

Summary of Phase 1 New User/Underrepresented Targeted Community Engagement

Forest Park Entrance and Nature Center Project
September 2016 | Design + Culture Lab, Pamela N. Phan (PM)

Background and Context

The acquisition of the property near the intersection of NW Yeon/Hwy 30 and NW Kittridge provides Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) an opportunity to construct a visionary entrance/gateway to the natural area. The Forest Park Natural Resource Management Plan (1995) recommends the development of a regional trailhead to include parking, informational kiosk, seasonal restrooms, drinking fountain, and an ADA accessible multi-use trail that connects Leif Erikson and Firelane 1. There may also be the opportunity for on-site space for education and interpretation of the park's unique natural and recreational resources, as well as staff/maintenance functions. PP&R has also prioritized developing lasting relationships with potential "new users" of all that Forest Park and the new facility can offer.

Design + Culture Lab also practices a community building approach in which community members speak for themselves, as they are the experts of their own experiences. Community engagement activities are designed to develop leadership, skills, and knowledge for long lasting relationships that result in equitable outcomes. We extend a "warm hand off" of these relationships to agencies, who are encouraged to continue positive and affirming interactions with community members on projects and programs moving forward.

D+C Lab met with Portland Parks and Recreation staff (Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong and Stefanus Gunawan) to specify the following Phase I: Underrepresented and Targeted Community Outreach and working assumptions.

Assumptions

Underrepresented groups who may or may not already be active users of natural environments in the Portland region, may not currently know that Forest Park exists. Furthermore, they may be unaware that it is a 'free' resource available to them like other parks in Portland. Phase I is designed to find out whether or not people are aware that Forest Park exists, and what interest they might have in using a natural area like Forest Park.

"New users" – are communities that are least often engaged and represented in public decision making. New users are residents from throughout the Portland Metropolitan region who are not traditionally aware or make use of Forest Park currently, and often include people of immigrant, refugee, low-income, or backgrounds of color.

Engagement Approach

Given this educated assumption that many potential new user groups are not using Forest Park because they 1) do not know about the park yet or 2) they might have their own reason, prompted adaptation to



intercept engagement in order to learn greater detail about new user groups. The initial intercept question was: have you heard of or have you been to Forest Park? Yes or No? If yes, what did you like about the park? At this point, we shared ideas and concepts for a potential new entrance with the opportunity for community members to give their input on what services, programs, or facilities they might want to see on that site.

In addition, to situate many new users, who may know little or nothing about the park, we offered a street map of Portland indicating Forest Park's location which extends for more than 5,000 acres allowing people to see where they were standing or where they lived in relation to the park. We also supplied visuals of park trails, streams, a view of the St. Johns Bridge overlooking the Willamette River, and a map of trails with flora and fauna viewing sites - as a way to familiarize people to the park's natural amenities. Had folks not heard about the park, depending on their interest, visuals were used to inform them about the park. Yes and No responses were collected using a "bean poll" – a tactile way for intercept participants to engage the question dropping a single bean between two jars labeled with their response (Yes or No). A spinning prize wheel was also used in order to draw people in for the intercept questions. Popular prizes included candy, cold bottles of water, Parks stickers and other Parks branded paraphernalia. Contact information was collected for a handful of users who were interested in either learning more about the survey.

Intercept Engagement Schedule (2-2.5 hour engagements)

August 13 – Latino Family Night at Parklane Park (155th Ave and SE Main St.)

August 20 – Jade Night Market at Portland Community College SE Center (82nd Ave and SE Division St.)

August 23 – Free Swim at Montavilla Park and Pool (82nd and NE Glisan St.)

August 25 – Free Swim at Peninsula Park and Pool (North Albina and Killingsworth St.)

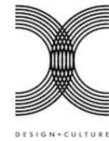
August 27 – Blue Lake Regional Park and Natural Area (205th and NE Marine Drive, Fairview, OR)

Sampling locations were chosen for the following reasons:

- Places where potential new users go with their families to use parks recreation facilities or programs;
- Places where families and youth of color engage with natural areas;
- Targeted events where specific cultural communities are prominent and the focal point of activities (Latino Family Night and Jade Night Market);
- Events and activities were chosen to fit into a three week sampling period from August 10- August 31, coordinating with the overall project timeline.

Targeted Stakeholder One-on-Ones

PP&R staff wanted to take advantage of the "warm hand off" approach during Phase 1 to hear more from organizations that represent and advocate for populations that are not often heard in Parks decision making, as well as a commitment from Parks to build stronger positive relationships with such groups. A short, not exhaustive, list was created considering organizations that might have a direct interest in outdoor activities and education for families of color, groups that advocate for greater equity



and diversity in the environment and conservation efforts, and potential new user groups from cultural backgrounds that are not often heard from.

Table 1. Targeted Stakeholder List

Group/Organization	Potential Connection to the Project	Primary Contact
African American Health Coalition	Culturally specific.	Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong
African American Outdoor Association	Environment, outdoor, and culturally specific.	D+C Lab
African Network	Culturally specific.	D+C Lab
Asian Pacific Islander Pride	Culturally specific, equity, inclusions, and diversity community building and advocacy.	D+C Lab
Audubon Society, Board Equity Committee	Environment and conservation.	D+C Lab
Environmental Professionals of Color	People of color, environment, and equity and diversity advocacy.	Stefanus Gunawan
Feathers of Color	People of color and outdoor appreciation.	Stefanus Gunawan
Office of New Portlanders, Linda Castillo	Staff at City New Portlanders Program.	Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong
Mujeres Movimiento	Culturally specific and outdoor activity.	Stefanus Gunawan
Muslim Educational Trust	Culturally specific education and advocacy.	Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong
Oregon Environmental Council, Emerging Leaders Board	Environment, conservation, and diversity advocacy.	D+C Lab
Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable	Culturally specific, conservation, and equity in the environment advocacy.	Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong
Sankofa (Formerly PFLAG Black Chapter)	Culturally specific equity, inclusion, and diversity advocacy and community building.	D+C Lab
Sierra Club, Board Equity Committee	Environment and conservation.	D+C Lab
Slavic Network	Culturally specific.	D+C Lab
Unite Oregon	Equity and inclusion advocacy and community organizing.	Stefanus Gunawan
Verde	Culturally specific community building and advocacy for environmental stewardship and economic opportunity.	Stefanus Gunawan
Vietnamese Community of Oregon	Culturally specific.	D+C Lab
Vive Northwest	Culturally specific, environment, and outdoor appreciation and conservation.	Stefanus Gunawan

Results of Phase I Outreach and Stakeholder Relationship Building

Intercepts

Graph 1. Bean Poll

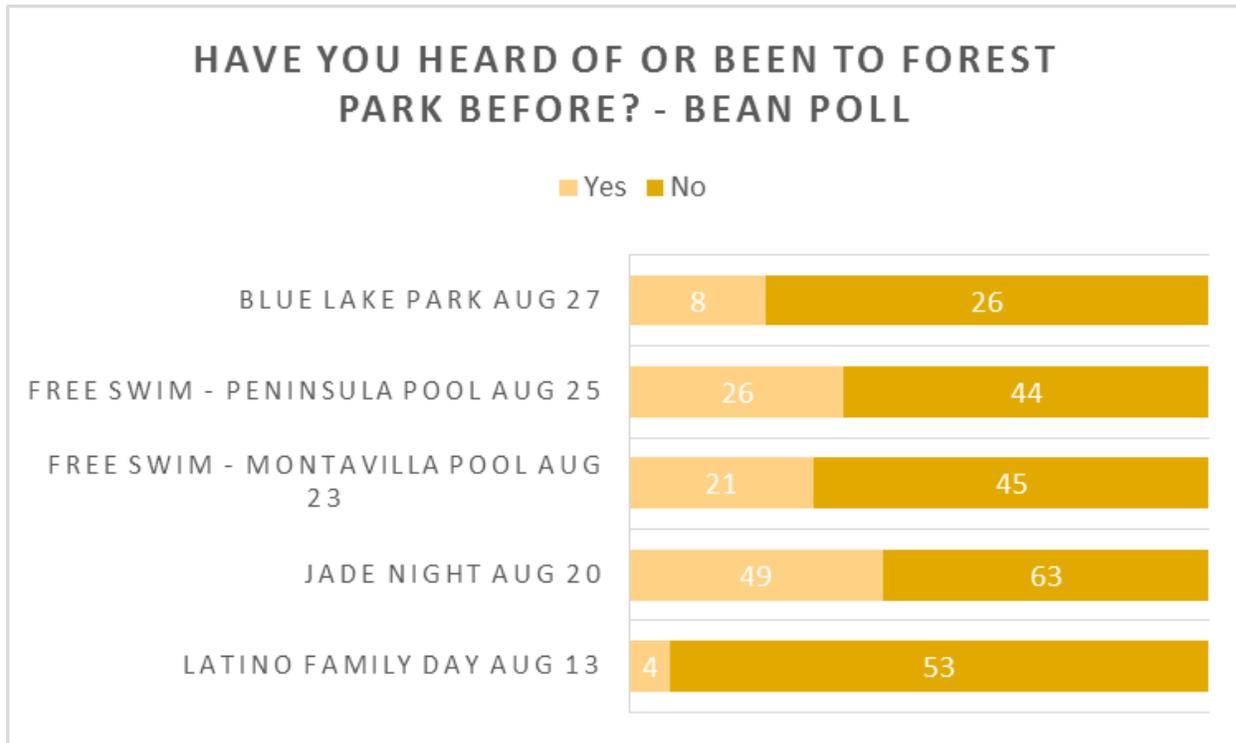


Table 2. Comments per intercept engagement

Engagement	Comments
August 13 – Latino Family Night at Parklane Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally specific activities. • Open and welcoming space that honors indigenous history of Portland. • Never heard of Forest Park, but would definitely use it now that I know it's there. • Not sure how I would get there without a car. • If I can hike with my family, yes I would use it. • Is swimming allowed? • That seems very hard to get to. Would definitely have to drive there. • Drinking fountains or water and bathrooms. • Spanish translation was used consistently to collect these responses.

August 20 – Jade Night Market at Portland Community College SE Center

- Bathrooms and water fountains.
- Parking.
- Programs and classes there might be nice, but not to draw crowds to the park. It's nice the way it is.
- Racially diverse history should be represented.
- Good signage with information about the park.
- Visible signage from the highway to know how to get to the park.
- Karen language was needed and not available on the fly, in one occasion which would have assisted in having an in depth conversation.

August 23 – Free Swim at Montavilla Park and Pool

- The park doesn't need a big entrance, the money should be used for more pressing concerns in Portland like homelessness and our housing crisis, or disaster preparation.
- Parking.
- I love this park, it's very peaceful and quiet.
- Would be great if the City could connect the bikeway in NW Portland (18th/19th) to get safely to Forest Park somehow.
- Many children responded with how nice the trails looked.
- Vietnamese translation was used in two instances to collect responses.

August 25 – Free Swim at Peninsula Park and Pool

- I've not been to Forest Park, but I do like hiking in natural areas. Having one closer than the Gorge would be great. I guess I should go.
- I went there a long time ago and just have never gone back.
- Several children were scared of how they might get lost in such a big and forested park, even if their parents were with them.
- Parking will be important, since it's not that easy to get to. I also have my children to bring with me.

August 27 – Blue Lake Regional Park and Natural Area

- I like that it is hard to find an entrance. It's a part of the mystery and adventure of going there. I don't think a big entrance is necessary.
- Drinking water.
- Bathrooms.
- Clearly marked trails.
- Never heard of it. Not that interested in finding a new park.
- Yes, we go there and love it! We saw owls!

General Interpretations of Intercept Engagements

When we went to places where people of color and those with low incomes often spend their recreation time, we generally found that **few people** already knew about or have been to Forest Park.

When asked if they would (hypothetically) use a forested park with hiking trails and streams, there were various answers, and no one answer prevailed, which could describe the many underrepresented groups as a single ‘new user’ identity. It became clear that many factors are involved, including (but not limited to) the park’s location, personal preferences about recreation and the outdoors, transportation options and access, awareness of the places west of the Willamette River, cultural norms, and household size were voiced. Many respondents did like the “idea” of going to Forest Park, but also expressed that if they haven’t gone there yet, they likely would not – even if there were an entrance with amenities. Others still, wanted to know more about Forest Park, asking for how to find it for a future hike and website information.

Lack of awareness of Forest Park is not the simple conclusion to why underrepresented groups are not using Forest Park. With such varying answers from different underrepresented groups, it will be essential to learn what specific barriers or challenges can be addressed within this site development project or by PP&R. People also touched on concerns that may require coordination or partnership with other agencies or organizations to effectively address (i.e. frequency or ease of Trimet service to the site). Given this mixed interest from intercepts, D+C Lab suggests cultivating strong and direct relationships with organizations that represent these groups be a priority for PP&R and the project. These relationships will help PP&R understand what specific concerns or challenges exist for various communities of color or other underrepresented groups.

Targeted Stakeholder One-on-Ones

Table 3. Results of one-on-one calls/meet ups

Group/Organization	If the “nature center/entrance” were to exist, what could it offer your organization or community?	Types of programs? Design? Amenities?	How can this site be welcoming to you/your community, or other users you represent?	Would you like to be involved with the development of the site? (i.e. Stakeholder Advisory Committee or future outreach)
African American Health Coalition				
African American Outdoor Association, Greg Wooley	A prominent entrance would be valuable to us, especially since the park is in town in comparison to other locations we use.	Basic amenities of a trailhead like bathrooms and drinking water.	How can involvement be more inclusive from here on out in the project? Whatever decisions are made about the site and/or building itself moving forward, it is important that underrepresented community members become more aware of and familiar with the decision making process. I think about the nearby river clean up, with potential job opportunities, while on the other hand there are serious implications of the disparate burdens of negative exposure that certain people experience along the river.	Yes I am interested in the stakeholder committee. Will have to check schedule for the next 8 months, before I can commit. Will also check with AAOA Board members about their interest. Heads up, AAOA may be also go through an organizational transition involving Black Parent Initiative. We’ll keep you posted, since it may affect our capacity to participate on AC. Please contact me with details about the committee when available.
African Network, Koffi Dessou	I guess it could be helpful for us to find the park.	Many of our communities enjoy using parks for social events that include music and cook outs. We’ve used parks like Colonel Summers, Blue Lake Regional Park, and one out in Oregon City. People do have interest in outdoor activities, which includes social sports like volleyball.	Having restrooms is important. Also a sense of safety in the park. Covered space that protect from the rain. Things that welcome us are places to play sports. This may not work well in a natural area, but having access to electricity in order to play music and dance together is a must.	Will bring this question to other community members and leaders of various groups (i.e. Nigerian, South African, Ghanaian, Togolese, etc.). Please send me more information about your survey and I can share. Tell me more about the advisory committee and we can help find someone from to represent the Network.

Asian Pacific Islander Pride	Left message and email. No response by date of report.			
Audubon Society, Board Equity Committee	Could we learn more about your specific plans?	n/a	Our concerns are about the overall goals of the project, and how it was earmarked in the budget. To make the space more welcoming to many of the families and youth of color we work with, it will be important to address both broad and specific instances of how Parks makes decisions that result in equitable outcomes.	Yes. We would like to hear more about this opportunity when details are available. Perhaps someone from the Equity Committee could support the development of including an equity lens within the project.
Environmental Professionals of Color				
Feathers of Color	Groups not interested.			
Office of New Potlanders, Linda Castillo				
Mujeres Movimiento, Lale Santelices	I love parks and go to them on a weekly basis. However, I find Forest Park inaccessible for people like me that can't count on private cars to move around. Unless there is a safe ped/bike/transit infrastructure to the park, I will probably continue to miss out on Forest Park. Is that area easily accessible by transit, foot, bike or other active transportation options?	I would love for the park to have places/activities for youth. Would a skate park or bike pump be feasible?	Equity! How are we getting low income families to access the park and its programs? Youth engagement – make space for 16-24 year olds? How are we engaging people of color in programming?	Maybe.
Muslim Educational Trust				
NAYA Youth and Elders Council	Unable to contact. Will try again after Labor Day holiday.			

<p>Oregon Environmental Council, Emerging Leaders Board, Jamaal Green</p>	<p>An entrance is an interesting idea. Although not an immediately compelling issue that the ELB or its members are currently working on.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>The site and the site development project could stand to be more inclusive of folks of color, and also consider equity outcomes as the site is developed. It is worth asking what is the purpose of the development, and is a project of this size and scope going to realistically serve underrepresented groups?</p>	<p>Yes, we are interested in serving on an advisory committee, but would need to know more. We meet at the end of every month, and I will bring details (when you make them available) to the ELB to see if someone would like to participate – at our September meeting.</p>
<p>Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable</p>				
<p>Sankofa (Formerly PFLAG Black Chapter), Khalil Edwards</p>	<p>Yes, and entrance would be interesting. It would be important to have parks access for GLBTQ people of color that is inclusive of them and their multiple identities, even their interests in outdoor activities.</p>	<p>This depends on what types of things the park is available for. We’ve had various positive and less positive experiences with PP&R. Programming needs to be fully accepting and inclusive of our community.</p>	<p>Welcoming and inclusive places and treatment hasn’t been simple for us with PP&R. We would love to see a change through this project.</p>	<p>Yes! We will ask a few members who have been trying to build a group of black queer outdoor enthusiasts. We’re interested in participating in future engagements you have with the community, and maybe the advisory committee if there is someone with time and availability.</p>
<p>Sierra Club, Board Equity Committee, Amira Streeter</p>	<p>There are many immediate needs, but one thing is for sure that it will take lot to make services at this facility culturally relevant for non-white populations.</p>	<p>Programs must be responsive to communities. Is it clear which communities Parks is serving with the FP project? If so, can you tell us which ones? Are communities of color being targeted? If so, when a specific group IS NOT targeted, for instance black communities – then it often gets overlooked.</p>	<p>Sierra club has different options that support Sierra club members who are also people of color with getting more plugged in, and perhaps can give input.</p>	<p>Maybe, although would like to hear more about the advisory committee: How long will the meetings be and at what time? Who have you targeted to be in the group already and who has agreed to be there? What will be the decision points and outcomes from the group? Will it be a safe space for me to voice concerns and does the group have cultural competency? It also seemed like a lot of decisions had been made already, especially when it comes to funding. If I were to join, what would be my main role in influencing the outcome?</p>

Slavic Network	Yes. But we need to understand more about the project. Please tell us more. Do you have written information? Pictures?	We love parks. They are very important to our community. Although we don't know enough about this park or the project to answer this question.	First of all, I don't know where this is. It is also very far from where much of our community lives (mainly in East Portland and Gresham). What would be welcoming to us is to invest in parks that are more accessible to us, maybe out in East Portland?	Yes. Can you tell us more about the survey? We can distribute some at our churches and I can share the online version. No, the advisory committee is too big of a commitment right now.
Unite Oregon	Left message. No Response.			
Verde , Carolina Iraheta	I think if the entrance had an educational component, I would be more motivated to visit the entrance. I would also like to take my nieces and nephew to the entrance, so they could learn about the natural landscape of forest park	I would like the center to reflect a design that was culturally relevant to the diverse communities that exist in Portland. That the aesthetic was inviting to a diverse set of participants.	1. That the design of the center reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of Portland communities 2. That the center is intentionally and inviting place for refugee and immigrant communities in Portland 3. That the center be an educational site for the native plants and history of Forest Park	Maybe.
Vietnamese Community of Oregon	Unsure. We need to know more about the park and the project.	n/a	n/a	Yes, we would love to stay involved and build a better relationship with PP&R. Would you like to sponsor a table at our September 17 th Mid-Autumn New Year Festival at IRCO? This is an important holiday in our community.
Vive Northwest , Jorje Guzman	Awaiting email response.			

General Interpretations from Targeted Stakeholders

Groups are generally interested in initiating or maintaining a relationship with PP&R, as well as giving input to influence the project based on each organization's capacity. A consistent theme: a concern that the project has not prioritized diversity or inclusion to date. This leaves community members and leaders wary, asking more questions, rather than answering the questions the site development team has presented. Additionally, several groups would like to take on a sincere role to work with Parks to seek equitable outcomes in decisions made by PP&R moving forward in the development of the site.

A helpful guiding question articulated by various stakeholders from above: *how will this project realistically serve underrepresented communities?*

It is critical that the project consider this and other related questions, as part of applying an "equity lens" to the project. Applying an equity lens is best accomplished by ensuring spots on the advisory/stakeholder committee for as many of the targeted groups as are able to commit, given reasonable accommodation. The myriad of perspectives can act as a valuable think tank that can guide and measure progress, prioritizing equitable outcomes as the project continues. Having these groups present responds to creating a diverse and inclusive process for the project. With their full participation, the site development project can engage in much more complex problem solving that can include how to create cultural relevance, multi-cultural and intercultural public space, or human centered design (in both space and programming), while also integrating broader social/urban implications such as transit access to the site, or education programs for low income youth from East Portland or East Multnomah County.