

London Aquatic Club
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Ms. Elizabeth Peloza, Chair
Community and Protective Services Committee
City of London
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cc. Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services
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Ms. Peloza:

Please accept the following submission as part of the Added Agenda for the Community and Protective Services Committee (CAPS) on March 21, 2023, at 4:15pm. This submission is made on behalf of the Board of Directors of London Aquatic Club (LAC) regarding the March 21, 2023, staff report entitled *Infrastructure Update – Thames Outdoor Pool*.

The Board of Directors of LAC is disappointed to see the recommendation to decommission Thames Pool. LAC is a consistent user of this facility where hundreds of young competitive swimmers in our club participate in the sport of swimming and complete many hours of training during the Spring, Summer and Fall swim season. In addition, Thames Pool is the location of the Annual Paul Hauch swim meet which brings hundreds of visitors to the City of London and is one of the only outdoor competitive swim meets in Ontario.

A 50-metre outdoor pool is a unique asset and should be seen as a cornerstone of the aquatic infrastructure in London. When Thames Pool opens each year, it brings with it the opportunity for clubs like LAC to offer additional training hours for competitive swimmers along with the many recreational benefits to the London community. Decommissioning the pool with no fully developed plan for a replacement site or facility would mean that this asset will be lost for future generations of Londoners.

While the Recreation Master Plan does not emphasize outdoor pools in future aquatic infrastructure builds, the growing competitive swim community continues to value outdoor pools as key locations for Spring, Summer and early Fall programming for which demand is increasing. This increased demand for competitive swimming is in part due to the success of local Olympian and World Champion Maggie Mac Neil who trained at Thames Pool during her time with LAC and during the pandemic when access to indoor pools was limited.

We encourage members of the Community and Protective Services Committee to complete additional community consultation about Thames Pool and its benefits. In addition, we encourage the CAPS committee to closely consider the viability of the other staff recommendations contained in this report including repairing damages and extending the life of Thames Pool. If the staff recommendation is indeed accepted and the pool is decommissioned, a viable plan for a replacement outdoor 50-metre pool must be in place.

We would be happy to meet with members of the CAPS committee, City Council or City of London administration to share more information about the growing sport of competitive swimming and the need for outdoor pools as training facilities in the City of London.

Thank you,

Mike Cooke

Mike Cooke
President, LAC Board of Directors