PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

North Portland Aquatic Center: Phase 2 / Cycle
Executive Summary – August 2025

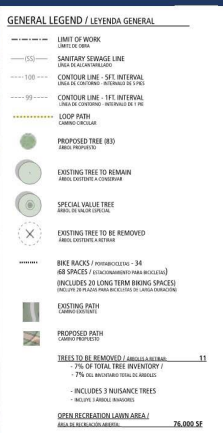
Table of Contents:

1. Site Plan Designs
2. Engagement Overview
3. Summary of Design Rankings
4. Summary of Themes from Engagement

In March 2025, three design concepts were shared with the community for input through meetings and an online survey. Using that input, the design team with Scott Edwards Architecture created an updated set of three design options, along with more detailed layouts and exterior building options. Below are the site plans shared in August 2025 (full set of designs can be found online *portland.gov/parks/NPAC).* At each meeting detailed in the Engagement Overview section, a presentation was given before a facilitated discussion. The same set of slides was available for online survey takers to review.

Meet Me at Geneva

Site Plan



Site Design

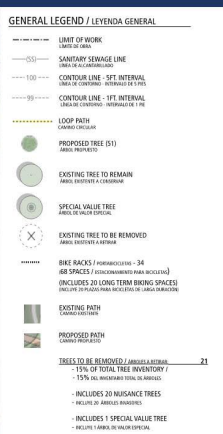
- Parking to the south with all access from Geneva
- Minimal number of trees removed
- Open Lawn adjacent to Clarendon
- Linear Plaza connecting all elements
- Small parking lot replaces tennis courts

Outdoor Amenities

- Pavilion near Fessenden
- Splashpad separated from building and Pavilion
- Accommodatesa 9V9 U12 soccer field

Beacon in the Park

Site Plan



Site Design

- Building nearest to Fessenden
- Parking lot to the east with access from Fessenden
- Smallest site development area
- Service access from Geneva

Outdoor Amenities

- L-shaped Plaza with Pavilion and Splash Pad
- Compact and efficient layout
- Largest Open Lawn accommodates HS soccer field

Engagement Overview

In August 2025, three updated design options for the North Portland Aquatic Center (NPAC) project were shared with the community for their input through the following engagement events:

- **August 18:** NPAC Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting
- **August 19:** NPAC Affinity Focus Groups (Low income, Immigrant, Youth, Competitive Swim, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+, Seniors, and Disabled People)
- **August 21:** Community Gathering (with English and Spanish discussion groups) at Roosevelt High School
- **August 23:** Display at Kidz Outside Festival at George Park
- **August 21- September 4:** Online Survey

In total, over 600 Portlanders engaged in this round of engagement through a variety of meetings, at the Kidz Outside Festival, and through the online survey.

Full summaries of input from the PAC, Focus Groups, Community Gathering, and Online Survey are all available online at portland.gov/parks/construction/north-portland-aquatic-center-project. Attendees at the Kidz Outside Festival were directed to the online survey to give input after reviewing the designs on display.

At the end of the Project Advisory Committee meeting, Focus Group meeting, and Community Gathering, participants were asked to participate in a live poll using a QR code to rank the three designs in order of preference. The online survey featured a similar ranking question, and the results from each groups follows.

The input from these engagement events as well as from the PP&R Technical Advisory Committee will be used by the design team to create a preferred design. Another engagement round is being planned for early 2026 to share how input was incorporated into the preferred design and gather feedback.

Summary of Design Rankings

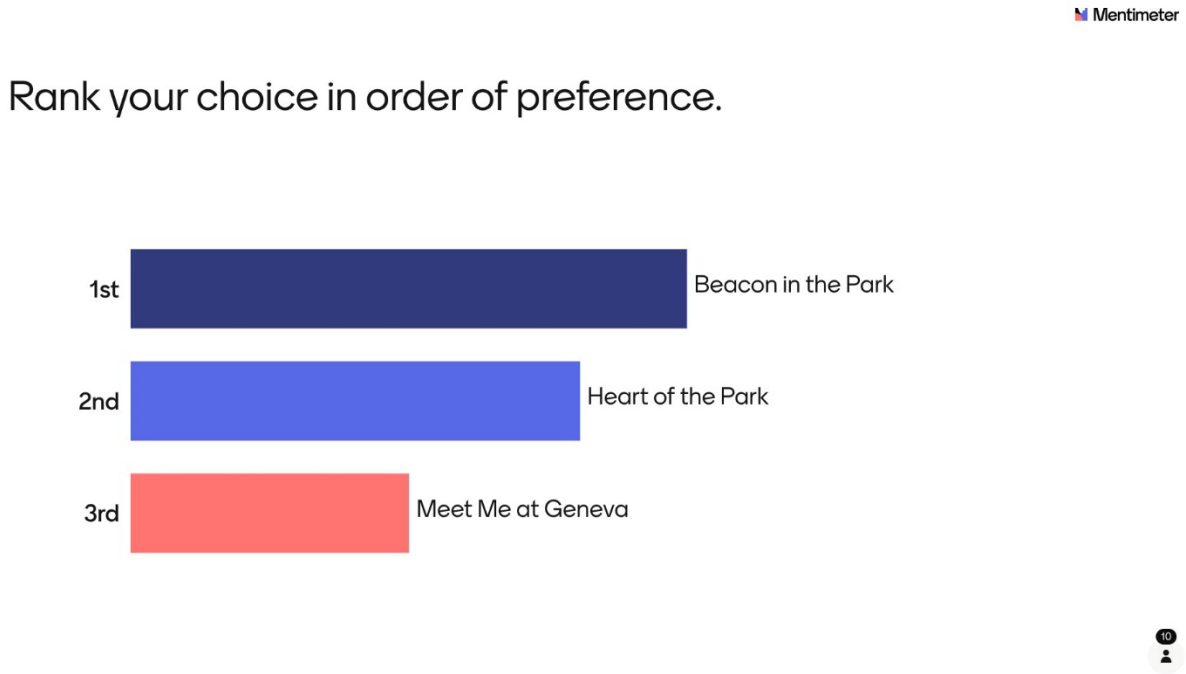
At the conclusion of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Focus Group, and Community Gathering meetings, an online live poll was shared that allowed participants to rank the designs in order of preference and view the immediate results. A similar ranking question was asked in the online survey.

- The PAC, Focus Group, and English speakers at the Community Gathering generally ranked Beacon in the Park the highest, with Heart of the Park closely following.
- The Spanish speakers at the Community Gathering and online poll takers ranked Heart of the Park highest.
- The Spanish group had the largest gap between their #1 and #2 rankings, showing a strong preference for Heart of the Park (77% ranked Heart of the Park as #1, 14% picked Meet Me at Geneva as #1, and just 9% ranked Beacon in the Park as #1).
- In the online survey, 181 people ranked Heart of the Park #1 and 183 ranked Heart of the Park as their 2nd choice. Even though Heart of the Park actually had more #2 than #1 rankings, the overall

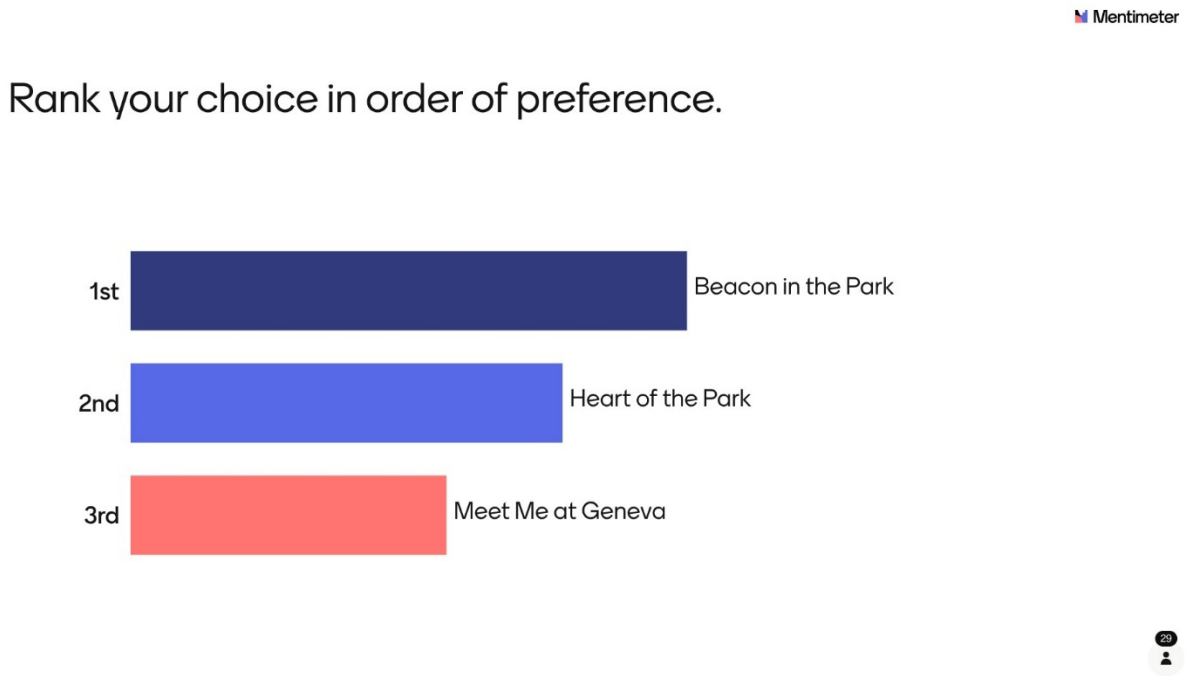
total of #1 and #2 rankings gave Heart of the Park an overall advantage. For comparison, the 2nd highest ranked, Beacon in the Park, received 169 #1 picks and 134 #2 picks.

- The following charts show the results and number of participants from each polling session. Not all meeting participants and survey responders participated in the ranking polls.

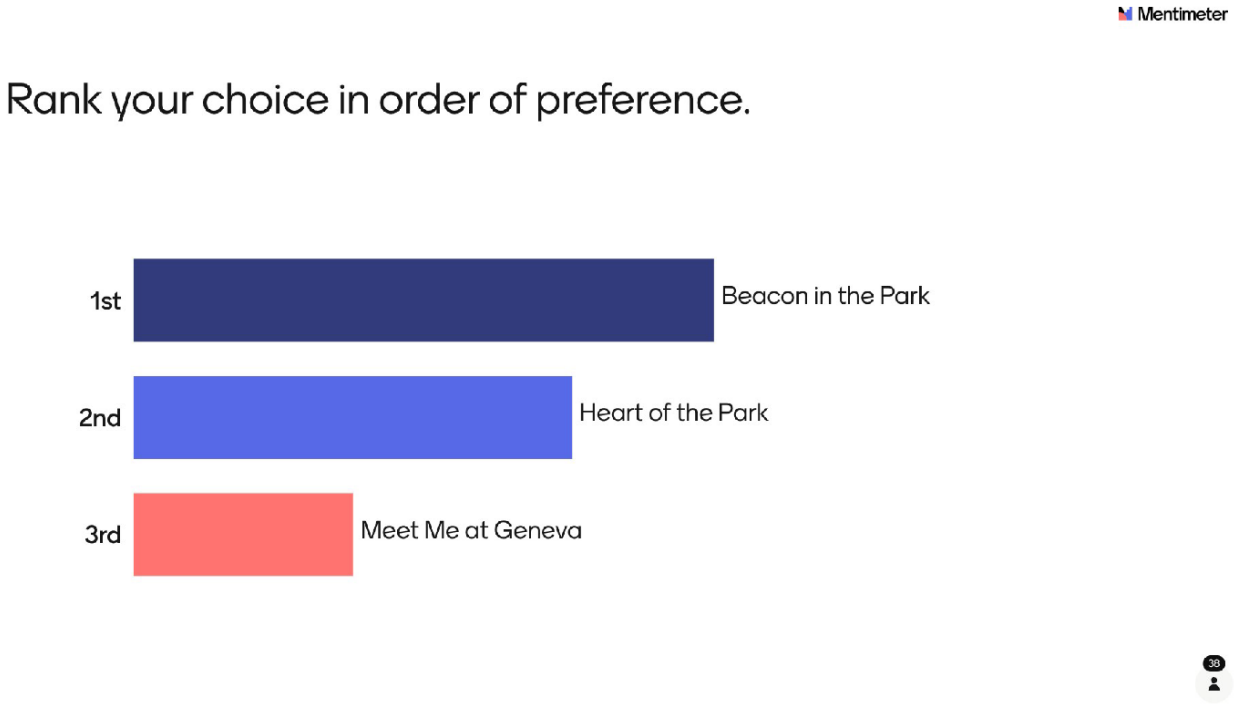
NPAC Project Advisory Committee 08/18/25 *(10 participants)*



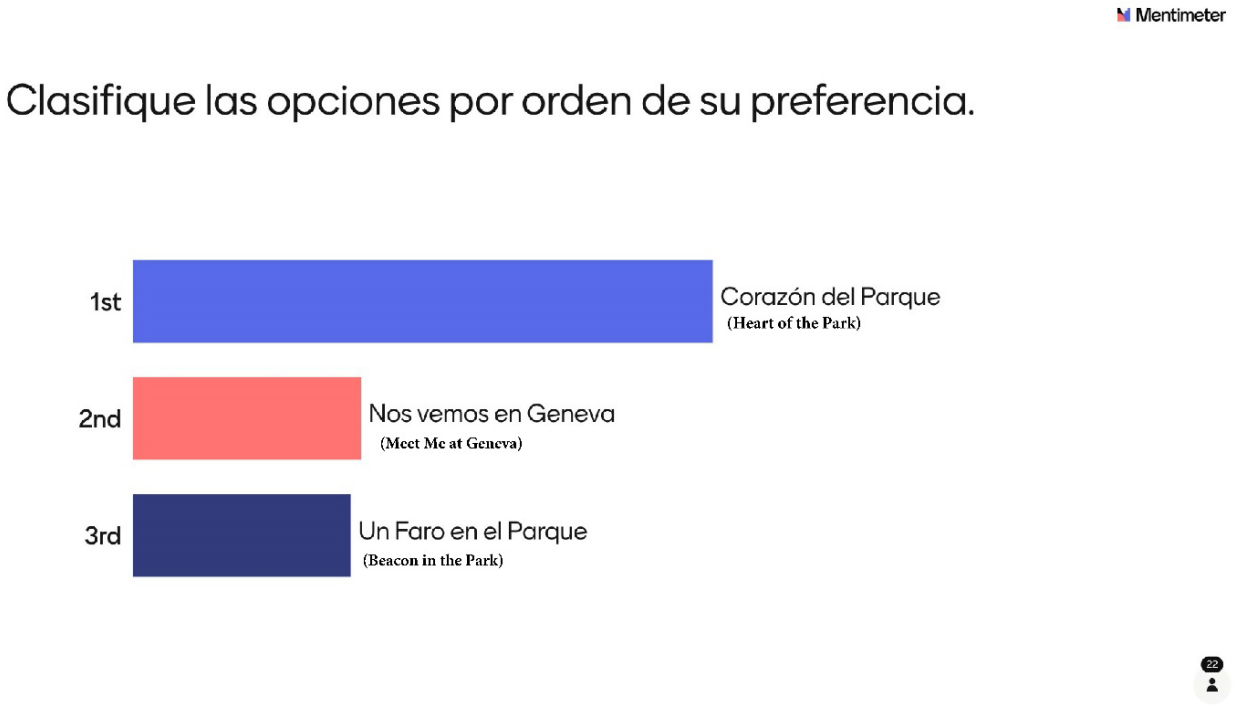
NPAC Focus Groups 08/19/25 *(29 participants)*



NPAC Community Gathering 08/21/25 – English Breakout *(38 participants)*

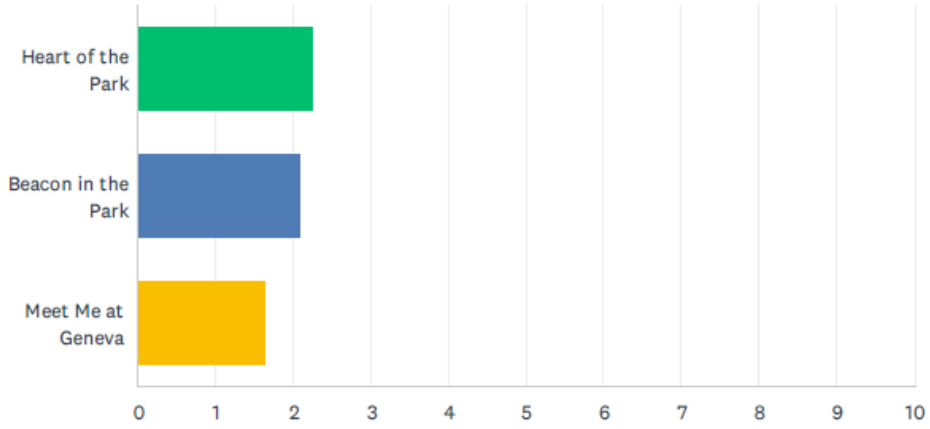


NPAC Community Gathering 08/21/25 – Spanish Breakout *(22 participants)*



Q13 Select your preferred design! Rank your choice in order of preferences. (#1 is your most preferred option, #3 is your least preferred option):

Answered: 428 Skipped: 69



	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
Heart of the Park	41.82% 179	42.52% 182	15.65% 67	428	2.26
Beacon in the Park	39.49% 169	31.31% 134	29.21% 125	428	2.10
Meet Me at Geneva	18.69% 80	26.17% 112	55.14% 236	428	1.64

The below chart compares how groups who participated in the live polls and the online survey ranked the designs in order of preference:

Ranking of Design Options – Ranked #1				
Group	**# of Participants**	**Heart of the Park**	**Meet Me at Geneva**	**Beacon in the Park**
PAC	10	20%	10%	70%
Focus Groups	31	26%	13%	61%
Community Gathering - *English*	38	21%	5%	74%
Community Gathering - *Spanish*	22	77%	9%	14%
Online Survey	431	42%	19%	39%
Ranking of Design Options – Ranked #2				
Group	**# of Participants**	**Heart of the Park**	**Meet Me at Geneva**	**Beacon in the Park**
PAC	10	70%	10%	20%
Focus Groups	22	59%	34%	9%
Community Gathering - *English*	31	75%	6%	19%
Community Gathering - *Spanish*	11	18%	55%	27%
Online Survey	431	42%	26%	31%
Ranking of Design Options – Ranked #3				
Group	**# of Participants**	**Heart of the Park**	**Meet Me at Geneva**	**Beacon in the Park**
PAC	10	10%	80%	10%
Focus Groups	20	10%	60%	30%
Community Gathering - *English*	31	6%	87%	6%
Community Gathering - *Spanish*	11	9%	36%	54%
Online Survey	431	16%	55%	30%

Overall Themes from Community Engagement

In all of the meeting discussions and the online survey, participants were asked to evaluate the design options using a scorecard to evaluate the designs based on the following four major categories. These categories came from community priorities identified previously in past rounds of community engagement.

Scorecard Categories and Descriptions:

1. **Site Design:**
    - Supports accessible and safe circulation by all transportation options (cars, bus, walking, biking, etc.)
    - Complements the surrounding neighborhood
    - Minimizes impact to trees
    - Preserves open recreation spaces
2. **Outdoor Amenities**
    - Creates a welcoming plaza and splash pad experience
    - Locates community pavilion with good visibility and accessibility for multiple uses
    - Supports a variety of gathering and recreation spaces
    - Locates park amenities to be visible and feel safe
    - Separates recreation spaces safely from vehicle areas
    - Support simultaneous use of recreation spaces and pavilion performances with minimal disruption
3. **Building Exterior Design**
    - Creates a distinctive building design that enhances the park and neighborhood in a compelling way
    - Creates a welcoming and safe experience for all users
    - Integrates well into the park
    - Provides striking and exciting views into the pools and community spaces
    - Creates an inviting and highly visible main entrance
    - Stands out as a North Portland landmark
4. **Building Interior Layout**
    - Provides views to the outside from the recreation pool and community spaces
    - Supports spectator seating with clear sightlines
    - Creates clear internal layout and flow
    - Supports safe and welcoming changing rooms
    - Locates community rooms to be enjoyable for multiple uses

Below are some themes heard across all engagements about why participants preferred an option and concerns expressed about the options. More detailed summaries of all engagements are available at *portland.gov/parks/construction/north-portland-aquatic-center-project*

Heart of the Park

Prefer this design because:

- Overall site layout and design
- Organic shape of plaza
- Location of splash pad and pavilion
- 2nd floor viewing area would reduce congestion on the pool deck during busy swim meets and provide good viewing opportunities
- Separate entrance and drop off for competitive swim meets would help with traffic flow inside and outside the building
- External slide is distinctive and exciting

Concerns:

- Those who preferred Meet Me at the Geneva were concerned about impact of having the parking lot accessed from Fessenden Street.
- The 2nd floor area, even with an elevator, might have accessibility issues, as there might be times elevator is out of service or crowded. Parents of younger children might prefer to sit on the pool deck to be closer to their kids during a swim meet or lessons.
- External slide might be an issue for maintenance and potential vandalism.

Meet Me at Geneva

Prefer this design because:

- This design features two parking entrances on Geneva which would reduce traffic congestion and safety issues on busy Fessenden Street.

Concerns:

- The parking lot access on Geneva would be too impactful to neighbors on a narrow street.
- The entrance to the building felt like a long distance from the parking lot and was not as visible as the other two options.
- The pavilion location in the northeast corner of the park would be hard to access to unload equipment for an event and might be a draw for negative behavior, especially late at night.

Beacon in the Park

Prefer this design because:

- Strong visual presence with striking glass corner features and view of the pool and building from Fessenden Street would create a landmark and invite people into the pools.

- Preserves park amenities and character, by providing the most greenspace to accommodate a full-sized soccer field and maintains the tennis courts (the only option not proposing to convert the courts to a small parking lot).
- While it does impact trees, 20 of the 21 trees are Norway maples, which is a nuisance species as defined by City of Portland Title 11 code. New trees in accordance with Title 11 and in support of Urban Forestry tree canopy goals will be planted as part of the project.

Concerns:

- Impacts largest number of trees.
- Pavilion location may be too close to the building.
- Those who preferred Meet Me at the Geneva were concerned about impact of having the parking lot accessed from Fessenden Street.