



**Couch Park – Parks Replacement Bond – Open House #2  
Comment Form Summary**

**Overview**

The second open house for the Couch Park Bond Project was held on Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 6:00-8:00pm at Congregation Beth Israel, 1972 NW Flanders. Outreach included a NWNW electronic newsletter article, post on project website, yard signs in the Park, flyers distributed to MLC students, and two rounds of emails to interested parties. The Open House was attended by approximately 35 community members. A paper comment form was provided at the Open House, and a similar version was posted online for one week after the Open House. A total of 190 comments were received.

The goals of the Open House were to share three concepts for the playground replacement and plaza renovations. The Open House included presentations on the Project Scope and Schedule by Sandra Burtzos, PP&R Project Manager and the three concepts by Ben Johnson with Greenworks, LLC. Questions and comments were taken from the audience.

Given feedback received earlier this year from students at MLC who participated in school-organized design workshops, and the commitment of the Friends of Couch Playground and Harper’s Playground to raise an additional \$500,000 for the project, it is intended that this project will have inclusive play as a focus of the design. The aim is for the design to be as inclusive as the budget, site, and scope allows. The Loo has limited options for siting, as it needs to be accessible, near sewer / water lines, and security staff have recommended it being close to NW Glisan St for easy surveillance. Given that, the questions asked on the comment form were focused on gathering feedback on the types of play elements desired in the playground and the community’s priorities for repairing the plaza.

It should be noted that this report reflects the opinions of those who chose to participate. It is not necessarily representative of the broader community. This information, in addition to information provided by the Project Advisory Committee; Technical Advisory Committee; staff, students, and faculty at MLC; stakeholders; and others will be used to inform the development of the final schematic design for the Couch Park plaza and playground improvements, and the installation of a Portland Loo.

**Note:** In reviewing the demographics of the responses, it was noted that 49% of the responses represented the youth perspective (under age 16). To determine if there were any differences between the youth and adult responses, the results are broken out into these two age groups – youth % / adult %.

**1. Please select which element you prefer in the three Playground Options**

**(Under age 16 % / Age 16 or Older %, Option 1 = Cascadian, 2 = StumpTown, 3 = Mosaic):**

**a) Overall Theme – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) More natural with some developed elements – 30% / 36%
- (OPTION 2) Hybrid of urban/natural–more developed with some natural elements– 56% / 51%
- (OPTION 3) Contemporary / urban with some natural elements – 14% / 13%

**b) Main Play Feature – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) Fort around / near horse chestnut tree with slide / pulleys / nets – 55% / 61%
- (OPTION 2) Mounds and hilltop with sliding & climbing – 30% / 33%
- (OPTION 3) Contemporary play structure with nets – 15% / 6%

**c) Swing Elements – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) Hammock swing (allows for group use) – 35% / 14%
- (OPTION 2) Group rope swing and basket swing – 40% / 61%
- (OPTION 3) Large / traditional swing set with individual swings – 25% / 25%

**d) Water Element – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) Channels – provides ability to manipulate water flow – 63% / 64%
- (OPTION 2) Water spray and/or sculptural water feature – 20% / 15%
- (OPTION 3) Water combined with sand – 17% / 22%

**e) Other Nature Play Elements – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) Loose parts / tepee structure / logs for climbing – 30% / 30%
- (OPTION 2) Forest walk / rock mounds & wood stumps for climbing – 38% / 43%
- (OPTION 3) Playful banana slug for climbing – 31% / 27%

**f) Sensory Element – I prefer (circle one):**

- (OPTION 1) Inspired by traditional musical instruments (xylophone/bongo drums/etc) – 23% / 28%
- (OPTION 2) Sound garden – discovery elements intersperse in sculptural maze – 59% / 57%
- (OPTION 3) Urban music elements – no-traditional music makers and/or games – 18% / 16%

**2. Options for the Plaza Renovations (Under age 16 % / Age 16 or Older %):**

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- Bricks: “Keeps the Same Look” – 18% / 22%
- Pavers: “Safer Yet Similar Look” – 50% / 19%
- Concrete: “Most Cost Effective” – 32% / 59%

**3. Options for Trees in the Plaza (Under age 16 % / Age 16 or Older %):**

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- Keep original cherry trees. Carve out larger area in paving surrounding trees to allow for roots – 38% / 42%
- Remove two of the four cherry trees to allow for more space in the plaza – 45% / 30%
- Remove all four cherry trees & replace with new trees elsewhere in plaza or adjacent to plaza – 18% / 28%

**What else would you like us to know? Is anything missing?**

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- Several adults and youth do not like the idea of sand and water getting on kids during the school day.
- Several adults did not want to see the cherry trees go but recognized the hazard of slippery bricks.
- Both adults and youth liked the idea of climbing features.
- Some adults expressed concern about the transient population and general safety.

- Youth gave many suggestions for additional elements including monkey bars, turf fields, obstacle courses, forts, and trampolines.

**How far do you live from Couch Park? (Under age 16 % / Age 16 or Older %):**

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- More than one mile – 82% / 48%
- Five blocks or less – 11% / 35%
- Less than one mile – 6% / 17%

**How often do you visit Couch Park? (Under age 16 % / Age 16 or Older %):**

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- Every day or every other – 86% / 61%
- Once or twice a week – 6% / 23%
- Once or twice a month – 4% / 16%
- A few times a year – 2% / 14%
- Never – 2% / 0%

**Do you... (all participants)**

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- Attend or work at MLC – 40%
- Have a child who attends MLC – 24%
- Have a child who attends another school – 17%
- None of the above – 16%

**How did you hear about this event / comment form? (all participants)**

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- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • PP&R email – 17%       | • NWDA newsletter – 4% |
| • Yard sign in park – 9% | • PP&R flyer – 4%      |
| • PP&R Website – 5%      | • Other (see below)    |

**If you checked “Other”, please explain:** Many participants became aware of the event through the Metropolitan Learning Center (MLC) via email, Facebook page, teacher, PTSA, or otherwise. Many others heard through friends, neighbors, family members, Greenworks, Harper’s Playground, Child Roots NW, and the Northwest Library Children’s Librarian.

**How many children do you have living with you under the age of 18? (all participants)**

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- Zero – 40%
- Two – 27%
- One – 23%
- Three – 9%
- Five – 1%

### **How old are they? (all participants)**

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- 5 -8 – 35%
- 9 - 12 – 25%
- 1 - 4 – 20%
- 13+ – 20%

### **I am age (all participants)**

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- Under 16 – 49%
- 35-44 – 24%
- 45-59 – 12%
- 25-34 – 7%
- 60-79 – 7%

### **I identify as (all participants)**

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- Female – 56%
- Male – 41%
- Other – 3%

### **Regarding Residence, I (all participants)**

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- Own – 58%
- Other – 22%
- Rent – 20%

### **I identify as (all participants)**

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- White – 86%
- American Indian / Alaskan Native – 5%
- Asian – 4%
- Hispanic or Latino – 3%
- Slavic / Eastern European Immigrant – 1%
- Black or African American – 1%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – 1%
- Some Other Race – 1% (Answers: Mixed, Human)