

Plan the Park!

Mountain Gate Park – Community Feedback Summary

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Mountain Gate Now

- Some positives: natural landscape, access to the river, birds, fishing, water
- Potential not realized
- Negatives: hot/exposed; river access not easy/not as good as other locations; trash/messiness/lack of maintenance; underutilized

Mountain Gate Future

- Improved river access & fishing
- Walkability, shade, peaceful/relaxing, physical comfort
- Natural, beautiful, clean, well maintained

General agreement & a lot of interest

Trail for walking and biking throughout park

- In survey responses, people also frequently mentioned wanting to be able to walk along the water or have trail access to the water
- This was the highest valued improvement at the July 15 meeting (“Extension of walking trails (longer distance to walk)”) based on sticky dot voting
- 23 of 28 survey responses listed trails in some form as something that they would like to see added to the park to improve their experience

Easier access to the river & fewer barriers to the water

- River access was considered important by most survey respondents, and ease of access to the river was mentioned repeatedly in added comments to survey questions. In the post-it exercise asking what people value about the park at the July 15 meeting, fishing access and interaction with water were two themes.
- In the surveys there were also several mentions of an area suitable for take-out of kayaks & boats, and swimming/wading access.
- See also ADA improvements topic below.

Safe non-motorized access to the park from Walker

- In the survey, walking was the most desired way to access the park (followed closely by driving and biking.)
- Many survey respondents specifically mentioned the connection to Walker or Eastside Lane, and safety from traffic on 395, as important in park development. A few comments also requested sidewalks or traffic calming measures like speed bumps (presumably in town/along 395 or other roads.)
- “Connection to Walker” was also near the top of the list of ideas discussed at the July 15 meeting (based on sticky dot votes).

Prioritizing natural landscape, native plants and wildlife habitat

- In survey responses there were some specific requests for native plants, habitat restoration, or other park improvements related to plants or wildlife. On questions relating to what was important to people in park design, most respondents rated the following statements or qualities as important: “Park supports wildlife and native plants,” (22 of 28) “Natural landscape” (25 of 28) and “Healthy ecosystem” (23 of 28).
- “Revegetation” received a lot of sticky dot votes at the July 15 meeting (although also one “no” vote.)
- Tree planting for shade also came up in several survey responses.
- Several survey responses also specifically mentioned ponds as an element they would like to see added to the park. Discussion during the site visit included new/re-opened side channels for riparian restoration.

Other topics – some support + no opposition

ADA-specific improvements

- In survey responses, ideas included improved functionality for existing ADA fishing platform; identifying/improving other locations that could be made accessible (level ground at river’s edge and clear routes to the water); and small amounts of accessible parking elsewhere in the park.
- Improved ADA parking received a significant amount of support in sticky dot voting at the July 15 meeting (as did “Improved/more formalized parking” as a separate item.)

Shade, particularly trees

Drinking water on site

- At the July 15 meeting there was some discussion about exploring the feasibility of a well on site as a way to provide drinking water and support new plantings, shade trees, and other restoration work.

Buffering/screening from private property at NW corner of the park

- At least one survey response suggested screening or separation from the private property at the northwest corner of the park. The owners of that parcel have also expressed concerns about possible impacts to their use of that property from changes in recreational use of the park.

Benches and rest spots

- Many survey respondents suggested benches and picnic tables, particularly in the shade and along a trail system, as an element they’d like to see added to the park.

Interpretation and signage

- Interpretive signage & the park as an opportunity for education came up in several survey responses, although not directly at the July 15 meeting. At the meeting, the group highlighted a need for improved signage along 395 to communicate what is available at the park beyond fishing, as well as discussing the site’s potential as a rest stop for visitors. These were two distinct topics but could have some overlap in implementation.

Dog park/dogs

- At the July 15 meeting, the idea of a fenced area for dogs where they could be off leash but safe from 395 traffic was raised and received a significant number of sticky dot votes.
- A handful of survey responses also suggested a dog park as something they'd like to see added to the park.
- Several surveys identified dogs off leash as something that would interfere with their enjoyment of the park.
- There were a few mentions in surveys of the need for more or different types of dog waste receptacles.
- One survey response was strongly against dogs being "prohibited" from the park – but wording wasn't entirely clear as whether requiring dogs to be on leash would qualify as a prohibition ("If dogs are prohibited (even on leash) I will not have any reason to use the park")

Other topics/areas of mixed input

Higher priority for passive recreation than active in the survey results, but interest in both

- In questions about what survey respondents valued in the design of the park, more people classified passive recreation as important than active recreation, but both elements were valued by most respondents (passive/natural 14/28, active 5/28, mix of both 16/28)
- Several respondents mentioned that they thought it would be possible to include both active and passive recreation within the park without conflict

"City park" uses and developed recreation

- At least one survey respondent was strongly for some kind of constructed course (or varying routes for different skill levels) for bicycles, while a few others specifically mentioned feeling that this use was not appropriate & would interfere with their enjoyment of the park.
- At least 3 survey respondents said that "city park" or highly developed uses in general (group sports, bike course, etc) would interfere with their enjoyment of the park. One mentioned not wanting disc golf or group sports specifically; another referenced BMX as something they thought would be a negative impact.
- At the July 15 meeting, the active recreation elements that received the most votes were disc golf and addition of a put-in/take out location for boats and kayaks. However, they fell roughly in the middle of the priority list after sticky-dot voting, below trails, revegetation, a connection to Walker, and a dog park.
- In the survey responses, disc golf and a boat/kayak take out were each listed by several people as a new element they would like to see in the park.
- Beyond the above items (disc golf, boat/kayak take out, bicycle course) and one survey response which suggested a sprinkle/splash park, no additional active recreation facilities were suggested in the surveys
- Other active recreation elements suggested at the July 15 meeting received few or no votes – mini golf and a skate park received no votes, and beach volleyball received one yes vote and two nos. None of these were suggested in the survey responses.

Parking

- In the survey, many people noted that they would like to access the park by car or other motorized vehicle (ATV/dirt bike), often in addition to walking or biking. Parking as a need came up in a few places in the survey responses, mainly in the context of a) ADA accessibility and b) a desire to access the park by vehicle at other points beside the existing location.
- At the July 15 meeting, “Better, more formalized parking” received four high priority yes votes (ones or twos) but also one no vote – which placed it quite high relative to other ideas considered.
- At the meeting, “ADA parking - particularly at the ADA fishing platform” as a separate item also received several yes votes.

Things that are clearly not wanted:

- Camping – particularly car or RV camping
 - One survey mentioned this as a possible camping location for cyclists, but the overall trend of the surveys was strongly against including camping in the park.
- Loud or large group activities
- Crowds
- Shooting sports
- Motorized/ATV use within the park
 - This topic received 7 no votes and 0 yes votes at the July 15 meeting
 - However, several survey respondents mentioned wanting to be able to get to the park by ATV or dirt bike. One respondent suggested a place to park ATVs near the river with access from Burcham Flat Road.

Other concerns expressed

- There were several mentions of garbage on site & community members needing to clean up the park on a regular basis, frustration at garbage and human and/or dog waste being left behind in the park. There were also one or two comments about the need for the County to maintain the park.
- There were a few surveys that had specific concerns about flooding, and in particular park infrastructure washing downstream in a flood and obstructing water flow at the Eastside Lane bridge.