

Planning Commission Schedule Overview and Updates

In review, the Planning Commission (PC) and DC received oral testimony about the Montgomery Park Area Plan at a public hearing on May 21, with a total of 21 members of the public providing oral testimony. This was a joint hearing as the DC will be making a recommendation on the MP Character Statement to City Council. The DC is also expected to provide a recommendation on the application of the Design Overlay in the Plan area to the PC. The written testimony period was open through May 28. Over 40 pieces of [written testimony](#) were received on the plan, with none commenting on the Character Statement.

BPS staff is currently preparing information for the PC in response to the preliminary feedback provided by them. This will be presented at the first PC work session on June 11 for discussion and further guidance.

BPS Staff will provide further updates on the MPAP to this Commission at your next work session on June 20.

Summary of Community Feedback on the MP Character Statement

Since no testimony, oral or written, was provided on the MP Character Statement, BPS staff is providing a summary of the topics raised by our most recent outreach efforts on the statement. This includes a public survey released in November 2023 and a BIPOC Design Focus Group conducted in February of this year. Staff hope this provides a framework to support discussion of how to ensure the Character Statement best represents the Community's desires for the future development of the Montgomery Park Area.

The following is a summary of the main issues and topics (including a few quotes) we heard from Community members, organized by each Character Statement theme:

Community:

- Acknowledgment of the area's natural and cultural history.
 - Acknowledge the natural history of Guild's Lake and Chinese Immigrant farmers in future development.
 - Acknowledge the area's cultural history, particularly that of the Black community, with murals or callouts like historical markers. Similar to the Historic Black Williams Project on N. Williams.
 - Repurpose older building materials for art installations; include historic storytelling in art and design.
 - Utilize the old loading docks on NW York Street for performance spaces and seating along the newly improved streets.
 - Acknowledge the Lewis and Clark Exposition as an international gathering to celebrate the history of the Northwest and the capability of the Northwest to lead the world to the future.
 - Recognize "Big Medicine" – what Native Americans called York – as the "the pioneer who was forgotten" with exhibits and place-based features.
- Desire to celebrate the diversity of the area's workforce.
 - Recognize Guild's Lake Court and its historical role in housing a diverse community of workers.



- Create culturally and historically focused greenspaces.
 - Consider greenspace for culturally/historically focused farmers, businesses, and festivals.
- Utilize colors and patterns to celebrate cultural heritage.
 - Incorporate murals and art representative of the various cultures. Consider sculpture garden.
- Create large flexible spaces for events and festivals.
 - Incorporate multi-generational and family focused elements within parks and open spaces.

Architecture and Urban Design:

- Celebrate the area’s industrial past by repurposing its industrial buildings and materials within development.
- Integrate active uses and ground level programming within public open spaces.
- Incorporate water features; a preference for water features other than the typical splashpad.
- Incorporate more gardens, including rooftop gardens and eco-roofs.
- Incorporate pedestrian only pathways, including narrow boulevards, alleys and side streets that provide connections throughout the district.
- Encourage preservation and integration of the historic rail tracks in new development.

Natural and Scenic Resources:

- Make the area more verdant: incorporate landscaping, trees and shade.
- Provide access to the Forest Park trailhead.
- Foster mature tree canopies.
- Reinforce Portland’s identity as a place with natural features and opens spaces.

Summary of Commission Feedback

In review, the DC had an opportunity to provide initial feedback on the proposed location of the Design Overlay Zone and MP Character Statement during and after the joint hearing on May 21, 2024. Staff has taken the opportunity to summarize the feedback provided by members of the DC to date. Below is a summary list of the themes we heard, supported by (paraphrased) comments:

1. *Proposed location of the Design Overlay Zone.* Support was expressed for the location of the Design Overlay Zone as proposed in the current draft (i.e., paired with application of EX zone).
2. *Generic Language.* Some of the Character Statement language feels very generic. There needs to be more direct and/or specific guidance written into the statement in order for staff and DC members to effectively guide future development to reflect the desires of this community.
3. *Green Corridor on NW Vaughn.* There is a desire to connect activity from the NW District into the new MPAP and NW Vaughn needs to be a zipper and not a barrier. Regarding the Green Curtain, how does that reconcile with a new Vaughn character and wanting to link both sides of the street?
4. *Align Subarea names/terminology.* Align the naming of Subareas 1 - 5 on the Urban Design Framework and Subdistricts A – F, in the code amendments. There are lots of things to keep track of in the five-volume set without having to wonder why those two sets of geographic



categories have different names. Rename the urban design framework Subareas A- F and have them directly correspond to the Subdistricts A- F in the code amendments.

These comments have informed the list of proposed amendments and/or suggested next steps within Attachment A. Design Commission members are asked to send additional questions, issues and amendment ideas ahead of the June 6 Work Session.

Next Steps

On June 6, staff requests the DC make a recommendation to PC on the proposed location/application of the Design overlay zone. After the work session on June 6, staff hopes to have a confirmed list of amendments from commissioners to use in revising the current proposed draft of the Character Statement. Members of this Commission will have an opportunity to review, discuss, and propose additional amendments to this revised draft Character Statement on June 20, 2024. See details below:

- **June 11 - PC Work Session**
- **June 20 - DC Work Session/Recommendation.** Staff will review the revised MP Character Statement draft with the DC and provide a draft Letter of Recommendation to the PC, for review and signature, on the location of the Design Overlay. Staff will use DC comments to propose amendments/changes to the Character Statement and to the Letter of Recommendation. If possible, DC can make a recommendation on the MP Character Statement at this session otherwise staff will return on July 18 with final amendments/changes.
- **June 25 – PC Work Session.**
- **July 9 – PC Work Session.**
- **July 18 – DC Work Session/Recommendation (if needed).** If needed, Commissioners will have an additional opportunity to review final draft and make a recommendation.

We look forward to discussing this work with you at the upcoming June 6 work session. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or suggestions on amendment topics.

Links:

[Portland Citywide Design Guidelines](#)

[Montgomery Park Area Plan - Proposed Draft – Volume 1](#)

[Montgomery Park Area Plan - Proposed Draft – Volume 2](#)

Attachments:

- A. Table of Proposed Amendments
- B. PDF of MPAP Character Statement with proposed changes
- C. PDF of Portland Citywide Design Guidelines Table of Contents

