



June 3, 2021

By Fax to: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Toronto City Council

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Council,

Re Ex24.3 Ontario Place Redevelopment Update

I am writing on behalf of *Ontario Place For All* to urge that the proposed Terms of Reference for the City's engagement with the Province on the redevelopment of Ontario Place need improvements in two crucial areas in order to advance Council's May 2019 direction and to protect the interests of Torontonians.

The first has to do with the overall objective for any redevelopment of Ontario Place.

According to the text of the Terms of Reference, the City is to agree, as part of its bargain, that it will yield to the Province the right to unilaterally determine the vision for the redevelopment of Ontario Place.

The text does not appear to require collaboration with the city or the public in developing that vision and does not appear to specifically require that vision to align with the 2019 Council conditions for collaboration. This in spite of the fact that two acres of the land and ten acres of water lot offered up by the Province are actually owned by the City.

Yielding on that important point is not consistent with Council's direction from 2019, in which made cooperation with the province contingent upon adherence to the guiding principles set out in Appendix 3 to the staff report – nor is it consistent with Council's duty of stewardship of public land.

In our view, the 2019 principles need to be restated as conditions for engagement in the proposed Terms of Reference. How else will Council assure the community that those principles are still in play and part of the City's objective for this important jointly-owned asset?

The second area has to do with public engagement.

City Council's 2019 principles included a requirement that decisions about Ontario Place be made through a public process and with full transparency.

After two years, many rallies, thousands of letters and tens of thousands of social media pleas for engagement, the Province has not shared any information with the public about the proposed developments it is considering for Ontario Place.

And it would seem that the City is no better off.

Two years after the Call for Development was released, after multiple promises on the part of the Minister and Premier to consult with the City, the staff report tells us that, to date, NO details of the proposals under consideration by the province have been shared with the City.

Against this context, we believe that the Terms of Reference must clearly require agreement to an early and robust level of public transparency and community engagement on the future of Ontario Place be as a condition for City collaboration with the Province.

Where the proposed Terms of Reference refer to transparency and openness, it is in regard to discussions between the City and the Province. But where are the residents, the taxpayers, the voters, the users in the open exchange of information? Almost nowhere to be seen or heard.

Having yielded unilateral control of the vision and redevelopment lead to the Province, the Terms of Reference similarly leave it open to the province to determine whether and when engagement is appropriate. The reference in the text to the possibility of a joint public engagement processes “when/as appropriate” does not impose any mandatory requirement.

This not good enough and certainly not consistent with either the 2019 Council direction or the City public engagement values.

We write to you with a sense of urgency about these two issues, as we understand that the Province expects to make an announcement about the future of Ontario Place very shortly. We are very concerned about the direction that announcement might take, particularly in light of the lack of transparency and engagement undertaken so far.

We fully appreciate the difficulty of negotiating with the Province. We also applaud the efforts that City staff have undergone to achieve a structured process for collaborative work. This is a constructive and important achievement.

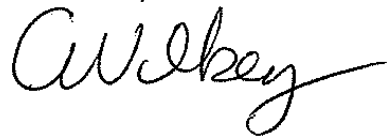
At the same time, we urge the city not to sell itself short in terms of what it can or should achieve on our behalf, even in this difficult context.

Ontario Place is a priceless asset that can have long lasting benefits for many generations if we get it right. It is important to remember that Ontario Place is not self-sufficient; the province cannot go it alone; it needs the city and its many technical services for any kind of redevelopment.

Ontario Place For All is a community-based organization that came into existence in January of 2019 after the Province announced its intention to redevelop Ontario Place. Our Core Principles for the revitalization of Ontario Place align very closely with the guiding principles adopted by City Council in May of 2019.

Our supporters are from all over Ontario and have come together through a desire to ensure continuance of the wonderful legacy of Ontario Place. Many thousands have engaged **on-line** and in-person, in sharing of memories and hopes for the future of Ontario Place. On May 13th of this year over 300 people registered for a rally and celebration of the 50th anniversary of the May 22nd, 1971, opening of Ontario Place.

Yours truly



Cynthia Wilkey
for *Ontario Place For All*

www.ontarioplaceforall.com

Our Core Principles:

To Keep Ontario Place For All We Believe:

- 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.
- 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 Ontario Place as a recognized cultural heritage landscape including the Cinesphere, the Pods and the newly added Trillium Park.