

From: [Phaedra Hise](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)
Subject: public comment for UDC 2025-19 Holly Street Playground
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 6:22:06 AM

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Submitted to the Planning Commission:

Hello, I am a Holly Street resident and co-chair of the Friends of Oregon Hill Parks which oversaw the extensive year-long community input process for the Holly Playground master plan. I want to make sure the Commission knows about the widespread community support behind this plan, including input and support from Oregon Hill families, businesses, Open High, Pine Street Baptist Church, and other park users. This plan was supported in a unanimous vote of 40 - 0 by the Friends of Oregon Hill Parks.

Although some residents have expressed concerns about the skate nook feature and the amount of hardscape that and the splash pad require, I wanted to point out that Oregon Hill has 3 parks (Linear Park, Pleasants Park, and Overlook Park) that except for two walking paths are 100% green space. In addition, we are adjacent to Hollywood Cemetery and JRPS, both of which are almost entirely green space.

Holly Street Playground is not a park, it is a playground, and the community has prioritized both the splash pad and recreational space for wheeled sport activities. Children and adults alike need safe spaces off the streets and away from cracked and buckling sidewalks to learn to roller skate, skateboard, ride scooters, and bikes. This is especially critical in urban areas — for example, my daughter grew up in the Fan and never learned to ride a bike as there were no safe spaces nearby for her to practice. She taught herself to roller skate in a semi-empty parking lot, which is not safe.

Given the proliferation of adjacent green space, and prioritizing permeable surfaces, please don't limit the amount of hardscape for safe wheeled sports in Holly Street Playground.

With much appreciation!

Phaedra Hise (she/her) phaedra@phaedrahise.com

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Mary Beane <mvb599@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2025 1:52 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Holly Street Park and Playground

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To Mr. Raymond Roakes:

This letter may be a day late due to circumstances that prohibited me from writing this yesterday, and I apologize for that.

First, I want to thank Charles Poole for his continued efforts to keep Oregon Hill beautiful and safe; his suggestions for the playground are sensible and environmentally positive.

Personally, I strongly believe that this area should be devoted to Oregon Hill's permanent residents: young families, school aged children and senior citizens. I cannot comprehend a need for a skate park, which I assume would cater to the pleasure of VCU students. Drawing from my own experience with this playground, (I have lived in Oregon Hill for 23 years), VCU students continue to skateboard on the basketball court (though signs say "No Skateboarding"), bringing with them devices that play loud and disgusting rap music, yell at each other using profanity and smoke pot freely. How many families would want to bring their young children to this environment? And why would you or any committee encourage such activity?

Oregon Hill is a community and not an appendage of VCU. Students are temporary residents, and have little to no interest in any neighborhood standards or improvements. Shame on those involved with any decision-making that would likely ruin this area for everyone who actually lives here.

Sincerely,
Mary Beane
806 China Street

Dear Urban Design Committee,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Holly St Playground Plan.

Thanks to PRCF and Timmons for their work creating this plan. I think it represents a good compromise and a general layout of the park that reflects community input. I think the updated construction prioritization list is spot on.

I would point out there are two aspects where I think the plan did not quite capture the public input:

- **Please reduce the amount of hardscape at the “pedestrian plaza” area proposed between the basketball court and the playground.**
 - In the online survey, “more green and natural space” was the number one comment written in the open text opportunity for feedback. There were no comments asking for a pedestrian plaza or additional concrete or hardscape.
 - I certainly understand skateboard features were asked for by the public and this comment doesn’t seek to change that. However, I think they could be concentrated away from the picnic area on the existing pavement near the existing shed or between the field and basketball court.
- **Please prioritize shade at the playground area itself**
 - Shade sails are shown at the picnic area but not at the playground itself
 - The Grayland tot lot is a great example of a playground shaded with mature trees. The trees at the Grayland site are closer to the playground equipment than those shown here in the Holly St plan.

A few more comments:

- The plan currently has “team benches” proposed in the paved area between the field and the basketball court. Currently, skateboarders have dragged concrete parking stops there and grind on them. If we are accommodating skateboard nooks in this plan I believe the “skateboard nooks” are a better use of that space than team benches. Seating for basketball should be placed on the north side of the basketball court instead, near the picnic area.
- I would ask that we prioritize natural colors and earth tones at the playground area (and in general) instead of the bright blue shown. If plastic materials need to be used please consider the more natural looking grass-like fake turf used at the Grayland Tot lot instead.
- I believe the proposed location of the shed means that the city will lose truck access into the park for mowing and other maintenance as that is the location of the current gate. The alley drops off and is steep and a gate is not feasible further west.

- I would ask that the plan itself define “skateboard nook”, that is a vague term, and a plan is meant to provide clarity on the future direction of the park.
- The plan should mention fencing improvements on the east and south side. The neighborhood has asked PRCF to investigate the feasibility of repurposing the iron fence at Mayo Island here.

Thank you for considering these commitments,

John Bolecek
517 S. Pine st

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Scott Burger <scottburger@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 9:04 AM
To: PDR Land Use Admin
Cc: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office
Subject: Holly Street Playground renovation plan

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Dear Planning Commission and whom else it may concern,

I am writing in reference to a renovation plan for Holly Street Playground in Oregon Hill neighborhood.

At some point very soon, this plan will be submitted for review by the City. I want to make sure that this letter is submitted and reviewed also.

Unfortunately, the renovation plan did not achieve unanimous neighborhood approval. Neighbors tried to submit some good amendments to the plan at recent Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association meeting, but they were not allowed for consideration.

"Recommend fencing improvements on the south and east side of the park (ideally reusing the iron fencing from Mayo Island).

Define "skateboard nook" as a couple of small features, excluding half-pipes and quarter-pipes.

To extent feasible, minimize new impervious surface and maximize green space at the pedestrian plaza area, ideally not exceeding what currently exists.

Prioritize shade at the playground itself by adding shade sails."

I am writing primarily to express my concern about the skateboarding features.

Several neighbors besides myself expressed concern early on in the process about adding skateboarding features to this small playground. Noise, debris, litter, vagrancy were some of the things brought up.

I will note that I have a friend who lives near the skateboard park in the Randolph neighborhood.. She told me that she wished she had voiced more opposition early on to the park as it has become a daily and nightly nuisance and disturbance for her. The sounds of trucks and wheels hitting and scraping are constantly barraging her in her home. She cannot afford to move. It's impacted her greatly.

I will also note that no one is 'against skateboarding', in general. I grew up skateboarding on Mt. Trashmore in Va Beach, abandoned buildings in downtown Norfolk, and several wooden half pipes in friend's backyards. Oregon Hill had some wooden half pipes near the Overlook when the neighborhood was more wild and much less dense in population. But now we have many neighbors who are directly adjacent to Holly Street playground. I am very very concerned for their well-being.

I do believe there are BIGGER AND BETTER opportunities for a small skateboard park nearby that would have much less impact on Oregon Hill neighbors. I urge the City to give more time for these opportunities to be explored and brought forward. I can elaborate on these if asked.

If I have time, I will write more in depth about the process that gave birth to this plan. I believe it well-intentioned and needed, but I have serious concerns about what ultimately emerged from the neighborhood association meeting. I think there are things to learn and improve upon the process, from both a neighborhood and City perspective.

Right now, I have to get to ready for my workday.

Sincerely,
Scott Burger
600 block of S. Laurel Street
scottburger@mac.com
804 714 5444

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Carleton, Clary <cwashing@rvaschools.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 5:55 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Holly St. Playground

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Good Evening,

I am writing in support of the proposed upgrades to the Holly St. Playground. Open High has been located at [600 S. Pine St.](#) in Oregon Hill since 1989. Since that time we have used additional community spaces (e.g., YMCA, Randolph Community Center, the downtown library) to support our program since we do not have a cafeteria, a gym, a library, or an auditorium. Travel time, rental costs, and technology requirements have made use of community spaces more challenging, so we currently use Holly Street for our gym and other community events throughout the year.

The playground is the main location for both 9th and 10th grade physical education as it provides a safe location to engage in a variety of activities. We utilize the grassy areas for team sports such as ultimate frisbee, soccer, flag football, tchoukball, and more. The blacktop is utilized during every physical education class as we complete warm up and cool down exercises in this space. It is also great for morning yoga, obstacle courses, relay races, and skill and drill practices for various sports. Additionally, Holly Street contains a shed where most of our equipment is stored as our school has very limited storage space. Not only is this convenient, it is secure as Open and Parks and Recreation are the only members with access.

We plan to use the playground space as long as we remain in Oregon Hill. Upgrades to the playground like the addition of fitness equipment, a covered pavilion, and a skateboarding area are all options that students would appreciate.

If you have any questions about Open High and our use of the playground, please let me know.
Sincerely,

Clary Carleton (she/her)
Principal
Open High School
600 S. Pine St.
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 780-4661 | cwashing@rvaschools.net
OHS website: <https://ohs.rvaschools.net/>



Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Bryan Clark Green <bryancgreen@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2025 7:47 AM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Public comment on the Holly Street Playground, UDC 2025-19

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Good morning, Chair and members of the Urban Design Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Holly Street Playground Plan and to the staff for their thorough review. As parents of an eight-year-old child, we visit the park several days a week, and the comments below are based on our observations as frequent users of the playground.

I respectfully urge you to adopt the staff's recommendations and to incorporate the following four modifications:

1. Limit Hardscape in the "Pedestrian Plaza"

Expanding paved areas was not a consensus outcome of the public input sessions—in fact, only one neighborhood survey respondent favored additional paving. More hardscape will raise surface temperatures, undermine children's comfort, and conflict with the City's best practices approach to reduce impermeable park surfaces. Retaining green space or installing permeable, soft-surface paving will enhance sustainability and user comfort.

2. Add Shade Features over the Play Area

The absence of shade over the playground equipment prevents midday summer use and exposes children to excessive heat. Installing shade sails and planting fast-growing canopy trees will extend safe play hours, protect users from UV exposure, and improve year-round comfort.

3. Relocate Skate Features Away from Play and Seating Zones

Positioning skate elements adjacent to areas used by small children and families at picnic tables creates safety and noise conflicts. Moving the skate features to a separate corner of the site—or alongside existing hard-court amenities—will minimize these risks while still providing a dedicated skate area.

4. Preserve Maintenance Access by Relocating the Utility Shed

The proposed shed sits on the site of the park's existing service gate, blocking truck access needed for mowing and other upkeep. Because the alley beyond drops off steeply, installing a new gate further west is not feasible. Moving the shed to a different location will ensure maintenance vehicles can continue to enter the park.

Thank you for considering these modifications. I am confident that by refining the hardscape, adding shading, and separating skate uses, the Holly Street Playground will better serve children, families, and the broader community.

Thank you for your consideration,
Bryan and Joanna Green

Bryan Clark Green
420 South Pine Street
Richmond, VA 23220
bryancgreen@gmail.com

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Grace Grubb <grubb.grace@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:56 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Support for Holly Street Playground Master Plan

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Secretary Roakes,

I'm writing in support of the master plan created for Holly Street Playground. I am a resident on Holly street, less than a block away, with one toddler and new baby on the way. We use the park almost daily.

We've been engaged throughout the community input gathering process and feel strongly that thorough work was done to capture the opinions and input of our neighbors and other park users through the city. This work by Timmons Group included open houses with voting on features and design that are representative of the broader community.

This plan, as is, passed the Friends of Oregon Hill Parks subcommittee unanimously and through the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association with a clear majority. There are some very reasonable design suggestions and clarifications that my neighbors want, but I believe these can and will be considered as part of ongoing community input and discussion, rather than defeating or delaying the Plan's approval at this stage.

Thank you,
Grace Grubb

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Lisa Hardy <lisalhardy@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 12:31 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Holly Street Playground

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Dear UDC -

My name is Lisa Hardy. I am a resident of Oregon Hill and have been actively involved with the Holly Street Playground design process. I'm excited about the plan that was voted on by Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, and would like to ask for the UDC to advise the project to include shade sails over the playground area, minimize the amount of additional impervious area and select natural colors.

Thank you for the opportunity to improve our beloved playground!

Lisa Hardy

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Lauren Nicole Hill <laurennicolehill@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 9:32 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Re: Holly Street Park: Neighbor Notes

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Hi Raymond,

I see my comments were not added to the list [here](#) and I sent them to you in time. Note there are two of us with the last name Hill, but we are separate families. Could my notes please be considered?

And would like to add that during all planning meetings, there was never any push for this skate nook. Almost all meeting attendees did not vote for it. There is a narrative circulating that this is somehow an important element to the majority of residents and that is false. From all of the planning resources we have been given and meetings we have participated in, this has been a common issue. It is not what families or adjacent park neighbors want and we are all in agreement. Certain members of the neighborhood feel their voice speaks for everyone.

Thank you,
Lauren

On Tue, Jul 8, 2025 at 4:18 PM Lauren Nicole Hill <laurennicolehill@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Raymond,

We are residents of Oregon Hill (600 block of S Laurel). We frequent the park daily in nice weather with our children.

My family wants to formally state that we hope the final park plans and implementation favors more shade, trees, and reduces the amount of concrete in the park. With such a small budget, we need to focus more on greenery, children's playground equipment, and functional shade than concrete skate nooks and features. There is enough concrete in the city for them already.

We have been actively attending meetings on the park since the project came about and look forward to seeing it come to life.

Thank you,
Lauren Hill

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Lauren Hill
804-519-0776 | laurennicolehill@gmail.com

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Lauren Hill
804-519-0776 | laurennicolehill@gmail.com

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Susan Hill <susnhill@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 2:47 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Costanzo, Kevin G. - PDR
Subject: Holly Street Playground design comments

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Dear UDC members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Holly Street Playground master plan. We sincerely appreciate the work of Ryan Rinn, the Parks Department, and the Timmons Group through this process. Thank you for the committee's time in receiving public comments.

I am an Oregon Hill resident, mother of two young children, and a regular visitor of Holly Street Playground. I am thrilled that there are funds to enhance this space that many young families use and where we hold regular neighborhood gatherings.

Please consider my comments on the proposed plan:

1. **Include shade features (sails, trees, etc.) over the playground in the final design.** One of the playground's biggest drawbacks is the lack of shade over the playground equipment. Holly Street playground equipment is unusable in the summer between midmorning and late afternoon, which is truly unfortunate for a public playground. This planning process gives us the opportunity to change this.
2. **Reduce the significant amount of cement proposed next to the playground, not to exceed what already exists.** I attended every community engagement meeting related to this playground and did not hear a consensus for expanded impermeable surfaces. Heat is already an issue at the playground and more cement will exacerbate the issue, in addition to being ascetically unpleasing and costly. Additionally, **please consider the most natural, safe, and environmentally friendly surface for the playground area as well.**
3. **Skate features should not be adjacent to where small children are playing, nor should they be allowed to merge with a seating area.** Skate features have drawn strong enthusiasm and opposition in community meetings, but they weren't revealed as a priority in our first community input

session. At the very least, please limit the scale of the skate features and do not allow them to potentially dominate an area intended for small children or relaxation.

4. **Repurpose Mayo Island iron fencing if possible.** We have learned of an incredibly valuable opportunity to use this fencing at Holly Street Playground. Please explore reusing this resource, as funding for equivalent fencing isn't viable.

Please note: there was strong favorability for plan #1 that Timmons proposed, but that was likely due to the inclusion of the water feature, which Timmons excluded in plan #2.

You will see that the Pedestrian Plaza only received one vote:

Engagement Feedback | Open House Plan Alternatives Feedback



How would and implemen

- Splash Pad:
- Replace Exis
- Update Bath
- Shade Struc
- Basketball C
- Pedestrian L
- Maintain Exi
- and install N
- Update Grills
- Pedestrian P



HOLLY STREET PARK - CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN
TIMMONS GROUP | MAY 20, 2025

Please also the engagement feedback and note the mentions of shade. People do not ask for additional cement.

Engagement Feedback | Open House #1

Plan Alternatives Feedback

- No walking loop - concerned about how to engineer & rework space
- The splash pad is a historic feature and should be retained
- The playground how becomes a place for the community to gather – Green Space, Shade, and Splash pad
- Smaller splash zone so it doesn't get too slippery at playground (add boulder type play)
- Paint splash pad concrete, build picnic tables with toe board... etc.
- Crush run trail would be nice. Could have rain gardens in the depressed areas
- Sails instead of pavilions, lots of sails
- Water fountains please!
- Historical marker
- No Gravel Path
- Suggest not adding new impervious surfaces
- Splash pad can be simple; Just a place for the kids to cool off.
- If the current fountain is a safety issue, we should remove it.
- Shade over play equipment. The slides get too hot in summer.
- Benches!
- Would like resilient materials used that don't require a lot of maintenance and look good.
- No skateboard features
- Workout Equipment?
- Holly Leaf shaped sun shaded!
- More trees less shade structure
- Combine splash pad and playground?
- Idea of small shade features
- Keep splash pad and add turn on valve for sprinkler; until then there is funding to improve

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Hill

423 S Laurel Street

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Phaedra Hise <phaedrahise@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:01 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Cc: hmoenich@gmail.com; Valerie L'Herrou
Subject: UDC 25-19 for July 11 meeting public comment

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I'm a Holly Street resident and can see the playground from my house. But I'm not writing to advocate for specifics because I don't care as much about design elements as I do about a fair and open improvement process. I'm co-chair of Friends of Oregon Hill Parks, a subcommittee of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association (OHNA). The Friends group was tasked with organizing the park plan design process.

The process started about a year ago with a draft plan, a survey, and several community input meetings. That process quickly got bogged down in arguments and accusations of bias among OH residents. City reps directed us to figure out a way to more effectively collect community input from all park users. Fortunately one of the Friends committee members volunteered The Timmons Group as an impartial third party to guide the input process.

Timmons Group held half a dozen open community meetings. To encourage engagement, the Friends flyer'd the neighborhood twice, sent emails, posted notices, and announced the community meetings via social media. We also kept the larger OH association informed as the process unfolded. Oregon Hill residents were overwhelmingly represented among meeting attendees, and we regularly had 40+ attendees.

The plan before you is the plan that the majority of park users want. It is supported by a diverse group of regular park users including Holly Street residents, local families, businesses, and Open High School. The Friends of Oregon Hill Parks subcommittee voted unanimously to support it, and OHNA voted 40 - 11 to support it.

Despite this open and fair process, a few highly vocal OH residents, all of whom attended the input meetings, seem upset that their preferences were not in the majority. Some of them are OHNA officers, which unfortunately can give the false impression that OHNA supports these preferences. These residents have been fighting to prioritize, change, or eliminate certain elements, particularly the skate nook, despite widespread community input from park users and OH residents.

While I respect that my neighbors have opinions, some seem to feel that their preferences are more important than the majority of park users. I urge UDC to allow this process to move forward capturing what the majority of park users want instead of adapting the plan to please a loud minority.

Phaedra Hise
Co-chair Friends of Oregon Hill Parks
714 Holly Street

With much appreciation!

Phaedra Hise (she/her) phaedra@phaedrahise.com

All my work comes from referrals, recommend me to folks who need marketing expertise.

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Harrison Moenich <hmoenich@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:33 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Cc: Valerie L'Herrou; Rinn, Ryan C. - DPR; Phaedra Hise; Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office; Robins, Amy E. - City Council Office
Subject: UDC 25-19 for July 11 meeting public comment

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Dear UDC Members:

Thank you so much for the time dedicated to our community playground and to recognizing the work of many, many people in order to get to a point where we are today. Especially Timmons Group for coming in to collect all of the community data and collate that into a plan that I believe is a wonderful compromise.

My name is Harrison Moenich and I'm an Oregon Hill neighbor, a parent, a Vice President of the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association for several years now, and the founder and Co-Chair of the Friends Of Oregon Hill Parks. I am an artist, and community organizer, and have raised over \$6,000 for our neighborhood parks in the first two years of my annual Block Party that I plan and execute myself, and combined over the last two most recent years I raised an additional \$8,000 for Open High to fund their students who were in need of financial assistance to be able to study abroad. Over the last year and a half I've been the driving force of the start of a re-imagining of our neighborhood playground. I ruminated on the issues with this park for years and how it was in dire need of a facelift and options for various types of play for people of all ages. I listened to community members through my years of fundraising, and I met with Councilperson Lynch and we discussed ways in which we could update this park, and the steps necessary to do so. I helped create the Friends of Oregon Hill Parks group, and alongside my Co-Chair Phaedra Hise, we set out to get community input in consultation with Ryan Rinn and Parks and Rec. We were awarded \$400,000 from the city toward a park renovation. This months-long process saw multiple community engagement sessions, surveys, and meetings, both online and in-person. It brought out neighbors who were excited about an initial conceptual plan that I had an architect draft pro-bono, as well as some opposition from a few neighbors who saw certain aspects of the park as an affront to their preferred method of activity. A few of these neighbors will undoubtedly be contacting you as well. The initial concept of the park included a child-focused skate area that mirrored the park in Ashland, VA that Kiwanis Club paid for, Pufferbelly Park. Many neighbors who don't agree that children should have a safe place to learn how to rollerskate, skateboard, or scooter, free of traffic, came forward to offer their suggestions that we remove any and all skateable portions of the park. They made many generalizations about skaters, and even made an effort to target me and make false claims. Some of their kids were on scooters or rollerskates during these very meetings, proving to me again that the desire is there. They did this and continue to do this, despite the public input and desire to have such areas. What was originally a section the size of a basketball court has now been whittled down to a few simple elements referred to as "skate nooks" in Timmons' plan. This final plan that is before you was approved 40-0 in our Friends of Oregon Hill vote, and somewhere around 40-12 in our Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association vote, and yet a few neighbors continue to echo this sentiment that our data and community engagement do not reflect the neighbors and did not take into account their desires. I am here to call to attention that these neighbors are attempting to make changes to a plan that received months of community input because this plan does not personally reflect their ideal neighborhood playground. I want to also call attention that wheeled sports ARE a form of play, and by not making space for this in a protected park, it leaves people of all ages to do so in the same streets we are all witnessing speeding and lack of stopping at signs. The goal of Timmons was to collect the data from us and form a plan, to which I think they

succeeded. I believe this plan is a wonderful compromise and gives everyone a little something they can enjoy. Including small skate elements, which would require concrete to roll upon. I know my son will be excited to explore the different parts of the park and be encouraged to play in ways that excite him in a safe place where he does not have to be concerned about car traffic. I hope that we can move forward with this plan without altering it by having a few neighbors bypass the public process by speaking out against aspects they don't personally like or plan to use.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Harrison Moenich

[\[They/Them/Theirs\]](#)

www.hmoenich.com

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Charles Pool <charles_pool@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR; Costanzo, Kevin G. - PDR
Subject: Fw: Amendments to Holly St Playground plan, UDC 2025-19

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Dear Mr Roakes and Mr Costanzo,
Please distribute my letter (below) to the UDC members in advance of Thursday's UDC meeting.
Thanks!
Charles

From: Charles Pool <charles_pool@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 10:26:16 AM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR <raymond.roakes@rva.gov>; Kevin.Costanzo@rva.gov <kevin.costanzo@rva.gov>; Rinn, Ryan C. - DPR <ryan.rinn@rva.gov>
Subject: Amendments to Holly St Playground plan, UDC 2025-19

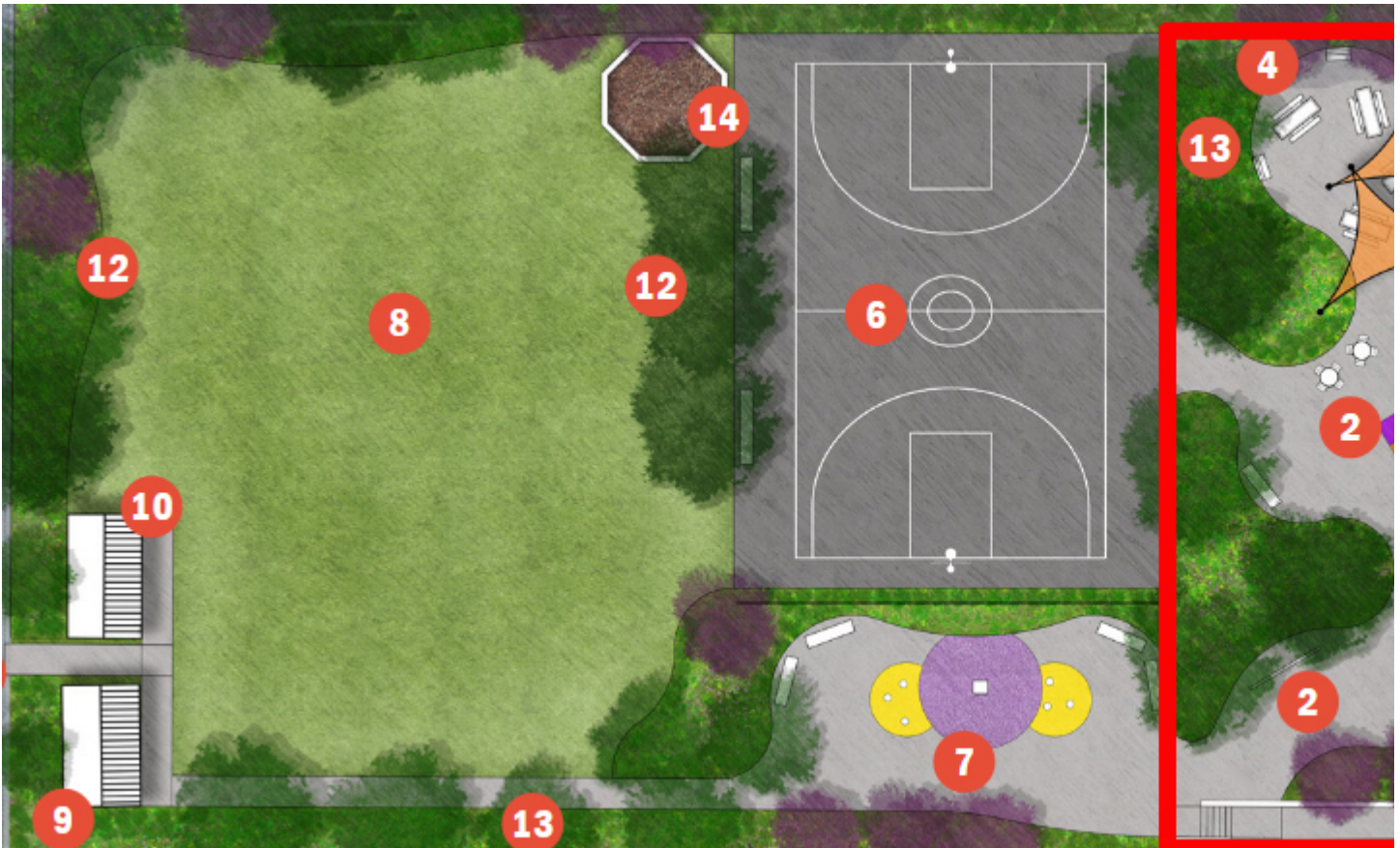
Dear Planning Staff and Members of the Urban Design Committee,

Thank you for the wonderful work of Ryan Rinn on the Holly St Playground plan, and for the contributions of Ray Roakes and Kevin Costanzo in the excellent staff recommendations. Reducing impermeable area must be a priority! Putting the mega-watt lights on timers (so that they were only on when in use) would be an excellent way to reduce light pollution.

In addition to excellent staff recommendations, please consider four additional reasonable amendments to the Holly St Playground plan in order to make the plan more environmentally and kid friendly:

- * **Greatly reduce the proposed new huge area of impermeable hardscape concrete in the "Pedestrian Plaza" of the playground**
- * **Define "Skateboard Nook" as a couple small features to exclude large skateboard features, like half-pipes and quarter-pipes**
- * **Add shading for tot-lot feature so that it can be used in hot weather**
- * **Replace chain-link fencing on south and east sides of playground with iron fencing**

PLEASE do not allow almost a quarter of our small playground to be covered in new concrete! This would greatly increase the impermeable surface area (as shown outlined in red, below):



No one knows what a **"Skateboard Nook"** is. Please define a "Skateboard Nook" shown in the plan as "a couple of small features, excluding half-pipes and quarter-pipes." It would be very unsafe to have large skateboard features, such as half-pipes or quarter-pipes, beside the tot-lot.

Many requests for **shade over the tot-lot equipment** were made and should be included in the final plan. On these hot summer days, the kids cannot use the slides and other tot-lot features due to the sun baking the play equipment.

Please include mention of **replacing the chainlink fencing** in the plan. (We have requested that the solid iron fencing that is being removed from Mayo Island be repurposed at Holly Street Playground.)

Thank you very much for your consideration of these four common-sense improvements to the Holly Street Playground plan along with the excellent staff recommendations.

Sincerely,

Charles Pool
421-1/2 South Laurel Street
Richmond

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Victor Reczkowski <vreczkowski@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:34 PM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Holly St. Playground Master Plan

You don't often get email from vreczkowski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Mr. Roakes,

I wanted to write you a note in support of the Master Plan for Holly St. Playground.

As Holly Street residents and parents of a toddler, my wife and I are daily users of the playground. We have a particular interest in seeing the realization of proposed renovations and improvements as outlined in the Master Plan produced by Timmons Group.

My wife and I participated in the many meetings that Timmons Group did with the community, as well as the meetings of Friends of Oregon Hill Parks (FoOHP) and Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association (OHNA) where the topic of the Holly St. park was discussed. We were impressed by Timmons Groups' rigorous engagement of the community as well as the quality of the Master Plan produced. From attending these meetings and discussing with neighbors over the past several months, I can tell you that this plan does an excellent job capturing what park users want. Moreover, though not everyone in the community shares the exact same vision in every detail, the Plan does a great job moderating and mediating everyone's ideas into something harmonious.

As you are probably already aware, the plan was approved by the 40+ members in attendance of the June FoOHP meeting. It similarly passed overwhelmingly in the most recent OHNA meeting.

It is our sincere hope that this plan is approved by UDC and moves through all the remaining steps so that construction can begin as soon as possible. We would hate to see any delays caused by a vocal minority, as that would only hurt the community; especially the children, teens, and young adults who regularly use the park and would benefit most from the enhancements laid out in the Master Plan.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,
Victor Reczkowski