

Jessie Wardarski/Po

# Mellon Park will be getting a new look, including the loss of a baseball field



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Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy plans to turn one of the three baseball fields in Mellon Park into a recreational field and considered splitting Mellon Park into two separate parks.



The conservancy released an action plan on Wednesday that it hopes will revitalize the park's "aging grounds and



infrastructure." Brandon Riley, the capital projects manager for Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy who helped create the plan, said renovations were simply overdue and needed to unify the park



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renovations were simply overdue and needed to unify the park.

“Mellon Park has been a park since the 1940s. But it hasn’t really been looked at cohesively or as a whole comprehensively since the 1950s,” Mr. Riley said. “So there’s two halves to Mellon, and they’ve kind of been developed separately in two different directions, so the first thing the Mellon Park action plan did was try and figure out, how do we make these two sides feel the same?”

In addition to taking out the middle baseball field, the plan includes enhancing pedestrian safety, creating meadows in place of grass fields, repairing the tennis bubble, planting more trees and turning the north side parking lot into a community gathering space.

Mr. Riley said the park must considerably reduce its maintenance load.

“Mellon Park certainly requires a lot of resources, and that’s a struggle that the city has to contend with,” he said. The city oversees “160-some parks, and they don’t have the resources and the manpower to maintain them right now, so I think anywhere where we can help by putting more meadows and fields that don’t have to be mowed will be a good way to ease the maintenance load.”

Mr. Riley said the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy also considered splitting Mellon Park into two separate parks along Fifth Avenue.

“I think overwhelmingly what we learned in the process was that the south side of the park lacks signage and a lot of people didn’t even know the south side of the park was a park, much less part of the north side of the park. So I think there was a lot of support for trying to connect the two and ... bringing people to cross and enjoy the other side.”

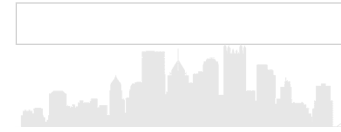
Ultimately, Mr. Riley said, the conservancy decided against the split in an effort to make the park one place for all the different neighborhoods to gather.

“There’s a lot of different neighborhoods in and around Mellon Park, and it’s not only divided physically by Fifth Avenue but also divided socioeconomically, racially and culturally as well,” he said. “So, since those neighborhoods are sort of separated, I think people saw an opportunity to try and focus on equity and make this park a place where everyone can kind of come together and it’s an amenity for everyone.”

Currently, the plan has no timeline for the renovations or funding for the projects, but Mr. Riley estimates that the initiatives will be completed within the next 10-15 years and is



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initiatives will be completed within the next 10-15 years and is hoping to get grants and individual donations.

According to Mr. Riley, residents should view this plan as more of a conceptualization, and while this is the final action plan, it can still be amended.

“We made this plan based on a lot of community feedback from public forums and individual feedback, and the whole plan is really based off of the needs the community has brought to us,” Mr. Riley said. “The plan can be amended especially when zoning processes start, but we think this plan is what the community wants.”

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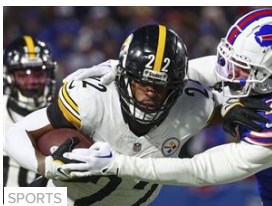
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