



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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Briefing

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: January 25, 2024
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Benjamin Nielsen, Design & Historic Review Team
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Re: Darcelle XV Interim Plaza
Briefing Cover Memo – February 1, 2024

This memo is regarding the upcoming Briefing on February 1, 2024, for the Darcelle XV Interim Plaza plans by Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R). A copy of PP&R's PDF packet, which you will also see on February 1, and a briefing memo from them are available for review online:

- <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/16542425>

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Portland Parks & Recreation staff, along with their consultant team, have been working on developing interim designs for the new Darcelle XV Plaza, which will replace the former O'Bryant Square (now demolished) in Downtown. Although the plaza design and uses are exempt from Design Review per 33.420.045.A.7, the interim plaza design and programming represent a significant development in a challenging area of the Central City and an opportunity to bring additional vibrancy to the city and help to activate the adjacent Green Loop. Therefore, the Design Commission is invited to provide advice to the project team. The Historic Landmarks Commission will also be providing advice to the project team on February 12th.

II. SOME THOUGHTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Darcelle XV Plaza will likely benefit from its close proximity to the Ritz Carlton tower (kitty-corner to the southwest) and future activity that may face SW 9th Ave in that building. Retail storefronts lie immediately south of the plaza along SW Washington St. Other adjacent buildings are much more closed off at the sidewalk level:
 - The Union Bank Tower building to the east has its back of house functions and parking garage entry directly across from the park. On the other hand, a new event space is opening in this building, and there could be synergies between the indoor event space and the outdoor event venue at the plaza.
 - AT&T equipment occupies the ground floor (and entire building) in the building to the northeast of the plaza.

- A surface parking lot and the Multnomah Behavioral Health Resource Center lie to the north of the park.
- The former Federal Reserve building (now offices) lies to the northwest. While there is an entry into the building at the southwest corner, there are no other supporting retail storefronts along the rest of its two street-facing facades.
- The Pittock Block building lies to the west of the plaza. While there are storefronts that face the plaza, there are no direct entries into any of these spaces or any type of activity currently that will help to support the plaza.
- It would be beneficial to discuss materials proposed for interim use. It is possible that may end up becoming more permanent features in the final iteration of the plaza.
- The plaza abuts the Green Loop on its north and west sides. Both the plaza and the Green Loop may mutually benefit by blurring the distinction between these two uses, whether through paving or other means.
 - This is also another opportunity for the City to officially define elements of continuity for the Green Loop, rather than leaving the overall design of the Loop up to individual development projects, such as has been done with the Ritz Carlton, PSU Art and Design Building, Cambria Hotel, and Honeyman Hardware Lofts projects on the west side of the Central City.