



July 15, 2024

Executive Committee, City of Toronto  
100 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Re: EX16.5 - Ontario Science Centre Update**

Dear Members of the Executive Committee:

**Save Ontario's Science Centre (Save OSC)** is a non-partisan, grassroots group dedicated to renewing, restoring, and reinvesting in the Ontario Science Centre (OSC) on Don Mills Road for all Ontarians to enjoy.

As a result of Save OSC's efforts and initiatives, Ontarians are writing to Premier Ford in record numbers for the Ontario government to reverse its decision to close the Ontario Science Centre.

- **Over 80,000 letters have been sent to Premier Ford.** (58,000 since June 21st closure.)
- **All 124 Ontario Electoral Districts** have written to Premier Ford.
- **58%** City of Toronto, **41%** Rest of Ontario, **1%** Outside of Ontario.

Save OSC believes the Ontario government, through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), purposely and wilfully neglected the routine maintenance of the OSC for a period of many years to force a crisis.

From the independent Auditor General of Ontario's value-for-money audit (Dec 6, 2023):

*"Since 2017, due to a lack of funding, 42 projects deemed critical and at risk of failure had not been repaired. Of these 42 projects, seven had been put forward in at least three of the past five years and were denied funding each time."*

Further relying upon the AG report (Dec 6, 2023), the Ontario government's business case to relocate the OSC to a smaller site with 18% less exhibition space and fewer attractions appears to be unreliable. The City of Toronto should set it aside.

*"The 2023 cost/benefit analysis used to support the decision to relocate the Ontario Science Centre did not include all costs for both options assessed."*

*"Ontario Science Centre Relocation Decision-Making Was Based on Incomplete Information and Excluded Input from Important Stakeholders."*

**No independent, professional report required or recommended the immediate closure of the OSC.**

Not Pinchin (2022), not Rimkus (2024), not VB & S Structural Engineers (2024).

In fact, the reports that IO commissioned all tell the same story: Whether it is the roof, or the boiler, or another component, the OSC is safe to reopen today. Repairs can be fully and safely addressed according to a 20-year schedule.

**No independent, professional report has quoted a repair bill of "Over \$500 million."**

The Pinchin report (2022) included a repair and replacement spending estimate of \$228,604,000 over a 20-year period.

Infrastructure Ontario's relocation business case (Nov 2023) revealed that significant and multiple gross-up factors were applied by IO to the original estimates provided by independent, professional experts.

**Save OSC believes the Ontario government intends to demolish the OSC on Don Mills Road.**

IO's own estimate of "Over \$500 million" is meant to dampen public support and scare away offers of financial support.

**The “Temporary OSC” RFP demonstrates the Ontario government is not committed to the Ontario Science Centre.**

The OSC on Don Mills Road has 160,000 square feet of dedicated exhibition space.

By comparison, the RFP contemplates a very small, Temporary OSC of 50,000 to 100,000 total square feet.

Given that independent, professional experts agree that closing the OSC on Don Mills was not required, an 18-month gap with no “Temporary OSC” until January 2026 is unnecessary.

Further, the RFP for the “Temporary OSC” provides for a series of one-year lease extensions, strongly suggesting the Ontario Place relocation will not open until well into the 2030s.

The Ontario Science Centre; its institutional knowledge, its employees, its legacy will not survive this closure.

**Successful Operating Models Alternatives are Available:**

Within the City of Toronto itself, the AGO and ROM have operating models that have been demonstrated to be resilient compared to the OSC’s direct relationship with the Ontario government.

Canada’s second most visited science centre, the Montreal Science Centre, is operated by Canada Lands Company, the federal crown corporation that also runs Toronto’s CN Tower, and Parc Downsview Park.

In Vancouver, Science World is managed through a not-for-profit organization. Science World successfully applied for tens of millions of dollars in provincial and federal funding to make capital repairs to its roof, HVAC, and Imax theatre.

**Save OSC strongly supports Councillor Matlow’s motion for EX16.5 – Ontario Science Centre Update:**

1. City Council direct the City Manger to request a Working Group be established regarding the Ontario Science Centre (OSC) with the Province of Ontario and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to review the:
  - a. lease agreement signed in 1965 between the Province of Ontario, City of Toronto, and the TRCA requiring the building at 770 Don Mills Rd to serve as the OSC;
  - b. Province of Ontario’s obligation to keep the OSC in a state of good repair;
  - c. terms of the New Deal requiring the province of Ontario to work in partnership with the City of Toronto on the future of the OSC;
  - d. usage of the OSC’s Building ‘C’ as a temporary exhibition space in lieu of an external site.

Jason Ash, co-chair  
Save Ontario’s Science Centre

For more information, visit:  
[www.SaveScienceCentre.com](http://www.SaveScienceCentre.com)