

## LAAJASALO WINTER SWIMMING FACILITY

Laajasalo is a quickly growing neighbourhood in the southeast of Helsinki and home for approximately 20.000 people. Population is about to increase with some 17.000 new residents within the next few years due to building new homes in Kruunuvuorenranta, infill development in Yliskylä and introducing a straight tramrail connection to the central Helsinki. Laajasalo is the largest inhabited island in Helsinki with 25 kilometers of shoreline. Laajasalo is an island, yet there is no public winter swimming facility!

Winter swimming, like many other local recreational activities, is very popular due to the quickly increasing number of users. The nearest public winter swimming facilities are located in Herttoniemenranta and Marjaniemi, but for the same reasons, they don't accept new members to use the facilities. This OmaStadi proposal promotes a new public winter swimming facility to Laajasalo where the local authority, City of Helsinki, provides a pier, water pump to keep swimming area ice-free and warm changing rooms for men and women (plus all required facilities) to use annually during winter swimming season from the 1<sup>st</sup> Sept until the 30<sup>th</sup> April. Outside these months, facilities could be open for all swimming purposes. The proposed facility is not only for the residents of Laajasalo, but also for all residents in Helsinki!

A new winter swimming facility could be located in Yliskylä, Hevossalmi, Tullisaari, Kruunuvuorenranta or Jollas. However, the suitable area must be owned by the City of Helsinki and managed by any local association to control usage and to collect small membership fees to cover the running costs - like other similar winter swimming facilities in Helsinki.

Helsinki city opened OmaStadi and held workshops where they advised that one or two possible locations for the facility should be studied in more detail. The first possible spot is in Hevossalmi and the second option in Kruunuvuorenranta. These two options are not in any order of importance and there definitely are other possible places along the 25



kilometres of Laajasalo shorelines if these are not suitable for winter swimming use. Both of these places have good connections for different means of transportation, they are safe and achievable, owned by the City and the local plan is favourable for leisure services.

Proposed winter swimming or ice swimming facility needs a safe and weatherproof pier with stairs, water pump to keep swimming area ice-free, lights, WC and warm changing rooms. All health and safety regulations must be taken into account when planning and running the winter swimming facility.

Winter swimming connects people over age gaps, genders, ideologies or cultural differences! Winter swimming promotes

many health benefits like boosting immune system and improving blood circulation, it gives a natural high and burns calories, reduces stress and gives you a smile! 😊

Give a THUMB UP and comment on OmaStadi to support this proposal!