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For Immediate Release

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(Portland, OR) – The community conversation around lead levels in drinking water in schools has prompted Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) leadership to review past testing results in parks facilities, as well as to begin testing on priority sites in the coming weeks as a voluntary precautionary measure.

After technical consultation with Portland Water Bureau (PWB), PP&R determined priority sites are those that meet two or more of the following criteria:

1. Any sites where there is likelihood for prolonged access to drinking water by vulnerable populations (specifically children under the age of 6 and expectant mothers) (<https://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead#exposed>)
2. Any sites where the building or its plumbing was built or updated between 1970 through 1985 (<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/article/572193>)
3. Any sites with previously tested elevated lead levels as outlined by the EPA at or greater than 15 parts per billion

As of June 4, 2016, PP&R determined priority sites to be Multnomah Arts Center (MAC), Portland Children's Museum and Fulton Community Center. Only one of these sites, MAC, has had test results that cause concerns. Consequently, drinking fountains have been taken out of service and all sinks have been labeled "Do not drink" at MAC. At Fulton and Portland Children's Museum, we have initiated a flushing protocol prior to opening the facility each day, in partnership with the community operators of those sites.

### **Multnomah Arts Center**

PP&R leadership learned late in the day on Friday, June 3, 2016, that in 2013, drinking fountains at Multnomah Art Center (MAC) had elevated lead test results, and were replaced or installed with filters on Tuesday, May 31, 2016. The reason for the delayed action is under review. The fountains have

not yet been retested to confirm that remediation is complete. PP&R leadership also learned on June 3 that elevated levels of lead were detected in 2011, 2012 and 2013 for some sinks at MAC. Some corrective actions were taken for sinks by 2013, but PP&R is still reviewing those records. As a precautionary measure until all retesting is complete, PP&R has shut down the fountains and marked that sinks are not for drinking, and will provide bottled drinking water for all MAC staff and visitors until retesting is completed and all necessary corrective actions are confirmed. Test results available for viewing here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/rs0zis1sqwl1esh/MAC%20Water%20Testing%20Results%20Multnomah%20Arts%20Center.pdf?dl=0+%5Ct+ blank>

"I am sorry that Portland Parks & Recreation did not notify the Commissioner in Charge or the MAC community of these test results when they occurred, and that we did not ensure that protocols were in place to ensure immediate and complete remediation," said PP&R Director Mike Abbaté. "Over the coming weeks, we will review what happened and institute new safety and reporting protocols. We are retesting the site so that our staff and visitors can be assured that lead levels for drinking water are within EPA guidelines. Working with our partners at the Portland Water Bureau, we will also prioritize testing at Fulton Community Center and the Portland Children's Museum, even though we have no previous elevated lead level results at those sites. We will publish testing results as soon as possible."

"I have directed PP&R to institute immediate testing of the three priority park sites, and to work with technical experts to review the potential need for periodic systematic testing throughout our facilities," said Commissioner Amanda Fritz. "I have also requested information on remediation work that has occurred in the past at all Parks facilities, and an explanation of the delay in taking action at Multnomah Arts Center. We know that many Parks buildings have infrastructure such as pipes that needs replacing. I will continue to prioritize public safety and prudent investments to keep working on fixing our aging parks."

### **Other priority sites: Portland Children's Museum & Fulton Community Center**

PP&R does not have historical testing information for either of these sites, however with all that we understand at this time, PP&R believes the risk of potential lead exposure in drinking water at these sites is very low. Therefore, while testing of all fountains and sinks is being completed in

the coming weeks, PP&R is working with staff at the sites to perform a daily “flushing” protocol every morning.

Guidelines for “flushing”:

- EPA: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/toolkit\\_leadschools\\_guide\\_3ts\\_leadschools.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/toolkit_leadschools_guide_3ts_leadschools.pdf) - Page 55, Item 5.2 and
- PWB: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/article/123081>

“We will review available scientific and engineering information, and work with the Portland Water Bureau and partners at Multnomah County in public health to determine any other priority sites, as well as system-wide testing needs. We will be transparent with Portlanders about our decision-making along the way,” said Commissioner Fritz, a retired Registered Nurse. “I encourage anyone who has concerns about lead exposure to lead to check with their licensed medical provider. Free testing is available for children under six through [Multnomah County](#).”

1. To understand the science behind lead exposure, call the Lead Line at [503.988.4000](tel:503.988.4000) or click here: <https://multco.us/health/lead-poisoning-prevention>
2. Everyone can play a role in limiting their own or their family’s exposure to lead in water. Learn more about reducing lead exposure at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/lead>

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