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# Building More Aquatic Centres in Ontario

Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario

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# Executive Summary

There is an urgent need for Ontario to invest in more and larger recreational aquatic facilities to enhance health outcomes, stimulate the local economy, and provide complete communities that support new housing starts. Ontario must empower local stakeholders to develop these facilities and position itself as a leader in drowning prevention, building healthy communities, and athletic excellence.

Currently, the development of aquatic centres in Ontario is hindered by outdated assumptions of operational costs, a governance structure that makes it challenging to build larger aquatic centres, and an overall infrastructure deficit that forces municipalities to make difficult decisions on capital projects. Most indoor 50-metre (50m) pools in Ontario were constructed between 1970 and 2010, with only four built after 2000 according to a 2023 study by Aquatic Associates. This slow down in pool development is due to short-term funding plans that have put pressure on the municipalities and non-profits managing pool facilities. Historical trends indicate that larger pools have primarily been built in response to specific needs from universities or major

sporting events, such as the Pan Am Games, which has left many Ontario communities without sufficient access to facilities.

Public opinion polling completed by Pluriel Research in the summer of 2024 indicates strong support for expanding pool programming and infrastructure, especially among parents with young children. However, barriers such as long travel time to facilities and limited access to swim programs hinder participation.

This lack of infrastructure negatively affects community vibrancy by limiting options for learn-to-swim lessons, recreational aquatic activities, water-based rehabilitation programs, water-based sports, and opportunities for local sport tourism.

To address these issues, Ontario needs to take a proactive approach to pool construction, anticipating future needs rather than reacting to them. By investing in recreational infrastructure, Ontario can attract residents, boost the local economy through sport tourism, and improve public health through increased access to exercise and



enhanced drowning prevention programs. The ability of municipalities to deliver their core services, and the expansion of learn-to-swim initiatives is particularly critical to this approach.

Pool operators suggest that increasing pool sizes significantly enhances usage rates if supported by optimized designs and energy-efficient systems. Industry professionals have shared that pool operators could triple their use if they could double the pool size and enable municipalities to generate more revenue to support pool programming.

To support the development of larger, 50m pool facilities, the province should assist in the construction of regional recreation facilities that serve multiple aquatic and recreational purposes.

These hubs would centralize resources, allowing municipalities to deliver essential services more efficiently while providing opportunities for aquatic sport clubs to rent space. A well-designed facility anchored by a 50m pool could attract large-scale competitions and events that smaller venues cannot accommodate. To facilitate this vision, the Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario is urging the government

to establish a dedicated funding application process for constructing regional recreation facilities with larger pools. This process should facilitate financial and development support from conception through to construction and address the financial barriers many municipalities face in constructing multi-use, 50m pools. The applications should be reviewed and approved for funding by the Minister of Sport and the Minister of Infrastructure to ensure that the regional facilities are being placed strategically, in locations that can support the aquatic programming, and built to maximize programming and operating efficiency.

**The Aquatic Sport Council, is comprised of representatives from:**

- Dive Ontario
- Lifesaving Society
- Ontario Artistic Swimming
- Ontario Water Polo
- Parks and Recreation Ontario
- Swim Ontario

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# Ontario is Falling Behind on Pool Construction

A **50-metre pool** can bring three times the programming for twice the pool size. A strategically placed 50m pool allows for greater access to swim lessons, swim team training, fitness training, and can attract out-of-town swimmer for tournament and other significant aquatic competition activities.

In underserved communities, a 50m pool can help provide enough pool time for growing populations while also benefitting surrounding service and hotel businesses.

50m pools should have 10 lanes, a warm-up tank, and be 2.5m deep to accommodate a full range of activities.

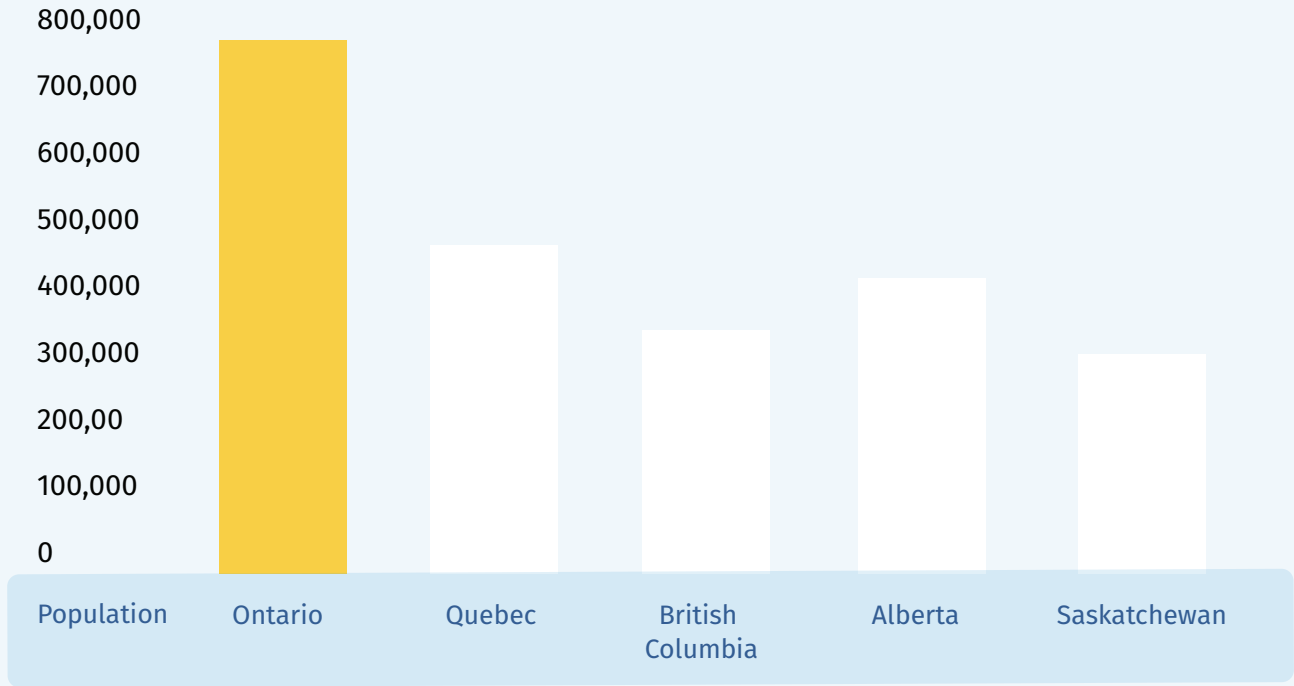
In Ontario, planning for aquatic infrastructure happens at the municipal level of government. There are currently no provincial standards for pool infrastructure requirements, nor is there a process for ensuring adequate aquatic infrastructure is distributed fairly across the province. The province needs to begin anticipating future gaps in pool infrastructure and should establish the cross-jurisdictional dialogue required to implement cost-effective and efficient construction.

In the past two decades, Ontario has suffered from a lack of pool development and insufficient funding. The majority of indoor 50m pools in Ontario were built in the 1970s, 1980s, and 2010s. Only four 50m pools have been built after the year 2000. As a result, Ontario is falling behind its counterparts across Canada.

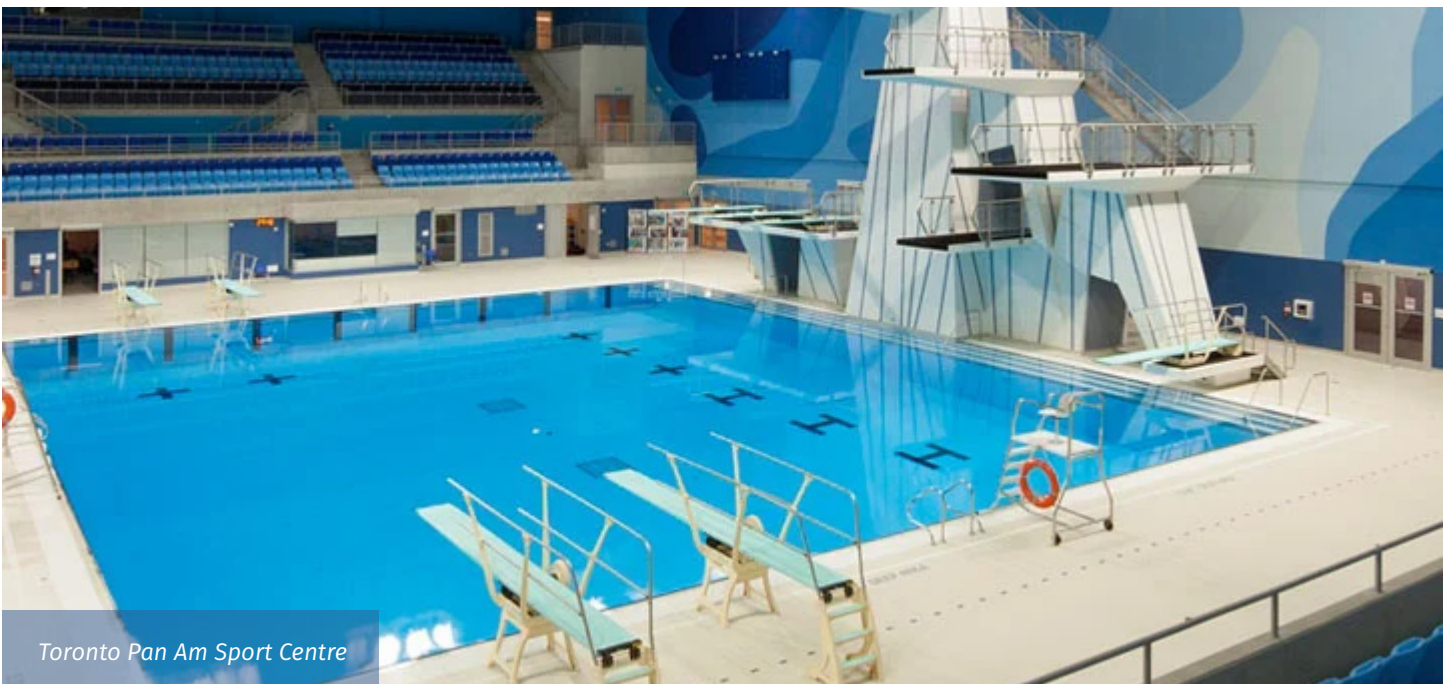
Ontario has a population of 14 million, approximately 40 per cent of Canada's population, but only 30 per cent of the 50m indoor pools. Further, six of the seven largest cities in Canada without 50m indoor pools are in Ontario. The data is clear: there aren't enough 50m pools in Ontario to serve the needs of its growing population. The gap in Ontario's pool infrastructure becomes even greater when compared to other provinces across Canada; Ontario's 50m pool to population ratio is 1:748,629. This is the second highest ratio in the country.

There is a correlation between stagnated 50m pool development and the withdrawal of government involvement. The lack of aquatic facility development is partly due to municipalities withdrawing their support from the development and operation of large pools. Ontario is the only province where 50m pools developed by institutions and for major games outnumber those built by municipalities, or other levels of government.

## Population Ratio per 50m Pool



*Ontarians experience double the competition to accessing 50M pools compared to the rest of Canada*



Toronto Pan Am Sport Centre

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# Ontarians Want to Swim

## Access to Pools is Integral to Developing Better Health Outcomes

Aquatic infrastructure provides community members with several benefits, including the opportunity to participate in sport and fitness, access rehabilitation/therapy programs, build social connection, and attend and participate in special events and sport tourism. Most importantly, and most desired by community members, is the increased availability of learn-to-swim programs that improve water safety and aid in drowning prevention. Learn-to-swim also indirectly provides users with access to the full capacity of pool programming; by learning and knowing how to swim, users can expand their participation in alternative aquatic programming, thus developing healthier lifestyles and good exercise habits. Access to pool-based fitness and recreation programs like diving, water polo, or artistic swimming require the ability to swim, reiterating that learn-to-swim programs are the foundation of aquatic participation.

Beyond the benefits felt by the general population, pools serve an even higher function for older adults, pregnant women, and those with different physical abilities who prefer or require an aquatic setting to perform exercise, as hydrotherapy is shown to cut down on recovery time. Access to exercise, specifically low-impact forms such as swimming, have been linked to a range of health benefits, from reducing rates of chronic diseases and rehabilitation from injury, to improving mental health. Pools, therefore, play a role in reducing the financial strain on the provinces' healthcare system.

Perhaps the most significant health benefit that can be gained from access to pools, however, is the prevention of drowning instances. Based on numbers provided by the Lifesaving Society: in 2020, 211 people in Ontario died from drowning, the highest number in a decade. In 2018 alone, deaths due to drowning resulted in an economic loss of \$175 million, and hospitalizations place an additional \$8 million dollar strain on the healthcare system, annually. Thirty-eight per cent of water-related fatalities occur while swimming in open bodies of water. By providing more opportunities to access and participate in aquatic programming, there is significant potential to decrease the amount of death and injury, and reduce some of the public healthcare system's financial strain.

## Ontarians Like Swimming, Know It's an Important Skill and Want More Access

For the purposes of this submission, Pluriel was contracted to perform public opinion polling to determine Ontarians' feelings about pool infrastructure across the province.

### This polling identified some significant trends:



56 per cent of Ontarians would like the government to make building new swim infrastructure a higher priority, with 77 per cent of identified PC voters considering an investment in new swim infrastructure to be a very or somewhat good investment.



Across all party supporters, the majority of Ontarians would like to see the provincial government invest more money into public swim infrastructure.



Parents of children under 18 are the most frequent users of public pools.



Parents and young adults indicated a high demand for pools: 41 per cent of parents would be more likely to use a public pool, and 37 per cent of Ontarians aged 18-34 say they would be much more likely if access was more available.



52 per cent of Ontarians would like the government to provide more facilities where future Olympic athletes can train and compete.

- *This includes the majority (51 per cent) of likely voters in the next provincial election.*

These results emphasize the need for pool infrastructure across the province and suggest that Ontarians are in strong support of investing in aquatic infrastructure.

## Families Want to Live in Communities with Recreational Activities, Pools

As the province continues to expand its availability of housing options, it is critical that a corresponding plan to develop and increase access to recreational programming -- especially pools -- is also developed. Regions that offer a wide array of recreational programming appeal to families looking to create roots, raise children, and grow older.

Given the constraints on pool availability, many families gravitate to urban areas where recreational infrastructure already exists. This puts greater stress on housing affordability in those high-density areas and leaves many areas of the province struggling to attract new families to support their growth, property tax base, and local economy.

If the government is looking to make housing more readily available and affordable in various areas of the province, they should consider areas that lack regional recreation facilities with aquatic centres and focus efforts on supporting municipalities to build recreation as a cornerstone of their community.

Ignoring the need for recreational programming, or expecting smaller municipalities to bear the costs of designing and constructing an aquatic/recreation centre, only prolongs the existing issues related to access and availability.





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# Municipalities Are Key to Pool Delivery and Need Support

From construction to operation, municipalities are responsible for public recreation facilities; they are the primary drivers of pool construction. Local governments respond to their communities' desires for athletic and recreation facilities and know where additional services are needed. Municipalities are also responsible for operating and maintaining pools and pool programming, ensuring longevity of the asset to maximize public benefit.

Municipalities are increasingly under financial strain due to competing financial priorities and raising the capital required for a new aquatic facility is a long and complex process. To build pools and their associated infrastructure, municipalities are sourcing large portions of capital through debt financing and development charges, and creating financial liabilities that must eventually be resolved. The prohibitive cost and limited revenue tools available to municipalities can make the idea of building new aquatic facilities too daunting for some municipal governments.

Support from higher levels of government can ensure municipalities have adequate capital to build a quality asset, help minimize operating and maintenance costs, and provide the long-term public benefits offered by pool infrastructure. A provincial funding program dedicated to helping municipalities move aquatic facilities from conception to construction by supplying a portion of the necessary capital, would relieve the pressure on municipalities and create public benefit.

Such a fund would support municipalities building new, large pool areas or expanding existing facilities.

Ontario's *Municipal Act* designates 'culture, parks, recreation and heritage' as one of 11 spheres of jurisdiction for municipal governments.

Unfortunately, many municipalities face significant capital funding challenges, leading to pool size and programming being one of the first items cut during the design process.

To maximize the impact of public capital and complement a provincial funding program, municipal governments should shift the way they design public recreation infrastructure by combining other recreation services and facilities with aquatic centres. By developing multi-use public spaces, complete with gyms, arenas, libraries, and/or service centres, municipalities can spread capital and operating costs over a wider set of revenue sources -- such as user fees for programming and rentals -- therefore increasing the efficiency of public spending.

**Whitby** hired a sport consultant to make sure their pool was set up for small athletic meets so they could get a diverse range of activities. The original scope doubled in size to have capacity for the projected population growth.

Funds for the complex came from Ottawa's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program. The facility includes a 25-metre, 10-lane pool, separate leisure pool and second floor spectator viewing area - which will make the Whitby Sports Complex home to the largest pool in Durham region.

*\*This state-of-the-art-facility will meet the immediate and future recreation needs of our rapidly growing community as well as the Town's environmental and climate commitments. It will be one of the first multipurpose recreation facilities in Canada to be certified as a LEED Gold and Zero Carbon Building through the Canada Green Building Council.\* - Elizabeth Roy, Mayor, Town of Whitby.*



Rendering of Whitby Sports Complex Pool

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# A Regional Funding Strategy Will Address Need

Public capital would have the greatest impact if invested at strategically located regional recreation facilities across the province. These facilities would bring together spaces and resources for numerous activities -- such as multi-purpose gymnasiums, weightlifting facilities, arenas, and indoor tracks -- anchored by a 50m pool. This follows the Canadian Sport Institute (CSI) model, which operates multi-purpose athletic facilities across Canada, providing training opportunities for high-performance athletes and recreation programming opportunities for surrounding communities.

Centralizing spaces for numerous forms of activity and use allows for an efficient and effective use of public dollars, as overhead and staffing costs can be spread across numerous revenue sources. For instance, the staffing complement required to service a standalone pool can provide the necessary maintenance and administration for a range of spaces. A regional facility with pool, gym and arena capabilities can provide revenue-generating programming across all three, offsetting the overhead costs required to operate a larger facility.

For pools specifically, larger pools mean more programming and access to larger revenue streams. Athletic clubs (i.e., competitive swim and dive clubs), commercial use (i.e., rescue and scuba training), and large events like major competitions all generate considerable revenue but cannot be accommodated by smaller pools.

Targeted investment in specific regional facilities also allows for investment in technology to make operation more cost-efficient. Modern water temperature, and chemical balance monitoring and regulation systems support the most efficient use of operating funds, but are not accessible to smaller facilities due to their high upfront cost.

The **Markham Pan-Am Centre** has a 50-metre swimming pool with 10 lanes for competitive swimming. At 2.5 metres deep, the pool is also suitable for artistic swimming and water polo events.

The pool includes a moveable floor and configurable bulkheads. It can be set up to meet various sport requirements and allows for a multi-use configuration.

In 2022, the centre hosted 71 events and 375,000 visitors.

The Pan Am Centres (PACs) in Markham and Scarborough, and the Canada Games Complex (CGC) in Thunder Bay present excellent examples of strategically designed recreation infrastructure. These facilities provide a range of services, including 50m pools, athletics and training, recreation, and commercial space, all under one roof. The increased revenue generated through programming fees, rentals, and leases offsets the overhead costs required to operate larger facilities. Each facility is large enough to provide services to a large user base, servicing the broader GTA and northern Ontario regions.

Ultimately, the greater scale of large regional facilities also creates a broader economic and service impact. More jobs are created in the facility's construction and operation, a broader programming range provides more recreation opportunities for community members, and it brings potential for new businesses and services. The regional aspect means fewer public dollars are required to impact a greater number of Ontarians.



Markham Pan Am Centre

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# Triple the Use for Double the Pool

Local and regional governments aim to generate revenue to assist with the operation of pools; a task which is made easier by building indoor, all-season 50m pools.

These 50m pools allow municipalities to offer low-cost drop-in and recreational access, while enabling them to generate greater revenues for permitted and sport training uses.

Pool operators are keen to modernize their programming and combine the innovations being made in pool construction and operations. By integrating the approach to construction, operations, and programming in the planning phases of a new or retrofitted pool, municipalities can reduce the gap between operating costs and programming revenue, and the larger pools will create opportunities for sport tourism to thrive.



## Procurement and Design

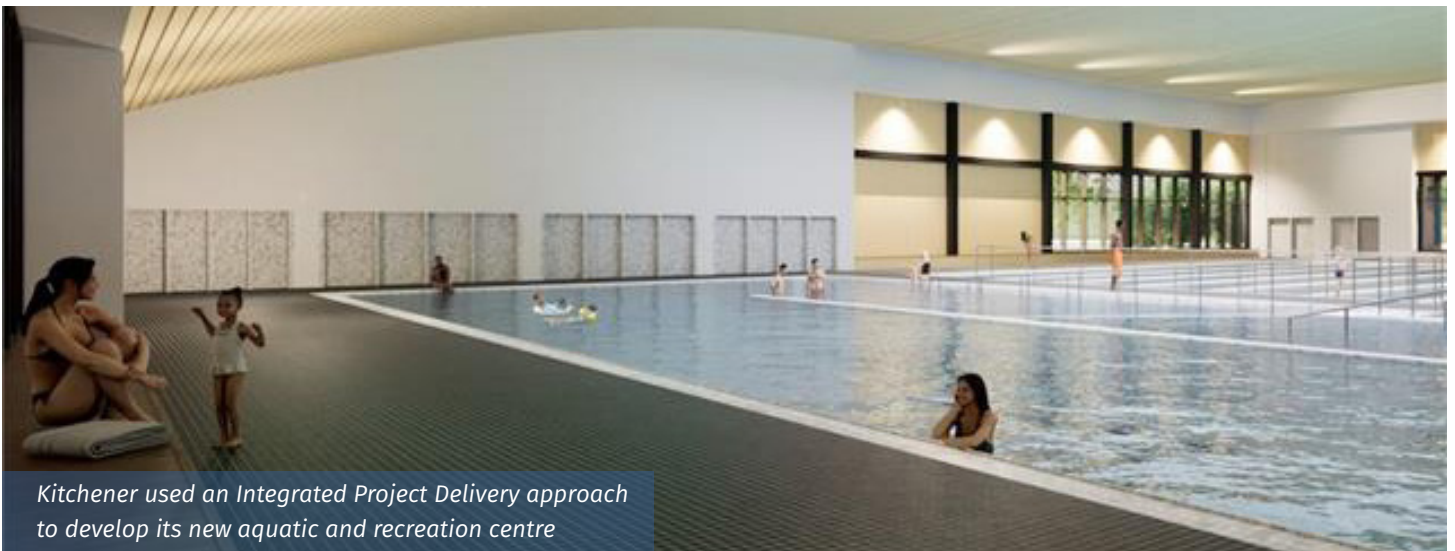
**Collingwood - Centennial Aquatic Centre** Built in 1967, Collingwood decided to enclose their facility in 2013. Collingwood chose a tension fabric structure, a fast, reliable and innovative solution. Construction took just 6 months. The new cover was accompanied by upgrades to the pool.

Knowing how a recreational centre will run, and who will use it, helps focus the design of the physical structure. There are a range of development strategies that can be used to ensure an anchor facility, like a 50m pool, is built in a cost-effective way, will be able to operate efficiently, and will support a range of uses.

Integrated Project Delivery is a procurement model that allows a funder and a contractor to work together to finalize design elements and a construction plan in a collaborative way that can enhance building performance.

Using new, cost-efficient building materials can help control construction costs, which helps make these large infrastructure projects more incentivizing for municipalities to build. For example, some municipalities are using tension fabric membranes to cover new aquatic recreation facilities. These can be built on their own or adjacent to a larger recreation facility and can accommodate 25m or 50m pools.

To build the number of pools needed to meaningfully improve access in Ontario, partnerships will be necessary. Not just partnerships between municipalities and federal and provincial funders, but also partnerships between neighbouring municipalities and not-for-profits. For smaller municipal communities that don't have the capacity to build new facilities on their own, partnering with surrounding municipalities can help create the capital needed to build a new pool, while also contributing to a facility that their constituents will likely use.



*Kitchener used an Integrated Project Delivery approach to develop its new aquatic and recreation centre*

In Ontario's fast-growing 905 suburbs (Mississauga, Brampton, Burlington, Markham, Oshawa), sport and recreation services are delivered solely by local municipalities, not regions or counties. Filling the gaps in access for 50m, regionally significant recreation centres anchored by a pool will likely require municipal partnerships and potentially regional or county leadership. Ontario's flagship aquatic centre, the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre is an example of a successful partnership.

In Europe, it is commonplace to develop an aquatic facility with additional empty space on the land with the intention of expanding the facilities in the future. This ensures that the aquatic facilities have supplementary space for expansion, allowing the space to adapt to the changing needs and financial obstacles that may arise in the future.

## West Parry Sound Recreation and Cultural Centre Board



Parry Sound partnered with six municipalities and two First Nations groups to develop this project. The approved project was submitted in 2019 with a budget of \$32 million. Since then, the project budget has increased to \$36.4M due to construction price increases and changes such as the addition of two lanes to the lap pool. The Board has also worked with the community to increase spectator seating in the pool and gymnasium.

The capital project is funded at 73 per cent through an Investing in Canada Infrastructure grant.

Recreation Centre will include a 25-metre lane pool. The site work is complete, and the foundations are underway.

## Operational Best Practices

As part of the design process, the pool should be developed with its future operation in mind. The building's footprint should be designed in a manner that supports airflow and provides enough space for effective filtration, water management, and waste disposal. This can help ensure future operational costs and performance are managed effectively. Energy is required to heat the water and the building via heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. To ensure these systems operate in harmony, and with maximum efficiency, it is important for the structural engineers and water engineers to work together throughout the development process.

The heart of every pool is its mechanical room. This is where the critical working components such as waste, water heating, and filtration operate. Over the pool's lifespan, most of the waste is created by turning over the water more frequently than is required by regulation. Many pools run five to 20 times more water than necessary. Often, it's because the water systems aren't being operated correctly.

Filtration systems are often under designed. Ontario pools don't have chemically assisted filtration, which results in low clarity of water. Current regulations require that all the water in a pool should be filtered every six hours. The Ontario Building Code states that every four hours water should be turned over. This often results in water being pushed through the filter at a rate too fast to perform adequately. When water begins to be pushed through the filter at a rate that creates channels, the water will rush through, rather than slowly percolate through the filter. The maximum speed for a sand filter should be 20 metres per hour (and for a multimedia filter, 30 metres per hour). Filters should be sized to get enough water at the correct speed to ensure proper filtration and timely turnover. Under designed filtration systems are common and can be avoided by incorporating four best-practice pillars: chemically assisted, biological, physical, and absorption (absorbing unclean substances from water).

The upfront design of the operations is critical, and there are many best practices in other jurisdictions we can learn from. For example, features like the circulation pump -- which injects water from the side of the pool -- could shift to bottom injection, which is used in Europe. The materials used for pools should also be carefully considered. These aspects affect the operational cost of an aquatic facility and can lower cost in the long run.

Operational efficiencies can also be executed administratively. A multi-use facility should optimize space by asking staff to perform multiple tasks.



## Programming Best Practices

Learn-to-swim and wellness amenities are integral to maintaining a pool because they bring in consistent revenue through user and programming fees. It is considered best practice for competition facilities to have multipurpose functionality, and community amenities are considered the minimum for overall successful operation. Pools can and must generate revenue during the off-competition season and non-competition weekends, as well as any times pools sit empty. This can be done through careful program timing as well as through the establishment of cross-municipal networks. Both solutions can reduce dips in pool utilization and off-peak usage.

Prime recreation time can be competitive and municipal and not-for-profit pools must manage the various programming they offer. Low-cost recreation and lane swimming is a public service that many expect to be available at a public pool, but it does not generate significant revenue. Swimming lessons and swim club rentals can bring in additional revenues for pool operators; however, at the expense of limiting public access.

By integrating learn-to-swim classes, lane swim, lifeguard training, aquafit and other community programming, pools can generate a better return for each operating dollar. This integration of programming requires a larger facility however, which is why 50m pools introduce the possibility of doubling revenue. Activating the space with this level of service efficiency helps protect the longevity of the facility.

Understanding local needs, such as the physical and water quality requirements for each user group, is essential to maximizing programming revenue. Depth, deck width, lane widths, accessibility resources, and spectator space can all determine if certain activities can utilize a pool.

Providing regional access to larger pools and identifying the programming methods to help sustain a 50m pool can help ensure the facility is more financially sustainable and has the capacity to grow along with the community. In some rare cases, there could also be a business case for an even larger, regional recreation centre that can cater to the provincial and national competition circuits, provide access to sport and daily swim training, and support the local service industry by hosting competitions.

## Sport Tourism is an Economic Driver, Cannot Be Ignored

The **Toronto Pan-Am Sports Centre** is a world-class facility comprised of 312,000 square-foot of programmed space including internationally sanctioned 10-lane 50-metre pools, a world-class dive pool and dryland dive training facilities. This recreation centre offers programs for children, youth adults and older adults.

In 2023, the Centre hosted over 1.5 million visitors, and played host to a significant number of high-performance camps, swimming lessons, and local, national and international events.

Sport tourism is a growing contributor to both the Canadian and Ontario economies, demonstrating substantial potential for growth and economic impact at the municipal and provincial levels. According to the Government of Canada, sport tourism generated \$7.4 billion in value for the Canadian economy in 2019, an increase from the \$6.8 billion reported in 2018. Ontario continues to be the leading beneficiary of sport tourism spending in Canada. In 2019, Ontario saw \$2.45 billion from visitor spending related to sport tourism, accounting for the largest share among all provinces. This dominance is further emphasized by Ontario's 41 per cent share of the total volume of sport tourism visits in 2018.

This impact comes in the form of visitor spending and job creation, with spectators spending on accommodations, food, transportation, and retail, directly benefitting local businesses.

However, the proper facilities and infrastructure that are required to host, let alone compete for such opportunities, are lacking. Cities looking to host large events, ranging from regional competitions to international championships, must have appropriate facilities that can accommodate large-scale event needs. For competitive swimming and diving events, aquatic facilities must have the necessary lanes, depth and water temperature regulation, among other requirements, to comply with competition regulations.

Having the ability to host large events and attract visitors is essential to leveraging these major revenue generating opportunities. Sport tourism presents a significant opportunity for economic growth at both the municipal and provincial levels, with Ontario leading the way. To maintain this edge and leverage the growth in sport tourism, it's key that the province support pool construction.



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# Conclusion

Only four of Ontario's 50m pools have been built after the year 2000. Meanwhile, from 2000 to 2024, Ontario's population has grown by three million people.

Many of Ontario's 50m pools were built by, or in partnership with, growing post-secondary institutions. Others, like London's Canada Games Aquatic Center, and Toronto's Pan Am Sports Centre were built in conjunction with major athletic competitions.

Regionally significant aquatic infrastructure projects are needed in several areas in Ontario. The cost and regional benefit of these facilities goes beyond any one municipality; in Ontario's fastest growing suburbs, sport and recreation infrastructure is typically delivered by lower-tier governments, not regions. This makes it difficult for an individual municipality to build a new, 50m pool.

As Ontario's population continues to grow, and more families look to settle in areas that provide recreational programming, the need for larger pools to support a wide variety of uses is more apparent than ever.

Enhancing Ontario's pool system also means community members will have continued access to multi-generational, low-impact exercise. Water exercise is proven to reduce

chronic diseases, provide rehabilitation from injury, and contribute to improved mental health. This contributes to better health outcomes, lessening the financial strain on the province's health care system.

Industry experts have laid out the path to creating larger pools, how the province can support the efforts of municipalities, and measures that can be taken to design and build more efficient, and more economical pools and recreation facilities.

The provincial Ministry of Sport plays an important role in promoting excellence and well-being across several sports in Ontario, and the government supports many amateur and professional sporting events through various funding programs. New 50m pools will create more opportunities for athletic competitions for all of Ontario and bring economic impact benefits to surrounding businesses through hotel and restaurant use.

Ontario should develop an intake process to support the development of concept planning, designing, and funding of new regionally significant aquatic centres to increase the capacity of municipalities to deliver core services, and consider the following recommendations to achieve this.

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# Recommendations

## The Government of Ontario Should:

- Establish a fund for Ontario municipalities to apply for grants to support the construction of 50m pools.
- Create an intake and application process for regionally significant recreation centres with a 50m pool as an anchor, and work with municipalities to develop and fund projects on a rolling basis.
- Work with the Aquatic Sports Council and other partners to design a best-practice guide for pool design, rehabilitation, and construction.
- Ensure municipalities and not-for-profits receiving public funding for pools include an operating efficiency plan in their funding application.
- Update Ontario's public pools water quality regulations to align with the Centre for Disease Control's model aquatic health code.
- Review Ontario's Building Code to ensure public pool construction aligns with operating best practices.
- Support the creation of a best practices guide to support pool operators and programmers to maximize revenue generation at aquatic facilities.

## About the Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario

Aquatic sports, similar to many sport disciplines, face serious infrastructure issues across Canada and especially in Ontario. The Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario believes that good aquatic facilities are fundamental to developing sporting opportunities for everyone, from the youngest beginner to the international class athlete. These aquatic buildings encourage civic pride and assist the process of revitalizing deprived neighbourhoods.

Facilities that are well designed, built to last, and well maintained provide the best return on investment and are more enjoyable to use. The best designed facilities are rooted in a sound understanding of the current trends, practices, and developments across various aquatic sports, and rely on good design principles at every stage of the process.

The Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario aims to promote a greater general understanding of overall design concepts, an appreciation of technical issues, and the critical factors that need to be considered in reaching the appropriate solution for a particular project. The Aquatic Sport Council of Ontario can also advise where further information, advice and expertise may be found and point to benchmark examples. This is fundamental to ensuring:

- Increased awareness of good design in sports facilities.
- Accurate information about the [facility specifications](#) required for competition in each aquatic sport.
- Tools to assist pool operators and sport groups understand the opportunities to work collaboratively for the best uses of space and resources.