



North Portland Aquatic Center Project Frequently Asked Questions

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

Updated October 24, 2022

- 1. How much will it cost to build a new indoor aquatic center in North Portland?**
 - The current estimate is roughly \$50 million. That estimate could vary depending on the final site selected, aquatic programming, and cost and availability of materials. The Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) project team will provide more detailed information regarding projected costs and timeline once a design team consultant is on board (expected this summer).
- 2. How much has the City and the State already invested in this new aquatic center?**
 - About \$32 million. In April 2021, [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.
- 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 \$18 million and Commissioner Rubio continues to explore potential 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. Where will the new aquatic center be located?

- That's not yet clear. PP&R is purposefully engaging the North Portland community in the earliest planning phase of this important project – determining where to locate the new aquatic center to best serve North Portland communities for this significant city investment. The first project phase will focus on collaborating with the community to identify their needs around aquatic program offerings, develop site selection criteria, and apply criteria to evaluate potential sites to finalize a preferred site. This summer, PP&R will select a design team consultant to work with the project team and community on this first phase of planning.

7. Is PP&R planning to locate new aquatic center at Columbia Park, the Columbia Annex or near the Charles Jordan Community Center?

- Possibly, but not necessarily. In the fall of 2019, under the direction of the late former Parks Commissioner Nick Fish (and before initial funding was allocated), PP&R staff began preliminary research on programming and site needs to accommodate an indoor aquatic facility in North Portland. Based on past bureau planning documents – such as the [Parks 2020 Vision](#) – staff initiated preliminary overviews or “test fits” of possible sites at the [Charles Jordan Community Center](#), [Columbia Park](#), and the [Columbia Annex](#). These efforts included preliminary cost estimate ranges, site impacts, opportunities, and constraints. These initial studies did not conclusively determine whether any of these sites will host a future aquatic center. All potential sites will have complexities and issues to coordinate through the design and public process. Before making that decision, PP&R is committed to collaborating with the North Portland community to help determine what factors need to be considered in determining a location for the future center.

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

- That is yet to be determined, and PP&R looks forward to consulting with the community on the types of activities and programs that could be offered. There are many communities and stakeholders in North Portland and the region. For this reason, PP&R is collaborating with community members representing a diversity of lived experiences, backgrounds, abilities, and lifestyles. Currently, other PP&R pools offer swim lessons, water fitness classes, lap swimming, competitive swimming, training classes and open play.

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

- Visit Portland Parks & Recreation's [project website](#) at portland.gov/parks/construction/north-portland-aquatics-center-project 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 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, Commissioner 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.