

Pioneer Park has historically been a place where there were a lot of people experiencing homelessness and unsafe or illegal activities. How will this project make the park safer?

Increased park activation and safety for all people are at the forefront of our planning process as we work to determine park re-design, policies for security, and programming.

We've seen Illegal and unsafe activities within the park decrease in the past five years for a variety of reasons, including increased use by area residents, dog walkers and sports/league use of the new multipurpose field.

The preferred concept plan (anticipated in October) will share approaches and strategies for park visitor safety and attracting this diverse neighborhood to enjoy the park together. Some of these include maintaining clear sight lines around the park, providing a variety of activities to engage a variety of people to be in the park, and increased maintenance and parks staff presence.

All members of the community are welcome to use Salt Lake City's parks and public lands, and those experiencing homelessness are part of our community.

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.

Historically, the land on which Pioneer Park was established as a meeting place that provided refuge and a place for congregation. As a historically public space, different groups and uses of the park have always raised questions of how to provide equitable opportunities for all community members to find sanctuary in a natural setting, relaxation, and socialization.

Part of the planning process considers strategies for coexistence. The team is considering how park design, management, and programs bridge the gap between differing and varying user experience. Encouraging social connection, positive interaction, and being a welcoming place for all are guiding principles for Pioneer Park: Your Downtown Park.

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.

Currently, the park does not have restrooms or other comfort amenities. Will the new concept include those 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 were removed. The Pioneer Park team and Parks staff recognize the need for safe and clean restrooms in the park as a basic service. As part of this process, the team is researching ways to provide restrooms safely that range from new technology including self-cleaning, automated restrooms to ways increased programming or ambassadors in the park can provide more eyes on park amenities. Cost,

maintenance and infrastructure requirements are all important considerations that will determine what could be possible.

[This \\$300,000, automated restroom in Colorado Springs](#) is a precedent example the team is looking into. The restroom is self-cleaning, can be programmed for open/closed hours and has a 10-minute maximum use time to discourage loitering. Historic imagery wraps the outside of the restroom to provide beauty and interpretation of the site. The design team is looking for solutions like this that provide multiple uses, leveraging any future investment dollars to provide maximum benefit to the public.

There have been several studies, concepts and engagements done, but not much has changed. How is this project different?

While Salt Lake City has made improvements incrementally over time with limited funds (multipurpose fields, lighting etc.), the dedication of impact fees specifically to Pioneer Park will allow for service expansion to happen now.

Improvements to existing and aging park infrastructure may also be addressed by proposed bond funding.

The current process includes ideas and feedback from past processes and also incorporates current needs of the downtown community, design standards, amenities and accounts for the changes that have occurred in the downtown area.

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 project 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. The project may also remove some trees and will limit tree removal whenever possible. If it is necessary to remove trees, SLC will replant the same number or more trees in the park.

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 or near the park. The project team is working closely with the Downtown Alliance and the Farmer's Market team to refine the project concept to incorporate the Market's needs while also achieving our goal of activating the park all day, all week and all year long.

Pickleball is a popular sport in Utah and this park should include a large number of courts (more than 10), like a regional sport court complex might have.

The outcomes from engagement window 2, in-person and the online survey, indicate that while the public support the addition of some pickleball facilities, they did not support a regional sport court complex at this location. The preferred concept plan will likely include a smaller number of

pickleball courts and other sports/athletic amenities. The Public Lands Department recognizes that Pickleball is a popular sport in Salt Lake City and is actively looking at opportunities for additional courts at other parks across the City.

Fiscal year 2022 capital improvement funding has proposed an opportunity for pickleball courts at Poplar Grove Park. We will begin working with the community next spring to determine if the resurfacing project should retain the existing courts for tennis or if this site should be converted to pickleball or a combination of both.

Parking near Pioneer Park has been historically difficult. Is this addressed as part of the project?

Parking is available on all sides of the park. The project will not remove any parking but there are also no plans to add parking. The park is highly accessible via transit with two UTA bus stops at the park and TRAX station just a one block away at the Gateway. A separated bike lane on 300 South provides a strong and safe connection to downtown via active transportation.

Water usage is a concern given the current drought and general climate in which we live. How will the project address this?

Water features were identified as important amenities by the public in the recent survey. 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 project team is currently looking at options to include an appropriate expression of water on the site.

Tanner Fountain in Boston is an example fountain that uses mist at key moments in the season to create a fountain experience. When not in use, the fountain provides informal seating and in cold seasons collects snow in a beautiful way (see example images below). This type of water feature with low-flow or recapture options may be appropriate for Pioneer Park.

Water could also be expressed in the west through plantings - visualize a cottonwood gallery along an ephemeral stream. Best practices in storm water management also offer ways to use artful landscape designs to capture inundation from storm events.

Improvements in this park will increase rent/land value and make it even harder for people to find housing nearby.

Downtown Salt Lake City is growing and changing, and gentrification is a complicated issue with causes and solutions that extend far beyond parks and green space. Many US cities have observed unintended consequences of displacement following public space enhancements and infrastructure investments and have implemented a variety of mechanisms to combat this relationship. Salt Lake City is currently working to develop an anti-displacement and gentrification program with guidance on concrete actions to take to avoid forcing people from the neighborhood.

Employing a best practice for parks-related anti-displacement strategies, this park improvement project has intentionally been incorporating community voices from the neighborhood including traditionally marginalized groups in the planning process.



Summer 2021 Public Engagement

Frequently Asked Questions

As the only park in downtown Salt Lake, Pioneer Park should meet the needs of all the different people who live, work and visit there.