PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

North Portland Aquatic Center: Phase 2 / Cycle 3: Executive Summary – February 2026

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 to share with the community in August 2025.

From these two engagement phases, we heard a strong preference to move forward the site layout of the Heart of the Park design along with the bold, landmark design of the Beacon in the Park concept. In February 2026, the final design option for the North Portland Aquatic Center (NPAC) project was shared with the community for their input through the following engagement events:

- **February 10:** NPAC Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting
- **February 12:** NPAC Affinity Focus Groups (Low income, Immigrant, Youth, Competitive Swim, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+, Seniors, and Disabled People)
- **February 17:** Community Gathering at Roosevelt High School
- **February 24:** Spanish Focus Group
- **February 26:** Youth Infrastructure Fair at McDaniels High School
- **February 17 – March 10:** Online Survey

In total, about 350 Portlanders engaged in this round of engagement. Full summaries of input from the PAC, Focus Groups, and Online Survey are all available online at portland.gov/parks/construction/north-portland-aquatic-center-project.

Summary of Poll Questions

Through the engagements, the following three questions were asked through either a live poll at the end of the meeting or focus group or as a question on the online survey. We have combined the answers in the tables below to show the individual engagement results and overall combined responses.

The results below show that overall, 85% love or like the design; 10% are neutral; and 4% expressed dislike.

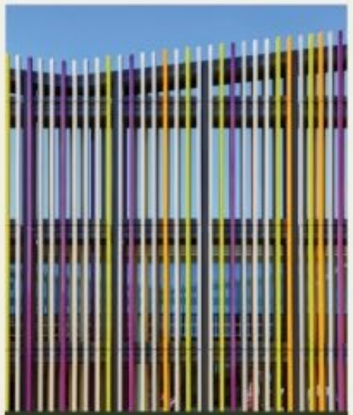
Question 1	How well does the final NPAC design concept reflect your goals and aspirations for the new center as a North Portland landmark?				
	Love it	Like it	Neutral	Dislike it	Strongly Dislike it
2/10 Project Advisory Committee	4	2	0	1	0
2/12 Focus Group	15	9	0	0	0
2/17 Community Gathering	19	17	3	0	0
2/24 Spanish Focus Group	14	3	0	0	0
Online Survey - English	123	81	33	4	10
Online Survey - Spanish	5	3	0	0	0
TOTAL RESPONSES (346)	**180**	**115**	**36**	**5**	**10**
TOTAL %	**52%**	**33%**	**10%**	**1%**	**3%**

Art & Expression

Exterior Inspiration Images

A

Patio Screen & Canopies



1 Multicolor Slats

2 Supergraphic

3 Monochrome Slats

4 Multicolor Glass

5 2D Mosaic

6 Mural Panels

7 Vertical Fins

8 3D Mosaic

Art & Expression

Exterior Inspiration Images

B

Outdoor Plazas & Paths

9 Integrated Patterns

10 Sculpture

11 Furniture

12 Integrated Texture

13 Interactive Sculpture

C

Main Entry

14 Vertical Surfaces

15 Horizontal Surfaces

16 Freestanding

17 Textured

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Question 2	Select your top two inspiration images that best represent the style, look, and feeling of public art you want to see integrated into NPAC's most prominent EXTERIOR art locations: (Pick two)																
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**
2/10 Project Advisory Committee	1	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	0
2/12 Focus Group	0	0	2	4	3	7	1	4	2	1	12	0	5	3	1	1	1
2/17 Community Gathering	8	2	4	9	2	6	4	9	3	4	9	3	4	3	1	2	4
2/24 Spanish Focus Group	0	0	0	8	4	5	2	4	0	2	4	1	3	1	0	0	0
Online Survey - English	35	6	15	54	25	27	14	44	19	27	50	18	39	22	11	5	26
Online Survey - Spanish	0	0	0	4	2	3	2	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	1	0	0
Youth Event at McDaniels HS	0	1	2	8	3	6	2	3	2	2	9	1	6	3	1	1	1
TOTALS	**44**	**9**	**26**	**87**	**39**	**56**	**26**	**64**	**26**	**41**	**88**	**23**	**59**	**35**	**17**	**9**	**32**

Blue shows top picks per group. The top three choices overall groups (yellow) were #4 Multicolor Glass, #8 3D Mosaic, and #11 Furniture.

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Interior Inspiration Images

D

Main Lobby

1 2D Mural

2 Mixed Media

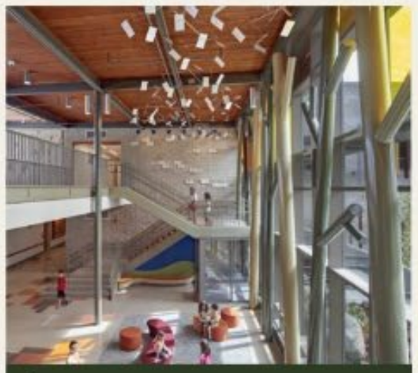
3 Vertical Slats

4 Dimensional

5 Chalkboard

E

Locker Room
Concourse



6 Mobile

7 Multi-Level

8 Suspended

9 Light-Catching

10 Multi-Surface

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Interior Inspiration Images

F

Pools

11 Multicolor Glass

12 2D Mural

13 Thematic Mural

14 Textured Mural

G

Community Rooms

15 Art Glass

16 2D Mural

17 Collage

18 Representational

Question 3	Select your top two inspiration images that best represent the style, look, and feeling of public art you want to see integrated into NPAC's most prominent INTERIOR art locations: (Pick two)																	
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**
2/10 Project Advisory	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	2
2/12 Focus Group	5	2	2	1	1	0	4	1	5	0	6	2	4	0	8	0	2	5
2/17 Community	6	1	8	2	5	3	7	2	5	3	8	5	6	4	3	1	2	5
2/24 Spanish Focus	11	2	1	1	0	4	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	4	4
Online Survey - English	33	15	12	9	6	13	34	18	55	14	79	6	21	17	45	11	15	19
Online Survey - Spanish	2	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	2
Youth Event at McDaniels	6	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	5	0	4	0	2	0	7	0	1	1
TOTALS	**64**	**23**	**26**	**15**	**14**	**26**	**51**	**25**	**74**	**18**	**102**	**13**	**37**	**21**	**69**	**12**	**24**	**38**

Blue shows top picks per group. The top three choices overall groups (yellow) were #9 Light Catching, #11 Multicolor Glass, and #15 Art Glass.

Community Priorities for Art and Expression

Cultural Representation, Themes, and Colors

1. **Community history, culture, and identity is seen and felt.** Art content and designs must reflect the diversity, stories, and multicultural character of North Portland. This includes the history of local Black, brown, and immigrant communities; Native/indigenous peoples; and the working-class community members who have all contributed to the building of North Portland.

2. **Create a balance between representational and abstract art.** Many expressed a preference for representational art that shows people and natural elements of the Pacific Northwest over abstract or graphic art. However, some reflected that art that is too representational can make people feel left out if they don't see themselves reflected in it.

3. **Celebrate geography and industrial history.** Another strong theme expressed was art that celebrates the natural beauty and geography of the area such as the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, views of tall trees, and the ecology of the riverbanks. This should be balanced with the history of the neighborhood as a working class, industrial neighborhood with iconic features like the St. Johns Bridge, shipyards, and the railroads.

4. **Select rich, vibrant, sophisticated, and joyful colors.** The art should use a palette of rich, vibrant, sophisticated, and joyful colors that creates excitement. The colors should make a statement that both welcomes and reflects the diversity of the community. While the community wants the art to be bold and colorful, the palette should not rely solely on primary colors as the base. Instead, the selection of rich colors should be done with thought and intention to ensure they reflect the natural environment and the range of diverse cultures that have shaped North Portland.

5. **Some art should be interactive and multi-sensory.** Incorporate tactile, engaging, and multi-sensory art pieces that allow for engagement by children and users of all abilities.

Exterior Inspiration and Style

1. **Plaza, walkways, and main entrances are key exterior locations for art.** Community members would like art to be centered in the facility's primary access points including the walkways and plaza approaching the main entrance, around the main entrance on the outside walls and awnings, and at the entry points into the building to ensure a strong first impression and an excitement about engaging with the new facility.

2. **Combine visual impact and maintenance.** The community wants exterior art that offers both a significant visual impact and can be long-lasting through weather and vandalism.

3. **Consider the connection to the surrounding park.** Community members emphasized the importance of the building's exterior connection to the surrounding park and using the exterior art to integrate and connect the building to the rest of the park.

4. **Sculptural seating was highly rated.** Ranking highest for the exterior, many appreciated the idea of sculptural seating to enhance the plaza and create both functional and artful outdoor spaces. Seating should also be inclusive and ADA compliant with different options available.

5. **Multi-color glass, 3D mosaics, and mural panels also ranked high.** These styles create a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere through their color palettes, reaction with light, and expression of diverse patterns.

Interior Inspiration and Style

1. **Main entry, main lobby, and other high traffic areas are priorities for interior art.** Prioritize art in high traffic areas of the building such as the main entry and lobby and major circulation transitions.

2. **Multicolor glass and light-catching artwork are inspiring.** Multicolor glass and/or light-catching artwork elements can bring energy, movement, and colorful reflections into the building. Many specifically noted that colorful, light-reactive art is essential for providing warmth and energy in interior spaces during Portland's dark winter months.

3. **Murals that can provide local storytelling.** Use art murals of different types to tell local stories and showcase North Portland people, places, and experiences that represent the diverse cultures of the North Portland peninsula.