



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2024 #184
IN CITY COUNCIL
September 9, 2024

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting report number 24-41 which requested a report on the possibility of extending public swimming at the Gold Star Pool, please see below from Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Ellen Semonoff:

In response to Policy Order #24-98, our Recreation staff took a series of steps this summer to determine whether it was possible to adequately staff the Gold Star Pool beyond Labor Day. As explained below, despite our efforts to find adequate staffing to keep Gold Star safely open for more weekends, we are not able to extend the season this year.

We recognize how important outdoor pools are when we have hot days. We opened Gold Star when school closed, and we kept it open thru the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, which is two weeks longer than our DCR pools are able to run. While finding an adequate number of trained lifeguards is always an issue, it is extremely challenging toward the middle and end of August when high school and college-aged guards return to school and sports. The past few seasons, we have been able to maintain healthy staffing levels during the summer months by offering Lifeguard certification courses, Lifeguard and Water Safety Instruction training programs, retention bonuses, and increased wages. We have worked with the CRLS Health and Physical Education Program to recruit and certify guards.

We've also tried to recruit from a network of local pools to bolster our staffing levels as well as working to see if any of our summer staff could work for more weeks. When we were able to reach the guards at other facilities, most had plans that did not include lifeguarding or were being assigned to other operations within their organization. Most of our summer staff were unavailable to stay.

Our staff are deeply committed to ensuring that all our young people learn to swim and have safe and happy experiences in the water. This summer, our staff worked hard to offer swim lessons, camp swim and open swim 7 days a week, including holidays. In total we were able to conduct lessons for 803 children/week for a total of 7 weeks for youth enrolled in local summer programs. We also tallied 5,352 visits for our camp open swim. Although our daily census started to decline with the temperatures, we welcomed between 12,000-13,000 swimmers in our 2024 season with our general open swim for swimmers of all ages, several events for teenagers and Water Safety Instruction for 10 participants of the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program.



Our swim program at the War Memorial opened on September 3. To ensure that all families have the opportunity to swim in September, we will be making family swim free for Cambridge residents for the month of September. Our robust children's lessons begin on Saturday September 14 at the War Memorial.

We will continue to explore possible ways to staff our programs so that expanding summer weeks might be able to happen next year, and we will continue to work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to explore any possibilities to extend the season for their pools in Cambridge.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yi-An Huang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Yi-An Huang
City Manager