



Process Summary & Frequently Asked Questions

January 2022

WHY PIONEER PARK

Pioneer Park is Salt Lake City's only downtown park, serving immediate downtown neighbors, Salt Lake City residents and the entire region as a green oasis downtown. Community dissatisfaction with the park continues to activate discussion about how it can be improved and made a community asset. This consistent interest in improvement over the last twenty years has resulted in community activism and lead to a number of planning efforts for improvements to the park. Funding for park improvements has been modest with just over \$3,000,000 dollars of capital improvements made in the last two decades.

The Public Lands Needs Assessment found that the downtown and central city neighborhoods have the fastest rate of population growth with the lowest level of park service per resident. Recent census numbers show that Council District Four added far more residents than any other district in the city. According to Salt Lake City's Public Lands Department goals, the downtown neighborhood has a deficit of 17.5 acres of park land. In addition, the Public Lands Master Plan, *Reimagine Nature*, calls for significant investment in Pioneer Park and Downtown. Pioneer Park provides the opportunity to meet immediate needs for more recreation options in downtown right now. Salt Lake City continues to look for new park space downtown, however, it is challenging to find centrally located large parcels that can be meet multiple needs and provide space for recreation.

FUNDING:

Currently this project is funded for approximately \$3.445 million. Due to the large scale of this project, only a portion of the vision plan will be able to be constructed with the current funding. Initial cost estimates show a full-build of the current concept coming in at \$20 million. While the full project cost is one of the larger requests for funding that Public Lands has made for a park, in comparing this request to other down-town parks of similar size, situation and level of services in other capital cities of comparable size, the number remains modest. With the level of service this park provides, it's central nature and the community desire to make this park an asset, financial investment in this project will be essential for the success of the park, the downtown community and the City at-large.

What about other downtown green spaces?

Salt Lake City Public Lands had considered other opportunities for new downtown open space but purchasing and developing new space to provide the recreational opportunities that could be developed at Pioneer Park would be significantly more costly than investing in this existing space. Public Lands believes that it is important to provide recreation opportunities within a walkable downtown and that urban parks serve more residents and other park users, meaning they need a higher level of investment, development, maintenance and programming than other parks in suburban areas.



PROCESS

WHAT WE DID:

The Pioneer Park: Your Downtown Park process team began with a thorough review and analysis of past process outcomes and feedback, then incorporated data about the changes in demographics, housing and other information about the area within a 15-minute walk of Pioneer Park.

The concept team met with past process stakeholders, current area residents, business owners and other stakeholders like the Downtown Community Council, Downtown Alliance, Pioneer Park Coalition and City staff to assess current needs of the downtown community at multiple phases throughout the process.

In summer 2021, the team opened a survey asking Salt Lake City residents to weigh in digitally and provided the same questions in-person to attendees of six park events including the Downtown Farmer's Market, Food Truck Night and Field Day/Movie Night.

Nearly 2850 respondents (over 1800 online and over 1000 in-person) identified their preferences for the park including amenity type, balance of active and passive spaces, potential layouts and other needs.

The feedback informed concept development, which was then workshopped with area stakeholders and City staff. Their input was used to refine the layout, features and proposed locations of items. In total, the project team held nine additional stakeholder meetings and workshops.

The resulting concept achieves the project goals:

The Heart of the City

A commons that connects people to our urban center

Model for Urban Ecology

A green space that responds to our climate challenges

Balance Neighborhood and Regional Needs

A park that supports everyday activities and active lifestyles while being a signature park that hosts city-wide and regional events

Welcoming for Everyone

An inviting space for all abilities, incomes, age, genders and cultures

Safe and Well-Maintained Space

A park with cutting-edge solutions to address common urban park conflicts and recognizes that stewardship and ongoing care is needed

Lasting Legacy

A place that expresses the layered history and provides value to future generations



NEXT STEPS: The team is excited to share the concept in early 2022 and will review final feedback from the public this month.

Final points of feedback will be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate while final cost estimates and construction plans are developed through 2022. Construction of some improvements is planned in 2023 and the scope of what will be built will be shared with the public pending confirmation of the funding available.

City-wide, the Public Lands needs assessment and master plan call for more park space downtown. While we are investing in existing spaces, we are also identifying new opportunities to create a network of complimentary spaces to serve the diverse needs and desires of urban Salt Lake City.

AMENITIES

How does this concept balance activity with opportunities for rest and relaxation?

During our public engagement process this summer and stakeholder workshops this fall, we heard that a variety of activities and balance of play and rest were important to park users and neighbors alike.

This concept provides opportunities for active play with a basketball and six pickleball courts, an all-ages playground, lawn game rental kiosk, and an enhanced dog-park.

At the same time shaded lawn, multiple seating areas, native plantings and tree groves offer a variety of places to relax. In between, the pavilion offers the opportunity for small to mid-sized events when utilizing the plaza or larger-scale events when facing the great lawn.

Will the new concept include restrooms and how will they be kept clean and safe?

It's true, restroom buildings and portable loos have provided a necessary service but also attracted nuisances and criminal activity in the past, and so they were removed.

The Pioneer Park team and Public Lands staff recognize the need for safe and clean restrooms in the park as a basic service. The concept adds a self-cleaning, automated restroom located adjacent to the most active area of the park – near the café, park ranger station and plaza where more people in the park provide more eyes on park amenities.

Cost, maintenance and infrastructure requirements are all important considerations that will be addressed in more detail in the design phase.

EVENTS

How does the concept add opportunities for programs and events?

The concept maintains the great lawn, which has been actively used for soccer leagues, movies in the park and other events, while adding a plaza and covered pavilion. The pavilion is open, offering the opportunity for small to mid-sized events when oriented north to the plaza or for larger-scale events when oriented to the south on the lawn. Concrete paths will be vehicle-rated for event coordinated traffic and Parks' maintenance use.

We love the Downtown Farmer's Market and want to make sure that changes to the park do not impact it.

We agree, the Downtown Farmer's Market is an event well-loved by Salt Lake City residents and visitors alike. It is critical that successful events can continue in and near the park. The project team consulted with the Downtown Alliance and the Farmer's Market several times to refine the project concept to incorporate the Market's needs while also achieving our goal of providing more opportunities to activate the park outside of this event.

This concept maintains the Market path around the perimeter of the park and provides nearly the same number of stalls as existed at the Farmer's Market prior to COVID. It also provides restrooms and more seating areas, making it easier for patrons who visit the market to stay longer.

ECOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

How does the concept address water usage in our arid climate?

Water features were identified as important amenities by the public throughout the planning process. The soon to be released cultural landscape report for Pioneer Park also notes that fresh-water springs drew Native Americans and the pioneers to this site.

The concept includes "The Source," a sculptural feature that uses mist at key moments in the season to add a water experience while being mindful of the arid climate in which we live. The concept increases the tree canopy and provides shade, maximizes use of secondary water via The Source water feature, and includes swales in the landscaping that run from the north-east corner to the south-east corner of the site in harmony with its natural topography.

Planting design will intentionally include low-water/drought tolerant landscaping and will take advantage of the natural topography of the site, where water flows from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. Planting groups that favor more moisture will be placed in response to the natural slope for designed irrigation or rain events. This strategic addition will respond to the increased hardscape and impervious surface added to the park on this plan.



Several trees were removed from the park when the sports field was added. Will this project remove more trees?

Trees and shade are important assets to any park, but particularly to a downtown park. The design team intentionally reduced impacts to existing trees wherever possible during concept development, although it does impact a few trees. It also adds opportunities for small tree groves distributed in multiple locations around the park. In the next phase of design, the project team will work with the Salt Lake City Urban Forester to assess the health of any trees and may remove those that are unhealthy or approaching the end of their life. SLC Public Lands has committed to replanting more trees in the park than are removed.

SAFETY

How will the concept make the park safer?

Increased park activation and safety for all people are at the forefront of our planning process as the concept moves to construction plan development and details related to Salt Lake City's recently announced Park Ranger Program are confirmed. The Public Lands team will continue to work with community partners to program additional park activities.

The concept addresses safety by maintaining clear sight lines around the park and providing activities to engage a variety of people to be in the park, additional lighting, a park ranger

,office, information booth and café which significantly increase the presence of day-time staff and patrons in multiple locations.

Positively, reports of illegal activities and police calls to the park have decreased in the past five years for a variety of reasons, including increased use by area residents, dog walkers and sports/league play on the new field. During this process, the project team also consulted with the Salt Lake City Police Department Parks Squad to review the concept and they confirmed that concept features would increase a staffed presence, attract a variety of park users and maintain open sight lines, all of which contribute to decreased opportunities for illegal behavior.

But, will the project force those experiencing homelessness out of the park?

As a community, it is our job to provide opportunities for the housed and the unsheltered to share space and positive interaction and the planning process considered multiple strategies for coexistence. The team also met with a variety of area stakeholders including the Utah Coalition to End Homelessness and Pioneer Park Coalition to ensure the park design encourages social connection, positive interaction, and can be a welcoming place for all.

Throughout its history as a gathering place, Pioneer Park has provided refuge and a place for congregation.



As a historically public space, different groups and uses have raised questions about how to provide equitable opportunities to find sanctuary in a natural setting, relaxation, and socialization for all community members.

The concept does not provide specific amenities or services for those experiencing homelessness because Pioneer Park is near service providers and community programs that deliver and are seeking to increase the provision of housing, showers, personal storage, and social services to address root causes of homelessness.