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## MEMO

**DATE:** June 13, 2024

**TO:** Portland Design Commission

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

**cc:** Patricia Diefenderfer, Chief Planner, BPS  
Ryan Singer, Principal Planner, BPS  
Mauricio Leclerc, Supervising Planner, PBOT  
Shawn Canny, Transportation Planner PBOT  
Ben Nielsen, City Planner, BDS

**SUBJECT:** Montgomery Park Area Plan and Character Statement Work Session

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The purpose of this memo packet is to provide a revised draft of the Montgomery Park (MP) Character Statement in response to the proposed amendments discussed at the Design Commission (DC) Work Session on June 6, 2024.

On June 20, 2024, the DC will hold a work session to review and discuss the revised MPAP Character Statement Draft (Attachment A). Staff will review the text changes proposed in response to the requested amendments. These changes are summarized within the table in Attachment B and outlined within a copy of the draft, in Attachment C. The Design Commission will have the opportunity to review the amendments and propose additional changes or make a motion to recommend the revised statement.

If additional changes are requested, the DC will have an additional work session on July 18, 2024, to do a final review and make a recommendation.

### **Planning Commission Schedule Updates**

On June 11, 2024, the PC held a work session to review questions related to the following topics:

- Housing, including affordable housing
- Benefits Agreements
- York Group Testimony



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The upcoming June 25, 2024 PC work session is expected to cover further information on industrial land and the Employment Opportunity Analysis, per commissioner questions, as well as information on Value Capture/Public Benefits, Equity and Investment, and the Streetcar Local Improvement District (LID) process.

### **Summary of Commission Feedback**

At the June 6 work session, staff received feedback from the Design Commission on a number of items. Below is an outline of the feedback Staff received, organized into three themes:

1. *Provide stronger and more direct language within the Character Statement.* The DC provided feedback and direction for language within all three-character sections, as well as the background section.
2. *Prepare materials for discussion on future character and improvements on NW Vaughn.* Chair McCarter requested that BPS and PBOT staff consider the following for discussion at the June 20<sup>th</sup> work session:
  - a. Making NW Vaughn less of a barrier now that there is an opportunity to help tie the new district into NW Portland with truck traffic moving to NW Nicolai.
  - b. Providing more consistency in the modes on NW Vaughn, particularly protected bike lanes and urban sidewalks in both directions.
  - c. Handling incremental updates to the street, similar to those on West Burnside.
  - d. Incorporating a cross section of NW Vaughn within the plan, similar to the ones for NW Wilson and NW Roosevelt.
3. *Clarification on how existing Design Standards within 33.420 apply to this specific area context.* No specific direction was given on this item but the DC had some questions regarding how the existing Design Standards would address some of the specific context within the plan area and staff has some additional information to share on this subject.

### **Summary of Revisions and Responses**

In response to feedback received at the DC Work Session on June 6, staff has prepared a series of revisions to the MP Character Statement and responses to items 2 and 3 above. All proposed changes to the Character Statement are summarized within the table in Attachment B and detailed within the document in Attachment C. Below is an outline of the changes:

1. *Stronger and more direct language in Character Statement (Attachments B and C).*
  - a. Amendments focused on updated language to be clearer and more direct within the three-character sections of the statement, and better connect these sections to the background statement.
  - b. Amendments were made within the background section to better inform development how to involve community in any commemorations of York on NW York Street and to highlight the opportunity, within the district, to improve connections between Forest Park trails and the Willamette River Greenway.
  - c. Amendments were made within the Character Statement to reflect the alignment of the Subarea names with the Subdistrict lettering in the Zoning portion of the plan.



2. *Future Character and Improvements on NW Vaughn.* BPS and PBOT are preparing material for discussion and additional information which will be presented at the work session on June 20, 2024.
3. *Follow up on relevant Design Standards in 33.420.* 33.420 Design Standards C7-C8: Historic Resource related regulations. These context design standards speak to how development should address and/or reference Historic Resources. Although only C7 is required, both require that development address abutting or nearby Historic Resources.
4. *Update on Montgomery Park Historic Landmark Boundary.* BPS staff were recently alerted that the landmark boundary for Montgomery Park is shown incorrectly within our mapping system. The boundary is smaller after an approval to decrease the boundary in 2021. Since the revised boundary does not include the adjacent parking lot, this means that a larger portion of the property will be subject the Design Overlay and the Character Statement. This has been updated within the map on the Character Statement and will be updated within the MPAP plan documents, including the Urban Design Framework.

### **Next Steps**

After the work session on June 20, this Commission will have a final opportunity to review and discuss amendments to this revised draft Character Statement on July 18, if needed. See schedule details below:

- **June 20 - DC Work Session/Recommendation.** Staff will review the proposed amendments and the revised MP Character Statement draft with the DC. Staff will use any further 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 more on June 20<sup>th</sup>. 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](#)

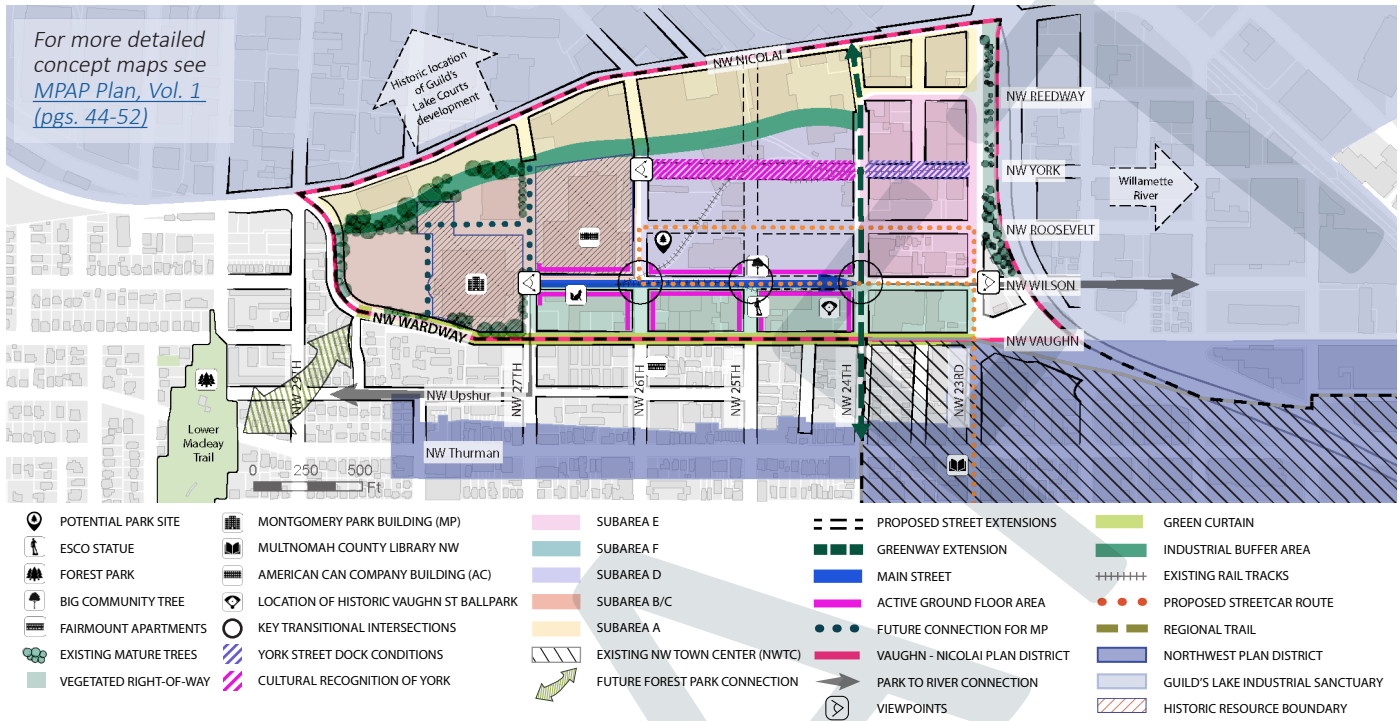
### **Attachments:**

- A. PDF of MPAP Character Statement Draft
- B. Table of Proposed Amendments
- C. PDF of MPAP Character Statement with proposed amendments



# 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.<sup>2</sup> 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, including an opportunity to connect Forest Park Trails to the Willamette River Greenway. Connected to this legacy are Portland's extant Indigenous and Chinese communities, though little acknowledgment of them or the natural environment exists in this location.

The area was 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] Park 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 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

Located at the edge of both an Industrial/Employment hub and the NW District Town Center, the VNPd is close to jobs, transit, parks, and shops and services. While encouraging elevation of it's employment roots and future, the MPAP leverages new development and public benefits to create an inclusive, vibrant, low-carbon mixed-use neighborhood served by the Portland Streetcar. A Public Benefits Agreement<sup>3</sup> outlines important public benefits, including the commemoration of York on NW York Street<sup>1</sup> in partnership with the City Arts Program and community organizations who carry forward the lived experiences of communities of color with roots in the area.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [NW District Plan](#)
- [Guild's Lake Industrial Sanctuary Plan](#)
- [Montgomery Park District Transportation Plan](#)
- [Preliminary Racial Equity Analysis](#)
- <sup>1</sup> [Indicates terms featured within the MPAP Plan, Vol.1, Pgs. 45 & 46](#)
- <sup>2</sup> [Oregon Historical Society, Photo Essay](#)
- <sup>3</sup> [Public Benefits Agreement within the MPAP](#)

"...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 and suggest ways character could be incorporated into development.

## 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. 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 celebrate the District's rich industrial character and provide spaces that allow for a true mix of uses, reflecting a history of ingenuity and innovation.

A few ways to address these goals include:

- 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.
- Framing terminating vistas, such as Montgomery Park on NW Wilson St, and American Can on NW Roosevelt and NW York.
- Integrating historic railroad track remnants in Subareas E<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup>, within, or as a connection

between, contiguous open spaces.

- Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas F<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup>.
- Acknowledging and celebrating contributions of Portland's Communities of Color. Consider incorporating color, patterns and/or artwork by Black, Chinese or Indigenous artists.
- Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.
- Referencing context on specific Streets:
  - On NW Wilson, incorporate neon signage as a nod to the neon MP sign.
  - On NW York, commemorate York with physical storytelling elements such as art or historic markers.<sup>1</sup>
  - On NW York, preserve historic dock conditions and reference them westward.<sup>1</sup>

## 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 subareas<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps most distinct is Subarea B/C<sup>1</sup>, home to the historic Montgomery Park (MP) and American Can (AC) sites, whose size, in combination with the former ESCO Steel site in Subarea D, creates a challenging, disconnected street network between NW 24th and NW 26th. The Portland Streetcar<sup>1</sup> 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 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.
- Improving urban heat island conditions, in Subareas E<sup>1</sup>, F<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup>, 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 area<sup>1</sup> along Subarea A by utilizing sound absorbing materials, landscaping and careful building orientation.
- Complimenting 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,
- Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street<sup>1</sup> with large openings at the ground floor with views into flexible spaces with active uses<sup>1</sup>, 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 A, 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:

- 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.
- Strengthening pedestrian connections, and way-finding, to the NW 24th Greenway, Forest park and 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, F and D.
- Designing prominent surface stormwater facilities that are functional, attractive and celebrate the 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 in Subarea D, and highlighting NW Vaughn as an access path to Forest Park.
- Mitigating impacts from pollution by utilizing a landscaped buffer<sup>1</sup> and setbacks, particularly on sites along NW 23rd and Subarea A.
- Incorporating elements referencing the former ecological and agricultural landscape of Guild's Lake. Consider utilizing water, native flora and first foods into landscape designs.

**Attachment B. Proposed Amendments to the Montgomery Park Character Statement**

**Table 1.** These Amendments are a result of Design Commission comments and direction heard during the work session on 6/20/24.

Ref #	Survey Question/Topic	Comment or Requested Amendment	Proposed by	Proposed Action or Change
1	Revisions to the Community Character Section	a. Within sixth bullet change “celebrating” to “expressing”.  Current language: <i>Acknowledging and celebrating contributions of Portland’s Communities of Color. Consider incorporating color, patterns and/or artwork by Black, Chinese or Indigenous artists.</i>	Design Commission	Staff proposes following language revision: <i>Acknowledging and expressing contributions of Portland’s Communities of Color. Consider incorporating color, patterns and/or artwork by Black, Chinese or Indigenous artists.</i>
		b. Incorporate language guiding developers to work with community organizations on the commemoration of York on NW York.	Design Commission	Staff proposes to address this in two ways:  1. Revise the Current Policy Framework section on page one to incorporate the following language:  <i>Located at the edge of both an Industrial/Employment hub and the NW District Town Center, the VNP is close to jobs, transit, parks, and shops and services. While encouraging elevation of its employment roots and future, the MPAP leverages new development and public benefits to create an inclusive, vibrant, low-carbon mixed-use neighborhood served by the Portland Streetcar. A Public Benefits Agreement outlines important public benefits, including the commemoration of York on NW York Street in partnership with the City Arts Program and community organizations who carry forward the lived experiences of communities of color with roots in the area.</i>  2. Add the Public Benefits Agreement to the Additional Resources section.
		c. Make the guidance for commemoration of York on NW York Street more explicit by stating that if the development is on York Street, it should do this one.	Design Commission	Staff addressed this by creating a new bullet at the end of the section with an opening, which states:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Addressing specific context on the following streets:</i></li> </ul> <p>This opening is then followed by three bullets, featuring revised language for the original guidance on addressing dock conditions on NW York, neon signage on NW Wilson, in addition to the commemoration of York on NW York Street.</p> <p>These three bullets feature the following language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On NW Wilson, incorporate neon signage as a nod to the neon MP sign.</i></li> <li>• <i>On NW York, commemorate York with physical storytelling elements such as art or historic markers.</i></li> <li>• <i>On NW York, preserve historic dock conditions and reference them westward.</i></li> </ul>

Montgomery Park Character Statement Amendments - Design Commission (6/20/2024)

Ref #	Survey Question/Topic	Comment or Requested Amendment	Proposed by	Proposed Action or Change
		<p>d</p> <p>Revise the first bullet to remove guidance for neon signage and replacing the verb “celebrating” with “designing”.</p> <p>Current language:  <i>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.</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision:  <i>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.</i></p>
		<p>e</p> <p>Revise the second bullet to replace “showcasing” to “framing”.</p> <p>Current Language:  <i>Showcasing the terminating vistas of Montgomery Park on NW Wilson St, and American Can on NW Roosevelt and NW York.</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision:  <i>Framing terminating vistas, such as Montgomery Park on NW Wilson St, and American Can on NW Roosevelt and NW York.</i></p>
		<p>f</p> <p>Revise and relocate the third bullet.</p> <p>Current language:  <i>Referencing historic dock conditions on NW York by preserving and/or continuing them westward of NW 24<sup>th</sup>.</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision:  <i>On NW York, preserve and/or continue historic dock conditions westward.</i></p>
		<p>g</p> <p>Revise language within the intro paragraph to condense and clarify.</p> <p>Current language:  <i>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.</i></p>		<p>Staff proposes the following language revision:  <i>Home to a mix of residents, businesses and institutions, this district takes immense pride in its industrial heritage and variety of uses. 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 celebrate the District’s rich industrial character and provide spaces that allow for a true mix of uses, reflecting a history of ingenuity and innovation.</i></p>
		<p>h</p> <p>Add language that references the background section to emphasize that these bullets are not the only way to address the Community Character in new development.</p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff proposes to address this by adding language to the overview sentence/statement at the top of page two.</p> <p>Current language:  <i>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.</i></p> <p>Revised language:  <i>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 and suggest ways character could be incorporated into development.</i></p>

Montgomery Park Character Statement Amendments - Design Commission (6/20/2024)

Ref #	Survey Question/Topic	Comment or Requested Amendment	Proposed by	Proposed Action or Change
		<p>i</p> <p>Within the last bullet, guidance should help ensure there is meaningful programming within public open spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more explicit about what these areas could include (i.e. outdoor space programming such as playgrounds, bandstands, etc.).</li> <li>• Note the inclusion of historic narratives or storytelling.</li> </ul> <p>Current language: <i>Incorporating spaces for recreation, including playgrounds and flexible green spaces, within new parks or open spaces.</i></p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this: <i>Programming open spaces with elements such as playgrounds, performance spaces, historic markers and/or passive recreation areas.</i></p>
2	<i>Revisions to the Architecture and Urban Design Section</i>	<p>a</p> <p>Incorporate a reference to Montgomery Park and the American Can building within guidelines as examples of how tall buildings could reference existing context.</p>	Design Commission	<p>In the first bullet, Staff proposes the following language revision to address this:</p> <p>Current language: <i>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.</i></p> <p>Revised language: <i>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.</i></p>
		<p>b</p> <p>Within first bullet, change “emulating” to “referencing”.</p> <p>Current language: <i>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.</i></p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this: <i>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.</i></p>
		<p>c</p> <p>Condense language within the third bullet.</p> <p>Current language: <i>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.</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this: <i>Buffering development from noise pollution, particularly on sites near Hwy 30 and in the buffer area along Subarea 5 by utilizing sound absorbing materials, landscaping and careful building orientation.</i></p>



Montgomery Park Character Statement Amendments - Design Commission (6/20/2024)

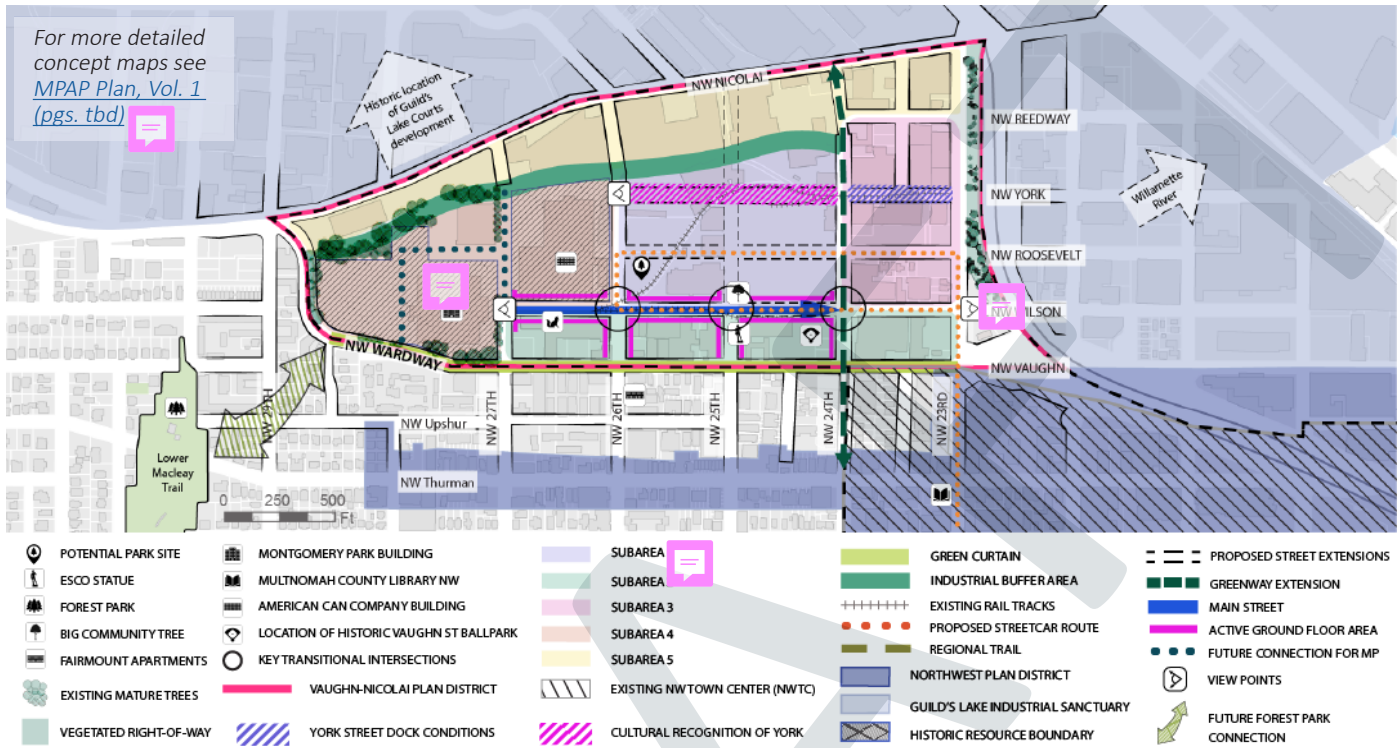
Ref #	Survey Question/Topic	Comment or Requested Amendment	Proposed by	Proposed Action or Change
		<p>d Add abbreviation for Montgomery Park and American Can within the intro paragraph.</p> <p>Current Language:  <i>A century of transition has created a diverse landscape of urban forms and uses in this Center, dividing it into five distinct subareas<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps most distinct is Subarea 4<sup>1</sup>, 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 Streetcar<sup>1</sup> 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</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this:  <i>A century of transition has created a diverse landscape of urban forms and uses in this Center, dividing it into five distinct subareas. Perhaps most distinct is Subarea 4, home to the historic Montgomery Park (MP) and American Can (AC) 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 Portland Streetcar 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.</i></p>
		<p>e Within fifth bullet, change supporting to encouraging.</p> <p>Current language:  <i>Supporting NW Wilson as a main street<sup>1</sup> with large, flexible openings at the ground floor with views into active uses<sup>1</sup>, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, as well as trees and weather protection near transit stops.</i></p>	BPS Staff	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this:  <i>Encouraging NW Wilson as a main street with large openings at the ground floor with views into flexible spaces with active uses, set-back frontages with hardscaped areas to accommodate large crowds, as well as trees and weather protection near transit stops.</i></p>
3	Revisions to the Natural and Scenic Resources Section	<p>a Like the change in language within bullet 2, but the connection to the Willamette River needs to be emphasized and clarified.</p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff addressed this item in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amending language in the second paragraph of the background section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Language:  <i>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. 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.</i></li> <li>Revised language:  <i>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.<sup>2</sup> 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, including an opportunity to connect Forest Park Trails to the Willamette River Greenway. Connected to this legacy are Portland's extant Indigenous and Chinese communities, though little acknowledgment of them or the natural environment exists in this location.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Amended Character Statement and UDF maps to highlight connection the opportunity between Forest Park and the Willamette River, within the district.</li> </ol>

Montgomery Park Character Statement Amendments - Design Commission (6/20/2024)

Ref #	Survey Question/Topic	Comment or Requested Amendment	Proposed by	Proposed Action or Change
		<p>b</p> <p>Within 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, change language to be more specific about access to NW Vaughn.</p> <p>Current Language:  <i>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.</i></p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff proposes language revisions within the first and fifth bullets to address this.</p> <p>Revised Language in First Bullet:  <i>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.</i></p> <p>Revised Language in Fifth Bullet:  <i>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 in Subarea 3, and highlighting NW Vaughn as an access path to Forest Park.</i></p>
		<p>c</p> <p>Within the fourth bullet, strengthen language by incorporating celebrating, instead of enhanced.</p> <p>Current Language:  <i>Designing prominent surface stormwater facilities that are functional, attractive and enhance the nearby Balch Creek Watershed.</i></p>	Design Commission	<p>Staff proposes the following language revision to address this:  <i>Designing prominent surface stormwater facilities that are functional, attractive and celebrate the Balch Creek Watershed.</i></p>
4	Align Subarea names/terminology	<p>a</p> <p>BPS Staff propose amending the Subareas in the Urban Design Framework to match the zoning code subdistricts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subarea 1 = Subarea E</li> <li>• Subarea 2 = Subarea F</li> <li>• Subarea 3 = Subarea D</li> <li>• Subarea 4 = Subarea B/C</li> <li>• Subarea 5 = Subarea A</li> </ul>	Design Commission	<p>Revisions were made throughout the document to update references to the subareas, to align with the plan’s subdistricts in the proposed Vaughn Nicolai Plan District (33.590)</p>

# 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.<sup>2</sup> 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](#)
- <sup>1</sup> [Indicates terms featured within the MPAP Plan, Vol.1, Pgs. 45 & 46](#)
- <sup>2</sup> [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 conditions<sup>1</sup> on NW York by preserving and/or continuing them westward of NW 24th.
- Integrating remnants of the historic railroad tracks, in Subareas 1 and 3, within, or as a connection between, open spaces.
- Integrating intimate, multi-functional and accessible gathering spaces to encourage intergenerational community gathering, especially in Subareas 2 and 3.
- 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 Street<sup>1</sup> through physical elements like art, sculpture or historic markers.
- Incorporating spaces for recreation, including playgrounds and flexible green spaces, within new parks<sup>1</sup> or open spaces.

## ARCHITECTURE + URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER



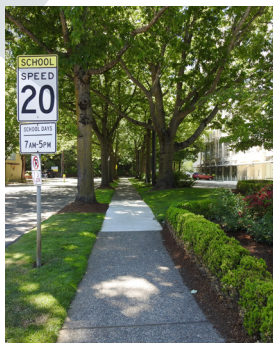
Development on NW Wilson which repurposed an existing industrial building with an updated form and new materials.

A century of transition has created a diverse landscape of urban forms and uses in this Center, dividing it into five distinct subareas<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps most distinct is Subarea 4<sup>1</sup>, home to the historic Montgomery Park and American Can sites, whose size, in combination with the former ESCO Steel site in Subarea 3<sup>1</sup>, creates a challenging, disconnected street network between NW 24th and NW 26th. The arrival of the Portland Streetcar<sup>1</sup> 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 1, 2 and 3, 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 area<sup>1</sup> along Subarea 5. Consider the utilization of sound absorbing materials, landscaping and careful building orientation.
- Providing accessible pedestrian connections on sites within Subarea 3<sup>1</sup> 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 street<sup>1</sup> with large, flexible openings at the ground floor with views into active uses<sup>1</sup>, 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 buffer<sup>1</sup> 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.