

Orangeville Town Council,

This letter is written in support of the expansion of the pool at the Alder Recreation Centre from 6 lanes to 8 lanes, as outlined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The Alder Recreation Centre's pool is the primary home of the Orangeville Otters Swim Club. Under pre-COVID-19 conditions, our swimmers trained in that pool for more than 20 hours each week. While we are most thankful to have a Myrtha Pool and the newly installed Omega OSB-11 starting blocks, our club would benefit greatly from the installation of a new, stainless steel, 8 lane tank.

Having an 8 lane pool, in addition to the 6 lane pool at the Tony Rose Memorial Sports Centre, would allow for us to continue to expand. Our club has seen tremendous growth over the past four seasons. When I arrived in 2016 as the new Head Coach of the Otters, our previous year's enrolment stood at about 105 swimmers. At our peak enrolment at the end of 2018, we had 248 swimmers training in our various programmes. The additional lane space would provide our team with the ability to offer more diverse programmes, which in turn would mean that more residents of the community could be part of the Otters.

The additional lanes would also allow for more of our athletes to use the new starting blocks, used at all Provincial, National, and International competitions. The use of those blocks has helped our highest performing swimmers tremendously. We had 6 swimmers qualify for the Canadian Olympic Swimming Trials last year, as well as 10 swimmers qualify for the Canadian Jr. Championships two seasons ago. Four years ago, the club did not have a single swimmer qualified to attend either competition.

The Orangeville Otters are a member of Swim Ontario's Huronia Region. Currently, our regional championship competition must be contested in an 8 lane pool. The additional two lanes would allow for us to regularly host that competition. Currently, Barrie, Owen Sound, Bracebridge, and Orillia with their new pool, host that swim meet. We are one of the three clubs (Trent and Lindsay) in our region who cannot host the competition despite being the reigning Regional Champions, having won the meet last season. Bringing 300 – 400 athletes and their families to Orangeville will have a positive impact on the revenues of local businesses, primarily restaurants and hotels, as many of the attending athletes will compete over three days in preliminary and finals sessions.

Last year, we held two competitions in Markham's 10 lane Pan Am Centre pool, as it allowed for us to host a meet that attracted a higher level of competition that we could attract if the meet had been contested in the Alder Recreation Centre's pool. The revenue associated with the hosting of such competitions is critical to swim clubs. Having an 8 lane pool in Orangeville would provide a sufficient home for the hosting of our Fall Invitational each season. Currently,

we host a three team meet with Brampton and Newmarket at the Alder facility. The expanded space would encourage more athletes from those teams to attend our competition.

Having swam competitively for 20 seasons, I have noticed a positive difference in the quality of the water and the air in pools with stainless steel tanks. In my experience, the water has a lighter and cleaner feel. The air seems to have less of a chlorine smell, and therefore fewer chloramines. The absence of surface chloramines in the air has a tremendous impact on the ability of swimmers to train and compete.

When exercising vigorously, swimmers inspire the air at the surface deeply into the lungs. When the levels of chloramines in the air are high, the lungs become irritated and sore. This makes it difficult to breathe during and after a workout. It seems to be easier to maintain a proper pool chemistry in stainless steel pools. Maintaining proper levels of chemicals permits swimmers to consistently train at their best.

During our last two seasons, the most successful seasons in our team's history, I moved all of our top athletes from training in both pools in town to train exclusively in the Alder pool. The difference between the water and air quality of Alder pool and the Tony Rose pool had a noticeable effect on our swimmer's performance. I think there would be a similar, beneficial effect, if a stainless steel tank replaced the vinyl pool at the Alder facility.

We, the Orangeville Otters, appreciate the Town of Orangeville's consideration in this matter. We are hopeful that our club may host higher level competitions, continue to expand our programming, and to have more athletes training in a facility that allows them to train at their best each day.

Best regards,

Rob Taylor

Head Coach of the Orangeville Otters

2000 Canadian Olympic Swim Team Member