



Dear Portland Parks & Recreation partners and City of Portland elected officials:

Friends of Columbia Park (FOCP) is pleased to release the *Columbia Pool Community Task Force Facilities Assessment Report* (the CTF Report) for the City of Portland's consideration in planning for the future of the Columbia Pool facility as part of a larger plan for year-round aquatics access on the North Portland peninsula. This report has been a useful tool for FOCP and other interested community members to understand the current physical state of the pool, the history and context that led to its deteriorated state and has spurred discussion among interested community members, prompting us to outline possibly scenarios to return this facility back to use as a productive public asset.

We understand and are frustrated that Columbia Pool is indefinitely closed due to lack of needed evaluation, maintenance and repair. We release the CTF Report now, September of 2021, and request that you directly engage with the growing group of concerned individuals, organizations and institutions who value Columbia Pool and year-round aquatics access on the North Portland peninsula and work together to design a solution that meets our diverse community needs.

FOCP is an all-volunteer stewardship group for Columbia Park and all its amenities since 1991. Our [strategic framework](#) guides what we do. We are committed to working in collaboration with the City of Portland as well as many other individuals, organizations and institutions in North Portland and beyond who are very concerned about the current and future state of Columbia Pool as a key asset in Columbia Park.

The Columbia Pool Community Task Force (CTF) is an ad hoc community group of experts in architecture, engineering, construction, and pool operations who came together in May 2019 specifically to develop the CTF Report in response to the initial threat of permanent closure of Columbia Pool *and* because there was insufficient information available to the community about the reasons for the pool closure. Attached is the CTF Report— first completed in March of 2020 and newly updated to capture current context.

## WHY NOW

We are releasing the CTF Report now, September 2021, in order to:

- Inform you that there are concerned experts in the community ready and willing to engage with the City of Portland to identify immediate next steps and long-term solutions;
- Offer you additional information and motivation toward taking next steps for the short and long-term future of the Columbia Pool facility; and
- Promote informed dialogue between the City of Portland and the community about the future of the Columbia Pool facility and year-round aquatics access on the North Portland peninsula.

## WHAT WE KNOW

- *The community and City Council took action:* In summer of 2019, nearly 2,000 pool advocates signed up to loudly voice their disapproval of the shocking decision to permanently close Columbia Pool. The CTF Report is a product of some of the community advocacy efforts.

- *The Columbia Pool facility has been neglected:* It is deeply disappointing that the needed maintenance, repair and attention to the Columbia Pool roof and facility have been ignored. A 2008 City of Portland report identified issues with the Columbia Pool roof and recommended further evaluation. The CTF Report recommends exactly this needed evaluation - “A modest structural assessment of the roof is needed as soon as possible to identify if any of the roof structure is compromised.”

Only recently, in June 2021, on the eve of reopening Columbia Pool amid the pandemic, did the City of Portland recognize the need for this assessment and commissioned a structural analysis (See SEFT Report issued August 13th, 2021). The inattention to the long-standing issues with Columbia Pool facility has now resulted in indefinite closer of Columbia Pool and the loss of indoor, year-round aquatics access to the North Portland community and beyond. This closure could have been prevented and a less disruptive plan made to support the community.

- *There is ample information and interest to take wise next steps together:* The CFT agrees with the City of Portland SEFT Report recommendations (August 2021) as follows:
  - ⇒ Expand its field conditions investigation to identify all the life-safety issues so it may proceed directly into development and implementation of an emergency structural repair program.
  - ⇒ Retain a consultant team to complete a comprehensive feasibility study to develop remediation concepts for the building.
  - ⇒ Conduct a seismic evaluation to understand the safety risks associated with the building.

The CTF Report offers four scenarios for the City of Portland and the North Portland Community to consider together in identifying solutions for the short and long-term future of Columbia Pool. These scenarios are based the City of Portland’s records of facility conditions and limited availability of cost data and are therefore for only intended to prompt dialogue.

## **WHAT WE ARE ASKING**

- Proactively communicate and engage with the community including the CTF experts about the short and long-term plans for Columbia Pool and year-round aquatics access on the North Portland peninsula.
- Immediately fund and take the action steps outlined in the August 2021 City of Portland SEFT Report so that we can evaluate the feasibility and costs to repair, restore and improve, or even expand the Columbia Pool facility.

We are eager for increased communication and collaboration with the City of Portland about Columbia Pool, a public asset that improves safety, promotes health and offers a gathering place for our diverse community. We look forward to engaging with you in the coming weeks.

Best,

Rachel Burdon

President, Friends of Columbia Park