Mellon Park Pathways, Lighting, and Entrance Improvements Community Meeting

December 10th, 2025 –6pm, Zoom

Speakers: Curtis Miller & Jeff Burlett (Cosmos Technologies, Inc), Brandon Riley (BR) & Ellen Conrad Winslow (ECW) (Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy)

Attendees: 25

Notes:

Follow slides for project details

Review of Mellon Park Action Plan

- This project satisfies several priorities from the Mellon Park Action Plan (MPAP) including:
    - Improving safe pedestrian and bike access
    - More park amenities (benches, lighting)
    - Respecting history, trees, open space, and landscapes that characterize Mellon Park (MP)
- Following the improvements in Phase 1 of the MPAP which included formalizing the park entrances, uniting both sides of the park, adding trash receptacles and signage

Existing Conditions

- Failing, narrow asphalt pathways in need of repair, need wider paths for bike and pedestrian use
- Accessibility concerns with slope of pathways, not ADA compliant
- No direct access from Fifth Ave and Penn Ave into the park
- Entrances at Beechwood Blvd and Fifth Ave leads into parking lot, which is unsafe
- Bakery Square Blvd and Penn Ave entrance in need of improvements
- No lighting in a park with heavy evening usage, creating safety concerns
- Limited meeting spaces and bench/seating options along the pathways
- Stormwater management is not captured, allowing for run-off into sewer system
- Great artwork, need more opportunities for art or new places

Proposed Design

- Pathway site design
    - Majority of pathways on the northern side of the park are in the initial project plan

    - Two pathways (near the baseball field and upper pathway of the "kidney bean" lawn near pavilion) that will be repaved if funding allows
    - Great thought given to avoiding tree root zones, increasing safety of pathways, leveling pathways for more ADA accessible options
    - Replacing cement swales near trail with planted swales for better water absorption and less impervious surfacing
- Bakery Square Blvd and Penn Ave Entrance
    - New plaza at this intersection with aesthetics matching the Bakery Square corner
    - Carry-over from Phase 1 of our last MP project, was eliminated due to budget constraints
- Lighting
    - All light fixtures the same style (City standard), Dark Skies compliant
        - Two types of light patterns:
            - One light will keep light on path only, the other will be a wider span of light for gathering spaces and intersections
- Beechwood Blvd and Fifth Ave entrance
    - Creating more of gentle slope from corner, ADA accessible
    - Moving entrance to park from parking lot, which was dangerous. Entering from corner creates more predictability and cars are more likely to see them (vs entering between parked cars)
    - Creating a flat gathering area at the top of the hill with bench
    - Sliding existing bus stop down Fifth Ave and adding waste receptacles
- Fifth and Penn Ave Entrance
    - Creating a more gentle slope and direct entrance into park
    - Adding ADA ramp, stair access, and pathway from bus stop
    - Gathering area connected to Fifth and Penn Ave with seat wall for gathering
    - Native plantings added to reduce mowing of steep hillsides
    - Intentionally adding soil to not interrupt the root system of trees
- Rain Garden Stormwater Management
    - Low area to capture rainwater with native plants, currently area has a pipe that doesn't allow infiltration
    - Working with the City on this garden design to meet stormwater code
    - Less grass and mowing required, adding native plants that will absorb more water but will blend in with the hillside,
    - Area will most likely only fill during heavy rainfall, has an overflow pipe
    - Option for educational signage for rain garden

- Arboretum Augmentation
    - There are 7 trees in bad health that need to be removed, will be replaced with at least 18 trees (as per City requirement)
    - Trees identified by City Forestry for removal, we will replace the species that we are removing for the arboretum status
    - Aging arboretum will require some removal and replacement over time, as outlined in MPAP
- Materials
    - City standard benches, waste receptacles, lights, bike racks, etc. across parks
    - Pathways made of asphalt with some cement/pavers near entrances
    - Similar to materials used in the other side of MP and other entrances

Q&A

- Bob D'Asssandro-- Hi! Thank you for all your hard work! Mellon park plays a pivotal role in our family, we live extremely close to the park.
  I have two questions.
  1. Talking about pedestrian safety, I thought I read in the initial draft that the speed limit on Fifth and Penn could be reduced to 25 mph. Is this feasible? I personally believe these roads should be slower. They have lights on nearly every block, so maintaining a 35 mph speed is difficult to begin with. So making it 25 mph seems like it won't affect much.
     a. BR—we were seeing about changing the speed limit. Maybe add a rumble strip to see a reduction in speed. Not a part of this scope, but can be implementing another time with DOMI

  2. We have friends that live in Shadyside near the busway. They have expressed how it is difficult to get to Mellon park. Is there a possibility to add a bus stop to the busway where the current employee stop is? That would open up Mellon park to any resident that is either near the busway or can get to the busway. It would also provide an opportunity to connect Larimer and Bakery Square together, say a pedestrian bridge over the busway there to connect both neighborhoods.

     Christian Umbach--Related to the busway, PRT has been exploring a potential additional station near the location you mentioned. More info here: https://www.rideprt.org/BOTEB
- Michele Clarke--Trees - natives? What about shrubs?
    - ECW: Yes! Trees are easier to protect from deer browse than shrubs, but they are not out of the question.

- Michele Clarke-- Safety- won't people still walk off the lawn straight into the parking lot (from the pavilion)? Shrubs or something to allow only two entrances from the direction?
    - BR: People will probably still walk down this hill, but we're trying to direct people to a place where cars are more likely to see pedestrians
- Michele Clarke-- Can you pull up now and the proposition? Side by side?
    - [Addressed in moment]
- Michele Clarke— Type of surface on paths?
    - ECW: Most pathways will be asphalt, but entrances will have concrete or pavers.
    - MC: Thank you…just thinking of sustainability and future need and cost of replacement.
- Michele Clarke-- I really like the meeting places
- Nancy Levine-- What will be done to make the parking lot safe for cyclists? I was "doored" in the current bike lane and ended up in the hospital with a concussion. Currently pedestrians walk in it, forcing cyclist into the active traffic lanes and vehicles park in it.
    - BR: This parking lot is actually sub-standard, was designed in the 1950s, it's dangerous. The long term solution is to move the parking lot all together to where the current splash pad and playground is, moving those amenities to the center of the park. Removing kids from the parking lot area. This is a future phase of the project, no timeline at this time.
- Michele Clarke-- At entrances: is there a place for name of the park at entrances.
- Michele Clarke-- Like the style of light standards…sort of retro.
- Michele Clarke-- Dog watering site?
    - BR: This project is not proposing this at this time. But this can be followed up with DPW. Standard park watering fountain has the dog watering bowl attached to drinking fountain
- Michele Clarke-- Not applicable today but all art should be climbable.
    - Sherpes: just like hartwood acres music concert area
- Michele Clarke-- Excellent thinking for Fifth and Penn entrance.
- MC-- Sales pitch for the future. Enhancing this park will enhance the neighborhood and value of homes. I live very close to the park on Kentucky and was a former parks and rec director and would love to help get neighbors to help with funding.

- MC-- An idea for the bikers…some kind of contest to make a sign that says , "Hey bikers, keep safe by going this way" or something like that with a cute animal on a bike!
- Crwentling-- Really like the thoughtful traditional lighting.
- Sherpes-- the corner of Penn and Fifth has a problem of very long pedestrian crosswalks. not safe
- Dtene-- is nothing being done on the South side of Mellon Park?
    - BR: Not as a part of this project, but yes in future phases there are projects in the Terrace Garden, pathway and lighting improvements in the southern part of the park, as well as improvements to the Fifth and Shady Ave corner entrance
    - Crwentling: Yes please to terraced garden!
- Sherpes-- will there be a pedestrian sidewalk on the edge of the parking lot? right now, if pedestrians want to walk from the playground to bakery square, they have to either walk on the grass, or on the pavement used for motorized parking.
    - BR: Putting in a sidewalk would damage trees and would take away parking in an already packed parking lot. The hill side is also steep, so the grading would be a challenge.
    - Sherpes: there is a sidewalk on the playground side from Fifth Ave to the playground entrance, but there is NO sidewalk on the same side, to reach the baseball field.
    - ECW: I totally agree that the sidewalk and parking lot situation is not desirable or safe. This project may not address this safety issue, but our hope is that it can be done in a future phase. Feel free to email me (econrad@pittsburghparks.org) if you'd like to talk more about it.
- Lisa Lowery: Could hump be placed at those two corners (Beechwood and Fifth)?
- Crwentling-- I like the idea of signature trees (redbuds?) flanking all the entrances and the rain garden to control storm water. I caught a glance of wild colorful painting on the 5th Ave road surface where the two sides of the park meet. I hope a more attractive, less colorful design replaces it.
- Vicky Lee-- What is your anticipated timeline for these improvements?
    - Starting late fall 2026, spring 2027
- MC--Cost?
    - BR: 1.4 million

- Jessie Demoise: Hi all. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed design! IMO this remains true to what was proposed at concept - improved connectivity throughout, lighting, multiuse width pathways, stormwater management are all thoughtfully addressed. Happy to see the vegetated buffer/rain gardens at the edge of Penn remain in consideration. Hope you're all doing well.
- MC-- Can pavers have names of donors?
- MC-- I have an idea of knocking on doors, going to street fairs, etc and asking for donations, etc. We can get high school kids who need a service project to help with volunteer adults.
- MC-- There a bunches of churches to do an outreach.
- Lisa Lowery—Have you ever considered schools or Boy Scouts making the benches?
    - BR: Not really, DPW has a standard for benches that are easier to replace the slats on
- Crwentling-- Thank you. It is a very thoughtful design.
- Vicky Lee—Thank you to PPC and to Cosmos!
- Lisa Lowery--THANKS TO ALL