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Pioneer Courthouse Public Square Informational Booklet

Portland (Or.). Bureau of Planning
Portland (Or.). City Planning Commission

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The Pioneer Court House and the Meier & Frank parking lot to the west present a rare opportunity for major open space development in the retail core of Downtown Portland.
The retail core in the heart of Downtown Portland is still the largest single concentration of retail and service business in the metropolitan area, even though recent growth trends have been toward the de-centralization of downtown business activities.

The core's future lies not only in maintenance of its diverse and intense activities but also in improvement of the physical environment in which these activities take place.
The proposed public square in the retail core will be the central element in a regeneration of Downtown Portland being carried on through a combination of major public and private investments.
Recently adopted Planning Guidelines For Downtown Portland call for the creation of a pedestrian-oriented retail core with a centrally located major public square to improve environmental conditions and provide a highly identifiable focal point for a variety of activities. Accordingly, vehicular traffic would be limited, favoring use by pedestrians and service vehicles. Sufficient off-street shopper parking would be provided at key locations on the periphery of this area.

The Meier & Frank parking lot to the west of the Pioneer Courthouse generally lies at the center of the retail core and presents a rare opportunity to develop a major public square.

In addition to providing a much needed open space activity center in the heart of the retail core, development of the Meier & Frank parking block into a public square will contribute to the realization of other planning objectives for the core area which are to:

- Support north-south mass transit malls being developed on 5th and 6th Avenues and eventual east-west transit malls on Morrison and/or Alder Streets.
- Provide a setting for the recently renovated historic Pioneer Court House ($1.2 million restoration).
- Develop a major shopper parking facility at the periphery of the retail core in accordance with Planning Guidelines and the City's Air Quality Improvement Program.
Although the downtown retail core generates some of the highest pedestrian counts in the City, very little space is actually devoted to pedestrian use.

This deficiency and the projected increase in pedestrian activity expected with the 5th and 6th Avenue transit system clearly indicate the need for a centrally located, major, pedestrian-oriented open space to serve this area.
The public square concept entails the provision of a pedestrian-oriented, open space environment supported by commercial activities.

Design of the public square should include:

- Landscaped open space for contrast and relief from surrounding block development.
- Space for events such as meetings and lectures; pageants, rallies, and celebrations; live performances, exhibitions, and recreational activities.
- Utilization of natural lighting and topographical features.
- Light-weight, flexible structures for shelter, meetings, information, commercial use, etc.
- Provision for day and night use regardless of season or weather condition.
- Facilities that serve all income and age groups providing for both active and passive activities.
- Consideration for future pedestrian use of surrounding streets with coordination of design elements i.e. street furniture, lighting, signing, etc.
- Coordination with mass transit design development on surrounding streets (5th and 6th Avenues) considering provision for TRI-MET call stations, a shuttle terminal, and other related facilities.
- Activities providing special benefit to the properties to be assessed such as:
  - Commercial uses to support activities, increase interest and use, provide a source of maintenance financing, and generate new commercial activities which help stabilize the retail core, i.e. public oriented uses such as a restaurant, specialty retailing, craft shops, etc.
  - An information center specifically to serve the assessed area which provides for a directory to commercial and retail establishments, posting of local events and mass transit scheduling and routing, and other information relative to the given space and local activities.

- Facilities for display of goods and services available in the assessment district.

The above listing does not exclude beneficial features that may arise from further contact with local property owners and tenants.
A POSSIBLE DESIGN CONCEPT:
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martin | soderstrom | mattheson a.i.a. architects
A possible design concept: A design selection will be made after evaluation of several alternatives.

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A balanced program of local and federal funding is proposed for development of the public square. This program includes:

- An assessment of properties benefiting from certain improvements in the square.

- A grant of $1.5 million from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to aid acquisition and development of less than fee interest in the subject property. The fee will be held by the City of Portland under conditions assuring BOR that the fee will be compatible with the use and development to be accomplished through federal aid.

- Retail commercial space will be developed by the City on the property rights reserved to the City. The commercial uses will be limited to those activities which will be compatible with a restful park experience and at the same time complement and attract persons to the square. Receipts (not land interest) from the facilities will be pledged to retire a $1.5 million revenue bond issue.

### INVESTMENT ($Million)
- Land Acquisition 2.0
- Improvements 2.5
  - $4.5

### FUNDING ($Million)
- Assessment District 1.5
- BOR Grant 1.5
- Revenue Bonds 1.5
  - $4.5