



West Don Lands Committee

Citizens for the Old Town /
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

March 5, 2019

Corktown Residents & Business
Association

Distillery Historic District

Dixon Hall

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation

Friends of Corktown Common

Goederham & Worts Neighbourhood
Association

Little Trinity Anglican Church

St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA

St. Lawrence Neighbourhood
Association

Task Force to Bring Back the Don

Toronto-East York Community Council

Sub-Committee on Ontario Place

Hello Councillors,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the future of Ontario Place.

I am John Wilson, co-chair of the West Don Lands Committee. You know us, but some listening may be unfamiliar. We are a coalition of community groups – residents, social, business, environmental and faith groups dedicated to positive redevelopment and city-building in the West Don Lands and neighbouring waterfront and Port Lands precincts.

The principles of Ontario Place for All we support:

- Ontario Place must be for ALL and kept publicly accessible.
- Before any changes, there must be a thoughtful, comprehensive public review, with a full and robust public consultation.
- Public interest, not commercial interest must drive the new vision.
- No casino.
- Future plans must:
 - acknowledge the waterfront's Indigenous heritage.
 - maintain Ontario Place as part of Toronto's waterfront park system.
 - be integrated with the revitalization of Exhibition Place.
 - Celebrate Ontario.
 - Preserve the Cinesphere, the Pods and Trillium Park.

I want to focus particularly on why a group like ours, centred in the east end along the Lower Don River would feel that Ontario Place is important to us... why we have a stake in the future of Ontario Place.

Our position is that the entire Toronto waterfront should be a public good and that all of the public should be able to enjoy it all. We see Ontario Place as part of a city-wide waterfront park system. It has been a huge 20-year effort for us to support and champion the revitalization of the waterfront in our part of the city in the East Bayfront and Port Lands. Now, thanks to the Waterfront Trail, Ontario Place is easily accessible along a linked parkland network. This network links not only from Scarborough to Mimico and beyond, but even up the rivers like the Don and the Humber. The natural parkland connections link Ontario Place not only east to the Central Waterfront and west to Sunnyside, but along Toronto's "lost" river, Garrison Creek, on a line north to Old Fort York, Stanley Park, Trinity-Bellwoods Park, Bickford Park, Christie Pits and beyond.

These public open spaces encourage us to get outside, improve our health and well-being, interact with our neighbours and contribute to a common good.

Ontario Place is a key, critical link in this network. It's not just an anonymous plot of land to be developed for the greatest profit by the highest bidder. Ontario Place is part of an organic whole – the public open space that links Toronto to Lake Ontario and the Great Lakes. Ontario Place reminds us living in Toronto, Ontario, who was here before us, how we came to build a city here, why we need to share our public spaces.

We urge you as councillors to help us protect the values of accessibility for all, full public participation in decisions about Ontario Place, public good over private interest, acknowledgement of indigenous interests, celebration of cultural heritage, and linkage – the interconnection of the natural systems that our waterfront represents.

Over 25 years ago, the Crombie Commission set out nine principles for Toronto's waterfront revitalization. They are as valid as ever. Our waterfront should be:

- Clean
- Green
- Useable
- Diverse
- Open
- Accessible
- Connected
- Affordable
- Attractive

Please help us preserve those values.

Thank you.
Yours truly,



John Wilson
Co-Chair