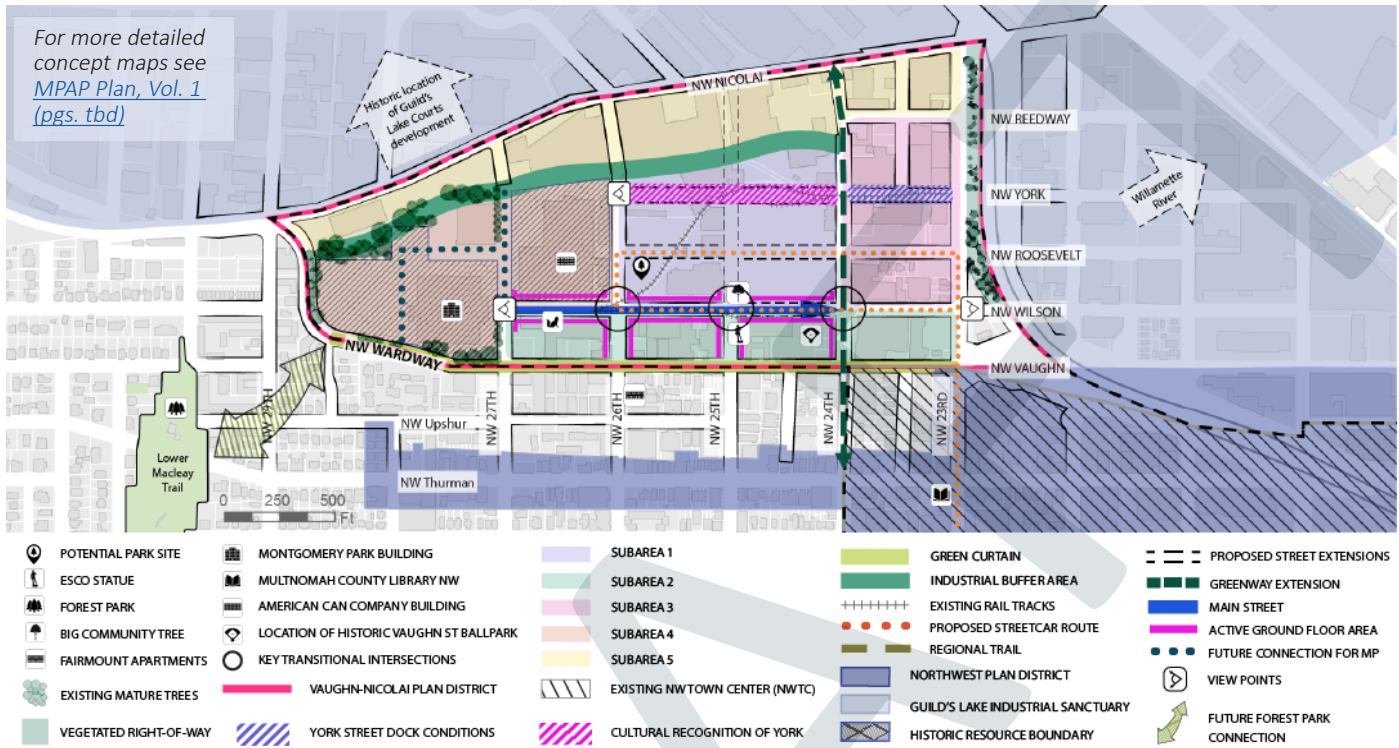


CHARACTER STATEMENT: Montgomery Park

TOWN CENTER



BACKGROUND

HISTORY & EXISTING CONDITIONS

Framed by the Guild's Lake Industrial District to the North, and the vibrant mixed-use communities of the Northwest District to the South, the Montgomery Park Area Plan (MPAP) is an eclectic mix of land uses and building types. The designated Vaughn Nicolai Plan District (VNPD), within the expanded Northwest Town Center, has been an area of continual transition and transformation. The area's variety of lot sizes, building types, and history of industrial and manufacturing uses created a dynamic built environment but have also resulted in a disconnected, difficult to navigate, street grid resulting in an urban heat island with little trees or green space.

Once home to a lush marshland and the low-lying Guild's Lake, this area was part of a larger ecosystem which contributed to the vibrancy of nearby Indigenous villages on Sauvie Island and across the Willamette River. Before significant changes to the landscape began in the late 1800s Chinese immigrants lived and farmed on land around the lake.² Plans for industrialization led to their displacement and to the filling of the lake in the 1920s to create a robust industrial center. Today, hints of this wild landscape remain in the nearby hills of Forest Park, Balch Creek watershed, and Willamette River. Connected to this legacy are Portland's extant Indigenous and Chinese communities, though little acknowledgment of them or the natural environment in this location.

The area was also the site of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition which showcased Portland's community, industry, and innovation. Industry and innovation was later carried on in the Montgomery [Ward] office building (1920), the American Can Company complex (1921), and the former ESCO steel foundry. Portland's Black community have strong ties to this area, including connection to the since-demolished WWII era housing development Guild's Lake Courts (1940s/50s) and the Portland Rosebuds, a minor league baseball team that was part of the short-lived West Coast Negro League, and played one season (1946) at the Vaughn Street Park. More recently, NW York St was named in honor of York, the enslaved man who was an essential member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Despite this, other recognition of the Black Community's contributions to NW Portland has been limited.

CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

Portland's Comprehensive Plan identifies the Montgomery Park Area Plan as part of Portland's Industrial/ Employment Areas and illustrates its proximity to several desirable amenities such as transportation (Streetcar), recreational areas (Forest Park) and commercial/retail (Pearl District/Central City). Set within the VNPD and an expanded Northwest Town Center, the MPAP leveraged this proximity to support the creation of a low-carbon mixed-use neighborhood served by an extension of the Portland Streetcar. The Plan's goals and actions encourage the preservation of the district's identity as a thriving employment hub, with expanded public benefits to foster a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [NW District Plan](#)
- [Guild's Lake Industrial Sanctuary Plan](#)
- [Montgomery Park District Transportation Plan](#)
- [Preliminary Racial Equity Analysis](#)
- ¹ [Indicates terms featured within the MPAP Plan, Vol.1, Pgs. 45 & 46](#)
- ² [Oregon Historical Society, Photo Essay: Guild's Lake Industrial District: The Process of Change over Time.](#)

"...celebrate proximity to Forest Park by extending trees and open space into the neighborhood. 'Green Curtain' instead of the 'Steel Curtain'..."

- Community Members, 2023

The following sections align with, and are derived from, content in the Portland Citywide Design Guidelines, specifically Guideline 01. They each focus on characteristics specific to this Town Center.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER



The use of color, art and outdoor gathering spaces provides sense of creative energy and vitality.

Home to a mix of residents, businesses and institutions, this district takes immense pride in its industrial heritage and variety of uses. Physically accessible public spaces, that acknowledge the contributions of Portland's Black, Chinese and Indigenous communities, are needed to support these various communities and reflect the multitude of histories of the area. Future development, should honor the District's rich industrial character and provide spaces which allow for a true mix of uses, reflecting a history of ingenuity and innovation.

A few ways to address these goals include:

- Celebrating the area's industrial character by designing ground floors with views into maker spaces along NW Roosevelt, incorporating neon signage along NW Wilson as a nod to the neon Montgomery Park sign or providing historic markers indicating the history and sites of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition.
- Showcasing the terminating vistas of Montgomery Park on NW Wilson St, and

American Can on NW Roosevelt and NW York.

- Referencing historic dock conditions¹ on NW York by preserving and/or continuing them westward of NW 24th.
- Integrating remnants of the historic railroad tracks, in Subareas 1¹ and 3¹, within, or as a connection between, open spaces.
- Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas 2¹ and 3¹.
- Acknowledging and celebrating contributions of Portland's Communities of Color. Consider incorporating color, patterns and/or artwork by Black, Chinese or Indigenous artists.
- Recognizing the history of York on NW York Street¹ through physical elements like art, sculpture or historic markers.
- Incorporating spaces for recreation, including playgrounds and flexible green spaces, within new parks¹ or open spaces.

ARCHITECTURE + URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER



Development on NW Wilson which repurposed an existing industrial building with an updated form and new materials.

A century of transition has created a diverse landscape of urban forms and uses in this Center, dividing it into five distinct subareas¹. Perhaps most distinct is Subarea 4¹, home to the historic Montgomery Park and American Can sites, whose size, in combination with the former ESCO Steel site in Subarea 3, creates a challenging, disconnected street network between NW 24th and NW 26th. The arrival of the Portland Streetcar¹ on NW Wilson and NW Roosevelt provides an opportunity for each subarea to preserve, emulate and celebrate its rich industrial context, while fostering a vibrant, safe and resilient mixed-use center.

A few ways to support these goals include:

- Referencing industrial character, by emulating the longer, rectangular facades and roof forms of industrial warehouses, incorporating large-scale operable windows and brick detailing, and using materials like concrete and steel. Consider also repurposing existing industrial buildings, materials and features.
- Improving urban heat island conditions, in Subareas 1¹, 2¹ and 3¹, with climate-responsive design approaches, like lighter building colors

and roofing materials, and green features such as eco-roofs.

- Buffering development from noise pollution, particularly on sites near Hwy 30 and in the buffer area¹ along Subarea 5. Consider the utilization of sound absorbing materials, landscaping and careful building orientation.
- Providing accessible pedestrian connections or sites within Subarea 3¹ to improve access to the NW 24th Greenway, NW Wilson, NW Vaughn and destinations like Montgomery Park, Forest Park and the Willamette Riverfront.
- Supporting NW Wilson as a main street¹ with large, flexible openings at the ground floor with views into active uses¹, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, as well as trees and weather protection near transit stops.
- Supporting NW Vaughn, Roosevelt, and York as multi-modal, pedestrian-oriented streets by incorporating inclusive and accessible seating and weather protection, especially at key intersections, and by locating utilitarian uses toward and along NW 24th, 25th, and 26th.

NATURAL + SCENIC RESOURCES



Large, mature trees and vegetation along the public right-of-way on NW Wardway offer links to nature and relief from heat.

At first glance, this transitioning industrial district offers no connection to nature. Yet, a maturing tree canopy in the western Subarea 5, an abundance of scenic views (West Hills, Mt. Hood and the Fremont Bridge), and rich natural history, provide this district with a foundational framework of natural and scenic resources. New development should reference, preserve, and build on this framework and address the community's desire for a more verdant district- one with easy access to its own green spaces, as well as improved and direct connections to nearby Forest Park and the River.

A few ways to address these goals include:

- Signaling Forest Park through the preservation of trees around Montgomery Park and widening sidewalks through building setbacks to support the planting of trees and development of green spaces to create a "Green Curtain" along NW Vaughn.
- Strengthening opportunities, particularly on NW Wilson, to connect to and reference the Willamette Riverfront.

- Reducing heat island impacts and easing stormwater system demand by preserving and adding large canopy trees, native vegetation and open spaces on sites within Subareas 1, 2 and 3.
- Designing prominent surface stormwater facilities that are functional, attractive and enhance the nearby Balch Creek Watershed.
- Orienting shared spaces and pedestrian pathways to provide access to natural and scenic resources, parks and open spaces, including views of Mt. Hood and Fremont Bridge along NW 26th, and of Forest Park along NW Vaughn.
- Mitigating impacts from pollution by utilizing a landscaped buffer¹ and setbacks, particularly on sites along NW 23rd and Subarea 5.
- Incorporating elements referencing the former ecological and agricultural landscape of Guild's Lake. Consider utilizing water, native flora and first foods into landscape designs.