

North Portland Aquatic Center | Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting Notes and Summary of Group Discussions Phase II Community Engagement - Cycle #2

Monday, August 18, 2025, 5:00–7:00 PM, Held on Zoom

Attendees

- **PAC Members in Attendance:** Itzel Cruz Megchun, Erica Cuesta, Jenny Hoyt, Millie Haley, Daniel Smith Wright, Morgan Spriggs, Derrell Wheeler, Samuel Garcia, Henry McIntosh, Laura Tock-Toggenburger, Toni Linnell
- **PAC Members Not in Attendance:** Ashley Bubnick, Crystal Ball, Jamar Summerfield, LA Walker, Sheryl Juber, Teresa Cook
- **PP&R Staff:** Aspen Brown, Robin Johnson Craig, Max Katz, Maija Spencer
- **Consultants:**
 - Scott Edwards Architecture (SEA): Roseva Alcerro Saa, Jesse Graden, Kara Grothen, Yen-Ting Lin Jennifer Marsicek,
 - Stanton Global Communications: Jessica Stanton
 - Jeanna Woolley Associates: Jeana Woolley

Meeting Summary

The meeting began with a presentation of the Schematic Design Options for the NPAC facility and covered the following items:

- 1. NPAC Project Updates**
 - a. PP&R general update(s)
 - b. Project schedule
 - c. Revisit Project Goals
 - d. Construction Forecasts and Need for Potential Scope Reduction/Value Engineering
 - e. Fiscal Responsibility and Operational Needs
- 2. NPAC Community Feedback**
 - a. PP&R general update(s)
 - b. Project schedule
 - c. Revisit Project Goals
 - d. Construction Forecasts
 - e. PP&R Fiscal Responsibility and Operational Needs
- 3. NPAC Design Concepts Review**
 - a. Review current Schematic Design options (10 mins ea.)



- b. Review Scorecard Design Areas (Site Design, Outdoor Amenities, Building Exterior Design, Building Interior Layout) and related criteria for each concept

The PAC was split into two breakout groups to discuss the design using the scorecard as a guide. Below is a summary of the group discussions.

GROUP 1 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

- A. **Group 1: Heart of the Park Schematic Design Option:** The group discussed various aspects of the proposed Heart of the Park schematic design, focusing on balancing existing park features with new amenities, ensuring accessibility, and addressing user needs for both recreational and competitive use of the aquatic facility.
 - **Retention of Existing Bathroom and Play Area**
 - Laura asked about bathroom access at the N Berkley entrance near the playground. Is there a consideration to keep the existing bathroom and play area?
 - Answer: We're trying to balance the ongoing use of the park by the neighborhood with the new facility, so we are planning to keep the existing bathroom and play area. This would be in addition to the proposed plaza and splash pad.
 - **Accessibility Concerns**
 - Comment about maximizing accessibility – did not like that there are stairs in this design.
 - The Heart of the Park design that shows a second level seating option for spectator viewing.
 - **Inclusive Changing Areas**
 - Laura appreciated the all-user changing areas.
 - Jennifer H. emphasized how important adult-sized changing tables are to incorporate into all designs.
 - **Competition Viewing and Pool Design**
 - Henry, being a competition swimmer, appreciated the second-floor competition viewing area and number of lanes but mentioned that it may be difficult to see the far lanes if viewing from above.
 - Erica was wondering if there will be a diving board for the competition pool.
 - No, consistent depth is needed for a competition pool and having a diving board would add cost and complications around the added depth.
 - **Recreation and Program Use**
 - Swim lessons for kids will be in the rec pool and people appreciated that competition, kids swim lessons, and rec time can all happen at the same time.
- B. **Group 1: Meet Me at Geneva Schematic Design Option:** The group discussed key elements of the Meet Me at Geneva schematic design option focused on southside



access, highlighting concerns about traffic and visibility, preferences for architectural features, considerations for bike and pedestrian access, and the relationship between green space and nearby schools. Overall, the discussion weighed the trade-offs between accessibility, aesthetics, and neighborhood impact.

- **Traffic and Neighborhood Impact**
 - The parking lot feels more intrusive to the neighbors on the south side. There would be added traffic on North Geneva Avenue.
 - Some neighbors are more protected by noise in this design.
- **Parking Lot Visibility and Access**
 - Henry said that people might drive past the parking lot, not knowing it's there, though the area is more accessible to the main building, plaza, and activities.
- **Architectural Preferences**
 - Laura really liked the roof form but liked the overall building in the Heart of the Park option better.
 - Favorite building by Millie because of the sleek roof design.
- **Bike Access and Connectivity**
 - Comment that people currently avoid Fessenden for biking. There's a greenway on Houghton via Berkley or Clarendon.
- **Relationship to School and Green Space**
 - Max shared that PPS PAC representative had indicated preference that the green space be placed close to the school in prior PAC meetings.

C. **Group 1: Beacon in the Park:** The group expressed strong support for this design option, noting its emphasis on maximizing outdoor park space and maintaining flexibility for a variety of recreational uses. Discussion also touched on field use needs, the importance of natural light in the building, and the spatial relationship between the park and nearby school.

- **Support for Outdoor Activity and Park Use**
 - Comment that this is their favorite design because it maximizes the park space with activities outside of visiting the building.
- **Field Use for Rugby and Soccer**
 - This park is currently used by rugby so maintaining a full-sized soccer/rugby field is ideal.
 - Note: Please note that the existing rugby field cannot remain at Northgate in any of the proposed schemes. Delta Park Field #9 is being renovated to be used for rugby. This project is currently underway with the intent of being operational prior to construction mobilization.
- **Building Design and Natural Light**
 - Likes the light coming through in the building.
- **Green Space Between Park and School**
 - Discourse about the need to have green space between park and school.



D. Group 1: General Discussion

- a. Are trees going to be replanted? Yes, there will be planting of trees around the parking lot and recreation space. Balance this with recreation space.
 - i. The project team has been working closely with Urban Forestry. Many of the trees being removed are nuisance trees as defined by City of Portland Title 11 code.
- b. Will there be sustainable use of live wood?
 - i. All design options are being considered to accommodate mass timber use.

GROUP 2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

A. Group 2: Heart of the Park Schematic Design Option: Group discussed several aspects of the proposed design, with a focus on ADA accessibility, parking configuration, safety, building form, landscape impacts, and operational considerations. Participants emphasized the importance of equitable access, thoughtful traffic flow, and long-term maintenance strategies while appreciating specific design features such as the roofline, buffer zones, and bike amenities.

- **Accessibility and Elevator Concerns**
 - Derrell didn't like the stairs with only one elevator available. Concern for ADA access if the one elevator is broken, what happens to viewing and access for ADA users and mobility challenged users?
 - Toni asked if there's first floor seating in addition to the second floor.
 - Note: There is no proposed permanent seating on the first floor for this scheme.
- **Parking Configuration and Traffic Impact**
 - Derrell appreciated the parking lot is on Fessenden to protect traffic from neighbors and from crossing by the school.
 - Toni liked that there were separate parking lots due to the many dead ends in the neighborhood.
- **Safety and Connectivity**
 - Safety of connecting the new building with the building and the park.
- **Tree Removal and Replanting**
 - There will be a large number of additional tree plantings in all of the proposed schemes. Many of the trees proposed for removal are identified as nuisance Norway Maples which are not required by code for protection or mitigation.
- **Use of Tennis Court Space**
 - Question about the existing tennis court on Geneva.
 - Answer: Two of the designs suggest turning spots to meet the need of the building use and converting into a parking lot given the state of disrepair of the existing tennis court (in line with our PP&R Courts strategy). This will meet the need of the number of parking spaces consistently provided across all three schemes of



110 spaces. The project does not have funding to re-do the tennis court.

- **Bike Parking**
 - Will there be bike parking?
 - Answer: Yes, there's several covered bike parking spots and other bike parking scattered throughout the site.
- **Splash Pad Shade and Maintenance**
 - Morgan mentioned that there won't be ample shade near the splash pad. How to provide shade without causing a maintenance problem?
 - Answer: PP&R Land Stewardship and Aquatics maintenance teams require 30-ft offset distance from trees so it's a balance to find a space that accommodates some shade while maintaining maintenance needs for offsets from tree locations. Tree debris routinely clogs the splash pad drains.
- **Cost and Efficiency of Two-Story Design**
 - Is it more cost effective to build a two-story building?
 - Answer: Taking advantage of the second story space is more effective in creating a compact development footprint although the increased square footage of a second floor will increase the overall cost. The addition of an elevator would be an additional building component for long term maintenance and operations.
- **Building Aesthetics and Buffering**
 - Morgan appreciated that there's a buffer zone between the building and the street and the roof line and most everyone agreed that a sloped roof was appreciated.

B. Group 2: Meet Me at Geneva Schematic Design Option: The group provided feedback on the design's relationship to green space, spatial layout, user experience, and proximity to the school. Comments reflected concerns about flow and functionality, as well as appreciation for features that improve safety, spectator experience, and pool accessibility. Cost and maintenance considerations related to landscaping and site layout were also discussed.

- **Green Space and Replanting Concerns**
 - Morgan mentioned the cost and energy taken to replant so much of the green space.
 - Answer: The construction team will likely use available green space during though much of the project for construction laydown and staging areas. A new irrigation system and Turf renovation will be required.
- **Design Flow and Site Layout**



- Derrell felt that the splash pad was isolated and the green space being close to the street would be problematic. The design feels fractured and doesn't flow well.
 - **Spectator Amenities**
 - Derrell appreciated the long bench next to the competition pool and having it so close to the comp staging area so parents can easily gather.
 - **Proximity to School and Safety**
 - Itzel appreciated how close the park is to the school – it's a lot safer to have next to the school. Would this increase cost?
 - **Pool Access and Circulation**
 - Itzel liked that there is a separate entrance for the competition and recreation pools.
- C. Group 2: Beacon in the Park Schematic Design Option:** The group discussed the spatial layout of the proposed design in relation to nearby streets and the school, the balance between development and preservation, and design elements that contribute to functionality and sustainability. Feedback included concerns about proximity to key features, appreciation for accessible pathways, and inquiries about cost tradeoffs, maintenance, and the benefits of a compact, efficient layout.
- **Proximity to Fessenden and School**
 - Samuel didn't like how close the building is to Fessenden or how close the parking lot is to the school. He also mentioned that the tennis court would not be improved which isn't ideal.
 - There is a buffer between the school and the parking lot.
 - How far is the building from Fessenden?
 - About 15 feet from the closest point.
 - Derrell mentioned that he wouldn't mind how close the building is to Fessenden once the trees start to grow.
 - **Pathways and Accessibility**
 - Derrell appreciated how many paths there are around the park, creating good flow and accessibility.
 - **Cost Tradeoffs and Compact Development**
 - Morgan asked if this design was easiest to make tradeoffs around costs or keep the most intact?
 - Mostly how it would get categorized. By keeping the amenities closest to the building, being one compact development, increases the efficiencies.
 - **Maintenance and Vandalism Concerns**
 - Comment about graffiti and maintenance needs.
 - **Roof Design and Sustainability**
 - Comments about appreciating the pointed roof and this design allowing the solar panel to produce the highest capacity.



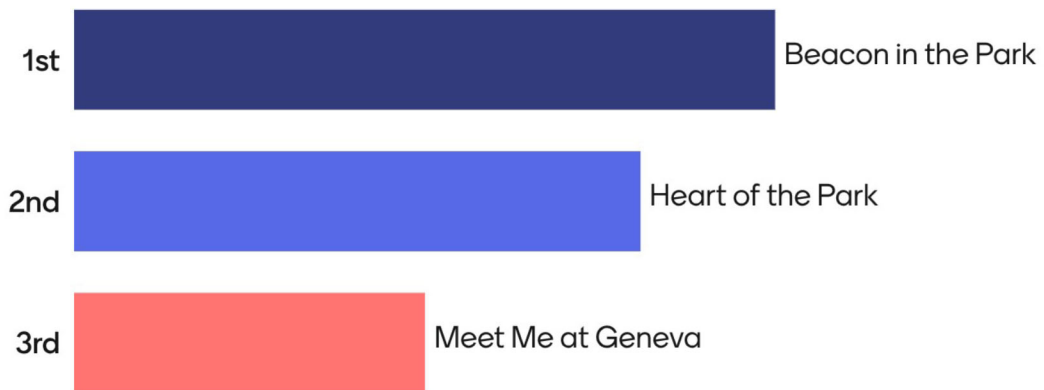
D. Group 2: General Discussion

- Regarding the roof, Derrell suggested whatever is the most cost effective while maximizing the amount of usable space is desirable.
- Derrell appreciated that there is separation from the competition, rec, and spa while everything is still relatively close.
- Derrell does not like the second story observation area.
- Each design will accommodate temporary seating on the deck level next to the competition pool.
- Worried about air quality emissions from Columbia industrial area.
 - Very relevant concerns. Since we're in early design still we don't have a conclusive answer but are considering this for future stages of design.
- Meet Me at Geneva and Beacon in the Park: Morgan liked that support was on the left, pools in the middle, and public spaces on the right. He's seen this orientation work well to have this buffer zone to not have support people having to work around people coming in and out of the pool.
- Discussion around specifics on nuisance trees per design.
- Is there a bike lane replacing street parking?
 - Yes, the *North Portland in Motion Plan* removes street parking on south side of Fessenden and replaces it with a bike lane. We will include the spaces on site to accommodate the number of users expected at the pools.
 - Answer: *The North Portland I Motion Plan* was approved in December 2024 by City Council. Specific recommendations for North Fessenden were a part of the Council approved plan. The PBOT project for the Fessenden ROW is currently unfunded. See: [North Portland in Motion | Portland.gov](https://www.portland.gov/north-portland-in-motion)
 - Traffic impact of the new facility shows that new trips will be generated. There are alternative ways that people will access the facility such as biking and bus. For large competitions and meets, there's a potential that we will partner with PPS to use nearby school parking lots and bus people back in.

LIVE POLL

- Full Group reconvenes for a Live Poll
- Question: Which design option do you most prefer? Rank your choices.
- Poll results: 10 participants

Schematic Design Options	1st place	2nd place	3rd place
Beacon in the Park	7	2	1
Heart of the Park	2	7	1
Meet Me at Geneva	1	1	8



By Ranking:

- Heart of the Park - 20% picked as #1
- Meet Me at Geneva - 10% picked as #1
- Beacon in the Park - 70% picked as #1

Next Steps & Closing

- Upcoming community engagement
- Questions/Comments from participants
- Final comments from Robin