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For Immediate Release

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Portland Parks & Recreation completes preliminary review of Multnomah Arts Center lead in water testing history:

Bureau to continue to review materials, documentation, and chronology

(Portland, OR) –

On June 20, 2016, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) sent out a water quality testing [update](#).

The Bureau now has preliminary findings (as of July 5, 2016) on the history of testing for lead in water and measures previously taken at the Multnomah Arts Center (MAC). That information is available [here](#).

The review reveals that PP&R management has not historically had in place any policy, protocol or training around drinking water testing. PP&R management did not have any process nor policy in place dictating when to conduct tests, what to do with results, when to escalate environmental and safety test results exceeding guidelines up the chain-of-command nor to the Safety Officer. PP&R management has not had in place any protocols on when or how to communicate with the community about any results.

There is no federal, state or local regulation requiring water testing for parks facilities.

PP&R management accepts the responsibility to create effective protocols and policies around Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) risks. The Bureau's review continues, and Portland Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz and PP&R Director Mike Abbaté are considering what steps the Bureau will implement going forward.

Recommendations for the PP&R Director to consider include but are not limited to:

- Adopt a Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Management System, including hiring staff dedicated to and with expertise in this work. In the near-term, procure consultant services to immediately supplement staff for starting up a water quality testing program.
- Training of staff around HSE issues and protocols.
- Process improvements such as Shop Lead sign-offs on some Work Orders and spot checks, especially of safety-related work.
- Better tracking systems for the Minor Improvement Project (MIP) and Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Work Flows.
- Management should work with staff to determine appropriate maintenance staffing levels for MAC and other facilities.

“It is my responsibility to work with management and staff to make sure that the needed Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) protocols are in place across our parks system,” says Portland Parks & Recreation Director Mike Abbaté. “It’s also my job to advocate for the needed resources. I support our frontline staff who have been continuously committed to doing their best even when resources have been constrained. In the MAC situation, management did not previously provide clear protocols and training—but we are doing it now. As I mentioned on June 20, this summer our priority is to test all PP&R sites where preschools are located. We will share further results when we have them.”

PP&R will continue to review materials, documentation, and chronology and add to the report as needed.

“We are committed to continuing our transparency to the public on these issues,” says Portland Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz. “I will work with Director Abbaté to move forward on long-term plans for taking care of our aging parks system, with health and safety as the top priorities.”

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