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## MEMO

**DATE:** August 22, 2024

**TO:** Portland Design Commission

**FROM:** Cassie Ballew, Barry Manning, Joan Frederiksen - BPS Project Staff

**cc:** Patricia Diefenderfer, Chief Planner, BPS  
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**SUBJECT:** Montgomery Park Area Plan: Exploration of Additional Design Standards Briefing

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The purpose of this memo packet is to provide a summary of the analysis BPS staff undertook to explore adding prescriptive standards to the Vaughn-Nicolai Plan District or the 33.420 Design standards as part of the Montgomery Park Area Plan to better support the goals of the Montgomery Park (MP) Character Statement. This analysis was done in response to a request made by Portland Design Commission (DC) on July 18, 2024. At that meeting the DC also added language to the transmittal letter to City Council recommending Council direct the project team to explore adding design standards to achieve better parity between projects that choose the prescriptive track over the discretionary design review track. BPS staff agreed to return after further exploration to share their findings.

### Summary of Commission Feedback

At the work session on July 18, staff received a request from the DC to make one additional change to language within the draft Transmittal Letter to City Council, and add the following language:

*Since the Character Statement will only be used for projects that go through discretionary design review, the Design Commission also recommends that the City Council direct staff to explore adding prescriptive standards to the code amendments that relate to the goals of the Character*



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*Statement in order to achieve better parity between projects that choose the prescriptive track over the discretionary design review track.*

After requesting this change, the DC went on to recommend the adoption of the MP Character Statement (Attachment A).

**Summary of Design Standards Analysis**

In response to the request for further analysis on additional prescriptive design standards, staff first conducted a review of existing regulations and policies that support guidance within the Character Statement, to better understand where opportunities for new standards may lie. After this exploration, staff concluded that the existing Design Standards within code chapter 33.420 and the proposed code provisions within the new Vaughn Nicolai Plan District (33.590), in addition to proposed PBOT recommendations, and provisions in the Draft MPAP Public Benefits Agreement Terms Sheet, provided substantial parity between projects that choose the prescriptive track over the discretionary design review track. Below is a breakdown of how each of these plan components support not only guidance within the MP Character Statement but also the desires from community to address specific context:

<b>Supporting design standards within the Design Overlay Zone Chapter (33.420):</b>	
<b>Current Standards in 33.420</b>	<b>Related Character Statement Language</b>
<p><i>C6 Historical Plaque. (optional)</i></p> <p>Site that contains a building that is at least 50 years old.</p>	<p>Community Character Section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing ground floors with views into maker spaces along NW Roosevelt and/or providing historic markers indicating the history and sites of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition.</li> <li>• Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.</li> </ul>
<p><i>C7 Building Abutting a Historic Landmark. (Required)</i></p> <p>New building located on a site that abuts a site containing a Historic Landmark. Meet one of the following standards. Additional features may be provided for optional points up to a maximum of 3 points.</p>	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referencing industrial materials (i.e. concrete, steel) and characteristics, such as the longer, regular facades and roof forms of industrial warehouses, the large-scale operable windows and brick detailing of MP and AC, and re-purposing existing industrial buildings, materials and features.</li> <li>• Complementing industrial context adjacent to, and across the from, new development through aligning belt courses, roof lines and forms, repetition of bays and windows, and continuity of setbacks.</li> </ul>
<p><i>C8 Building Near Historic Landmark or Property on Historic Resource Inventory. (Optional)</i></p> <p>New building that is either:</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• located on a site that is across the street from a site containing a historic landmark, or</li> <li>• located on a site that abuts or is across the street from a site containing a building on the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI)</li> </ul>	
<p><i>C10 Tree Preservation. (Optional)</i></p> <p>Site with at least one tree 20 inches or greater in diameter</p>	<p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 E, F, and D.</li> <li>• Creating a “Green Curtain” on NW Vaughn to identify it as an access path to Forest Park by preserving trees around Montgomery Park and widening sidewalks through building setbacks to support the planting of trees.</li> </ul>
<p><i>C12 Native Landscaping. (Optional)</i></p> <p>Site that is 20,000 square feet or larger and located outside of environmental zones.</p>	<p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporating elements referencing the former ecological and agricultural landscape of Guild’s Lake. Consider utilizing water, native flora and first foods into landscape designs.</li> </ul>
<p><i>PR9 Main Entrance Location. (Required)</i></p> <p>New building with at least one main entrance for a nonresidential tenant space, or an existing building where the main entrance to a nonresidential tenant space is being moved.</p> <p><i>PR12 Seating Adjacent to Main Entrance.</i></p> <p>Main entrance to a lobby or to a non-residential tenant space.</p> <p><i>PR 13 Pedestrian Access Plaza. (Optional)</i></p> <p>New development</p>	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street with large openings at the ground floor offering views into flexible spaces with active uses, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, trees, and weather protection near transit stops.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>



<p><i>PR 14 Weather Protection at Entrances. (Required)</i></p> <p>New main entrances at a new or existing building</p>	
<p><i>PR 15 Weather Protection along a Transit Street. (Required)</i></p> <p>The standard is required for a new building with a height that exceeds 55 feet.</p> <p>The standard is optional for new buildings that are 55 feet or less in height</p>	
<p><i>PR21 City Approved Public Art Installation<sup>1</sup> (Optional)</i></p> <p>Any Site</p>	<p><i>Community Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging and celebrating contributions of Portland’s Communities of Color. Consider working with Black, Chinese or Indigenous artists to incorporate design elements such as color, patterns and/or artwork.</li> <li>• Referencing context on specific Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On NW Wilson, incorporate neon signage as a nod to the neon MP sign.</li> <li>○ On NW York, commemorate York with physical storytelling elements such as art or historic markers.</li> <li>○ On NW York, preserve historic dock conditions and reference them westward.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>QR5 On-site Outdoor Common Area (Optional)</i></p> <p>New Development</p>	<p><i>Community Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas F1 and D1.</li> <li>• Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.</li> </ul>
<p><i>QR 19 Low Carbon Concrete (Optional)</i></p> <p>New building using concrete as allowed for an exterior material.</p>	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving urban heat island conditions in Subareas E1, F1 and D1 with climate-responsive</li> </ul>



	design approaches, like lighter building colors and roofing materials, and green features such as eco-roofs.
QR 21 Ecoroof (Optional) New Building or Alteration	
QR 22 Solar Energy System (Optional) New building or alteration	
QR23 Reflective Roof Surface (Optional) New Building or alteration	

<sup>1</sup> *Additional Public Art Design Standard.* Staff closely examined the proposal of an additional, and required, design standard specific to the Commemoration of York, on York Street, for the MPAP Plan Area. However, it was determined that any standard requiring Commemoration of York, on York Street could result in diminishing the uniqueness of these acknowledgements. Similarly, staff explored an additional standard requiring public art done by Black, Chinese or Indigenous artist, incorporating design elements such as color or patterns, but determined that such a requirement may be hard to implement since the city cannot regulate the content of the art itself. Therefore, staff believes that the current design standard, PR21 City Approved Public Art Installation, combined with the stipulations for commemorating York within the Public Benefits Agreement will meet the need of acquiring public art outside of the discretionary review process.

**Summary of Analysis of MPAP Recommended Vaughn Nicolai Plan District Standards**

<b>Supporting standards within the proposed Vaughn Nicolai Plan District (33.590):</b>	
<b>Current Standards in 33.590</b>	<b>Related Character Statement Language</b>
<i>33.590.245 Residential-Employment Buffer Standards (Setbacks and landscaping)</i>	<i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i> Mitigating impacts from pollution by utilizing a landscaped buffer and setbacks, particularly on sites along NW 23rd and in Subarea A.
<i>33.590.250 Standards on Main Streets (Ground Floor Windows and active uses)</i>	<i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i> Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street with large openings at the ground floor offering views into flexible spaces with active uses, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, trees, and weather protection near transit stops.
<i>33.590.255 Standards near the Streetcar Alignment</i>	<i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i> 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.
33.590.260 Urban Green Features (landscaped area, space for large trees and ecoroofs)	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving urban heat island conditions in Subareas E, F and D with climate-responsive design approaches, like lighter building colors and roofing materials, and green features such as eco-roofs.</li> </ul> <p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 E, F, and D.</li> <li>Creating a “Green Curtain” on NW Vaughn to identify it as an access path to Forest Park by preserving trees around Montgomery Park and widening sidewalks through building setbacks to support the planting of trees.</li> </ul>
33.590.265 Required Outdoor Areas (publicly accessible outdoor area)	<p>Community Character Section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas F and D.</li> <li>Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.</li> </ul>
33.590.270 Off-Site Impacts Standards	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buffering development from noise pollution, particularly on sites near Hwy 30 and in the buffer area along Subarea A by utilizing sound absorbing materials, landscaping and careful building orientation.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting language from the Draft MPAP Public Benefits Agreement Terms Sheet:</b>	
<b>Current Language</b>	<b>Related Character Statement Language</b>
<p>3. New Park/Open Space. The New Park/Open Space benefits package is intended to provide at least one quality publicly accessible parks or open space in this new mixed-use area, which is expected to accommodate thousands of new jobs and housing units.</p> <p>a. Park Obligation. The property owners will be required to create at</p>	<p>Community Character Section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas F and D.</li> <li>Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.</li> </ul>



<p>least one park on their current property, totaling a minimum of 40,000 square feet and having at least two public street or public easement frontages of a minimum of 100 linear feet. The park design will be determined through a public process, working with Portland Parks &amp; Recreation (PP&amp;R), but generally should be oriented to passive recreational uses and be characterized by significant vegetation and tree canopy and should include facilities for children and children’s play.</p>	
<p>4. Commemoration of York. The Commemoration of York public benefit is intended to celebrate the contributions of York, an enslaved member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the first documented person of African descent to visit what would become Portland, Oregon, and for whom NW York Street, which exists in the area, is named.</p> <p>a. The developers/owners must demonstrate a partnership between them and the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) or its successor, as determined by the City of Portland, that will result in the funding and installation of one or more features memorializing York at the intersection of NW York Street in the area between NW 24th and NW 26th avenues. The owner/developer may propose any other bona fide organization or organizations in place of RACC and must consult with representatives of interested community groups.</p>	<p><i>Community Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referencing context on specific Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On NW Wilson, incorporate neon signage as a nod to the neon MP sign.</li> <li>○ On NW York, commemorate York with physical storytelling elements such as art or historic markers.</li> <li>○ On NW York, preserve historic dock conditions and reference them westward.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting language within the proposed in MPAP Volume 3: Transportation Plan:</b></p>	
<p><b>Current Language</b> (<i>Recommended project categories and numbers in italics</i>)</p>	<p><b>Related Character Statement Language</b></p>



<p><i>Internal Connections: IC.1-IC.6</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend NW Roosevelt Street, NW Wilson Street, and NW 25th Avenue to improve connectivity, support streetcar operations, and provide multimodal transportation options in the area.</li> <li>• Build new and improve existing sidewalks and bikeway connections along the streetcar alignment and in key areas to improve conditions for pedestrians and people bicycling.</li> <li>• Ensure future street connectivity and multimodal access as the area redevelops in the future.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street with large openings at the ground floor offering views into flexible spaces with active uses, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, trees, and weather protection near transit stops.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening pedestrian connections and way-finding to the NW 24th Greenway, Forest Park, and the Willamette Riverfront.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Neighborhood Connections: NC.1 NW Vaughn Street Crossing Improvements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve crossings of NW Vaughn Street for pedestrians and people bicycling to stitch together the area with the rest of the neighborhood and move the industrial boundary to NW Nicolai Street.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening pedestrian connections and way-finding to the NW 24th Greenway, Forest Park, and the Willamette Riverfront.</li> <li>• Creating a “Green Curtain” on NW Vaughn to identify it as an access path to Forest Park by preserving trees around Montgomery Park and widening sidewalks through building setbacks to support the planting of trees.</li> </ul>
<p><i>City and Regional Connections: RC.1 NW Nicolai Street Freight Route.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize NW Nicolai Street as a freight route and direct trucks accessing and exiting US-30 to use this route instead of NW Vaughn Street.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a “Green Curtain” on NW Vaughn to identify it as an access path to Forest Park by preserving trees around Montgomery Park and widening sidewalks through building setbacks to support the planting of trees.</li> </ul>
<p><i>City and Regional Connections: RC.2 NW Nicolai Street Multi-Use Path.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a multi-use path connecting St Helens Road to</li> </ul>	<p><i>Natural and Scenic Resources Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening pedestrian connections and way-finding to the NW 24th Greenway, Forest Park, and the Willamette Riverfront.</li> </ul>



<p>St Johns by repurposing an abandoned rail spur on the north side of NW Nicolai Street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><i>City and Regional Connections: RC.3 Montgomery Park Station Transit Hub.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize a transit hub near the terminus of the streetcar extension near Montgomery Park to connect travelers to transit options and shared mobility services.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Architecture and Urban Design Character Section:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street with large openings at the ground floor offering views into flexible spaces with active uses, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, trees, and weather protection near transit stops.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

**Next Steps**

On September 5, the Design Commission will hold a briefing to hear a presentation of staff’s findings from this analysis and will have the chance to determine if the existing and proposed regulations are successful in providing a prescriptive path for projects not going through design review. If the DC agrees with staff’s conclusion, staff requests that the transmittal Letter to City Council (Attachment B) be amended to remove the request for further exploration.

After this session, staff will continue to work on the next stage of the legislative process, preparing the Recommended Draft and findings for a hearing and work sessions at Portland City Council in the fall, beginning on October 24.

We look forward to discussing this work further with you on September 5. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

**Links:**

- [Portland Citywide Design Guidelines](#)
- [Montgomery Park Area Plan - Proposed Draft – Volume 1](#)
- [Montgomery Park Area Plan - Proposed Draft – Volume 2](#)
- [Montgomery Park Area Plan – Proposed Draft – Volume 3](#)
- [MPAP Draft Public Benefits Agreement Term Sheet – April 2024](#)
- [33.420 Design Overlay Zone](#)

**Attachments:**

- A. PDF of MPAP Character Statement Draft
- B. Draft Transmittal Letter to Portland City Council

