

Plans for new park proceed apace with community input, may break ground in 2009

By Andy Medici

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh held another meeting for public comment on their plans to redesign and rebuild the park that lies at the center of what used to be Allegheny City. Nestled

between the Museum, the old library building and Allegheny Center Mall, this concrete area is made up of sets of steps, and large potted trees.

The current designs for the pro-

posed new park paint a much different idea of how such a space can be used. The plans originally called for a parking garage under the park, but that part of the design has been removed, and the space is now at ground level.

An open space in the center will hold people for events; with a facility that will allow people to have tables and chairs set up for special occasions.

There will be trees off to both sides, and at the center of the park may be a star pattern and constellations.

Chris Siefert, the deputy director of the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, said that the design for the park has changed as the community has commented on the process.

"I think it's evident that it has evolved already in response to the community. We hear a lot of 'You've incorporated everything we've said,' or 'you've clearly heard our comments'."

He said that the design has been simplified

and that the next steps in the design process is determining which materials to use. Siefert likened beginning the project to trying to build momentum.

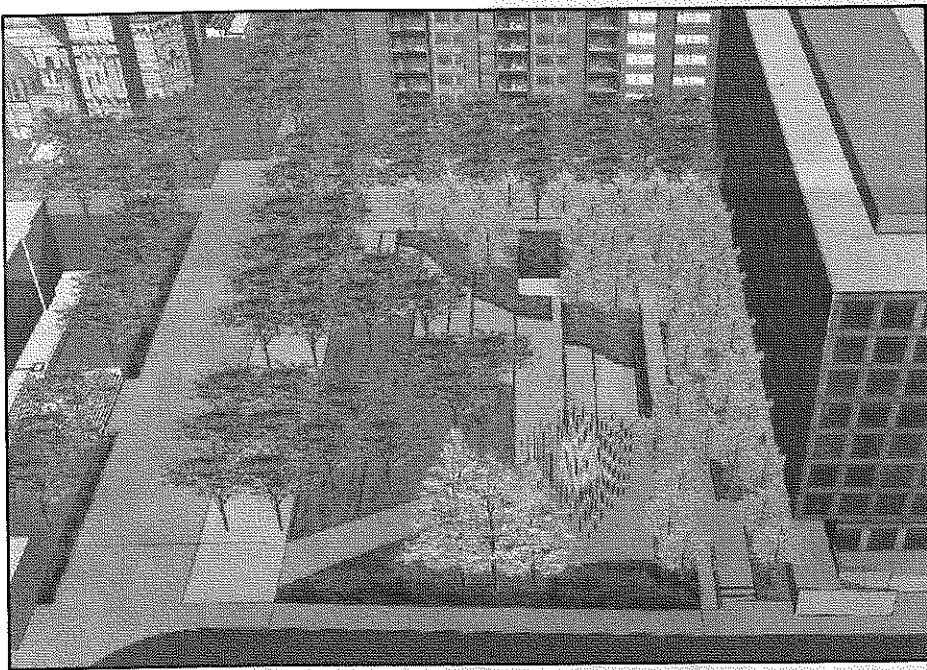
"It's pretty exciting. It's a pretty ambitious project so you are never quite sure if whether the rock will gain speed going down the hill or will it hit the tree," Siefert said.

"It was great to have the community letting us lead on the project and having the trust and faith in us to work on this project. The trust and faith is mutual, and it's impressive to be a part of that."

The next few steps include going before the art commission and getting letters of support from the community.

Then they will bring the City in on the process, and they will come back before the community in January to help finalize the project.

If everything goes well, the Museum could break ground in May or June of 2009, with the park being completed sometime in the summer or fall of 2010.



Above: These two designs show the current plan for the park, which includes trees, a central meeting location inside the park and a fountain in the center.