



North Portland Aquatic Center Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Project website: [North Portland Aquatics Center Project | Portland.gov](https://www.portland.gov/parks/north-portland-aquatics-center-project)

(Last Updated December 13, 2023)

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

The current estimate is \$102 million. After the Northgate Park site was selected in summer 2023, PP&R updated the cost estimates for the aquatic center and refined the program size to the site parameters. Commissioner Ryan and PP&R will continue to work with community partners to explore options to completely fund the project, which is estimated to cost approximately \$102 million.

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

\$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 to cover initial project design, permitting, and meaningful community engagement program. SDCs are not General Fund tax dollars, rather they are fees from development which by law can only be used to expand capacity in the parks 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, Culture and Livability Commissioner Dan Ryan allocated an additional \$59.8 million to the project bringing the total to \$91.5 million.

3. How much more money will need to be raised for a new indoor aquatic center in North Portland?

The project currently has an estimated funding gap of about \$10 million and Commissioner Ryan and Portland Parks leadership continue to explore additional funding sources.

4. 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. The Parks Local Option Levy (Parks Levy) voters approved in November 2020 is an operating levy, which allows PP&R to restart programming and activities this summer. These funds cannot be used for capital projects such as repairing a failed building.

5. 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. For comparison, the usual timeline for PP&R to develop a large facility for design, permitting, and construction typically takes five years with an approved master plan and programming, and an identified site. The North Portland Aquatic Center project does not yet have a master plan, an identified site or final recommended programming. That's

why it's so exciting to begin community engagement. It takes time for PP&R to effectively collaborate with you in these important planning processes. We want to get it right! Thus, the project team has assumed an additional year or more to determine the site and right size program needs and aspirations to the size and cost of the future facility.

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

After extensive community feedback and with equity factors being the deciding criteria, in summer 2023 Culture and Livability Commissioner Dan Ryan and Portland Parks & Recreation Director Adena Long [announced](#) the new North Portland Aquatic Center will be built at [Northgate Park](#). 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 lighted ball field in the system (outside of our Delta Park ball fields). The field lights at University Park are a valuable addition that allow for sports play later than sunset. Northgate Park has several schools nearby and the park and aquatic center will be a focal point for community life.

8. 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 so popular in other PP&R full-service aquatic facilities.

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

Visit Portland Parks & Recreation's project website 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.

10. 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](tel:503-823-2525)
 - Call Matt Dishman Community Center at [503-823-3673](tel: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.