



WNBA commissioner Cathy Engelbert speaks to the media before the WNBA basketball draft on Monday, April 15, 2024, in New York. (AP Photo/Adam Hunger, File)

WNBA is Headed Back to Portland

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

the other two. The Golden State Valkyries will begin play next season and Toronto in 2026.

“We’ve been working on Portland for a while, so when we did our original data analysis, I guess two and a half years ago, Portland was one at the top of the list, after the Bay Area,” Engelbert said. “So I’ve had my eye on Portland.”

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek was unable to attend at the Moda Center, home of the Portland Trail Blazers, but issued a statement.

“The decision to choose Portland for the next WNBA team is just as much a recognition of our past as it is about faith in our future,” Kotek said. “Portland has an unequivocal love of women’s sports.”

Engelbert has said she hopes to have more teams by 2028 but doesn’t think that the league will be adding any more that will start playing before 2027.

Portland had a WNBA team, the Fire, from 2000 until it folded in 2002. That franchise averaged more than 8,000 fans when games were played at the

Rose Garden. The new franchise will play at the same arena, now known as the Moda Center, and the Bhathals plan to build a dedicated practice facility for the team as well.

In addition to the Thorns, the Bhathal family has been a co-owner of the Sacramento Kings since 2013. The Bhathals added to their sports portfolio earlier this year when they bought the women’s soccer team for \$63 million.

“When you look at our numbers, not just the Thorns’ off-the-charts attendance, which is incredible, what you’ve seen, in Eugene, what you’ve seen in Oregon State, we knew that this was going to be one of the great moments in sports for Oregon,” Wyden said. “We saw, February of 2023, what was possible. So I can tell you that right now there are women playing in Portland. They’re rebounding in Roseburg, they’re hooping in Hermiston. Every nook and cranny of our state is into this.”

The new Portland WNBA team is not yet named. The Bhathals said they wanted to tap into the community to select one.

St. Johns Library to Close October 11 for Renovations



Draft rendering of St. Johns Library children’s area and community room courtesy of Bora Architecture and Interiors

Construction Will Modernize Space

Multnomah County Library is starting construction on another of its transformative renovations and expansions. St. Johns Library will grow to approximately 8,500 square feet, maintaining the historic Carnegie building and adding a new addition.

To start on these updates, St. Johns Library will close to the public on October 11.

St. Johns Library has one of the smallest footprints in the Multnomah County Library system, at approximately 5,600 square feet. Its size reflects the space shortage the library bond is working to fix. As part of the 2020 library bond, St. Johns is one of eight libraries the library will expand, renovate or construct. Through this expansion and update, St. Johns can serve patrons even more efficiently with features that reflect the community.

To amplify the community’s vision, Community Design Advocates (CDAs) were part of a paid program to connect

with their communities about how this library can represent them.

Based on additional community input through focus groups, public meetings, surveys and more, new features will include a large play and learning space for children and families; flexible meeting spaces for community use; teen area with space for technology, homework and creative expression; updated technology and internet; and new art that represents the community.

Bora Architecture and Interiors led the design for St. Johns Library, along with Convergence Architecture, an architecture firm based in St. Johns that brings their knowledge and love of this neighborhood to the project. Howard S. Wright, a Balfour Beatty company, is the General Contractor for this \$13 million project.

During St. Johns Library’s construction, the library encourages patrons to visit the Kenton Library or the Northwest Library. St. Johns Library is scheduled to reopen in spring 2026.

Community members can stay up-to-date on the latest news about Belmont Library and all Multnomah County Library building projects at multcolib.org/planning.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The IBR Program’s Draft SEIS is Available Now!

The **Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement** is documentation of the federal environmental review process. It identifies potential impacts and benefits of the proposed infrastructure investments on transportation, the community and the environment, both during construction and in the future. The public **comment period is open now through Nov. 18**, and feedback from the community will inform design and updates to technical analysis to shape the solution that advances to the Final SEIS.

To review the document and provide comment:



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