

North Portland Aquatic Center
Focus Group Community Engagement Cycle 2
August 19, 2025

Summary of Focus Group Preferences

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1. Purpose and Process

The planning and design process for the new North Portland Aquatic Center at Northgate Park has progressed through a series of community engagement cycles designed to ensure that community voices play a central role in shaping the project. In March 2025, participants in the first engagement cycle reviewed preliminary site concepts and provided feedback that directly informed the next stage of design. Building on this input, along with guidance from other key stakeholders, Scott Edwards Architects developed three schematic design options, which were presented during the second engagement cycle.

NPAC Affinity Focus Groups

- Low-Income/Immigrant
- Youth/Competitive Swim
- Black/BIPOC
- LGBTQIA+
- Seniors/Disabled People

At the August 19 Focus Group session, members of the NPAC affinity focus groups shared their impressions and insights on site layout, building exteriors and interiors, and outdoor amenities, further refining the vision for a community-centered aquatic facility. The three schematic design options presented were:

- **Design Option 1: Heart of the Park**
- **Design Option 2: Meet Me at Geneva**
- **Design Option 3: Beacon in the Park**

Design Areas

- Site Design
- Building Exterior Design
- Building Interior Layout
- Outdoor Amenities

This second engagement cycle provided participants with more detailed materials to review, allowing them to evaluate the site organization, architectural design, and outdoor amenity layouts across the three options. Community members were asked to consider the design areas and criteria associated with each option, then share their preferences regarding how these design areas were organized and laid out on the Northgate Park site.

The second engagement session was conducted as a two-hour facilitated virtual meeting on August 19, 2025, with 28 participants representing five Affinity Focus Groups. The session included:

- A project update and overview of the community engagement activities to date
- A presentation of the three final schematic design options
- Small group discussions focused on feedback for each option and its specific design areas
- A live poll to capture participants' real-time rankings for the design options

During the small group discussions, which lasted approximately one hour, participants shared their values, likes, and concerns regarding each of the three design options. These

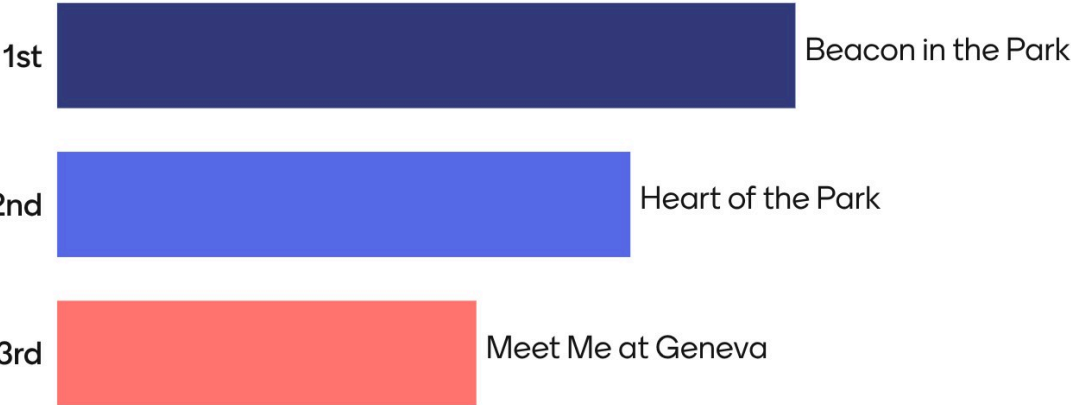
conversations offered valuable insights into community preferences and the trade-offs related to site layout, as well as exterior and interior design, including the placement and connectivity of the outdoor amenities. At the end of the discussions, all 28 participants completed a live poll to rank their preferred design options, providing a clear snapshot of community preferences after thorough and focused discussions.

The results of the live poll are presented below.

2. Preferred Design Option Live Poll Results

After discussing the three site schematic design options during small groups, the Focus Group participants ranked their preferred design options in order of choice. We received responses from all 28 of the participants who participated in the August 19 session. Below are the results from the CE Cycle #2 live poll.

Rank your choice in order of preference.



Participant Voting Results

A total of **28 participants** cast votes to rank the park designs. The results are as follows:

- **Beacon in the Park** – Ranked **#1** by 19 out of 28 participants
- **Heart of the Park** – Ranked **#2** by 13 out of 28 participants
- **Meet Me at Geneva** – Ranked **#3** by 11 out of 28 participants

Summary

Beacon in the Park received the highest number of first-place rankings. Heart of the Park was most frequently identified as the second choice and Meet Me at Geneva was most often ranked third.

North Portland Aquatic Park Focus Group Participants



3. Desired Outcomes and Common Themes for the Preferred Design Option

From selecting a site to preliminary programming and conceptual design, the **North Portland Aquatic Center** project design has continually evolved in response to key stakeholders and community feedback. The Portland Parks & Recreation’s (PP&R) engagement process has invited community participation at each stage of the design development, ensuring that residents serve as active stakeholders in shaping the design.

Through this collaborative process, community members have continuously shared their aspirations and goals for this new development with the project team. Desired community outcomes established early on have guided each phase of the project’s design process and have become more specific as the design advances. In other words, as the design develops, the community becomes more specific about the design elements that are most important to them.

During the **March engagement session**, the community provided feedback on three initial conceptual designs. By the **August session**, these concepts had evolved into three distinct schematic designs. While the community’s core outcomes developed in CE Cycle 1 remained consistent, their design priorities became more refined in response to specific design options presented in our successive engagement sessions.

Desired Outcomes from Community Engagement Cycle #1

Based on focus group participant feedback, the following desired outcomes were identified as desirable for all concept design options in CE Cycle 1:

	Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities		Accessibility
	Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility		Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations
	Safety and Security		Parking Lot/Traffic

Common Themes from August 19 Focus Group

During the August 19 Focus Group session, several more specific desired design outcomes emerged that evolved from the earlier general outcomes developed in CE Cycle 1. These updated themes remain consistent with the earlier outcomes developed in CE Cycle 1, as indicated by the CE Cycle 1 outcome icons shown to the left of each new and refined outcome listed below. However, the latest outcomes are more detailed, reflecting the evolution of the design process.

For example, the earlier goal of creating a welcoming, inclusive aquatic center has evolved into the community’s desire for a **highly visible landmark featuring a front entrance on Fessenden—the major street—paired with an inviting plaza that is fully accessible to people of all abilities.**

While each group contributed unique insights and experiences, the following key themes stood out overall as desirable outcomes for the preferred design option:



Visible Community Landmark

Most participants emphasized the importance of locating the building prominently along Fessenden Street, to establish a recognizable community landmark while providing clear visibility and accessibility to the main entrance for a variety of users.



Compact Site Layout and Preservation of Open Green Space and Existing Amenities

Many participants expressed a preference for a compact building design and plaza layout to preserve open green space and maintain as many park amenities as possible.



Tree Preservation

Some participants underscored the importance of protecting existing trees. Supporters of the *Heart of the Park* design favored its building placement set back from Fessenden to maintain the tree canopy, while many others accepted removing trees to achieve the more compact layout of *Beacon in the Park* that preserves other park features such as open green space for a regulation soccer field, tennis courts, and the playground.



Centralized Outdoor Amenities

Participants emphasized the importance of a centralized layout of outdoor amenities that preserves open sightlines throughout the park. They stressed the need to avoid placing amenities in more isolated areas that might invite undesirable activity, ensuring the facility and its amenities remain safe and welcoming for all users.



Main Entrance and Parking Lot Accessibility and Safety

Because most visitors will be walking, rolling, or taking public transit from Fessenden Street, participants placed strong emphasis on a safe, accessible, and welcoming main entrance. Key concerns included pedestrian safety and traffic management along Fessenden. One affinity group suggested shifting the primary parking entrance to Geneva Street to avoid congestion and experience a calmer approach to the facility. Other recommendations included:

- Locate bus stops as close as possible to the main entrance
- Install crossing lights near bus stops and pedestrian crossings along Fessenden
- Ensure that the main entrance is accessible for all users, minimizing the distance from the parking lot, bus stops, and front door plaza entrance
- Balance the quantity of on-site parking while anticipating Portland Bureau of Transportation's North Portland in Motion plan, which will have street parking impacts on Fessenden



Universal Accessibility in the Building

Some participants underscored the need for smooth, inclusive access from the parking lot and street into the building and throughout the facility. Priorities included barrier-free entry to pools and changing rooms, as well as ample elevator capacity and slide access. Ensuring that people of all ages and mobility levels feel welcome and able to use all the areas of the Aquatic Center was identified as a top priority by at least two affinity groups.



User Functionality: Spectator Seating Preferences

There was strong support for pool-deck seating for both pools, but especially for the recreational pool. Participants emphasized its importance for the following reasons:

- Parents and caregivers ensuring youth safety and well-being
- Mature swimmers who may need rest breaks outside of the pools
- Competitive events requiring ample deck space for swimmers, teams, and spectators

While deck-level seating was widely viewed as essential, many also were excited about adding a second-level spectator area for improved viewing and flexibility.



Hybrid “Beacon in the Park” and “Heart of the Park”

Many participants favored a hybrid approach combining features from Beacon in the Park and Heart of the Park, specifically:

- Compact site and building layout from *Beacon in the Park*
- Landmark building presence on Fessenden of *Beacon in the Park*
- Signature glass corner feature from *Beacon in the Park*
- Preservation of green space and tennis courts from *Beacon in the Park*
- Distinctive architectural building character of *Heart of the Park*
- Second level spectator seating and additional party rooms from *Heart of the Park*
- Separated competitive swim entrance and drop-off placement from *Heart of the Park*
- Pavilion placement from *Heart of the Park*

Clear sightlines from the parking lot to the main entrance and primary parking lot access off Fessenden, were features valued in both designs.

Desired Outcomes for All Design Options



Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance & Amenities



Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility



Safety and Security



Accessibility



Connected Outdoor Amenities/
Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations



Parking Lot/Traffic

4. Design Option Preferences 1st, 2nd, and 3rd

Preferred Design Option #1: Beacon in the Park

The first choice of a majority of the Focus Group participants was *Beacon in the Park*. They highlighted several reasons for preferring this design option:

- Design favored for its site placement, which creates a strong building presence and statement along the main street and avoids traffic on residential street.
- Appreciation for how the building layout optimizes the existing park, preserving more green space to accommodate a full-sized soccer field and maintains the tennis courts rather than converting them into parking.
- Overwhelming preference for locating the main parking lot entrance off of Fessenden.
- Favored the building design for its compact layout, high visibility along Fessenden that creates a strong sense of arrival, and a striking northwest-corner glass storefront offering an inviting view of the recreation pool to passersby.
- Preferred the centralized outdoor amenity layouts in *Beacon in the Park* and *Heart of the Park*, which participants felt would discourage loitering and vandalism while maintaining clear sightlines throughout the park to improve safety.
- Appreciated the clear sightlines and shorter walking distances from the parking lot to the main entrance, viewing these as key safety and accessibility features in both *Beacon in the Park* and *Heart of the Park* design options.



Participant Comments

"I think basically... moving the aquatic building all the way up closer to the street allows for so much more maximization of the whole space."

"...It's kind of like this Beacon in the Park combines elements of the other two that are positive in my opinion... Before I didn't like Beacon in the Park and now it seems to be like it looks really good."

Remaining Concerns

- The most notable concern was that some participants felt this design removed too many trees, 21 in total, 20 of which are classified as “nuisance trees per the City’s Title 11 Tree Code. However, many participants who favored other aspects of the design considered the tradeoff worthwhile to bring the building closer to the main street.
- Concern was raised about the community pavilion’s location in the south plaza. Several participants felt it was too close to the building and suggested relocating it to the east end of the open green space, like the pavilion location in the *Heart of the Park* design option.
- Participants felt strongly that spectator seating needed to be added on the main pool deck for the recreation pool. This preference will be considered while balancing operational requirements.
- One affinity group expressed strong preference for zero-depth entry into the recreation pool to enhance accessibility, rather than relying solely on ramps and lifts.

Preferred Design Option #2: Heart of the Park

Although ranked second overall, participants identified several compelling reasons for liking the *Heart of the Park* design option as well, with an emphasis on safety, functionality, and distinctive character:

- The placement of the main parking lot was viewed as an advantage, minimizing crime risks and reducing impacts on existing trees. Its more compact design was also seen as offering additional safety benefits.
- The layout of the competitive swim entrance layout was strongly preferred by at least two groups, as it provided quick access from the parking lot while maintaining separation from the general public’s main entrance — a priority for hosting competitive swim meets. This separation was viewed as effective without compromising other design areas.
- The pavilion location and centralized amenities were seen as practical and supportive of safety by discouraging loitering and vandalism.
- Clear sightlines from the parking lot to the main entrance were considered important for safety, a feature valued in both *Heart of the Park* and *Beacon in the Park*.
- Elevated spectator seating was appreciated, particularly for competitive events, though participants emphasized the need for pool deck seating for the recreation pool so parents could supervise young children.



Participant Comments

- “I can imagine the image of this slide coming out of the building and going back in being incorporated into t-shirts, people they’re going to be excited about that.”*
- “A couple of really positive things I like about this . . . outdoor site design. I like that the pavilion is away from the actual aquatic center so that you could have two separate activities going on... And I like that the plaza extends down behind the pavilion. It just seems like it makes it more cohesive.”*

- The external water slide was described as a unique, “instagrammable” feature that could help establish the Aquatic Center as a landmark.
- Overall, some participants specifically favored *Heart of the Park* for its minimal impact on existing trees, its more compact parking lot, pavilion location, the elevated spectator seating, and iconic water slide.

Remaining Concerns

- While the external water slide was seen as a distinctive and appealing feature, participants raised concerns about its long-term durability as well as potential security and vandalism issues.
- Significant concerns emerged about the practicality of a two-story design dependent on a single elevator, particularly during busy competitions.
- Although there was support for second-floor seating, participants emphasized the need for additional seating on the recreation pool’s main deck so parents can easily supervise young children.

Preferred Design Option #3: Meet Me at Geneva

As the third-ranked choice, a small number of participants felt that the *Meet Me at Geneva* option offered preferred benefits, primarily better traffic flow and parking lot accessibility:

- A few participants preferred a main parking lot entrance from Geneva, seeing it as a way to avoid congestion on busy N. Fessenden and provide easier access from the east, south, and north.
- There was a preference for two entrances to the parking lot with this design option.
- Suggestions were made for a hybrid design that combined the building aesthetic and layout of *Heart of the Park* with the parking configuration of *Meet Me at Geneva*.



Remaining Concerns

- Many participants worried that a parking lot entrance on Geneva would negatively impact nearby neighbors and create unnecessary disruption. This led most groups to prefer a main parking lot entrance from Fessenden instead.
- Some participants suggested that the pavilion in this option was too isolated and disconnected, making it less accessible and potentially attracting more loitering and vandalism.
- Concerns were raised that the main entrance was set too far from the primary parking lot, and that its location could create congestion on competition swim days since the first building entrance from the parking lot was the competitive swimmers' entrance.
- Participants felt that the walking distance from the parking lot to the front door could pose accessibility challenges for seniors and differently abled individuals.

Participant Comments

"I like this one. Probably just because the flow of traffic on Fessenden. You can come to this parking lot multiple ways. You can come down Wall from Lombard, or you can come from Fessenden. I just think it's better and it won't be such a heavy traffic load there on Fessenden. I also take the bus too, so I'm thinking how the bus would be stopped up from the cars driving into the parking lot off Fessenden."

5. Participant Feedback for the Project and Design Team

The Focus Group members identified the following areas for further development by the design team.

Site Design

- Balance the park impacts with the quantity of on-site parking availability and explore potential overflow parking solutions.
- Explore traffic calming and mitigation measures along Fessenden to support safe access to the site.

Building Exterior Design

- Incorporate popular glass corner feature from the “Beacon in the Park” design into the “Heart in the Park” design.
- Explore maintenance and security needs to support the popular external slide feature.

Building Interior Layout

- Explore the possibility of on-deck seating at the recreation pool.
- List out specific design features to be included in the “all user locker room suite” to ensure it provides adequate privacy and functionality for all intended user groups.
- Ensure accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges in the elevated spectator seating area.
- Manage overcrowding of deck space during swim meets.
- Evaluate the elevator’s capacity and usage in the two-story option to determine if a second elevator is necessary to avoid long wait times during peak periods.
- Assess how the operational requirements for different activities, such as water aerobics, affect the shape, depth profile and water temperature of the leisure pool.

Additional Comments

Since the August Focus Group engagement session, PP&R has confirmed select design components and collaborated with the design team to address some of the questions that were raised by participants. Key updates include the following:

- A walking distance diagram was completed and will be shared with the focus group members to address their inquiries.
- The tennis court will remain in the design going forward.
- In response to the concerns about the loss of a rugby field at Northgate Park, PP&R is actively developing a new rugby field at Delta Park.
- Other issues that have arisen will be addressed by the design team, including the configuration of spectator seating in relation to the starting blocks in the competitive swimming pool area.

Appendix

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- Participant Comments on Preferred Design Options 1st, 2nd, and 3rd
- Participant Comments Relevant for All Designs

Preferred Design Option #1: Beacon in the Park

Participant Comments

- “Yeah I mean it’d be awesome if all those trees didn’t have to be removed . . . but I really like Beacon in the Park.”
- “I like Beacon in the Park”, the design of it, where the slide is. I like those windows and then the other side is the opening.”
- “If we were to keep 10-20 parking spaces here (in place of tennis courts). . . closer to the toddler playground, then we could have the main parking lot a bit smaller.”
- “I like how it has preserved the existing playground and the tennis courts. There’s a soccer field there. It just feels more community based.”
- “One thing that’s really prominent for me is . . . that front view where it has the open window view of the slide and inside the pool. That really caught my eye.”
- Beacon in the Park seems to have everything centrally located and easy to find.”
- “I honestly agree with the site design and the exterior, especially having the trees being cut where they are and by the road having the windows more open so you can see from the road (Fessenden). I think that’s pretty cool. And more space within the park, I feel that’s also important. . . I overall just like the exterior of this design.”
- “I also (like) how the main entrance would be visible from Fessenden, so it’s easier to find.”
- “So, I like that there’s going to be less confusion of people walking to know which entry to go into because . . . by situating the parking lot in that spot (you have clear sightlines to the front door).”
- “I like where the parking lot is situated again across from that front entry, some line of sight, but also looks like a very welcoming plaza where things are going on and people would be there. So, it’s a big plus being around the street.”
- “It’s easy to find a nice tree line between Clarendon early learning center and the parking lot. It’s not like they look out and see a parking lot.”
- “So, I think it’s a plus that it (the tennis court) can stay there, and then they (can) worry about keeping it fixed later on.”
- “So that’s a huge thing . . . this is going to be such a grand space that I think those things (the tennis courts and full-size soccer field) are such a bonus in addition to the (aquatic center).”
- “I think that basically moving the building, moving the aquatic building all the way up closer to the street allows for so much more maximization of the whole space.”
- “I feel like this (design) was my least favorite one last time, and it seems like that’s where it was across the board, but I’m seeing a lot of switches here.”
- “The only thing I didn’t care for much is just the placement of the splash pad because it feels kind of crowded right there in the competition entry area.”
- “Okay, that’s cool (the NW corner exterior building window). Yeah, I like that.”

- “I also agree with the first (Heart in the Park) and the third (Beacon in the Park) layouts . . . I do think maybe incorporating (the best of) both would be kind of cool, and being able to find a fine line in between would be really nice.”
- “When we have those kids taking lessons out front, they’re looking through that glass. I strongly hope we have glass.”
- “I’m going to jump on the not a fan of the larger lawn bandwagon. They (young people) learn and they create in wild lands between the trees and spaces, not on manicured soccer fields. I think providing a soccer field big enough for whatever the smaller kids, but I don’t know that striving for a high school size soccer field in this project is appropriate.”
- “One thing that I will say in favor of this building is even though it removes the tree canopy and pushes it closer to Fessenden, I like that view, that image of coming up Fessenden and seeing the open building (corner) there (NW Corner) . . . that’s very attractive. And again, Instagramable, it’s sort of more iconic.”
- “One thing I was going to say about this one, the pavilion is right up against the building, I mean it depends on what it is going to be used for, but it sort of puts whatever event is going on in the pavilion at the same time as a competition.”
- “Now I’m getting fussy, but here’s the splash pad (too close to the building) with a bunch of kids playing in it and then here come all the competition swimmers trying to get past the splash pad to get into the competition entry. That seems a little challenging.”
- “Just the lack of trees. It doesn’t feel Portland.”
- “I have a question about the community rooms. . . Can you only get into them from inside the building or do they have a public entrance such that the room could be used when the building’s not open?”
- “One more comment about the space of the lawn (open green space)—I don’t know if this has come up a lot, but it’s (the park) a big fireworks park, and so having lawn behind the building seems like it might be safer in some ways.”
- “I like the way Beacon in the Park, the peak goes on the window on the outside (NW corner). I like that building.”
- “If I’m driving to a place that I’ve never been to before, if you’re going to have competitions and all that, I think it’s great to have it (main parking lot access) on a main street rather than Geneva.”
- “I really like the amount of grass area that is left with Beacon in the Park just because it accommodates a higher level, high school soccer field.”
- “Yeah, I like that (presence on the street). I think that’s nice. I know you’d have to take out the trees but then you’ve also got more natural light going in on that side.”
- The Beacon . . . I think it looks better from the street. The other two are kind of boring, not that inviting.”

Preferred Design Option #2: Heart of the Park

Participant Comments

- “I like that the splash pad was moved to the south and it looks like it’s in a kind of a safer area as far as cars driving by and whatnot.”
- “I like the way the competition pool, recreation pool are configured in this one.”
- “I’m thinking about the soccer field, and how is the community being served if this is minimized. A lot of youth and families go to this park to play soccer.”
- “I’m just thinking about the accessibility to families and students . . . and just safety in regard to the amount of cars going back and forth in the area.”
- “I think crossing lights (for Fessenden) would be very, very useful in the area.”
- “I think if we can have more space for the parking it would be nice.”
- “I figure for a lot of parents, they’d probably want a place to sit, especially when they’re watching their kids so maybe we should add some seating . . . right next to the pool, that way they’ll be able to directly look at their kids.”
- “I’m thinking of the Columbia Pool just when I used to take my kids to swimming classes I felt comfortable being close by and being able to sit in one of those plastic chairs versus being away in a second level completely distance feels more unsafe as a parent.”
- “When I go to Matt Dishman, a lot of the parents that have their kids at the rec pool are near the pool and Dishman has benches there. They also have second story spectator seating, but all the moms and dads are in the benches that are close to the rec pool and that gets very crowded.”
- “I do like the splash pad, the location of it . . . I just can’t tell if there’s a big enough buffer between parking.”
- “I like the area for the buses and the competition entry. I feel like that’s a good addition to have multiple angles for entry and just being able to have more accessibility.”
- “I like the orientation of the competition pool. It looks like those are rooms below the pool (spectator area).”
- “I also like that the competition pool is back a little. I like it when you walk in (the main entry) and you’re kind of seeing the rec pool, I think it’s more inviting to people who are going to come in and use the facility . . . I think it’s a more welcoming entry into the facility.”
- “My question is, so we have the 350 seating on top, what’s our deck space look like and is there any connected outdoor space we can overflow to say in summer months or what’s our deck capacity? That seems pretty tight.”
- “So, one issue to think about is we run these (competitions) under a SafeSport mechanism where we don’t allow cameras behind the blocks. I would like to think that none of them (kids, competitors) are using their cell phones, but I think that’s going to probably be a concern.”

- “Based on that (SafeSport concerns) and this kind of configuration, I would probably want the starting side to be on the other side of the pool.” (Heart of the Park) – Grp 2
- (Related to the multi-purpose rooms) “So you could probably have some overflow place for people if we’ve got kind of a live stream so people can see what’s happening.
- “I think I really like the vertical exterior windows. I think that’s really cool because some of the (other) renderings look like big spaceships.”
- “I do like the (slide) right off it (the main entrance) too. It makes it look really fun.”
- “I’m agreeing that the first (Heart of the Park) and the third (Beacon in the Park) are similar in their features. The one thing I like (in Heart of the Park) is like that competition (entry location) when there is competition that’s not every day, but when it is, it’s just away from (the main entry). There’s no crowding.”
- “So, what I found myself liking about this option is that the parking lot is tucked away enough from the street to I would imagine (it would) influence the type of behavior that is happening when it comes to abandoned vehicles and unfortunately some types of criminal activity, which also is pretty regularly happening along that portion of Geneva Avenue that butts up against the park.” (Heart of the Park) – Grp 3
- “I really liked that the recreational lawn was very accessible, easily accessed from McKenna and Berkeley. Loved the bus stops as well as keeping the playground that was just built out. The other thing I think I enjoyed was converting (tennis courts) to parking over there on Clarendon. As someone who’s in the area pretty frequently those tennis courts aren’t getting too much use.”
- “A couple of really positive things I like about this . . . outdoor site design. I like that the pavilion is away from the actual aquatic center so that you could have two separate activities going on. I think in one of the other designs (Beacon in the Park) it’s right up against the building. So, it (this location) kind of provides for multiple activities to be happening consecutively and it’s pretty close to the little parking lot. I think they moved the splash pad in this design. It feels like it’s more part of the recreation field area than close to the parking lot. And just thinking about the plaza feels more organic in this design than the more linear ones in the other design options. And I like that the plaza extends down behind the pavilion. It just seems like it makes it more cohesive.”
- “I really like the idea of the spectators being elevated and looking down on the races. I think it’s an amenity that . . . if you were up there, you’d think, oh, this is cool. . . So, I really like that particular amenity (in) this building.”
- “I’m really intrigued by the slide coming out of the building and then going back into the building. I think that’s super cool, and I think it just adds a really fun element. . . I can imagine the image of the slide coming out of the building and going back in being incorporated into t-shirts, people they’re going to be excited about that.”
- “I’m thinking as someone that did many, many competitions indoor and outdoor as a swimmer, what sticks out the most to me is where the spectator seating is. . . It’s better to me when spectators are on the second level . . . because it creates a lot of deck crowding when everybody’s down there. But if you’re going to have a lot of kids meets there, having the spectators on the first level on the deck level will be better

because if you have a five-year-old that you need to get to the blocks, you're going to want to be right there."

- "I wonder about the slide being on the outside. I mean, I like it. I would buy a t-shirt with it on it, but I just think of vandalism and wear and tear with weather, things like that. How secure is it going to be?"
- "Make it (the slide) out of plexiglass. That'd be kind of cool. Then you could see when you're going down."
- "I like it (site plan) because it has the existing field in the back area and the playground untouched. I like the look of that for sure."
- "I don't want to be up high watching them (my kids) learn to swim. And I guarantee they don't want me up high either while they're in the water with a stranger that they get to know over this short time to swim, they don't want their parents up high and far away from them. Wherever their classes are taking place, they should have seating in that area."
- "Heart in the Park looks the nice, the roof looks the nicest."
- "Yeah, I agree. Heart in the Park seems so much more like it just says real community to me. Beacon in the Park looks a little bit more business, slightly industrial. And then, Meet Me at Geneva, I don't know, it's just not cute. I don't know any other words to say, it's just not cute to me. I really, really like the Heart in the Park design."
- "We have parents who sit and watch our kids and they would not necessarily want to go way upstairs and look down (from second floor spectator seating). So I'm thinking that (area) would be for competitions . . . so that's a plus for them."
- Well, it's interesting what you say about how crowded it gets (on the pool deck) and so I could see where it'd be nice for the spectators to be above that."
- "So I like the second-floor option because on Saturday at Dishman the swim team goes up there and finishes training. . . So I can see (how) having something like that would be a plus. And also the bigger party rooms. I think put 'em (Heart of the Park and Beacon in the Park) together, the two designs. That's a good idea."

Preferred Design Option #3: Meet Me at Geneva

Participant Comments

- “I don’t like the configuration of the parking lot off Geneva Avenue as far as being a good neighbor to the neighborhood there. I think it will disrupt that street having ... a large influx of traffic there.”
- “I don’t like the layout. It just seems so distant (from the front door) to the parking lot area.”
- “I’m not a fan (of the pavilion location). I would love for it to be closer to the aquatic center... not so pushed out.”
- “I like the linear plaza of this option and I do like how there’s that space of trees that’s in between the splash pad and the parking lot.”
- “I like how the parking lot on the bottom is connected to the field and the playground, so you have multiple options of what you want to do even if you’re not there for the aquatic center but you’re there to hang out and have fun.”
- “I’m not sure about the competition entry (location) right there though. It just feels like that can get really convoluted for a little bit or really crowded at certain points (on swim event days).”
- “I think I really liked the parking lot in front of the last one (Heart of the Park) because I also like the openness of the main entry (in that design). I feel like that was kind of a safety visual as people are going to their cars and coming from their cars, there’s a line of sight that I don’t see on this site view (Geneva entrance to main parking lot). You’re just kind of over there and that doesn’t feel quite as safe to me. I also like the competition area and how they were dropped off and where they went in and their entry and everything (in Heart of the Park). This one . . . looks like it could get real confusing.”
- “That line of sight for people coming from as many areas as possible, . . . that’s critical, and it’s a safety . . . issue or could become a safety issue.”
- “Is there anyone that has concerns about (this design) if someone was coming to visit the facility or kids have to meet there and they normally don’t swim there, and people going by on Fessenden and not knowing how to get to the main parking lot or how to get to the facility where the entrance is?”
- “Yeah, it does feel a little less, I would say inviting.”
- “Well . . . the thing that I noticed about this one in particular is that the pavilion is not adjacent, at least that I can tell, close to any parking. If someone’s loading out speakers, sound equipment, whatever they’re going to do, I’m not exactly sure how they’re going to do.”
- “What is maybe concerning about that is (a pavilion) and an open area that doesn’t connect to anything. And I could imagine maybe some criminal activity that some of the folks that live in the neighborhood, I could imagine that being a little bit of a hub for it, in that it’s kind of an island by itself.”

- “This one was my favorite coming into the meeting because I liked the parking being behind the building. And selfishly because I’m north of the park, I liked the idea of the field being so accessible, especially because my kids, my little kids are bizarrely like, no, the fields going to be gone. And I’m like, no, it’ll still be there. But I’ve completely went over to the first one (Heart of the Park) now.”
- “The field (open green space) currently gets very busy when it is kickball (season) or whatever sports ball people do.”
- “I like this one. Probably just because the flow of traffic on Fessenden. You can come to this parking lot multiple ways. You can come down Wall from Lombard, or you can come from Fessenden. I just think it’s better and it won’t be such a heavy traffic load there on Fessenden. I also take the bus too, so I’m thinking how the bus would be stopped up from the cars driving into the parking lot off Fessenden.”
- “It drives me crazy having to walk through the locker room to get to the pool. And that’s how it is right here, you have to walk through the locker room to get to the pool. . . So for example, people coming to watch meets and stuff, they have to walk through the locker rooms?”
- “I drove around there (on Geneva) just to see what it felt like and I really don’t like coming up that side street on Geneva (to access the park). I think it’s going to add a lot of traffic on that street. I wouldn’t appreciate it if I lived on that street and suddenly we had a bunch of cars coming up and down through there.”

Relevant Comments for All Designs

Participant Comments

- “Are the trees that they are going to be planting in the parking lot going to be getting so big where if a person wanted to hide, they could? Are there going to be so many trees that we have to (be) washing our cars due to the bird activities?”
- “So the majority of it (use of competition pool) will be practice, a lot of practice and lap swim scheduled. And the advantage of this is it basically doubles what we have at Dishman and Dishman still is also open. But during the high school season, basically Dec through mid-Feb, probably every Wed and Friday night there’ll be some sort of meet there.”
- “As far as large competitions, I imagine clubs would use those (the comp pool lanes). There’s usually a large competition early November and then another in the spring. But I think a facility like this might invite some additional competition and use and that’s where I’m kind of focused. I have 150, 200 swimmers, they all have parents, so I need a place to house 150 to 200 swimmers and another 300 people. So do I have the room to put those people somewhere? So that’s why I’m trying to maximize the space without overflowing too much into the rec pool. So (I’m advocating for) anything we can do to increase (holding space), even on the rec side.”
- “Because we have competitions, we’re going to have people from other communities and they many times have views about North Portland and I’m so glad they’re incorrect, but they won’t know until they come and see how nice it is.”
- “I’d like a little spot for a little three-piece band in there (on the pool deck) too.” (All Designs) – Grp 2
- “Jazz it up. This is a community thing. . . I just don’t want parents sitting up there. I want community. I want them to come out and say hey there’s a meet, let’s go check it out. . . that’s why I want an inviting and large space because that’s what’s going to generate the interest.”
- “If parking on Fessenden is going to be removed, then this parking lot is going to be very important because there are a lot of abandoned cars, RVs, stolen cars, but the residents over there still use that area. So if parking on Fessenden is going to be taken away, I hate that it’s going to be taken away. I don’t think that’s fair. I don’t think that’s right. And for an expanded bike lane.”
- “You’re going to have to keep in mind that there may be people who may park in the parking lot who are not attending the community center but they’re just in the neighborhood. They are going to a family member’s home. So that’s something to consider.”
- “I think the fact that we are going to take away parking from the neighborhood, that’s a problem.”
- “What power do we have if we as a collective are saying we do not want that whole entire street parking to be removed?”

- “Are the showers in there (inside the building) private like East Portland and Mt Scott? Matt Dishman, I think is one of the few where everyone’s just out there.”
- “All of the pools I’ve ever taken my kids to learn to swim, the area for the parents to sit to watch their kids is limited. But I think it’s important that the parent or guardian, whoever’s bringing the kids, they should have space to sit.”
- “There should be a designated area for them to be able to sit instead of going over on the other side of the pool and your kids (are) in a lesson on the other side of the pool because there’s no seating and you can’t see them.”
- “It’s just not for the parents, it’s also for the child’s psychological safety. If you have a 6-year-old or a 3-year-old doing swim lessons for the first time, they want to be close to their parents. It’s for everyone’s safety.”
- “Also for the elderly (seating on the recreation pool deck) in case they need to stop and sit down if they’re not feeling well, or something like that.” (All Designs) – Grp 4
- “Is there going to be zero entry? At East Portland and even in Vancouver at Marshall Pool, zero entry is good because people don’t have to ask for help with a lift. They don’t have to depend on the lift. I wouldn’t want a pool built now without zero entry. Zero entry should be definitely on the plan, at least for the rec pool.”
- “To spend all this money on a pool and not have zero entry or something, it needs to be state of the art and I just think that should be definitely considered.”
- “We have big water aerobic classes. So where are swimming lessons going to be (going) right now (when) we’re jammed in the a pool? We’re jammed at East Portland, even though they have two pools. The water aerobics ends up in the lap pool. And so this needs to be looked at to accommodate our large water aerobics classes.”
- “I’m thinking about people walking to that front door if they had to walk, if they park and walk, let’s say, and they’re on an assisted device, how far are they walking from the lot to the door. . . . It might be somebody with a bad hip who doesn’t have an assist device. So, I’m looking at how far do they have to walk from the parking lot if the drive to the building.”
- “We see a lot of older people, as you know, that are starting to lose their vision, who can’t drive anymore and they’re fearful of riding the bus. So the use the para transit. We’re getting a lot of older people, a lot of new users who are older adults. So, loading and unloading (areas are important).”
- “One thing I’m thinking of is that if somebody’s coming from the east and getting dropped off by the bus, is there going to be a crossing light or something there because Fessenden gets a fair amount of traffic.”
- “It’s nice if you can get everything you still want sized on the first floor. That would be ideal. And I guess the question is what are you going to lose if you don’t do a second floor or are you going to lose anything.”