



**NORTH PORTLAND AQUATIC CENTER
Joint Community Engagement Kick-Off Meeting for Design Phase
Participants: Project Advisory Committee and Focus Groups
Online Meeting Summary - December 10, 2024, 6:00-8:00 PM**

Welcome and Introductions

- People introduced themselves in the chat.
- New PAC member, Crystal Ball, introduced herself and shared her background. She works with Portland Public Schools Early Learning department. One of their programs are at Clarendon, and she worked for Clarendon's Head Start when she first started with Head Start.
- Robin Johnson Craig, PP&R Project Manager, introduced new PP&R staff, Max Katz, Design Manager for the project and Patrick Sullivan, Construction Manager for the project. Both are architects. She also introduced some of the team members from Scott Edwards Architecture (SEA), Sid Scott and Kara Grothen.

Members of the project team went through the presentation slides. Key questions that came up during the presentation are noted below:

What is the update on funding since this group last met?

- While hard construction cost is targeting \$50 million, we currently have a gap of approximately \$10 Million, based on previous estimates to address the soft costs, overhead, and inflation. PP&R is working proactively to resolve this funding gap.
- The design team will provide more detailed cost estimations as the design process progresses allowing us to refine the total funds required for construction

What is the approach for managing communications with this large team (design team, PP&R staff, community advisors)?

- The project is managed by the P&R NPAC Project Management Team, Robin as Project Manager for the Bureau, Max as Design Manager, and Patrick as Construction Manager which rounds out the team. The NPAC PP&R Management Team addresses all communication with the design team led by Scott Edwards Architecture. The PP&R Community Engagement team and PP&R Communications team lead all communication with community members. Design team has met with

PP&R staff during site visits and will continue to reach out as the project goes on.

- Any questions from the PAC should go to Ken Rumbaugh (NPAC Community Engagement Lead), and he will work with Robin to get answers. Community members are requested not to contact the Scott Edwards Architecture design team directly. We will continue holding PAC meetings, focus groups, and community meetings. Ken will continue to lead this and communicate out with materials, invites, and other updates. He will also regularly update the project webpage. Focus group members can direct questions to Jessica Stanton and Jeana Woolley who regularly meet with Ken and other PP&R staff, so any community input will be addressed.

Does the project cost include the demolition of Columbia Pool?

The North Portland Aquatic Center is currently funded by System Development Charges (SDC) and the State of Oregon grant funds. Those funds are specifically for the new construction, more information on PP&R's funding sources can be found here: [Understanding PP&R funding sources | Portland.gov](#) The cost for the Columbia Pool demolition is funded by separate PP&R major maintenance funds. PP&R has assigned a separate Project Manager to address the Columbia Pool demolition which has a separate funding stream as a separate PP&R project. For more information on the Columbia Pool project, please see: [Columbia Indoor Pool | Portland.gov](#)

Did the Chehalem and Medford pool projects completed by Scott Edwards Architect (SEA) come in on time and under budget?

Robin noted that SEA is also working on Lake Oswego's pool which is nearing construction and will open in 2025. Robin said that all the agency project managers for these 3 past indoor aquatic center projects in Oregon (Lake Oswego Recreation and Aquatics Center, Chehalem Aquatic and Fitness Center, and Rogue Credit Union Community Complex) gave glowing reviews for Scott Edwards Architecture and Perkins & Will for attention to detail, working with community, and designing a great project. The Chehalem project did go over budget, but that was not SEA's fault. The project scope grew and went beyond the original budget. Robin shared that the design team members could share more details on the budgets of the two Oregon pool projects. An additional memo has been provided by Scott Edwards Architecture and Perkins & Will to address this question as a supplemental document to this meeting summary.

You said the footprint of the building grew in size. Will that impact things that the community was really excited for outside of the building like the splash pad

and plaza?

Those elements are still going to be included as funding allows. The design team is considering them in the conceptual design process and is studying how best include and arrange everything on the site.

Why wasn't the sewer line identified in the location analysis and made public?

- The diagram showing the sewer line was shared in all the documentation, identified by the previous design team and was shared during the Phase I site selection effort. This was also shared in the community workshops.
- The sewer line is the main trunk line that connects the West Hills to the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant. The line is 56' deep, 72" in diameter. There are many built facilities including homes, apartment buildings, roads, parking lots, and utilities across North Portland built over this tunnel. BES has shared that any proposed pool tanks and building foundations should not be located over the sewer easement.
- We have learned more about what can and can't be done over the BES sewer easement in more recent discussion with BES. . Borings have been completed to support geotechnical engineering understanding of the site. The proposed facility does not present significant risks for a future foundation to be added. A PAC member suggested making sure this information is added to FAQ's on webpage.

PAC member made a comment about air quality – the Northgate area has air quality problems due to freight and other industrial uses. PBOT did a study and identified this as one of the worst locations for diesel particulate, primarily from BNSF locomotives which idle in the area regularly.

PBOT's North Portland In Motion plan recommendations:

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/north-portland-motion/north-portland-motion-plan-recommendations>

If the sewer line prevents too many challenges, would a previous site such as Charles Jordan be reconsidered?

Robin responded that the technical investigation by SEA is complete, and now they are testing the program on the site. The initial information shows the program fits and does not have a conflict with the sewer line, so we expect to keep moving forward with the NPAC facility on the Northgate Park site.

How will you make the art accessible to people with low visual or are blind?

There have been many discussions about multisensory art and thinking about art differently than just flat on walls – use of sound, tactile, sensory spaces, but it is all very conceptual right now. No specific artwork has been identified, but there have

been goals set as shared in the presentation. Jeana also noted that in the focus groups, making the art accessible in multiple ways, not just visual, came up a lot as well, and that info was shared with the art team.

Is the idea still to have permanent art as well as changing art?

Yes, we received feedback from the community expressing interest in both, so that remains an objective.

What is the difference between outdoor plaza and community pavilion?

The two can work together. A plaza provides placemaking and outdoor space. It can integrate with the landscaping, the building, amenities like the splash pad, and the art to provide a welcoming entrance to the building. A pavilion would function as a a dedicated space for community events and gatherings with the benefit of a covered outdoor space that could host many events.

What is the difference between community gathering spaces and pavilion?

The community gathering spaces could be a wide variety of spaces for coming together – could be picnic tables or open space. The plaza is a specific type of gathering space. The pavilion would be a multi-use space for performances and programs.

A PAC member spoke to advocate how important a splash pad is for increasingly hot summers and with limited pool hours at times. It also would provide an opportunity for kids whose parents can't take them to the aquatic center, aren't old enough to go on their own, and/or don't have financial resources. Ken also noted splash pads can be more welcoming to people who may not feel safe in a larger pool. Robin said there is an existing, simple splash pad at Northgate Park but the design team may look at relocating this one or making it into something better.

Can the splash pad be part of the plaza? Yes, it can.

Is Pier Pool closed now?

It is closed for the season as it is an outdoor pool but is expected to reopen in Summer 2025. Repairs are being made. <https://www.portland.gov/parks/pier-outdoor-pool>

How would you foster engagement and participation among community members? Some feel like they have not been participating or consulted.

Ken explained that engagement had been paused due to a lack of questions during the past year, as new staff and design team came on board. Looking ahead there will be a lot of opportunities over the next year for engagement. Ken offered to

follow up offline, as the PAC member was not able to turn on their microphone to share more.

A member noted some people were upset about the decision to close Columbia Pool, so they did not participate in past engagement, and someone noted that it is important to note that North Portland has felt forgotten about and not well funded for many years. Ken said it has been a key message from PP&R staff since the beginning of this project at every gathering that the goal is to close a historic gap in services; that is why we are here. We have not met the needs of people in North Portland, specifically Black and brown kids who have a higher rate of drowning.

Someone suggested making a presentation to the new District 2 Council members. Adriana offered to connect the engagement team with youth from Roosevelt to hear their input. Someone noted that the principal of Rosa Parks set up a partnership to get kids to the pool for their gym class, so it could be done again.

Has there been outreach to the University of Portland and other potential partners?

Robin said that this past year's efforts included working with BAE Economics on a market study of a competition pool and potential partners for development and ongoing operations. BAE researched potential partnerships with partners such as Portland Community College (PCC), University of Portland (UP), and Portland Public Schools (PPS) with the potential of a fee structure for use. This was shared with the PP&R leadership team, and there is not any further update at this time. Project staff have met with administrators at PPS to introduce the project and the project team to PPS staff. The PP&R Project Management team will continue to partner and collaborate with PPS during the duration of the NPAC project. Portland Parks & Recreation has a significant maintenance backlog, so that partnerships could be helpful. However, partnerships need to be carefully considered as they can cut into the general community's use.

The meeting concluded with a poll, and the results are presented on the next page.

**North Portland Aquatic Center
 Project Advisory Committee + Focus Group
 Phase II Kick-Off Meeting Poll**

**What are the top 3 additional facility components you'd like to see included in the final NPAC design?
 (38 respondents: 21 during the Zoom meeting/17 in online poll)**

- Outdoor Splash Pad	21
- Exterior community gathering spaces	20
- Community Pavilion and ability to host events	17
- Distinctive exterior art and culture	14
- Lobby/reception area welcoming look and feel	8
- Lobby entrance accessibility to parking & bus stop	7
- Natatorium appearance, functionality, and vibe	7
- Outdoor Plaza	6
- Ability to host food carts on site	6
- Views into the building from the street and park	5
- Landscaping and circulation around the building	5