

## A wave of green will splash into new pool

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Most people like their swimming pools sparkling blue. But families in outer East Portland will get one in a different shade: vivid green.

Construction has been under way since July 3 on a long-promised \$11 million aquatic center at the East Portland Community Center, nestled in the Gateway neighborhood a few blocks east of Mall 205. The design, by Portland's SERA Architects, includes environmentally friendly systems never seen at a Portland public pool.

"This pool – if it's built the way they've designed it – could be one of the greenest pools, if not the greenest pool, in the United States," says Michelle Winningham, SERA marketing consultant and Centennial neighborhood mom who lobbied for the aquatic center.

A special filtration system will save a million and a half gallons of water a year, says SERA project architect Lisa Petterson. The center will also be 56 percent more energy-efficient than required by Oregon building code, thanks to smart lighting and plans to recover heat from mechanical systems.

The center might even qualify for the highest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating. The city mandated a gold rating, Petterson says, "but we might be able to achieve LEED platinum." She knows of only a few Portland buildings with platinum ratings – and says no pools come close.



The center, set to open in September 2008, will also contain Portland's first public pool east of 82nd Avenue.

With so many children and seniors in the area, it will be welcome, says Sarah Schlosser-Moon, a Bureau of Parks & Recreation spokeswoman.

Winningham agrees. "This is where the families are," she says, "and this is where the families are that can't afford" access to swimming pools at private gyms and health clubs.

She remembers many times when she's loaded the car with neighborhood kids and driven 20 minutes to the Mt. Scott Community Center pool only to find it full.

In addition to all the green features, the indoor complex will be high on the fun factor. Designed to be comparable to Mt. Scott's aquatic center, the facility will have a four-lane lap pool and a warm-water leisure pool.

A beach-style entry – suitable for wheelchairs and tentative children – will offer gently sloping access to the 4,500-square-foot leisure pool. Big kids will be able to make a splashier entrance on a 17-foot-tall water slide, while tots can slip through the jaws of a small shark-shaped slide.

Sprayers and other toys will be on hand, and the pool will have a lazy "river" flowing to a vortex that will "spin like a flushing toilet," Petterson says.

Three lap lanes in the leisure pool will be used for senior exercise classes, swim lessons or slower-paced swimming. A jetted underwater bench will soothe sore necks and backs, and a separate spa tub will hold 18.

A watery playground was always in the master plan for the community center, completed in 1998, says Schlosser-Moon. Voters passed a parks levy in 2002, contributing \$7 million to the project. Mayor Tom Potter delivered the rest in his 2006-07 budget.

Swim fees haven't been set but will probably be similar to those at other Portland community center pools, Schlosser-Moon says, at \$2 to \$3.25 for drop-ins.

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