

Dear pool users,

As we look to the 2021 outdoor pool season there will still be numerous COVID restrictions in place, but we are excited to announce improvements, updates and additional opportunities for our swimming community, compared to 2020. During the summer of 2020, we successfully offered opportunities for lap and family swimming at Fuller pool, with an emphasis on safety for our guests and staff. This coming summer, we will continue to follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC, MDHHS and the Washtenaw County Health Department to open all three of our outdoor pools, Fuller, Buhr and Veterans, in some capacity.

Pool hours and operations will be different than pre-COVID years. In addition to opening all three outdoor pools, staff believe that it is imperative to find ways to provide programming that we were not able to offer in 2021, namely swim lessons and day camps. In order to accomplish this, we will be designating Buhr as our camp pool and Veterans as our lessons pool. Veterans will house some version of swim lessons in the morning before opening for general swim in the afternoons, evenings and weekends. Due to licensing requirements for camp, Buhr will be used only for an enlarged camp program through mid afternoons on weekdays, before opening for general use in late afternoon, evenings and weekends. Traditionally, Veterans and Buhr have not opened to the public until the afternoon due to swim lessons and other programs, so these schedules are not a drastic change from pre-COVID operations. Staff are looking at the possibility of opening Fuller before Memorial Day and offering longer weekend hours at Buhr and Vets to provide more opportunities for the public to enjoy the pools.

SAFETY

Our priority is to offer swimming experiences that are safe for our visitors. To that end, we will be requiring reservations, mask wearing when not in the pool, social distancing in the pool, arriving with your swim attire on, showering and changing at home after your swim and bringing your own pool chairs and toys. These guest expectations fall in line with the guidelines set by the CDC, MDHHS and Washtenaw County Health Department and were practiced successfully at Fuller in 2020. This summer, all three of our pools will be offering designated lap lanes and family spaces and at Fuller and Buhr, we will also be offering bungee swimming opportunities. Due to the limited number of spots and the need to reserve those spaces, we will not be offering season passes this year. Our hope is to offer the best use of our pool space for our guests while adhering to the one swimmer per lane and one family per space regulations set forth by the county.

DEEP END TEST

As many families know from last summer, we were unable to offer deep end tests for swimmers due to space restrictions and needing to limit physical interaction between staff and swimmers during the test. We have spent a great deal of time reviewing our deep end test policy, specifically the age requirement of 16 years. We have looked at best practices around Michigan and throughout the country. We have also looked at other city policies regarding the age of swimmers who are able to come to the pool unsupervised by an adult. Looking at all the factors involved, we have decided to lower the deep end

test age to under 12, so-any swimmer 12 and older will be able to swim in our lap lanes and will be able to swim in our deep end family spaces. We will still reserve the right to remove swimmers who are not capable of safely swimming in those areas but are excited to offer some of our younger swimmers more opportunities to swim this summer.

RESERVATION SYSTEM

Last summer, we heard a great deal of feedback regarding challenges with our reservation system. We have been diligently working to address some of the challenges with that system and have decided to utilize a new reservation system for the summer of 2021. This new system will allow us to limit lap swim reservations to 3 per week, have reservations open for the entire summer with no early morning rush to reserve space and allow family members to reserve lanes without the need to create new accounts for reach family member. As was the case in 2020 we will not be offering season passes this summer. Although we know this system will not be perfect for every person, we hope that more members of our community will have the ability to make reservations and enjoy pool time this summer.

UV FILTERS

Finally, we are very excited to announce the addition of UV filters to our outdoor pool filtration systems. Several years ago, Ann Arbor saw an outbreak of cryptosporidium and many pools in our community had to close for an extended period of time. Prior to that outbreak, we had a UV filter installed at Mack Indoor Pool, which resulted in the pool only being closed for a day. Recognizing the value of having a secondary filtration system that kills all bacteria and water born illnesses and considering the added safety that it offers our guests, we will be working this spring to have the UV filters installed at each of our outdoor pools.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES



As we continue to develop our plans to operate this summer, we are acutely aware that circumstances and regulations related to COVID can change quickly. As was the case last summer we will respond to any changes in rules and regulations carefully and make sure we have the correct safety measures in place. We are pledging to do our best to offer our community as many opportunities to access our facilities as possible and hope that you will approach this summer with optimism and understanding.

Thanks and be well,

City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Staff

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