North Portland Aquatic Center
Community Engagement Cycle 1: Focus Groups
March 12, 2025

Summary of Focus Group Preferences

Design Phase - CE Cycle #1 Purpose and Process

The first Design Phase Focus Group engagement cycle aimed to bring affinity group participants together to provide input on three site design options created by Scott Edwards Architects for the new North Portland Aquatic Center on the Northgate Park site. Community members evaluated various elements of each site design option and shared their preferences regarding the organization of these components.

The engagement process consisted of a two-hour facilitated discussion with 29 participants from five Affinity Focus Groups. This virtual session took place on March 12, 2025, and included a project update, a community engagement update, a summary of the work accomplished in the past year since the Focus Groups last met, a presentation of the three site design concepts, small group discussions, and a live poll.

During the 55-minute small group discussions, participants expressed their opinions on the design components they liked or disliked among the three site design options. At the end of the session, a live poll was conducted to allow participants to share their top choice reflecting their preferred design site design option in real time after in-depth discussions. Although a few Focus Group participants had to leave early, the live poll collected responses from 26 of the 29 participants. The results of the live poll are shown below.

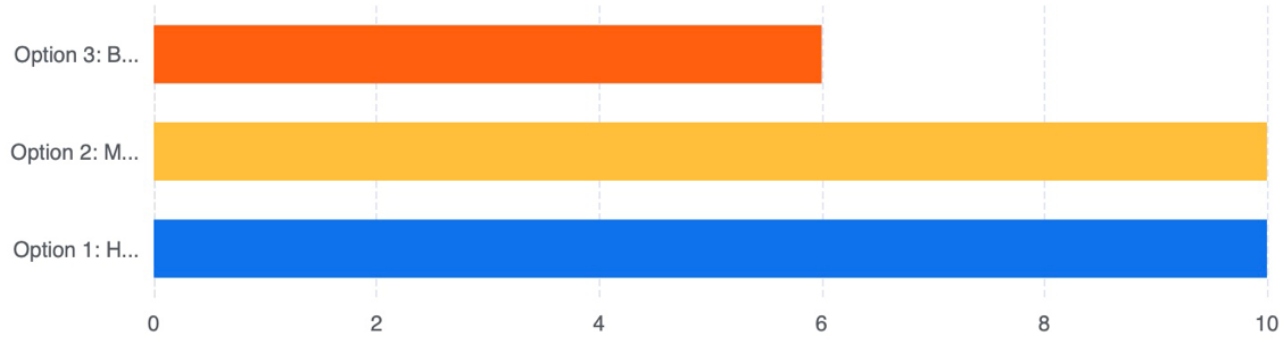
NPAC Preferred Option Live Poll Results

After discussing the three site design options during small groups, the Focus Group participants chose their preferred site option. We received responses from 26 participants in total. Below are the results from the CE Cycle #1 live poll.

NPAC Preferred Site Option Poll

1. Which site concept do you like best? (Single choice)

(26/26) 100% answered



Options	Responses
Option 1: Heart of the Park	10/26 (38%)
Option 2: Meet Me at Geneva	10/26 (38%)
Option 3: Beacon in the Park	6/26 (23%)

Focus Groups' Desired Outcomes for Any Design Option

Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities

- Participants preferred designs that prominently feature a main entrance and community plaza visible from Fessenden Street, which would enhance visibility and accessibility. Many envisioned a vibrant park where they see the community engaging in activities such as using the splash pad, attending events at the pavilion, and enjoying the views from the main entrance into the park.

Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility

- Participants stressed the importance of designing the pavilion and open green spaces to support a diverse range of community uses and activities. These include live performances, fitness activities/classes, community gatherings and events, pick-up recreational activities, and picnicking.

Safety and Security

- One of the key concerns for participants is the location of the splash pad being too close to the main street or the parking lot. Many suggest installing a protective barrier or moving it further into the plaza or park to prevent children from running into the street or parking lot.
- Several participants emphasized that quality lighting is vital for creating a safe and welcoming community park.
- Clear visibility is essential for the park, with no hidden corners, to promote transparency and ensure everything inside and around the park is easily visible.
- Participants expressed concerns about safely directing bus riders and pedestrians across N Fessenden. Several individuals mentioned the need for a traffic signal to allow people to cross safely from the bus stop on the north side of Fessenden across to the park and Aquatic Center.
- For bike riders, the bike parking in the plaza should be in a location that is visible from inside the building to prevent theft or tampering.

Accessibility

- Participants emphasized the importance of having a bus stop located near the front entrance.
- They expressed a preference for making entrances and pathways into and through the park as flat as possible, avoiding stairs, and ensuring that ramps are designed to provide flat access.
- It is crucial to have designated drop-off areas near the front entrance where LIFT and other vehicles can safely drop-off seniors and people experiencing disabilities.
- Participants expressed the need to clearly distinguish entry points for community and competitive swim users.

Connected Outdoor Amenities/
Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations

- Focus group participants preferred a connected layout for outdoor amenities to enhance visibility, transparency, safety, and community use. They wanted the community plaza and splash pad visible from the park entrance and visually connected to the other amenities and open green space. Concerns were raised about the splash pad's proximity to the Aquatic Center entrance and parking lot for safety reasons. While shade was important for comfort in the plaza, excessive shade over the splash pad might decrease its appeal.

Parking Lot/Traffic

- Participants frequently shared the importance of considering traffic flow, parking accessibility, LIFT and bus drop-off areas, and appropriate access for various user groups, including competitors and recreational users. This approach will help make traffic movement safer and more efficient for everyone.

Site Option I – Heart of the Park

Overview

Participants liked several aspects of this design option, including:

- The location of the main entrance to the Aquatic Center off N. Fessenden better announces the facility to the main street and is close to bus stops, main street sidewalks, and bike paths.

- The community plaza and splash pad are centrally located on the site, also along N. Fessenden. These amenities create excitement and visibility around the Center, allowing passersby to see through the site clearly.

- The visible and physical connectivity of all key design components, including the Aquatic Center, community plaza, splash pad, and pavilion.

Site Option 1: Heart of the Park

- The parking lot is strategically located to provide visibility to the Aquatic Center's main entrance while retaining a roughly 100' wide buffer zone of undisturbed trees and grass between the Clarendon Early Learning Center and the parking area.

- The open green space located behind and adjacent to the Aquatic Center connects seamlessly to the other play areas in the southern part of the park.

- A larger and more versatile open green space area that accommodates a variety of use, with the pavilion placed in an accessible location connected to the green space and the plaza.

Key Strengths Identified for Design Option 1– Heart of the Park:

Main Entrance on Fessenden

- Many comments strongly preferred the main entrance on Fessenden, citing improved safety, better access to transportation modes, and a more visible, welcoming approach.

Green Space Location

- The open green space behind and south of the Aquatic Center was praised, particularly for its sunny location and lack of obstructions between the playground and the Aquatic Center, making it safer for children.

Accessibility to Parking/Bus Stops

- The location of the bus stop and parking lot near the facility was positively received, with comments highlighting convenience and easy access for people using public transit and driving.

Participants expressed their main concerns regarding this option, which were:

- The location of the splash pad raised concerns for some participants. They believed it was too close to the main street and the parking lot entrance, making it unsafe for young children to play there.
- There may be potential congestion when entering and exiting the site from N. Fessenden.

Key Weaknesses Identified for Design Option 1– Heart of the Park:

Safety of Splash Pad Location

- There were concerns about the location of the splash pad and its proximity to the street and parking lot, fearing that children could accidentally run into traffic or the parking lot.

Accessibility from the South End of Site

- There was one comment that the main entrance being focused on N Fessenden made the front door less accessible for pedestrians entering from the south end of the site.

Relocation of the Bus Stop

- There were a few comments that the move of the existing bus stop from the corner may not be convenient for existing users, and might disrupt routines and accessibility for some neighborhood people.

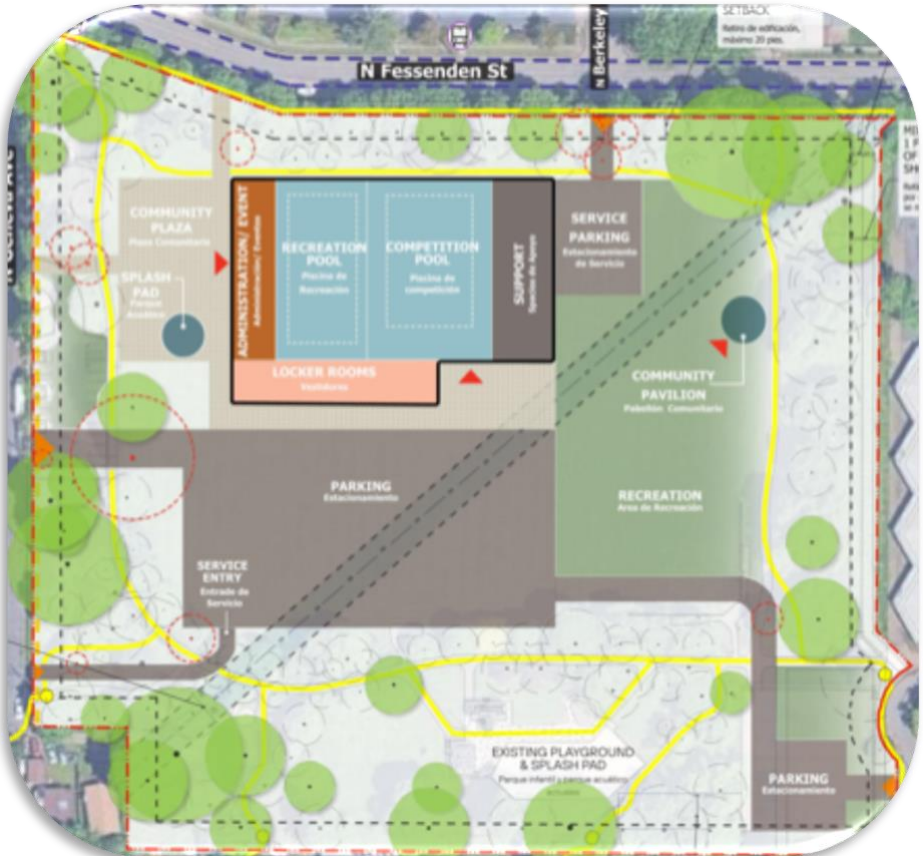
Site Option 2 – Meet Me at Geneva

Overview

Participants shared the following preferences with this option:

- Some participants preferred the main parking lot entrance and exit on N Geneva because they felt it would be less congested and more accessible than N Fessenden, particularly during peak times like competitive swimming events.

- Participants interested in competitive swimming felt this option provides better overall parking accessibility and a more convenient drop-off layout for both the main community user entrance and the competitive swim user entrance.



Site Option 2: Meet Me at Geneva

- Some participants viewed the location of the splash pad and community plaza in the northwest corner of the site positively. They believed this design would create a safer splash pad play environment for children, away from the busy street and parking lot.

- A few participants liked the location of the open green space being more prominent from N Fessenden. They believed it would create a separate and distinct open green area for users of the pavilion away from the community plaza and Aquatic Center. Additionally, they thought it could provide open park space next to the Clarendon Early Learning Center, enhancing their accessibility to both the park and the Aquatic Center.

Key Strengths Identified for Design Option 2 – Meet Me at Geneva:

Parking Lot Access Off N Geneva

- Access off N Geneva was favored by some who thought it would be easier to get in and out of the parking lot on a less busy street.

Splash Pad Location

- The splash pad's placement away from the parking entrance and front door was appreciated for safety reasons and better separation from busy areas.

Separation of Access for Different Users

- The design's separation of access points for general community users and competitive event users was praised, by some who participate in competitive swiming, as it ensures convenient access to parking and green spaces for both groups, accommodating different needs.

Participants said they did not like this option for the following reasons:

- It divides and breaks up the open park space by placing the main parking lot in the center of the site. This design creates a situation where kids must cross the parking lot from the southern play areas to get to the Aquatic Center and splash pad.

- They noted that N Geneva is already very tight now and would become more congested than N Fessenden if it were to serve as the site's main access point. Participants were worried about the impact on nearby residents living on this street once the Center is operational.

Key Weaknesses Identified for Design Option 2 – Meet Me at Geneva:

Safety of Parking Lot Location

- Many comments highlighted the potential danger of children needing to cross through parking lots or roadways to get from play areas to the Aquatic Center, which could pose a safety risk.

Fragmented Layout/Isolated Green Space Location

- The parking lot's position in the middle of the site was criticized for dividing the park, making it feel disjointed. Separating the plaza and recreation areas was seen as detrimental to the flow and overall design by many.

Traffic and Accessibility Issues

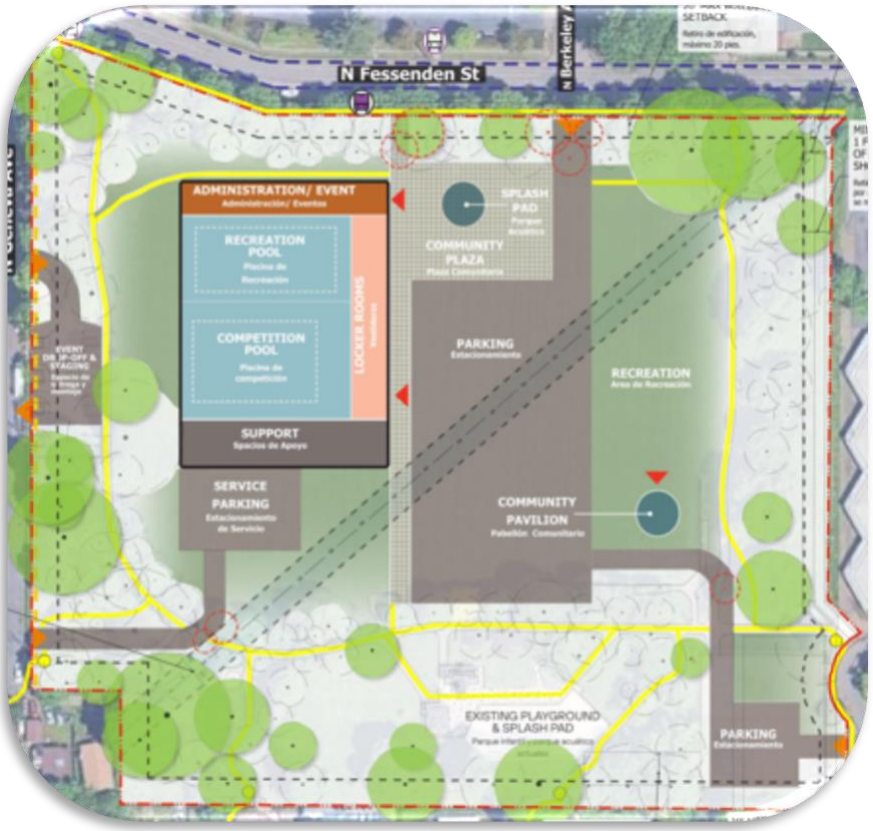
- Opposing concerns were raised by some participants about the Geneva entrance being difficult to navigate, with a tight side street and potential traffic congestion, making it less accessible for walkers and bus riders compared to the N Fessenden entrance.

Site Option 3 – Beacon in the Park

Overview

This option was the least favored among participants; however, some aspects of the layout received positive comments, including:

- The larger, prominently featured community plaza and splash pad off N Fessenden, which participants felt would attract more attention and interest from passersby.
- The Aquatic Center, prominently positioned off N Fessenden, offers outside views from inside the pool areas, showcasing the trees and streetscape, similar to Option 1.
- The splash pad is situated farther away from the main street and parking lot, surrounded by a larger community plaza area, making it safer for children.



Site Option 3: Beacon In the Park

Key Strengths Identified for Design Option 3 – Beacon in the Park:

Visibility of Community Plaza/Splash Pad from N Fessenden

- The location of the splash pad and community plaza on N Fessenden was liked for its potential to attract attention and interest from passersby, increasing visibility of the facility.

View of Trees from Pools

- The design allowing for views of the park's trees from inside the pools was praised, enhancing the aesthetic experience for users.

Safer Splash Pad Location

- The splash pad's location in this option, further away from the street and parking lot entrance, was seen as a safer arrangement for children, especially within a larger plaza area.

Most participants did not like this option for the following reasons:

- They felt it was the most fragmented, busy, and disjointed among all the options.
- They didn't like the location of the main parking lot, which was situated in the middle of the N Fessenden frontage and at the center of the park.
- A majority didn't like the open park space being isolated on the east side of the site, completely separating it from other amenities such as the community plaza, splash pad, and Aquatic Center.
- Participants believed that the open park space should be located next to the Aquatic Center.

Key Weaknesses Identified for Design Option 3 – Beacon in the Park:

Fragmented Layout/Disconnected Key Amenities

- The layout of this option was criticized as feeling disjointed and "busy," with certain areas like the open green space and pavilion being isolated from the main amenities, making it harder for users to connect with the entire park.

Isolated Green Space/Pavilion Location

- The isolation of the green space and pavilion from the the rest of the park was criticized, with many feeling the open green space should be adjacent to the Aquatic Center.

Safety of Splash Pad Location

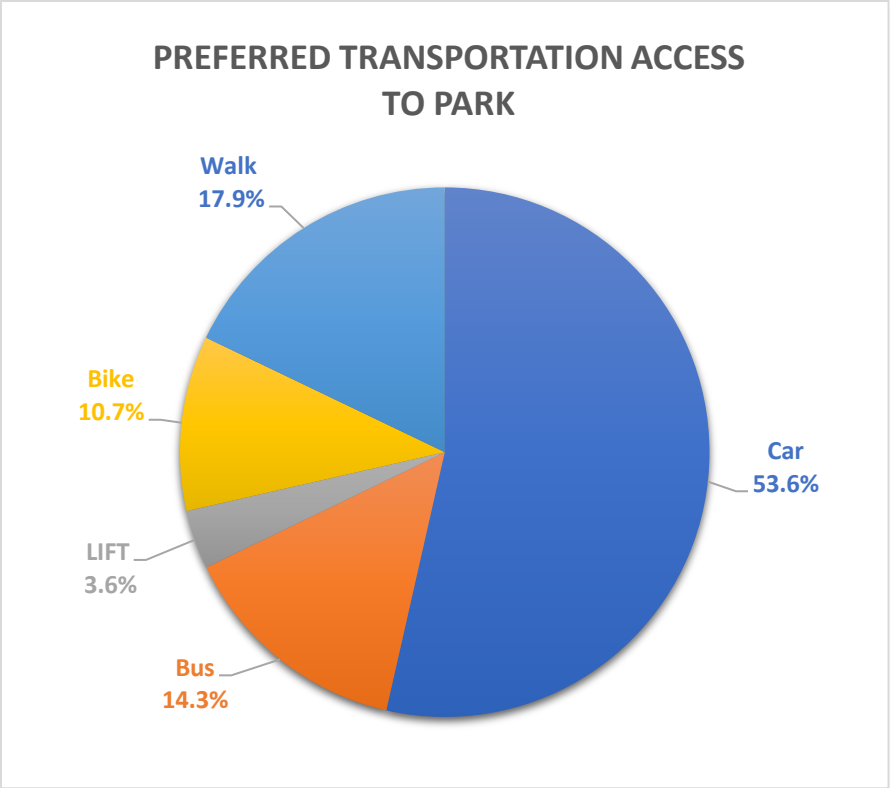
- The splash pad's proximity to the parking lot and main entry was viewed as a safety risk for children, with some commenters suggesting that its location could lead to dangerous situations due to the nearby roadways and parking areas.

Focus Group Summary of Chat Questions

Chat Question 1

How will you typically get to the park?

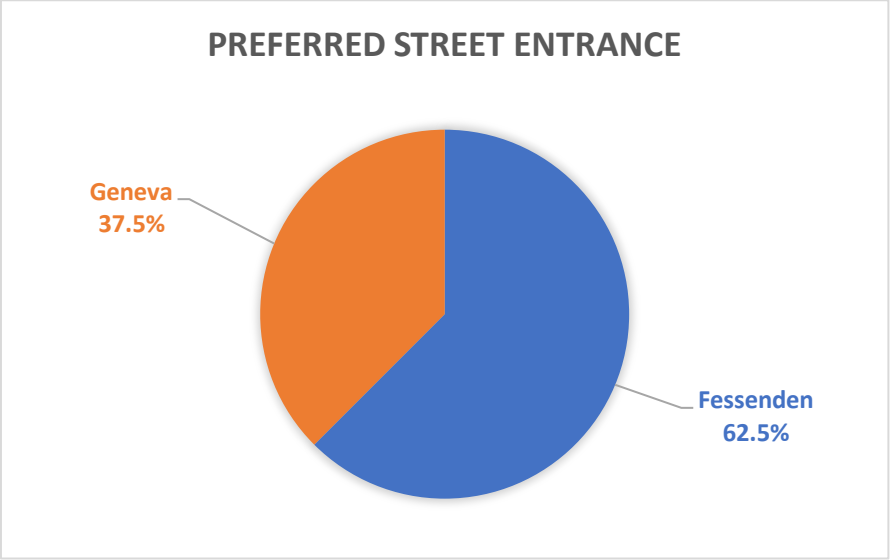
- Car, 53.6%
- Walk, 17.9%
- Bus, 14.3%
- Bike, 10.7%
- LIFT, 3.6%



Chat Question 2

Do you prefer to access the parking off N Fessenden or N Geneva?

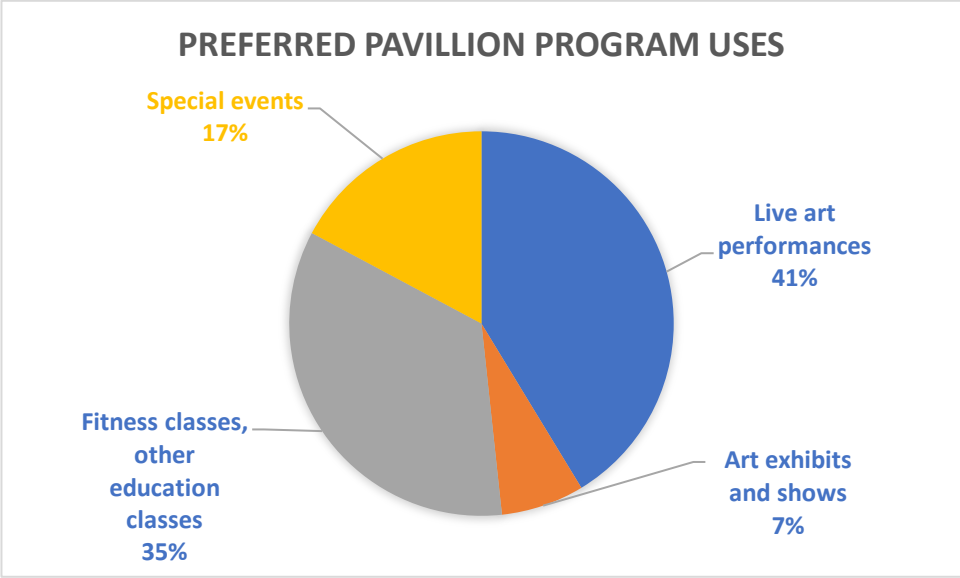
- Fessenden, 62.5%
- Geneva, 37.5%



Chat Question 3

What activities are most preferred for the pavilion use? Live art performances (music, dance, plays, spoken word), art exhibits and shows, fitness classes, special events (weddings, receptions, reunions, celebrations). List top 3.

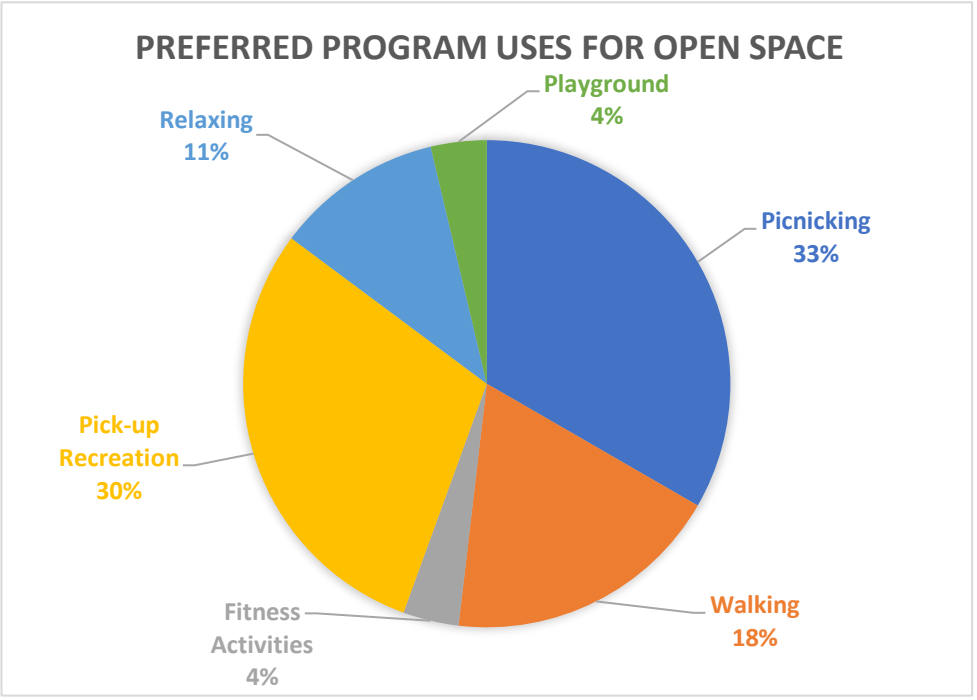
- Live art performances, 41.3%
- Fitness classes, other education classes, 34.5%
- Special events, 17.2%
- Art exhibits and shows, 7%



Chat Question 4

How do you want to be able to use the reduced open green space at the park? Picnicking, walking, fitness activities, pick-up recreation (frisbee, soccer, football throwing, relaxing). List top 3.

- Picnicking, 33.3%
- Pick-up recreation, 29.6%
- Walking, 18.5%
- Relaxing, 11.1%
- Fitness activities, 3.7%
- Playground Use, 3.7%



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- Focus Group Overall Summary Options with Strengths and Weaknesses
- Focus Groups Desired Outcomes for All Concept Design Options

Individual Focus Group Comments

The following section provides participants' comments on the three site design options. This information aims to capture individual and collective opinions on what they liked or disliked about each site. For ease of reference, we have organized their comments into the following categories:

1. **Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities**
2. **Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility**
3. **Safety and Security**
4. **Accessibility**
5. **Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations**
6. **Parking Lot/Traffic**

DESIGN OPTION 1: HEART OF THE PARK

Summary of All Individual Comments for Design Option 1

Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities

- Really like main facility entrance off of N Fessenden.
- Like front entry off of N Fessenden. Feels safer having main entrance off of main street rather than side street. Entering off Geneva feels scarier.
- Like main entrance on Fessenden because it's closer to all traffic modes. Parking should be close to front door.
- Like the access from Fessenden.
- Like the visibility, transparency from Fessenden. It feels safe and welcoming. No hidden areas.
- Like the proximity of the front door to the bus stops and parking lot.
- I just think having things on the main road, you got the bus that's pretty busy for safety. People can see everything that's going on. It's easy to access because when you have little hidden corners for lack of a better word, things can happen...the main thing I think about is just having that entrance where there's a lot of traffic and lighting and access to the bus lines.

- Vote for Option 1 with one suggestion that the see-thru glass walls looking into the natatoriums be added to the south side as well so you can see in and out of the Aquatic Center from park side too.

Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility

- Like location of the open green space behind and south of Aquatic Center.
- Like having some green space that separates Clarendon Early Learning Center from parking lot.
- Like that recreation and Aquatic Center backed up to each other so kids don't have to cross a parking lot to get from the open green space to Aquatic Center.
- Like that you don't have to worry about kids running across a parking lot to get from open play areas and green space into the Aquatic Center.
- Like the location of the green space in Option 1. It appears more serene and quiet.
- Like the location of the Pavilion. This location supports all the desired pavilion activities including live art performances, art exhibits/shows and fitness classes.
- Like the location of the Pavilion because activities are visible from Fessenden, showcasing the community activities in the park.
- Option 1 is the best. . . I also like how the green space is to the South, so it gets all the sun.
- Like pavilion location in Option 1 because it's behind the Aquatic Center and better connected to plaza and open park space.

Accessibility

- Why can't they just put another bus stop in the middle of the site instead of moving the existing one from the corner?
- Relocating the existing bus stop may not be convenient for everyone that already uses the one that's currently there. We want the Aquatic Center to feel like a good neighbor and not disrupt existing routines.
- Don't like that this option feels like front door is less accessible for people walking to center from south end. It focuses all the building and plaza entry points off of N Fessenden.
- Option 1 is the best. . . . I like that the bus stop is moved closer to where you can get off and go straight in.
- Option 1 is best. . . . I don't know where the bike racks are going to be. That would be something I would like to know. Parking accessibility is good, but it would be nice to know where bike racks are going to be.

Parking Lot/Traffic

- Is there an ideal entry for parking based on a traffic study? PP&R project management team shared that PBOT usually prefers that the main parking entrance be accessed off of a less busy street but says in this case that PBOT has indicated that it might prefer the entry off of N Fessenden.
- Think this option offers most parking space around facility because you still would have Geneva for overflow parking use.
- Option 1 is the best. . . And I like how the parking lot is between those two buildings (the Aquatic Center and Clarendon Early Learning Center) as opposed to putting green space between the two buildings.

Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations

- Like flow from Fessenden of community plaza and splash pad that announce the building from main street.
- Do not like the location of the splash pad and its proximity to the street and parking lot. The concern is to prevent children from accidently running into the street or parking lot.
- Like the placement of the plaza, pavilion and the splash pad (where it will be safe for children). Would like to see an outdoor restroom near these outdoor amenities.
- Like the splash pad being upfront, want it to be safe. Want to be reassured that all the safety issues have been brought up.
- Want to make sure that (this Aquatic Center) is as good (as Matt Dishman), if not better, in terms of community gathering where people come to be in the center hub of North and Northeast Portland. Getting together diverse groups of people, meeting in one place and celebrating not only the history but also the present and the future of the area.

Safety and Security

- Will there be a street crossing across Fessenden to get bus riders safely across Fessenden? Need street crossing and lighting.
- Would there be a crosswalk across N Fessenden near the main entrance for those who must cross Fessenden from the other side of the street to get into the Aquatic Center and park?
- Can there be a secured area with a gate around the park for safety at night? The PP&R project management team suggested that this is not typical for public parks, but there may be a need to block off the entrance to the parking lot during hours when the park is closed.

- Like that, bike parking could go further in on the plaza next to the building under the view of the administrative offices so there's more security for bikers leaving bikes outside.

DESIGN OPTION 2: MEET ME AT GENEVA

Summary of All Individual Comments for Design Option 2

Parking Lot/Traffic

- Don't like that kids running from play areas at the bottom of park to Aquatic Center have to cross through the parking lot or over other roadways to get to the plaza area and pools. This could be dangerous.
- Parking lot in middle of site breaks up park and think entering off Geneva is going to cause more traffic congestion. Seems more difficult for walkers, bus riders coming off Fessenden to access building's main entrance.
- This option seems to remove more of the existing street tree canopy than the other two for the extra roadways.
- Don't like this option. Plaza and recreation areas are all divided up. Parking divides Aquatic Center from rest of park and open recreation area is off to side away from the rest of facilities and park amenities. Doesn't have good feng-shui.
- The Geneva side street is very tight already and even with improvements getting into the facility is going to be more difficult than having the main parking entrance off Fessenden. People living on this street will be complaining within 6 months of the facility becoming operational.
- Seems like parking lot would be easier to get out of on Geneva than Fessenden.
- Some people like the idea of entering the park from N Geneva. They think there will be less of a chance of impeding busy traffic that occurs on N Fessenden.
- Like the idea of the parking lot being hidden from the front of the park and the more prominent visibility of the aquatic center and recreation space, if you're driving down Fessenden.
- Might have to consider providing free access to Center for Geneva residents if they have to suffer more traffic and congestion.
- Like that Geneva would be the best entrance for that parking lot. You're going to have do a lot of work to fix that road and sidewalks over there.
- Don't Like the main entrance on Geneva. If people come out at 10 o'clock after pavilion events, cars will be backed up waiting to get onto Fessenden. If they wake up sleeping children, that's the downside of having it there.

- Don’t Like the main entrance on Geneva. I feel like that block is very narrow and would be a nightmare.

Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations

- Think having shade for plaza sitting areas is important and this plan looks like it might provide more shade from tree canopy than Option 1 unless the plaza has covered area.
- Don’t want to see boulders and things that kids/adults can trip over as part of splash pad area.
- Like splash pad location in this option because it’s away from parking entrance and front door.
- The community plaza needs room and places for people and parents to sit while their kids are playing in the splash pad.
- Going back to when I was a kid, if I play in the splash pad, I want it to be away from the shade so that the water can cool me down.
- Like the location of the splash pad and plaza right on the corner due to the high visibility for passersby.
- I like the entry points from both Fessenden and Geneva with the community Plaza being offset well enough back from Geneva and Fessenden. If you were coming down either one of those streets, you could see the community plaza. I think that's great curb appeal.
- Like having the community plaza and splash pad over there; it’s nice for the sun, but that community plaza, in the middle of August at about 2:00 pm, will have an awful lot of shade.

Accessibility

- There are going to be LIFT buses that travel to the site – where are they going to drop people off? This needs to be thought about for next round of schematics.
- Like that existing bus stop doesn’t have to move locations in this option.
- Like that there are separated access points for general community users and competitive event users that both have close entry points to the parking. It’s important to have parking and green space accessible from competitive event entry since there is often overflow and people need to wait outside the building in between their events.
- Was curious about why design team seemed to prefer this option in the large group presentation? Want to understand how service entrances and emergency entrances will be used to support facility in final plans.

Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility

- Pavilion feels isolated in this option. Prefer flow in Option 1 where everything is visually and physically connected all the way through park.
- Like the location of the pavilion regarding the shading of the trees, I think it's perfect for having some of those activities like outdoor yoga and all that stuff. I think that's perfect location for big time music, all that…Imagine the amount of peace and tranquility.
- Don't like that the open recreation space is smaller in this option than others.
- Don't think the location of pavilion in this option is very accessible for people using this amenity or participating in events staged from the pavilion. You have to walk quite a way into the open field from the parking lot.

DESIGN OPTION 3: BEACON IN THE PARK

Summary of All Individual Comments for Design Option 3

Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations

- Like that community plaza and splash pad are the centered feature on N Fessenden in this option which can attract attention and interest from passersby.
- Splash pad location in community plaza seems safer in this option because plaza is bigger, and splash pad is further away from parking lot entrance.
- Don't like the splash pad next to the parking lot and main entry. Worried about the safety of children using this amenity.
- Would having the splash pad on west side like in Option 2 allow it to be available for use for longer periods?
- Don't see any restrooms outside in any of the options. Will this be addressed in final versions?
- Wonder if amenity components should be better connected and located closer to each other (splash pad, pavilion, community plaza, playgrounds) than they are in this option?
- This option just seems very busy and more disjointed than others.
- Don't like this option- it feels crowded.

Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities

- Feel that this layout of Center itself provides minimum impact on the main street in helping to attract attention to and interest in the new facility.
- Like the wow factor of the splash pad and see-thru natatorium windows looking out on the trees and main street, N Fessenden, in Options 1 and 2.

- Favorite thing about this option is that you would be able to look out and see the park trees from the pools with them oriented west.
- Like orientation of pools as well but think the organization of all the other components are chopped up.
- Also like the idea of seeing trees outside from inside pools.

Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility

- Don't like the open park area is stuck in corner of the site and separated from all other amenities in the park.
- Don't like the open recreation space layout in this option, it feels very isolated from the rest of park activity.
- Think the Aquatic Center and the open park area should be adjacent and back-up to each other like they do in Option 1.
- What will pavilion look like – will it just be a covered area or an enclosed area?
- Don't like the recreation area. It seems to be much smaller in No. 3. So, one of the tradeoffs you're seeing is the recreation area.
- Like the recreation area, which is surrounded by trees.
- Don't like the pavilion location. The question is, what type of pavilion would it be in this location? There are too many trees just south of the pavilion. You can't use the area around the parking lots for any activities. In this case, it isn't forward-facing and would limit the design and activities it could be used for.

Accessibility

- Like having the bus stop on Fessenden, because you can see everything through the trees, and it's nice to see what's going on in the park.
- Like that little parking lot, so if you wanted to go in there with your toddler, you could sort of sneak into that back parking lot and not (have to walk through) the whole park.
- Like that there are different options for parking. It's not just one big old piece of concrete.

Appendix: Summary of Overall Focus Group Feedback for All Options Strengths and Weaknesses

Design Option I – Heart of the Park

Key Strengths:

Main Facility Entrance on Fessenden

- Many comments strongly preferred the main entrance on Fessenden, citing improved safety, better access to transportation modes, and a more visible, welcoming approach.

Green Space Location

- The open green space behind and south of the Aquatic Center was praised, particularly for its sunny location and the lack of obstructions between the playground, green space and the Aquatic Center, making it safer for children.

Accessibility to Parking/Bus Stops

- The location of the bus stop and parking lot near the facility was Strengthsly received, with comments highlighting convenience and easy access for people using public transit and driving.

Key Weaknesses:

Safety of Splash Pad Location

- There were concerns about the location of the splash pad and its proximity to the street and parking lot, fearing that children could accidentally run into traffic or the parking lot.

Accessibility from the South End of Site

- There was one comment that the main entrance being focused on N Fessenden made the front door less accessible for pedestrians entering from the south end of the site.

Relocation of the Bus Stop

- There were a few comments that the move of the existing bus stop from the corner may not be convenient for existing users, and might disrupt routines and accessibility for some neighborhood people.

Design Option 2 – Meet Me at Geneva

Key Strengths:

Parking Lot Access Off N Geneva

- Access off N Geneva was favored by some who thought it would be easier to get in and out of the parking lot on a less busy street.

Splash Pad Location

- The splash pad's placement away from the parking entrance and front door was appreciated for safety reasons and better separation from busy areas.

Separation of Access for Different Users

- The design's separation of access points for general community users and competitive event users was praised by some who participate in competitive swimming, as it ensures convenient access to parking and green spaces for both groups, accommodating different needs.

Key Weaknesses:

Safety of Parking Lot Location

- Many comments highlighted the potential danger of children crossing parking lots or roadways to get from play areas to the Aquatic Center, which could pose a safety risk.

Fragmented Layout/Isolated Green Space Location

- The parking lot's position in the middle of the site was criticized for dividing the park, making it feel disjointed. Separating the plaza and recreation areas was seen as detrimental to the flow and overall design by many.

Traffic and Accessibility Issues

- Opposing concerns were raised by some about the Geneva entrance being difficult to navigate, with a tight side street and potential traffic congestion, making it less accessible for walkers and bus riders compared to the N Fessenden entrance.

Design Option 3 – Beacon in the Park

Key Strengths:

Visibility of Community Plaza/ Splash Pad from N Fessenden

- The location of the splash pad and community plaza and splash pad on N Fessenden was liked for its potential to attract attention and interest from passersby, increasing visibility of the facility.

View of Trees from Pools

- The design allowing for views of the park's trees from inside the pools was praised, enhancing the aesthetic experience for users.

Safer Splash Pad Location

- The splash pad's location in this option, further away from the street and parking lot entrance, was seen as a safer arrangement for children, especially within a larger plaza area.

Key Weaknesses:

Fragmented Layout/Disconnected Key Amenities

- The layout of this option was criticized as feeling disjointed and "busy," with certain areas like the open green space and pavilion being isolated from the other main amenities, making it harder for users to connect with the entire park.

Isolated Green Space/Pavilion Location

- The isolation of the green space and pavilion from the the rest of the park was criticized, with many feeling the open green space should be adjacent to the Aquatic Center.

Safety of Splash Pad Location

- The splash pad's proximity to the parking lot and main entry was viewed as a safety risk for children, with some commenters suggesting that its location could lead to dangerous situations due to the nearby roadways and parking areas.

Appendix
Focus Group Desired Outcomes for All Concept Design Options

- Participants preferred designs that prominently feature a main entrance and community plaza visible from Fessenden Street, enhancing visibility and accessibility. Many expressed a vision of a vibrant park where they see the community engaging in activities such as enjoying the splash pad, attending events in the pavilion, and taking in the park's main views.

Visibility of Aquatic Center Entrance and Amenities

- Participants stressed the importance of designing the pavilion and open green spaces to support a diverse range of community uses and activities. These include live performances, fitness activities/classes, community gatherings and events, pick-up recreational activities, and picnicking.

Open Green Space/Pavilion Location and Versatility

- Participants emphasized the need for improved safety measures, including relocating the splash pad further into the park with a protective barrier, ensuring quality lighting and clear visibility throughout the park, adding a signaled crosswalk across N Fessenden for safer pedestrian access, and placing bike parking in a visible area to prevent theft.

Safety and Security

- Participants emphasized the importance of having the bus stop near the front entrance and prefer/need flat, stair-free pathways throughout the park. Designated drop-off areas for LIFT and other vehicles should be included for seniors and individuals with disabilities near entrances, along with clear entry points for community and competitive swim users.

Accessibility

- Focus group participants preferred a connected layout for outdoor amenities to enhance visibility, transparency, safety, and community use. They wanted the community plaza and splash pad visible from the park entrance, and visually connected to the other amenities and open green space. Concerns were raised about the splash pad's proximity to the Aquatic Center entrance and parking lot for safety reasons. While shade was important for comfort in the plaza, excessive shade over the splash pad might decrease its appeal.

Connected Outdoor Amenities/Community Plaza and Splash Pad Locations

- Participants frequently shared the importance of considering traffic flow, parking accessibility, LIFT and bus drop-off areas, and appropriate access for various user groups, including competitors and recreational users. This approach will help make traffic movement safer and more efficient for everyone.

Parking Lot/Traffic