few months ago.
  - He will be using an Instagram account to show the stories he is collecting. Everyone can follow it here: [www.instagram.com/millparkstories](http://www.instagram.com/millparkstories)
  - Please let him know if you can connect him with people who know about local history or have interesting stories. Jasmine shared a link about the history of Gethsemane Church. There was a dance hall located behind the church called Tiny Dumont's Park that had many musicians play at, including Willie Nelson. The dance floor is still there but is now part of the church. Many older folks at the church still remember this.
    - <http://pnwbands.com/tinydumontspark.html>
    - <https://www.pinterest.fr/pin/295408056787354373/>
- Existing conditions – map looking at what exists at the site currently including mature trees that need protection during construction, safe routes to school access points, and edges of the park that meet adjacent property owners.
  - PP&R just closed on the purchase of the former Central City Concern offices at 1949 SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. This is a great opportunity

provide a main entrance into the park from 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave and bring the park into this new space. The existing building will be demolished.

- Review of Master Plan – will need to incorporate new property. Considering moving parking lot to it.

#### **Overall thoughts from the PAC:**

- Mohammad: excited to hear what the community thinks and prefers at the community meeting. He will be providing Arabic interpretation.
- Francis: likes the community garden.
- Audrey: really likes the design from the Master Plan. If there are budget constraints, would be something be removed completely or just scaled down? Likes ideas of folding art into the park design, not just a single mural or sculpture.
  - Maija/Tim: Will try to figure out how to combine features for greatest flexibility, hearing the community's priorities will help decide, and some features could be scaled down.
- Andrew: very visual person – wants to walk around the park to understand it. Great place to start.
- Amy: great to see design and ideas. Would like the new parcel to have some buffer to the sound and sight of SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Would be great to have an eco-parking lot, not just asphalt heat-suck. Doesn't see the baseball fields being used much by school kids. Wonders if the soccer field could be on the school property. How big will the covered area be?
  - Maija noted the existing field on the school property needs improvements, quite rutted, and it is limited to school use during school hours. Will be following up with Michael to had to leave early due to illness). Joanna added the soccer fields would be flexible use, not heavily programmed – could be used for kids soccer, festival, other games. We don't know yet how big the covered space will be – that will be part of the design process going forward.
- Nang: wonderful design, exciting, community members will be excited too. Very inclusive. There are lot of community gardens around SE Portland. He

realized it will be important to provide more, as there are not many close to Mill Park, and many Burmese/Karen/Rohynga community members will want to garden. Some use the SE 148<sup>th</sup>/Division garden.

- Jasmine: looks awesome. Asked about COVID guidance for the community meeting, since masks are now required indoors again.
  - Maija noted that masks are not required at the event, but will be available and welcome to wear. She will be following the public health advisories if anything changes. Breaking the event in 5:30-6:30 for DMA interpretation and 6:30-7:30 for general public to space out the crowd. Boards will be spread out under the basketball court area. Info and comment form will also be posted online for anyone who would prefer to engage that way.
- Erin: need appropriate shade and seating for community gathering space. Struggling to think of a mixed used open space that is used for both soccer and other events. Asked for examples.
  - Tim said they aim to provide a grass lawn that can get used for casual sports like frisbee, movies in the park, soccer, etc. Maija noted her neighborhood park (Woodlawn) has a large grass area that gets used for multiple things – National Night Out, movie in the park, volleyball, etc. The Master Plan shows these are very small soccer fields – more for young kids or casual pick-up games. They are also working with Soo Pak (PP&R Arts & Culture Manager) to talk about PP&R and community events needs. Let us know of community festivals that happen in the area.
    - The Division Midway Alliance does the annual Festival of Nations event. Plaza 122 has done a dinner for investors. Pizza Baron does a car show.

### **Community Gathering on August 3**

- Tuesday, August 3 – 5:30-7:30pm at Mill Park, 5:30 – 6:30pm for Arabic, Burmese, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese speakers, 6:30 – 7:30 all are welcome.

- Please invite your community. The information and comment form will also be available online.

**Next Steps:**

PAC meeting #3 will be in early October, and Mayer Reed will be sharing three different design options.