July 15, 2021 4:07 pm

Present: Julie, Jon, Chris, Merritt, Peg, Kady, Judy, Emma, Nancy

Nancy is taking notes

There’s a page for this group on the [web](https://www.capitolrivercouncil.org/pedroworkgroup) where we will put documents and minutes.

**Pedro Park Final Concept Plan (2018)**

Mary Norton and Alice Messer presented the most recent landscape architecture plan for Pedro Park. Mary is a landscape architect who worked with the Ackerberg group on what a fully developed park would look like. The project paused after the open house.

There was a design advisory committee that looked at quarter block, half block, etc. Looking at the design specific to the quarter acre.

The current flower garden is meant as an interim park design. Attempts and requests for funding from CAP throughout, unsuccessful. 2017-2018 when PSA proposal came out on the annex.

Surveys of the community were conducted to determine priority amenities in downtown – many were suggested and they try to balance them given the space they have.

* Need for open space
* Need relief from the sun – immediate and future shade
* Flexible space for events
* Water interaction
* Kid- and Family- and Dog-Friendly space

Idea of ability to expand – adapt for future expansion has also been part of the planning process. Knew there is a strong desire to expand the park as land becomes available. Designed in a way that expansion is not precluded.

Advanced Design Concept Plan

* Shade structure provides immediate shade, with water element, gathering space
* Need many seating spaces – tables, nooks, daytime needs for lunch, community table on the street front
* Spaces for public art at the corner – at the time of the plan a Bus Rapid Transit Platform was originally slated to stop along the park and so that appears in this plan. That has bicycle parking and bus stop infrastructure in the plan
* Playful space with surface water where children can play – also provides a backdrop for a stage or events – water elements
  + Parts of the design can access vehicles for events - drivable
* Secondary water space on the south too (where the Pedro Park sign used to be).
* Safety and visibility
* BRT shelter was meant to really give a street presence to the park on the 10th street side. The shelter would be well-lit and it’s open on either side. It’s a big horizontal arch – 60s style.

Gradient – Currently quite a drop from 10th street to the alleyway. Big part of the project is building up the grade and adding retaining walls on the backside. Shared edge with the PSA building is part of the retaining wall.

Play area / art space

Amphitheater

They won a merit award for unbuilt works for the park design

In the Project Sequence, they got through final design and site approval, but when Ackerberg pulled out, then the project went on pause because there was no immediate funding, particularly for the structural issues with changing the grade.

Construction staging is an important phase – whether PSA comes down or stays up

Alice – there’s more detail in terms of storm water treatment and maintenance, safety and security than was shared at this meeting. The design is such that you would want to be in this place.

From Mary and Alice’s point of view, no work on the park can happen until we know what is happening to the PSA building. Some sort of wall is needed to retain the new grade – there would have to be structural assessment, and if the PSA came down, and they would have to design the park to expand in a different direction.

**Chris: Is there a plan for community gardeners?**

Mary: There are a few flower beds beneath the trees. There’s space for planting, and we would have a conversation about whether that could be community gardening space?

Mary says that everyone wants everything for this space. It’s a lot of wants for this amount of space. Shade is super important, and right now it’s full sun.

Interaction between the parks? In Wacouta the play area is traditional, in the Pedro plan it’s more of an art project. Trying to make flexible spaces – things can serve multiple purposes, i.e. art as play.

Mary left the meeting.

**Question: Did Alice get a chance to get demographics. They have the Census tract data, not the district level data.**

2010 1,811 – people downtown in the district - Fitzgerald Precinct Plan boundaries

2020 2,270 “

2020 1466 total households

2020 projections used was 2068

55 -65 years is the biggest demographic group age-wise – 81 percent. 1800 is the population. Fitzgerald Precinct Plan is the data area – Robert, 7th, 11th streets.

**Discussion**:

Could we compare data between this neighborhood and Mears Park neighborhood? Also, what’s the per capita park space across the city?

Is this a priority area because it’s less well-served than other parts of the city or is this a lower priority. Alice doesn’t have that ranking; there’s no rule from the city. The City would like a Park within a 10-minute walk.

Merritt suggested that the metric should be comparing who has yard space and who does not. 1000 people without yard space need a park more than 1000 people with single-family homes. It’s not apples to apples.

Peg has counted 847 units in the block area between Rossmor, Penfield, City Walk and The Point.

The Metro and open space demand for employees. Downtown needs strong amenities to be competitive. Pedro Park should be more of a priority than it was the past two years.

Impression is that the need doesn’t matter, that what gets prioritized is what there’s money for. And for this park, the money is supposed to come from the sale of the building, or a big capital fundraising campaign. Can the City start a capital campaign and prioritize that and Pedro Park – lobby the Mayor’s Office.

Others believe that there must be funds somewhere to build parks – how were parks built in the past?

Are there companies that are downtown that we need to talk to about fundraising?

**Question: what’s the cost of the projected park, like if one person were going to write a check, what would the amount be?**

Last time, $3.7 million was the estimated costs, with sale of the building 35%, capital, 60% capitol improvement funds, 5 % area improvement funds. Because of increased construction costs, what is likely to cost now?

Alice – is saying generally 3%. She would check into this.

**We have to play out a few scenarios:**

* keep the PSA and use the sale to help fund the Park development.
* Tear down the building and then expand in a different direction, and then pay for building teardown and new park planning, and the structural issue of the building not being there to serve as a retaining wall.
* Expand to the south in some manner

**PSA Building Condition:**

Need to understand the condition of the PSA – it has had water leakage for years – it was an issue with Ackerberg.

There’s some crumbling going on with the brick sides on either side. There is stucco over the brick right now – it needs stucco patching.

Who would know what the building’s condition is? The City realtor, Bruce Englebrekt would know. And we would still like our tour.

**Other considerations:**

Alice – She knows from the Ackerberg discussion that the city is against privatizing public space and having a privately owned business using the space. A business cannot use the space for outdoor dining. The City is not going to allow privatizing the space because it’s against the law under the donation agreement.

Alice – Scenarios/site constraints. If the park goes North-South or East-West – think about that. Building access – need to keep access to the interior parking ramp (unless it gets removed). Alley access? Or will the front of the building still need to provide access. You cannot landlock the building. There’s a lot of underground infrastructure.

Where does this park sit as a priority in terms of equity goals? Can the city do a soft RFP – not requiring detailed drawings?

Need to eEvaluate the feasibility of different options.