

North Portland Aquatic Center Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Project Webpage: [Portland.gov/parks/npac](https://portland.gov/parks/npac)

(Last Updated February 24, 2025)

1. How much will it cost to build a new indoor aquatic center in North Portland?

\$91.5 million. The current estimate budget of \$91.5 million reflects the significant labor, material, and overhead costs expected to occur due to inflation before the project's construction begins. It also reflects the City's commitment to provide North Portland with a first-class, inclusive, accessible, aquatic center to serve current and future generations. Portland Parks & Recreation truly envisions this future aquatic center as an important hub for community life that will strengthen social ties, support physical health, and promote a sense of belonging for all North Portlanders.

2. How much has the City and the State already invested in this new aquatic center?

In total, the City and the State have invested a combined \$91.5 million. In April 2021, former Parks Commissioner Carmen Rubio invested a record setting \$11.7 million in Parks System Development Charges (SDCs) for the future aquatic center. Those funds were for initial project design, permitting, and meaningful community engagement. Park SDCs are one-time fees assessed on new development, not General Fund tax dollars. SDCs help ensure that, as the city grows in population, its quality of life keeps pace with its infrastructure needs. By law, SDCs may only be used for improvements that will expand the capacity of the parks and recreation system.

In March 2022, the Oregon State Legislature leveraged the City's initial SDC investment by approving \$15 million in lottery funds, as proposed by Oregon State Representative Travis Nelson (District 44), to support the project. Commissioner Rubio dedicated an additional \$5 million in SDC funding for the center in October 2022.

In December 2023, Commissioner Dan Ryan, who oversees Portland Parks & Recreation, allocated an additional \$59.8 million to the project bringing the total to \$91.5 million.

3. Can you explain more about System Development Charges?

When a new home or commercial development is built in Portland, city infrastructure must expand to meet the needs of a growing population. System Development Charges, also known as SDCs, are one-time fees assessed on new development that help pay for that growth. SDCs must be used for capital projects that expand the capacity of the park system, like acquiring new land, developing new parks or facilities, or expanding existing parks or facilities. By law, SDCs cannot be used for any other purpose, such as maintenance, wages, or operations. For example, these funds cannot be used for capital projects such as repairing a failed building. More information about PP&R's funding sources and how each type of funding can be used is available on our new "[Understanding Our Funding Sources](#)" webpage.

4. When would the new indoor aquatic facility be open to the public?

PP&R estimates that a capital project of this magnitude and complexity will take between five to seven years from site determination through construction completion. That would put eventual completion somewhere in 2029. Construction projects, especially those of this magnitude, involve many variables including weather, materials, labor, and other considerations. And first, we must

continue our robust community engagement and secure a design team. We will continue to inform the community on any changes.

5. Why was Northgate Park selected as the final site for the North Portland Aquatic Center?

In summer 2023 Commissioner Dan Ryan and Portland Parks & Recreation Director Adena Long [announced](#) the new North Portland Aquatic Center will be built at [Northgate Park](#). The announcement came after extensive community feedback and with equity factors being the deciding criteria. The ongoing, robust, collaborative process with the community showed strong support for the aquatic center at Northgate Park as well as at University Park. There are concerns about further traffic on the already congested, and narrower, N. Alaska Street, where University Park and the adjacent Charles Jordan Community Center are. The Northgate Park site will be accessible and transformative for a densely populated neighborhood with a significant number of neighbors who earn low incomes. Building the aquatic center at Northgate Park will have less of an impact on current park usage, as the ball field at University Park is the most programmed, and only ball field with lights in the PP&R system (outside of our Delta Park ball fields). The field lights at University Park are a valuable addition that allow for sports to be played later than sunset. Northgate Park has several schools nearby and the park and aquatic center will be a focal point for community life.

6. What types of recreational activities and programs would be available at this new center?

North Portlanders can look forward to swim lessons, water fitness classes, lap swimming, competitive swimming, training classes and open play at the future facility.

After reviewing the community priorities and feedback from a robust community engagement process, Commissioner Ryan directed PP&R to build a 35-meter pool to better meet the increasing demand for lap lanes and ample space for school aquatics programming and other competitive swimming events. The 35-meter pool is in addition to the "fun pool" with all the popular slides and water play

features that are available at other full-service aquatic facilities in the PP&R system.

7. How can I get involved in the North Portland Aquatic Center project?

Visit the North Portland Aquatic Center project webpage at portland.gov/parks/npac to sign up for our project email list. We'll send you project updates and post website announcements for upcoming community engagement events and opportunities.

8. With Columbia Pool permanently closed, where can I swim while the new aquatic center is being developed?

Noting the pool's closure affects North Portland swimmers and partner groups, former Parks Commissioner Carmen Rubio rallied City Council to approve funding in the fall budget adjustment to help pool users. The City approved \$1.5 million in one-time funds to explore interim strategies to increase North Portlanders' access to aquatic facilities.

Starting December 1, 2022, all North Portland residents are eligible for a free [North Portland Pass](#) at Matt Dishman Community Center. This pass allows free access to the center's fitness room and drop-in pool activities.

- **To get your free North Portland Pass:**
 - Call the Customer Service Center line at 503-823-2525
 - Call Matt Dishman Community Center at 503-823-3673
 - Visit with the front desk staff at Matt Dishman Community Center.
- The North Portland Pass is available only to North Portland residents. Passes must be renewed annually at no cost. The registration period does not end. Residents must have a photo taken on their first visit to create a membership card.
- Residents who register for a North Portland Pass can also receive a free Tri-Met bus pass for access to Matt Dishman Community Center. Tri-Met passes are mailed weekly only to those who indicate the need during registration.

North Portland outdoor pools (Peninsula Park Pool and Pier Park Pool) [are open and available throughout the summer months](#) (June 14-August 27, 2023).

For a full list of swimming pools, please visit the [PP&R Swimming Pools and Lessons](#) page.