PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

North Portland Aquatic Center PAC Meeting Summary - Moday, March 10, 2025

PAC Members in attendance: Jamar Summerfield, Daniel Smith, Sheryl Juber, Derrell Wheeler, Jenny Hoyt, Itzel Cruz Megchun, Crystal Ball. **PAC members not in attendance:** Erica Cuesta, Morgan Spriggs, Millie Haley, LA Walker, Ashley Bubnick.

PP&R Staff: Robin Johnson Craig, Max Katz, Ken Rumbaugh, Maija Spencer

Design/Engagement Consultants: Jeana Woolley, *JM Woolley & Associates*, Jessica Stanton, *Stanton Global Communications*, Jennifer Marsicek & Kara Grothen, *Scott Edwards Architecture*.

Purpose of Meeting: The project team hosted a virtual meeting where three preliminary concept design options were shared. PAC members (7 in attendance) provided feedback and input on the designs, including feedback on the main entry location, outdoor amenities, and access throughout the park.

Key Takeaways and Themes Discussed by PAC Members:

- Traffic and Parking
- Accessibility and Safety
- Community Design Preferences
- Design Elements that Support a Welcoming Experience

****Presentation Begins****

Discussion during presentation:
Question: has analysis of traffic been done?

- Completed draft traffic impact study with PBOT.
- Current designs plan for 130 total parking spaces.
- Current study does not include split modes - pedestrian, bike, or bus
- Working closely with planning at PBOT for North Portland in Motion plan in aligning this site with #4 rapid bus transit line by TriMet. Several stops along Fessenden. Coordinated approach to help reduce impact to community
- More information forthcoming as design is refined.

Question on connecting the community plaza, pavilion, playground, and splashpad in Meet me at Geneva (Site #2) and Beacon in the Park (Site #3). These concepts divide the areas with parking. How can we ensure safety?

- Years of robust community engagement before this phase, we heard how important it is to have splash pad and plaza in close proximity. Pavilion is planned farther away as it's a flexible space to be used for concerts, plays, productions.
- This is a matter that will continue to be developed especially regarding safety and access as main priority.
- Meet Me at Geneva – the community pavilion is located on backside of facility. Area of space that could be considered vacant or not active. Creates better zone of safety and monitoring by and for community instead of non-desired behaviors.

Jenny mentioned concerns regarding accessibility for her daughter in a wheelchair. Meet Me at Geneva (Site #2) currently features grass to get from the pool to community pavilion and vice versa. This would entail having to go all around the building. Suggestion and request to add a pedestrian or accessible path to go between both places.

Crystal - Clarendon Early Learning has 100 families. Option 2 (Meet Me at Geneva) and 3 (Beacon in the Park) make Clarendon community more accessible to the park. Gives more recreation space and greenery directly outside the school as opposed to a parking lot in between the school and park.

*****End of Presentation. Small Group Discussion Begins*****

Participants were prompted to evaluate each design option on how well they supported the following key design components:

1. Aquatic Center Location/Visibility from Main Streets
2. Front Door Accessibility
3. Parking Accessibility
4. Community Plaza/Splash Pad Experience
5. Pavilion Space/Use and Location
6. Use of Open Green Space
7. Connected Outdoor Amenities

Site Option #1- Heart of the Park

Restroom Concerns:
PAC member asked about access to restroom facilities within the park. Existing outdoor restrooms near the playground and splash pad were noted, and additional porta-potties are typically brought in for large events.

On-Street Parking and Congestion Concerns:
Parking and congestion issues were a significant concern for PAC members, particularly about the impact of removing street parking to extend bike lanes along N Fessenden Street. While efforts are being made to balance the park's aesthetics and car usage, participants were mindful of the potential traffic congestion and the need for parking spaces that do not detract from the park's beauty.

- PBOT Plan for Bike Safety: PBOT's plan is part of the larger North Portland in Motion Plan to increase bike safety and invest in bike lanes. The North Portland In Motion project plan proposes removing street parking along the south side of Fessenden to allow for an extended bike lane.
    - Effort to reduce car use: The City is trying to reduce car usage, which aligns with the City's broader policy objectives.
    - Parking spaces reduction: The North Portland in Motion Plan recommends the removal of approximately 30 street parking spots. The project will need to accommodate those spaces in the design of the parking lot within the park. See: North Portland in Motion | Portland.gov
- Balancing parking and park aesthetics: The project team is working to avoid overfilling the park with parking spaces, as they want to maintain the park's beauty while accommodating necessary parking.

Design and User Flow Feedback:
Feedback on the park's design emphasized the need for a more welcoming and accessible layout. PAC members appreciated that this concept allows for easy, car-free access to amenities, such as the pavilion and splash pad and would like good connections with the bus stop.

- Crystal stated that this design is her least favorite because it feels the least welcoming, as the park is divided by a parking lot, separating the center from the Clarendon Early Learning Academy.
- Jenny noted that families and kids can enjoy the pavilion, splash pad, playground, and new center without having to cross through the parking lot.
- Daniel highlighted a streamlined layout with all core features located in the center and a direct, straight path from the bus stop to the playground.

Site Option 2 - Meet Me at Geneva

Design and Layout Considerations

The design team intentionally placed amenities like the splash pad away from quieter spaces such as the pavilion to avoid noise interference, but some participants questioned this design choice. There was also a discussion about the function of multiple entrances, including those for day-to-day visitors and for competition days.

- Design Team's Intent: The splash pad was placed away from the pavilion to prevent noise disruption, as the noise from children playing and water splashing could interfere with quieter events like concerts. However, a smaller splash pad is located closer to the pavilion for less noisy play.
- Cheryl raised questions about the two entrances—one for regular visitors and one for competitive events—and the necessity of the competition entrance. She also asked how the entrances would be managed.
- Ken confirmed that the entrances would be monitored by swim team employees, not PP&R Park staff.
- Jamar suggested that the competition entrance might be unnecessary and could be better used for other purposes.

Internal Features and Amenities

There were inquiries and suggestions about providing spaces for visitors to relax and watch the pool activities without being in the general pool area. This suggests a desire for a balance of active and passive spaces for visitors to enjoy the park in different ways.

- Jamar raised the question of whether there would be separate spaces for parents or guardians to watch the pool area while being able to relax or work on laptops, away from the general pool area. The design team replied that they intended to provide these viewing areas to facilitate parent and child needs in the development of the schematic design options.

Site #3 - Beacon in the Park

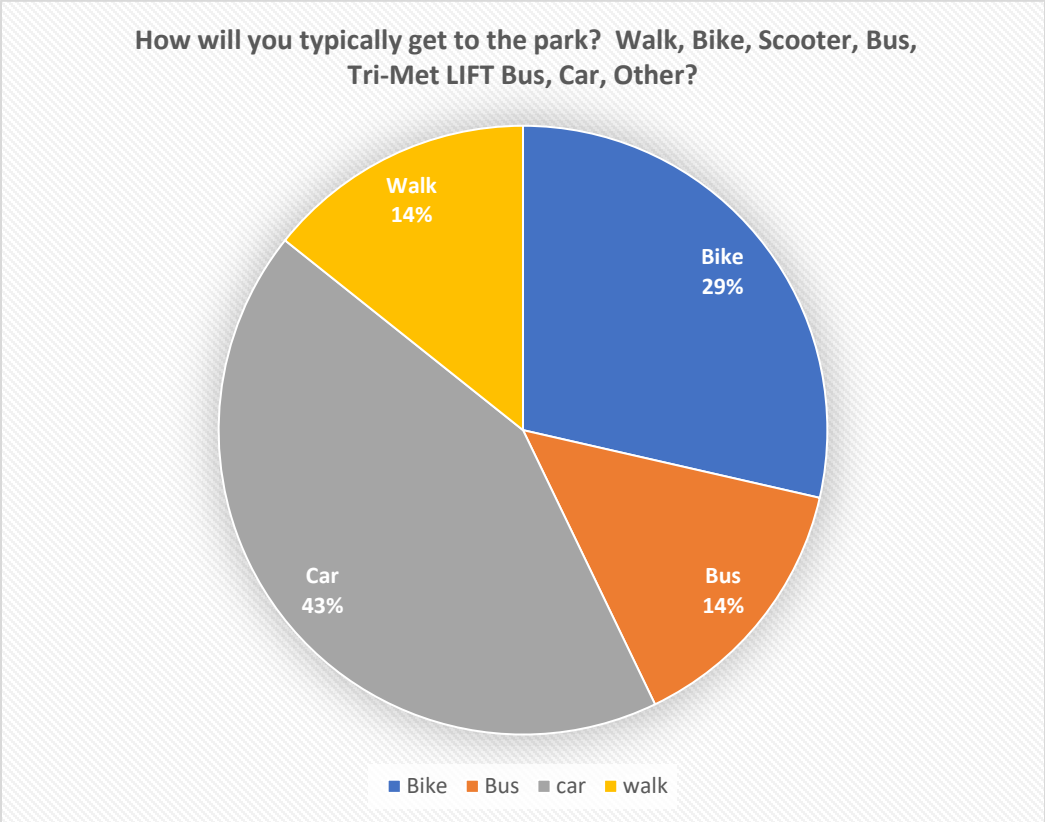
The major discussion about the Option #3 Beacon in the Park was covered in previous discussions earlier in the meeting. There were concerns about kids running from splash pad into main driveway. Appreciate the views of trees while inside the pools. Daniel felt this was well laid out in regard to traffic. Unsure with four different parking lots. This option #3 feels the most divisive but also logical.

Summaries from Chat Questions

The following questions were answered by the PAC in the chat. Not all PAC members participated in each question.

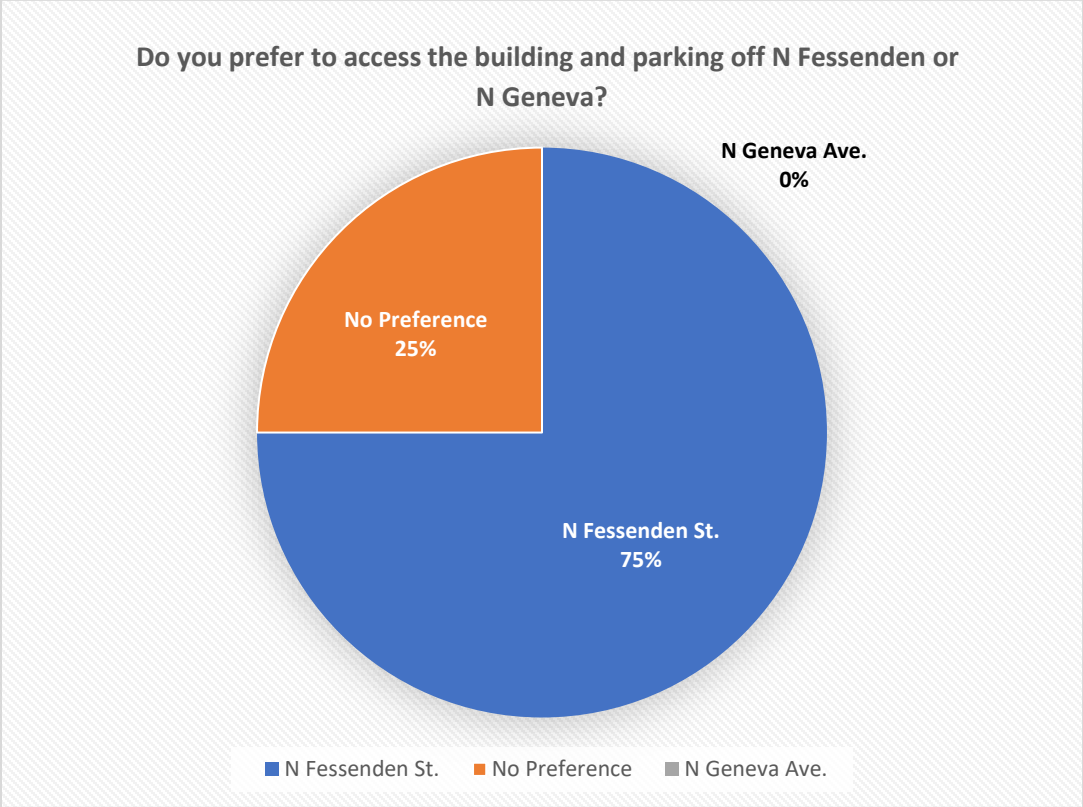
Chat Question 1: How will you typically get to the park? Walk, Bike, Scooter, Bus, Tri-Met LIFT Bus, Car, Other

- Bike (2)
- Bus (1)
- Car (3)
- Walk (1)



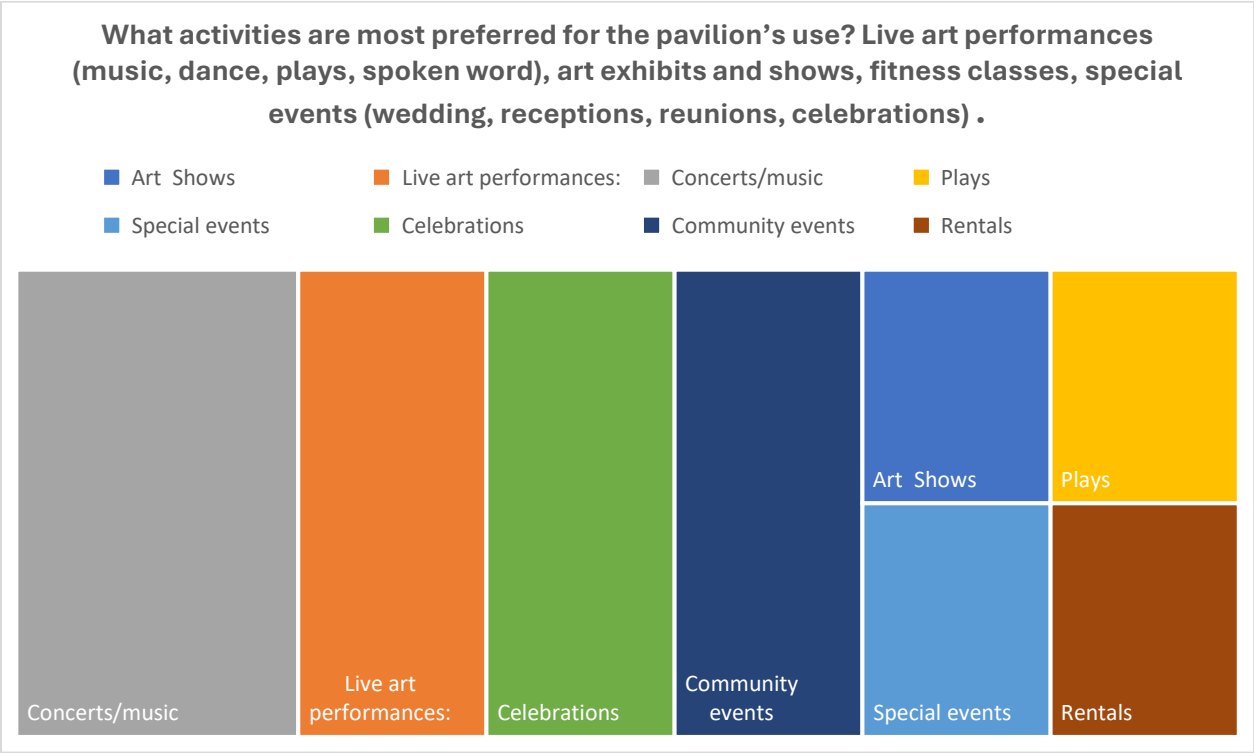
Chat Question 2: Do you prefer to access the building and parking off N Fessenden or N Geneva?

- Fessenden (3)
- No preference (1)



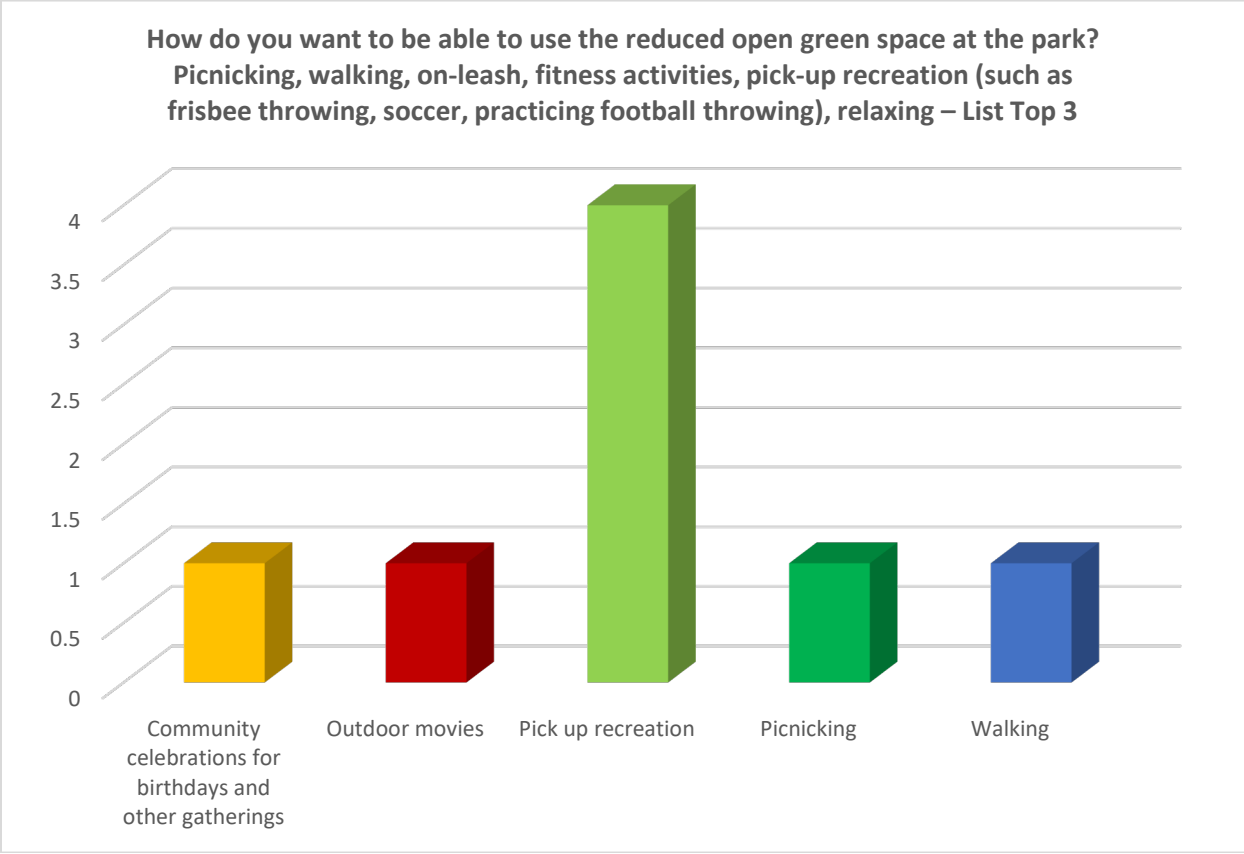
Chat Question 3: What activities are most preferred for the pavilion's use? Live art performances (music, dance, plays, spoken word), art exhibits and shows, fitness classes, special events (wedding, receptions, reunions, celebrations) – List Top 3.

- Art shows (1)
- Live art performances: (2)
    - Concerts/music (3)
    - Plays (1)
- Special events: (1)
    - Celebrations (2)
    - Community events (2)
    - Rentals (1)

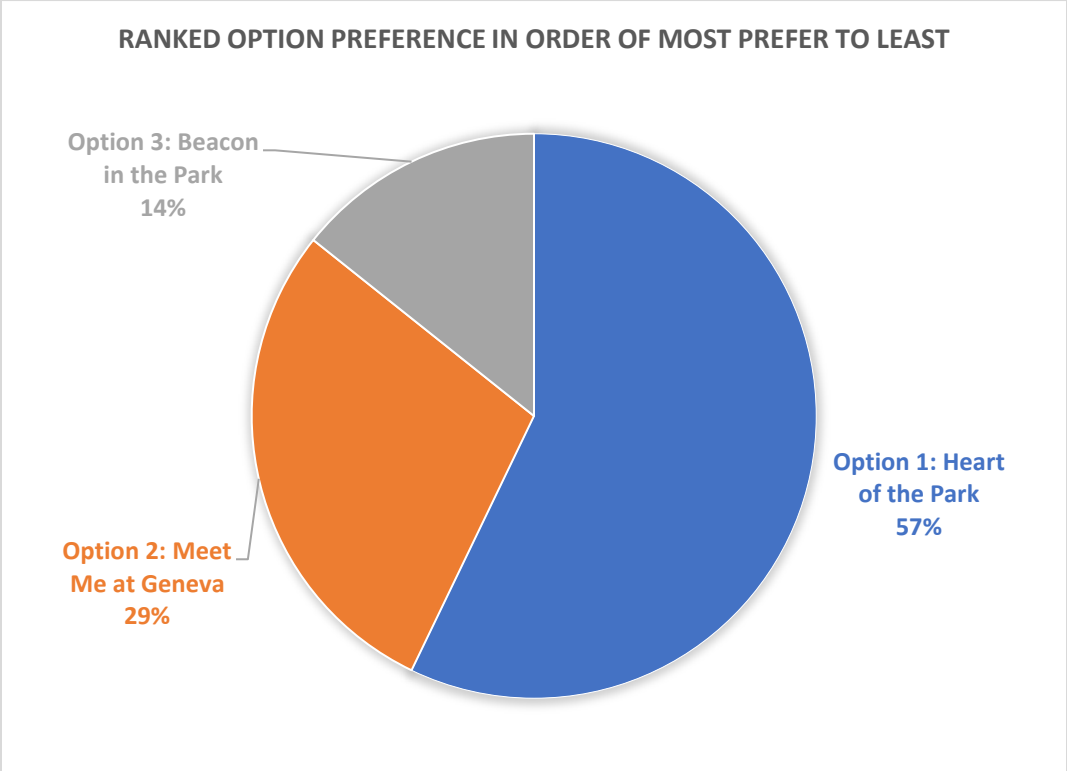


Chat question 4: How do you want to be able to use the reduced open green space at the park? Picnicking, walking, on-leash, fitness activities, pick-up recreation (such as frisbee throwing, soccer, practicing football throwing), relaxing – List Top 3.

- Community celebrations for birthdays and other gatherings
- Outdoor movies (1)
- Pick up recreation (4)
- Picnicking (1)
- Walking (1)



Preferred Option

PAC members ranked their preference in order of most preferred concept to least:

- Daniel Smith - Really like 1 and 3. Option 1 has more connected main features and accessibility. In all options, Clarendon students must ross back entrance to access playground so need to make that crossing extra safe/well designed.
- Crystal Ball - #2 is my vote – best view of the facility from Fessenden, has east-west access to site, access and open view from Clarendon. Ranked in order – 2, 3, 1
- Sheryl Juber – 2, 1, 3
- Itzel Megchun – 1 and 2
- Jamar Summerfield 3, 1, 2
- Derrell Wheeler 1, 2, 3 – though 1 and 2 are tight
- Jenny Hoyt – 1, 2, 3
- Overall, Option 1 led as the PAC's most preferred, Option 2 was the generally the runner up, and 3 was one PAC member's first choice and one PAC member's second choice.