

Points To Consider Using In Letters To Council

General Guidelines

Who to write to:

You should write Mayor Goldring and all members of Council, not just your own Councillor. They can be reached at: cob@burlington.ca

Make it personal:

- tell them how often you go to the park
- why you enjoy it as it is (quiet, unobstructed view of the lake, wildlife, friendly people, watching Bev and team work with the swans, etc.)
- what you do at the park (walk, do photography, birdwatch, enjoy nature, take visitors, take children/grandchildren etc.)
- what the swans mean to you/why they matter (conservation success story, taken volunteers 30 years to bring them back from the brink of extinction, their extraordinary beauty etc.).

Sign your letter with full name, address, phone number.

You may want to remind them that a **municipal election** is coming up and you consider this a key election issue.

Share your letter with us. cc us at trumpeterswancoalition@gmail.com

Basic facts About the Project:

- The LaSalle Park Marina Association, a private entity, wants to use government grants (taxpayer subsidies) to build a permanent breakwall and expanded marina (from 219 slips to 340).
- This project will significantly change the harbour and may destroy it as a suitable over-wintering ground for the 200 Trumpeter Swans (1/4 of Ontario's population) and the numerous other waterfowl that currently overwinter there.
- The purpose of the breakwall is to reduce wave action in the harbour. It is the wave action that keeps the harbour from freezing for long periods and makes it a good habitat for Trumpeters.
- Almost 10,000 tons of rock will be dumped into the harbour.
- More than 420 truckloads of heavy rock will be required.

- The resulting breakwall will be 400 metres long extending across almost the entire harbour.
- Permanent docks will be left in the water year round marring the previously undisturbed vista of the Lake and leaving less area for the swans.

Other Issues:

- Trumpeter Swans congregate in winter. If LaSalle Park is destroyed as an overwintering area, Trumpeter Swans have nowhere else to go as virtually all of their original wintering grounds (large marshes that don't freeze in the winter, mainly along the eastern U.S.) have been lost due to draining for development and agriculture. Supporting docs (see Presentation For Waterfront Committee under Trumpeter Swan Brochure, Handouts, Presentation on our website www.trumpeterswancoalition.com):
 - a. "The most serious threat to Trumpeter Swans is the loss of undisturbed breeding and (especially) wintering habitat to expanding human populations. . . .The long-term viability of all three populations likely depends primarily on enhancement of existing, restoration of former, and creation of new wintering grounds." Species Assessment For The Trumpeter Swans In Wyoming (Pacific Flyway Council 1992, 2002).*
 - b. Also: "Populations do not appear to establish themselves easily in new wintering habitat. Therefore, as long as wintering habitat is limited . . . the breeding population continues to be dependent on current management practices and habitat protection" Alberta Department of Fish and Wildlife*
 - c. As mentioned previously, suitable wintering habitat is rather rare and restricted in distribution, especially during very cold winters, and further loss and degradation of winter habitat is likely the main threat to trumpeter swans across their range." Species Assessment For The Trumpeter Swans In Wyoming (Pacific Flyway Council 1992, 2002).*
- Trumpeter swans have very specific habitat needs requiring good source of aquatic plants, right depth of water for feeding, shelter from northerly and easterly winds, a beach area to rest on — LaSalle Park meets all of these requirements.
- Trumpeter Swans selected this area on their own and can't just be moved.
- This decision requires very careful consideration because despite everyone's best intentions, any changes to LaSalle harbour could negatively impact it as habitat. LaSalle Park already offers one cautionary tale in what happened when "improvements" to the park ended up destroying the habitat of sandy cliffs used by bank swallows, thus destroying the bank swallows – a bird whose population has fallen by 95% since the 1970s in Ontario.

The expanded marina and breakwall project could also result in:

- Concentration of nutrients causing overgrowth of aquatic plants (as experienced after a permanent breakwall was constructed in Orillia's harbour);
- Pollution as the addition of 120 permanent slips may add contaminants to the water;
- Attraction of nuisance birds (as happened in Orillia);
- Reduction area available to waterfowl;
- Reduction of Trumpeter flight paths (they need at least 100 m).

Costs:

- The estimated cost so far: \$8 to \$9.2 million for the benefit of 340 boaters.
- That works out to a taxpayer-funded subsidy of between \$23,530 and \$27,059 per boater.
- If the Federal and Provincial governments have this kind of money to spend it should go to support transportation, healthcare, rebuilding aging infrastructure — in other words projects that will benefit ALL Burlington residents.
- The City of Burlington has already contributed \$150,000 as half the cost of an Environmental Studies Report that is currently under review by the Ministry of the Environment at the request of Conservation Halton and the Trumpeter Swan Coalition
- The LaSalle Park Marina Association has asked the City for another \$160,000 to fund any additional environmental studies that may be required by the Ministry of the Environment that they will reimburse only if the project gets the go-ahead from Council.
- The LaSalle Park Marina Association has not yet presented a thorough business case to the City for this project.
- Citizens require consultation, transparency and accountability — they don't want this to turn into another Burlington pier or Performing Arts Centre.

Don't forget to copy us on your letter and please let us know if we can put it on the website. Email us at trumpeterswancoalition@gmail.com