



REFERRAL OF MEMBER MOTION BY CITY COUNCIL

Ontario Place: a Place for Families and a Public Space

Date:	April 16, 2012
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Council
Wards:	All Wards

City Council Decision

City Council on April 10 and 11, 2012, referred Motion MM22.7 to the Executive Committee.

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor John Parker, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Province of Ontario and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to keep Ontario Place a public space for families and all Toronto residents to enjoy and that no casinos or other gambling facilities be built or placed at Ontario Place.

Summary

Ontario Place is an important 96-acre public and family friendly space in Toronto and has been an affordable family-oriented destination since 1971. A staggering 72 per cent of yearly attendants are residents of the GTA. It is land that was originally dedicated to "The People of Ontario – Past, Present and Future."

In the last few decades attendance at Ontario Place declined, but with \$10.8 million spent in 2011 to upgrade attractions, rides, and the park grounds the park witnessed an over 70 per cent increase in attendance and large revenues from the Cinesphere and rides. In July 2011, the readers of *City Parent* magazine awarded it the "Best Seasonal Attraction in the GTA." Over 40,000 guests visited Ontario Place on Canada Day 2011 alone. Ontario Place provides 600 summer jobs for Ontario Students.

Despite the improvements made at Ontario Place in 2011 and the important family friendly public space it provides, on February 1, 2012 the Ontario Government announced it would be closing the park for redevelopment.

It has been rumoured that the Provincial Government is considering building a new casino in the GTA and that Ontario Place is being considered. A Casino at Ontario Place would turn it into a private space closed off to families. Torontonians will no longer be able to enjoy the use of the land and will instead bear the brunt of the resulting social costs brought with casinos.

John Tory is heading an advisory committee on the fate of Ontario Place and he is expected to report back in early May 2012. It is for that reason Toronto City Council must make it known now that Ontario Place must remain a public space for all Toronto residents to enjoy and we cannot afford to have a casino or other gambling facility built on it.

(Submitted to City Council on April 10 and 11, 2012, as MM22.7)