

O'Neil Street Re-use Working Group  
Assets, Ideas and Principles

ASSETS

Location, location, location.

Schools (Brown, Holy Cross, Memorial, HS)

Parks/playground (Mill Creek Park, Brown School playground and fields, Mahoney fields)

Shopping (Knightville/Millcreek)

Restaurants

Library

City Hall

Public Transportation

This area is also protected from hustle and bustle of major streets and would appear to attract only those people targeted to use it.

Bordered by major streets, Cottage, Highland, and Ocean. Really defines the area. Great neighborhood and will really thrive once the public works is not in the middle of the area.

Within walking distance\*to Public Library, Mill Creek (Art in the Park, skating in the winter, summer music concerts), grocery stores, local shops, and some (not enough) places to grab lunch, breakfast, dinner), walking distance to Elementary and Middle schools. A few streets away from Trout Brook Nature preserve, Sawyer Marsh vistas. Within 5 mins (driving and 15-20 walking) to Willard Beach and Portland Players Theatre. The neighborhood has some variety of smaller (affordable?) "starter homes", with small to average footprints. Surrounding neighborhood has older, mature trees and because of the trees in the neighborhood, it stays coolish even during a heat wave. Several churches also in walking distance. Neighborly pride and friendliness and a sense that neighbors generally care about their next door/abutting neighbors or folks on their street. See a lot of walkers and people walking their dogs which I think translates into a "neighborhood watch" effect.

\*crossing Broadway is still a problem for walkers and people on cycles, so the perception of easy walking distance should be footnoted with the high traffic and dangers of crossing Broadway (it's width and heavy traffic use) deters folks from walking to Mill Creek and shops versus driving there.

1. Very quiet
2. Low traffic count
3. Homes well maintained
4. Homes of a variety of styles but fit nicely into the neighborhood

## IDEAS

Single family homes similar to the ones in the neighborhood in style and value.  
Condos in single floor or town house style, two units to a building.

I would like to see:

- housing for young families,
- 3 bedroom modest homes
- focus on community where children and families live in a safe, shared neighborhood
- small playground or children's park
- community garden
- benches and picnic tables for people to socialize if they want.

In talking with neighbors, the consistent comment is that they want to maintain diversity in the neighborhood. Hence housing that is affordable for first time buyers, moderate income families & sized appropriate for retirees.

That this space is ideal for a real experiment in 21st century design technology, solar, top surfaces that need no mowing, state of the art drainage.... Let's get some national coverage for a planet friendly community.

Row housing to maximize living space & minimize unused lawns. Perhaps English style with fenced dooryards.

Common park & playground areas to bring community together & reduce need for lawns.

Existing PARK on Pitt fenced & slides, swings, etc. added for the growing number of young kids in neighborhood. Add a few tables with checker boards on top for people of all ages to play chess, etc.

City should not sell land but retain as an investment for the future & rent to a tiny house grouping.

Have at least an area of tiny houses. We'd need to have strong codes as to architecturally designed, etc., so that we'd have a tasteful grouping. Currently in So Portland it's impossible for single, average income people to own a home & have \$\$ left over to enjoy travel or other personal pursuits.

The snow rolling wheels at the back of the property need to be saved & used as a "monument" to SP history, or site history. They are beautiful.

Existing brick building be retained & used as community center, art studios.

This development, whatever shape it takes, should emphasize Community.

Opportunity for abutting property owners (especially on Walnut St.) to possibly purchase additional land that abuts their property.

I would like to see a mix of uses for the lot. I see some opportunities for higher density mixed use units on the hillside portion of the lot and more traditional single family homes on the Walnut side of the lot. This would achieve the city's goal of generating revenue, while also fitting in with the fiber of the well-established neighborhood. To accomplish this I think all buildings need to be demolished and I think it would be essential for O'Neil Street to be extended to Pitt Street.

The people I've talked to want it to be sold and produce taxable income for the City. (Offset the cost of the new public works facility)

Tiny house village in the City specifically as a way to "develop" small nonconforming lots. The idea here was to allow energy- and sewer-independent on-chassis tiny houses to park there for a set permit fee good for one year, possibly renewably for a limited number of renewals, but also have a pathway for them to become permanent on-slab units.

My fear is the cost of cleaning up the site (not just demolition of the existing buildings) and safely shoring up the sloped bank to the south.

Possibilities:

- Maximum density residential development
- Existing neighborhood density residential development
- Ordinance net residential density residential development
- Tiny home village
- Sustainability-oriented residential development (renewable energy, efficiency, etc.)
- Affordable housing residential development
- Cluster subdivision (could include the above)
- Attached dwelling units (could include the above)
- Through street(s) residential development (vs. cul-de-sac)
- Passive recreation park
- Active recreation park
- House of worship
- Multi-purpose community building
- Hybrid of various of the above

Parks and playgrounds made with recycled materials, with some part of them indoors for winter play.

A site that draws people from other parts of South Portland (West End), while contributing to the neighborhood.

The process is as important as the end product in terms of drawing people to the new entity. Involve the Recycling Committee and other committees to the process.

An electric car charge station

Make sure the design tells the story of how and why this was created.

I would like to see continuity of small single family homes with a mix of public open space park for these neighborhoods. I like the idea of more density of homes in this area but think that should occur in other areas of the city, Millcreek, West End, etc., where there is more land.

Subdivision with some dedicated open space for the neighborhood and city as a whole.

Provide a public playground. All other city neighborhoods' playgrounds are difficult to get to from this area of town. Brown School is great but can't be used during a school day (crossing Ocean and Cottage).

\*\* not in any special order\*\*

1. Some portion of the parcel is preserved for a pocket park, gazebo/picnic shelter, picnic benches with a crushed stone pathway. Design public space with community gathering in mind, mix of grass and interestingly designed gathering areas. (Place making)
  - 1a. An award winning community space design. Something so unique that residents from other parts of the City will want to see and enjoy themselves
2. Community Gardens- A similar sized area (100 x 110 ft- Hamlin School gardens) protected and used for community gardens for the neighbors/food pantry and/or any SP resident.
3. An edible walking path and pollinator corridor weaving throughout the property.
4. Botanical gardens or arboretum.
5. Co-working studio space or local artisans that could include gallery nights/low key retail. Highlight local artisans, who can't afford Portland rents.
6. Cluster of tiny homes- affordable.
7. Cluster of cutting edge eco-designed, low impact homes as models of sustainable living. (Design matters)
8. Incorporate small solar grid
9. Small Planetarium
10. Outdoor amphitheater (build seating into earth to control erosion of the slope that is problematic. (Not amplified). Neighborhood theater nights.
11. Playground for children

Orient the new buildings towards the sun.

Convey storm water into a rain garden.

Include shared spaces such as a community garden, greenhouse or micro-grid for solar power. The property could be repurposed as a neighborhood park with a playground.

Any housing built cannot exceed two stories - it can't block the Hillside view of the Portland

skyline.

Those snow rollers need to be kept somewhere on the property for historical reasons.

I think condos might fit in that space better than separate houses but then that means more traffic through the area. Individual houses should be reasonable in size not 4000 sq. ft. mansions.

There is no need to consider a convenience store in that area.

I really don't want to see apartment buildings in that space. Some affordable housing should be available.

Tiny homes?

Half housing half park.

Expand that existing park to include a playground.

Keep the greenhouse.

#### PRINCIPLES that emerge from the lists

- This development, whatever shape it takes, should emphasize Community.  
Examples:
  - Focus on community where children and families live in a safe, shared neighborhood.
  - Maintain and expand on diversity in the neighborhood. Hence housing that is affordable for first time buyers, moderate income families & sized appropriate for retirees.
- Provide a mix of public open space and housing.
- Any housing built cannot block neighbors' existing views (of the Portland skyline).
- Make use of existing buildings when possible.  
Examples:
  - Existing brick building be retained & used as community center, art studios.
  - Keep the park.
  - Keep the greenhouse.
- An award winning community space design. Something so unique that residents from other parts of the City will want to see and enjoy themselves.

Examples:

- That this space is ideal for a real experiment in 21st century design technology, solar, top surfaces that need no mowing, state of the art drainage.... Let's get some national coverage for a planet friendly community.
  - Make sure the design tells the story of how and why this was created.
  - The process is as important as the end product in terms of drawing people to the new entity.
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- Take into account the history of the area.  
Example:
    - The snow rolling wheels at the back of the property need to be saved & used as a "monument" to SP history, or site history.
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- Provide a tax base for the City.