

# Engagement Summary

## Ontario Place Community Consultation Meetings

Report prepared by Gladki Planning Associates for the City of Toronto

June 2023



# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ..... 1

## Introduction

Project Overview ..... 3

**Development Application Review Process** ..... 4

**Project Phases** ..... 4

Document Purpose ..... 5

**How will Public Feedback be Used?** ..... 5

Promotion ..... 6

**Indigenous Engagement** ..... 6

Methodology ..... 7

## Feedback

Community Consultation Meeting (April 15<sup>th</sup>) ..... 8

**Plenary Question & Answer Summary** ..... 9

**Break-out Sessions** ..... 11

Virtual Community Consultation Meeting (April 18<sup>th</sup>) ..... 16

**Q&A and Comments Summary** ..... 16

Feedback Forms ..... 19

Next Steps ..... 29

# Executive Summary

In November 2023, Infrastructure Ontario submitted a development application for the redevelopment of Ontario Place to the City of Toronto. The application includes an Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning application for public realm, shoreline, heritage and underground parking proposals for the non-tenanted lands, as well as for entertainment, recreation and wellness uses on the West Island on behalf of Therme.

The City is the approval authority for this application. To inform its review, as part of the development approval process, the City is undertaking community consultations. Comments and questions received during these consultations will inform feedback the City provides to the applicant, as well as be considered in the preparation of a Recommendations Report prepared by staff for City Council.



The City has retained Gladki Planning Associates to serve as the independent facilitator of the community consultations and to report back on feedback.

This engagement summary report covers engagement activities for the first series of City of Toronto community consultations on the Ontario Place application, which occurred between April 15, 2023 – April 28, 2023. Engagement activities summarized in this report include:

- In-person Community Consultation Meeting – April 15, 2023 – A half-day meeting held at the Beanfield Centre consisting of a plenary session and series of break-out sessions organized by theme. (390 attendees)
- Virtual Community Consultation Meeting – April 28, 2023 – A two-hour virtual meeting on WebEx which included a presentation from the applicant and a question and commenting period. (1078 people registered, 500 attendees)
- Feedback Forms – April 15-28, 2023 – Feedback forms were available to the public in paper form at the in-person community consultation meeting and available digitally from April 15th to April 28th, 2023. People were asked to submit feedback, comments, and questions pertaining to the Ontario Place development application. (107 paper feedback forms and 174 digital feedback forms were received)

The following is a high-level, thematically organized summary of the main ideas heard across all engagement activities.

## Built Form, Heritage, and Character

- Generally, people were in favour of revitalization and investment in the Ontario Place site, however, a majority of attendees did not support the redevelopment plans for the West Island.
- People stated that the building was too tall, that the massing was not suitable to the site, and that the current building will obstruct views of existing Pods, Cinesphere, and waterfront
- Many people appreciated that the Pods and Cinesphere will be preserved and refurbished to maintain the architectural heritage of Ontario Place.
- People mentioned that the main building's architecture and materials do not reflect the character of Ontario Place, or Ontarian and Torontonians cultural heritage.

## Public Spaces and Activities

- There was general desire from attendees to preserve existing and create more outdoor amenity space at Ontario Place.
- People wanted more clarity on who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of public spaces and facilities.
- It was important for many that Ontario Place remained accessible, public and free for all to participate and enjoy.
- People consistently inquired about options for the public access during winter months.
- The public emphasized the importance of protecting Michael Hough's landscape design on the West Island.
- Many people expressed that Ontario Place was a place of sanctuary and a place to connect with nature during the COVID-19 pandemic. A reoccurring sentiment across consultation activities was that the current redevelopment proposal does not

seem to consider the importance of how people used the site during the COVID-19 pandemic, nor how people continue to want to use the site as a public place of refuge and relaxation.

## Environment and Sustainability

- Impacts from the redevelopment of the West Island on the water was a reoccurring concern for the public. People recognized that it was important to protect and improve water quality for aquatic life and water-based recreation activities.
- People were concerned about changes to the tree canopy due to the replacement of mature trees with younger trees.
- People wanted to know what the applicant was going to do to reduce and manage flooding.
- There were concerns pertaining to the impact the spa structure would have on bird migration and how wildlife habitats on the West Island will be impacted.
- The public shared that the underground parking lot size and number of parking spaces are not aligned with the City's and Province's environmental and sustainability goals.
- People were particularly concerned about the amount of energy required for heating and cooling a large, glass spa building.
- People stated that the redevelopment should focus on heat and climate change mitigation.

Following this phase of engagement, City staff will provide detailed comments to the proponent on the development application. A resubmission package from the proponent addressing City staff feedback is anticipated in Summer 2023.

# Introduction

# Project Overview

Infrastructure Ontario has submitted a development application to the City of Toronto for the revitalization and redevelopment of Ontario Place. As part of the development review and approval process, the City of Toronto is undertaking a community consultation program to gather input from the public on the development application. The first series of consultation activities has occurred.

This report describes these activities, and organizes and summarizes the public feedback that emerged from these activities. The City of Toronto has retained Gladki Planning Associates Inc. (GPA) as a neutral and independent consultant to facilitate the community consultation program for this development application. GPA is responsible for convening public meetings, as well as gathering, analysing, and reporting on public feedback.



Figure 1 - Aerial View of Ontario Place. Source: Google Earth Screenshot

## Development Application Review Process

The Ontario Place property is a unique waterfront asset, comprising 155 acres of land and water, which served as an iconic cultural and tourism destination between 1971 and 2012. Adjacent to the City's downtown and the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, the provincially owned lands have been identified as a redevelopment opportunity.

The Province of Ontario is advancing leasing arrangements for two development proposals intended to revitalize parts of Ontario Place. The Province has engaged in the development approvals process with the City of Toronto as the approval authority as set out in the Planning Act. Infrastructure Ontario has submitted a combined Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment application for the redevelopment of the provincially owned lands at Ontario Place.



## Project Phases

On November 25th, 2023, Infrastructure Ontario submitted a development application for the redevelopment of Ontario Place. The application includes an Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning application for public realm, shoreline, heritage and underground parking proposals for the non-tenanted lands, as well as for entertainment, recreation and wellness uses on the West Island on behalf of Therme. This is the first application for the redevelopment of Ontario Place, with other planning applications anticipated to follow.

In March 2023, the City submitted a [status report](#) to the Toronto East York Community Council which included preliminary policy considerations and planning guidance. Comments from the community consultations, of which this report summarizes, and additional written comments from the City will be provided to the applicant in spring 2023. The applicant is expected to respond to City and public comments with design changes to come forward in a resubmission package in Summer 2023. The resubmission will benefit from City feedback, technical comments on the application materials, as well as feedback from community consultation and stakeholder input. City Planning will provide a final report and recommendation to City Council for consideration by the end of 2023.

# Document Purpose

This document is a summary of the findings from the City-hosted community consultation activities on the development application. Activities included an in-person meeting with a plenary session and themed break-out sessions, a virtual meeting, and feedback forms. This report contains a section for each of the engagement activities.

1. In-person Meeting
  - a. Plenary Question and Answer Period
  - b. In-person Meeting - Break-out Discussions
3. Virtual Meeting - Question and Commenting Period
4. Feedback Forms

Next Steps as it relates to the City's development application review process for the Ontario Place redevelopment can be found at the end of this report.

Key findings from all activities have been summarized according to 3 main themes:

- Built Form, Heritage and Character
- Public Spaces and Activities
- Environment and Sustainability

Questions and comments in this report have been edited for clarity. Verbatim questions and comments submitted in the feedback forms can be found in Appendix D. Additionally, notes from the break-out discussions, and the in-person and virtual question and commenting periods can be found in Appendix A, B, and C.

## How will Public Feedback be Used?

Comments received as part of the community consultation activities will be used to inform (1) City staff feedback to the applicant, and (2) the City staff recommendation that will be provided to City Council at the end of 2023. Given that the City of Toronto is acting in its role as the approval authority, feedback collected at the City-hosted community consultation meetings can directly influence the following:

- City staff review and formal comments on the application;
- The shape and size of the buildings;
- Public space, landscaping and public amenities;
- Transportation and parking;
- Environmental objectives;
- Alignment with city-building objectives; and
- The City staff recommendation to Council.

Commentary from the City-hosted community consultation meetings cannot directly influence the following:

- Leasing considerations
- Business and funding matters
- Other potential locations
- Land exchange matters

All commentary from the community consultation meetings and online feedback forms are captured in this report and accompanying appendices. They are part of the public record. Feedback that cannot directly influence or falls outside of the scope of the City's development application review process is summarized at the end of each section.



# Promotion

Both the in-person and virtual community consultation meetings were advertised widely. Promotional content was shared across the City's social media networks (see Figure 2). Additionally, Notices were sent using the City's City Planning email Listserv, Stakeholder Advisory Committee networks, interested parties who reached out to City Planning via email and through local councillor newsletters (see Figure 3). The City also encouraged youth participation by offering a 4-hour credit for high school students working toward completing their community involvement requirement. Organizations with a youth-focus were directly contacted by Gladki Planning Associates on behalf of the City of Toronto to inform them about opportunities for youth to be involved in the Ontario Place redevelopment community consultations. GPA sent notice emails to 46 recipients that worked on city-wide and local neighbourhood youth community development and leadership programs.

## Indigenous Engagement

City staff meet with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation bi-monthly on the proposed redevelopment. A strategy for the engagement of other Indigenous communities including urban Indigenous communities is in progress. For more information on Indigenous Engagement with the City of Toronto please contact [Meg St. John](mailto:Meg.StJohn@toronto.ca) (Meg.StJohn@toronto.ca). Infrastructure Ontario is facilitating their own Indigenous consultation programme.



Figure 2 - City Twitter Post

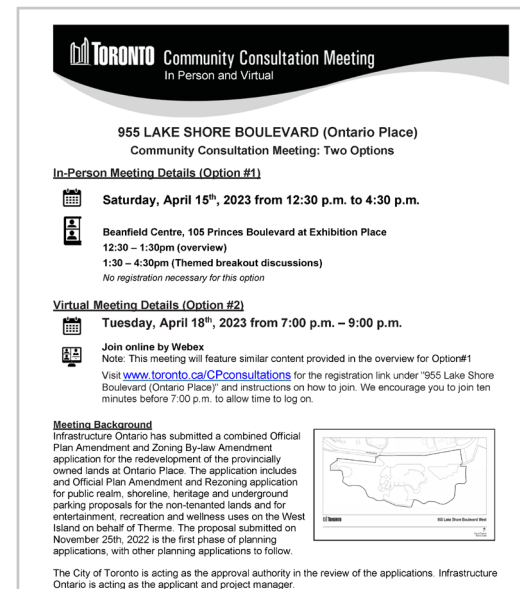


Figure 3 - City Public Notice

# Methodology

Public feedback was captured through written notes that were recorded by Gladki Planning Associates Inc. (GPA) and City of Toronto staff. People were also able to submit written feedback using a paper or digital feedback form, and using the Q&A box on WebEx during the virtual meeting. Of note, paper feedback forms were transcribed by GPA. Due to the illegibility of some handwritten comments, some of the comments have been edited for clarity.

A thematic analysis was conducted for each of the data sets. The data was separated into 3 main categories: Built Form, Heritage, and Character; Public Spaces and Activities; and Environment and Sustainability. Sub-themes within the 3 main themes were identified. Consultants then counted how many comments there were per sub-theme. This approach demonstrates which comments and questions were mentioned more frequently by the public, and where there are points of consensus among the public. Comments that fell outside of the scope of this project were identified as miscellaneous. These comments were counted but are not reflected in the summary text of this report. Refer to the appendices for the transcripts and notes of the consultation activities.

In this report, the terms “general, many, and several” refer to when a majority of people agreed with or repeated a point. The term “some” has been used to reflect reoccurring comments that were not necessarily shared by a majority of the public.

# Feedback

# Community Consultation Meeting (April 15<sup>th</sup>)

The in-person meeting was held at the Beanfield Centre on Saturday, April 15, 2023. 390 people attended the meeting representing a wide variety of people interested in the future of Ontario Place. The in-person meeting consisted of a plenary session and series of break-out sessions organized by theme. The plenary session began with an introductory presentation from Gladki Planning Associates and the City of Toronto, and was followed by a presentation by the applicant. There was a twenty-minute period for questions and answers. People were then split into one of three break-out sessions.

**Session A: Built Form, Heritage and Character**

**Session B: Public Spaces and Activities**

**Session C: Environment and Sustainability**

During each break-out session a short, themed presentation was given by the applicant followed by small group discussions that were facilitated by City of Toronto staff. Every attendee was given the opportunity to attend two break-out sessions.



*Image: Attendees checking in at the registration table*



*Image: Attendees sitting in the plenary room during introductions*

# Plenary Question & Answer Summary

10 questions were asked during the 20-minute open question and answer period. They are organized and summarized according to 3 main themes. A summary of other comments that will directly influence the City's process can be found at the end of the section.



*Image: Colin Wolfe, Senior Planner with City of Toronto City Planning answers questions during the question and answer period.*

## Built Form, Heritage and Character

A question was asked about the contingency plan for the Therme building and leased lands if the spa fails. Infrastructure Ontario stated that they are not considering an alternative and that two thirds of the site will be publicly accessible, completely free, and will include site improvements and programming for all uses.

## Public Spaces and Activities

Members of the public asked questions about the accessibility of the site and if there are options to ensure that the activities that are being offered by the tenants will be affordable in perpetuity. The applicant responded by noting that two thirds of the entire site will remain publicly available and will be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The applicant emphasized that public means free access and that other Therme facilities located internationally have community benefit programs.

The applicant was asked about the size of the parking garage and how the amount of parking supports provincial transportation goals. They responded by stating that public transit will be the primary mode of transportation. Transportation modelling shows that about 10% of visitors will drive and use the parking lot. The parking lot is only focused on those visitors.

Additionally, members of the public asked about what spaces will be created for Indigenous gathering. For example, someone asked about the opportunity to have a Sweat Lodge. The applicant indicated that Indigenous engagement, led by the Ministry of Infrastructure, began in early 2021. Elder Shelley Charles from

Georgian Island First Nation is leading Indigenous engagement with First Nations as well as other Indigenous communities and organizations. Plants, materials, and soils have been discussed so far and Indigenous groups have provided information. Elder Shelley Charles will provide more information at future meetings.

## Environment and Sustainability

A question was asked about if more land would be added to the current site. The applicant responded that the plan includes an approach to lake fill and will expand the West Island. There will be an increase in the total area of Ontario Place. Improvements with expansion will provide more public open space with program partners and a parking lot.

A question was asked pertaining to the current shoreline and the impacts redevelopment will have on the current accessibility of the beaches at Ontario Place. The applicant shared that shoreline experts will be able to respond to these questions in the Environment and Sustainability break-out session.

## Other

City staff were asked to speak to preliminary issues that they had identified in the status report that was shared with Council on April 12, 2023. City Staff shared that they are looking at the location of the entrance of the Therme building, the massing and size of the building, among other issues. The City staff encouraged the public to read the report.

Members of the public expressed frustration that the City and applicant presentations were too long and there was not enough time for the public to speak and comment. Gladki Planning Associates and City staff shared that there would be additional opportunities for everyone to speak in the break-out discussions in a small group discussion format. Additionally, the City was asked if they could describe the ways in which the public had influence over this project. The City referred to a previous slide that outlined the kinds of comments that could directly influence the City's development review process. Public comments on the physical elements of the site will have the most direct impact. City staff added that public feedback from today and other upcoming consultation activities will be used to create detailed feedback from the City to the applicant for resubmission in Summer 2023. Feedback from today will also be used to inform a City staff recommendation to Council at the end of the calendar year.

The applicant was asked about the extent to which Indigenous communities has been involved in the design, specifically the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Additionally, a question was asked about why there were no Indigenous panelists. There was a concern that there was no diversity among the panelists. The applicant stated that a Ministry of Infrastructure led Indigenous engagement programme with Indigenous communities in early 2021. There is on-going engagement on the development concept with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Elder Shelley Charles from Georgian Island First Nation is leading Indigenous engagement with First Nations as well as other Indigenous communities and organizations.

# Break-out Sessions

Commentary from the small table discussions has been summarized below according to the theme of each break-out session. A miscellaneous section has been included at the end to highlight comments that fall outside of the scope of the development review process.

## Built Form, Heritage, and Character

### Indigenous Engagement and Design

Some people asked about the extent to which treaty holders and urban Indigenous peoples have been involved in the design of the building. Attendees also asked about the way in which the redevelopment plan for Ontario Place meaningfully honours and includes Indigenous heritage.

### Revitalization

Generally, people were in favour of revitalization and investment in the Ontario Place site, however, a majority of attendees did not support the redevelopment plans for the West and Centre Island. Specifically, people were opposed to the private spa uses that have been proposed. Some people did express support for the proposed landscaping plan and public realm plan for the East Island.

### Therme Building Design

A reoccurring sentiment across small group discussions in the Built Form, Heritage and Character sessions was a frustration

with the design, proportion, and scale of the spa building. People consistently stated that the proposed building is not appropriate for the site.

People remarked that the building was too tall, that the massing was not suitable to the site, and that the current building will obstruct views of existing heritage structures. Some people noted the Province's desire to make Ontario Place a world class site, however, many people questioned what exactly about this proposal specifically makes it world class. Several people specified that cities they view as forward thinking and world class such as Paris, New York and Chicago are expanding their green spaces and not privatizing it.

Attendees were also concerned about the materials used for the building, specifically the amount of concrete and glass that would be required to construct the spa building. Attendees were concerned about how the use of glass would impact energy usage and migratory paths for birds. Other sustainability and ecological concerns pertaining to the building were raised, such as tree removal, flooding, and the lack of native plant species in the current design.

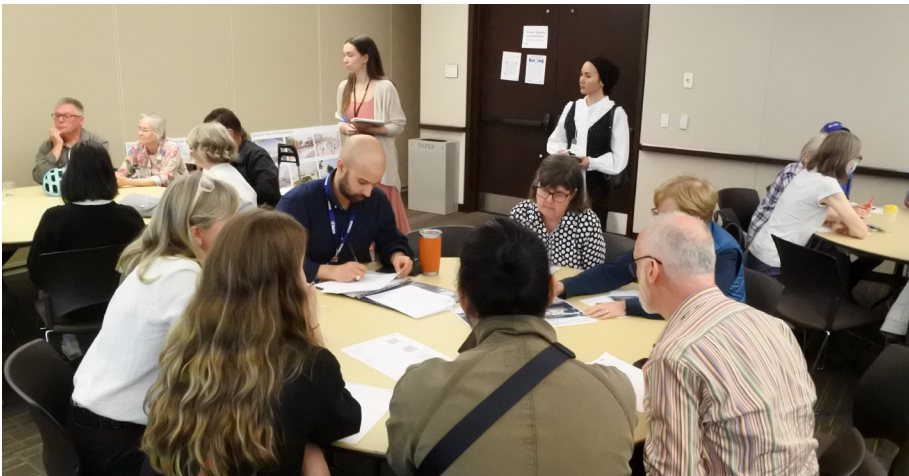
Attendees questioned if renderings of the building accurately represent what the building will look like once it is constructed, and if the building is too large given number of spa users who might realistically use the facility. Additionally, people shared concerns that the large size of the proposed building will negatively impact and restrict public water and beach access. Others shared concerns about the attractiveness of some of the additional smaller structures. Finally, some people asked the applicant to consider going above and beyond what is required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and incorporate best practices in universal design.

## Cultural Heritage

Generally, attendees stated that the current redevelopment plans do not reflect the original vision for Ontario Place – that it is a place for everyone. One attendee was noted as saying that “The spirit of Ontario Place will be lost”. Some people added that the current plans impose a European business model and design in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world and this does not reflect the cultural heritage of Ontario Place.

## User Experience

There was general agreement between attendees that the current built form conveys a priority for private users over public users, and reinforces existing amenity inequities within the City of Toronto. Several people noted that Ontario Place is widely used by people whose housing does not include outdoor amenity space.



*Image: Attendees participating in group discussions during the break-out room sessions.*

Some suggested lowering the height so the building does not feel so domineering to public users of the West Island.

## Contingency Plan

Several attendees asked the applicant team what the contingency plan or adaptive re-use plan is for the building if the spa goes out of business. Additionally, people wanted to know more about the maintenance plan for the building given its size.

## **Public Spaces and Activities**

### Accessibility and Affordability

There was some disagreement regarding the affordability of Therme and Live Nation. Some people shared that the rates to access the spa and other entertainment programming were unaffordable, while others noted that the proposed private attractions will offer an activity that will be affordable for families who do not own a cottage or cannot afford to take international vacations.

People wanted more clarity on who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of public spaces and facilities. For example, one attendee was noted as asking who would be managing kayak and canoe rentals and if rentals would only be available to paying Therme customers. Additionally, people were unclear on what parts of the proposal will be publicly accessible with no user fees. There were several questions about where exactly Therme would be requiring people to pay and how this may inhibit public access to the site. There were reoccurring requests for public access to the Therme’s green roof, free and accessible places to play, and places for local businesses and vendors to provide goods to visitors of Ontario place.



## Winter

People consistently inquired about options for public access during winter months. There was a desire for there to be public spaces for programming to occur during all four seasons.

## Mobility

Several people expressed that the increased traffic in the area would negatively impact the public user experience. There was a sentiment among many attendees that the priority seems to be for private spa users and not the public. Some people shared positive feedback for the bridge that would connect Therme to the mainland due to enhanced emergency vehicle access and pedestrian use.

## Outdoor Amenity Space

With a few exceptions, there was general desire from attendees to preserve existing and create more outdoor amenity space at Ontario Place. Some people shared a concern that as the City continues to intensify to accommodate more housing, outdoor amenity space along the waterfront will be critical for those living in condominium and apartment buildings. Many people expressed that the current redevelopment proposal does not seem to consider how people used the space during the pandemic or how people are currently using it. Many shared that the site is currently a place to feel connected to nature and that they would rather look at nature than a spa building. Additionally, people noted that Ontario Place has become a place of sanctuary during the COVID-19 pandemic. A few people highlighted the current design encourages movement between spaces rather than creating public opportunities for stillness, relaxation and refuge.

People shared how they like the nooks and crannies of Trillium park and the open space characteristics of the West Island. They did not want to see this disappear. People suggested that the West Island should be an extension of Trillium Park.

## Indigenous Involvement

Attendees shared concerns regarding the extent to which Indigenous communities have been meaningfully involved in the redevelopment process. Some people shared that so far, Indigenous engagement for this project feels tokenistic. Some people asked about how Indigenous communities benefit from the current proposal.

# **Environment and Sustainability**

## Ecological System

There was some disagreement among attendees regarding the landscaping and public realm plans. Some people were in favour of the plans for the wetlands, trees, flora, and promenades, while others had some concerns related to the proposed tropical plant species and the amount of natural space that would remain following construction of the spa building. There were also concerns pertaining to the impact the spa structure would have on bird migration and how wildlife habitats on the West Island will be impacted. Additionally, some people asked about the applicant's plans for insect management. There was a desire for the revitalization of the site to focus on naturalization and rewilding initiatives. Some people were concerned that if the spa goes out of business, there are currently no adaptation plans for re-naturalization.



*Image: Attendees participating in group discussions during the break-out room sessions.*

### Shoreline

Attendees highlighted the importance of natural algae along the water. Additionally, someone asked about the consequence of an armored shoreline compared to a naturalized shoreline. There was also some concern shared among attendees regarding soil removal and how this will affect the structural integrity of the shoreline.

### Therme Facility

While a few people favoured the proposed development, a majority of attendees had concerns regarding the spa's compatibility with the natural environment. People shared concerns regarding the impact the building would have on the surrounding environment. For example, someone asked about the impact of the amount of infill required to build the spa.

### Maintenance

A reoccurring comment from attendees was who was responsible for maintaining the site. People asked who would maintain and be responsible for water remediation, site clean-ups, paths, tress, and plants.

### Water

Impacts of the redevelopment on the lake and water were a reoccurring concern for attendees. People asked questions about the impacts that construction would have on the lake water, managing and treating the water leaving the spa, and the how the materials used for lakefill would impact water flow and aquatic life. There were also concerns about changes to the canals surrounding Budweiser stage. Particularly, people were concerned that any changes to the canals would impact the beavers who live there.

People identified that water quality is already an issue along the waterfront at Ontario Place due to source pollution. Questions were asked about improvements to the water quality and addressing City sewer outflow. There was concern that redevelopment could potentially worsen the water quality. Finally, attendees wanted more information on how increased water traffic from motorized boats would be managed.

### Trees

Many attendees were concerned about the removal of trees, particularly mature trees. People wanted to know who is responsible for planting more trees. There was a desire for additional native tree species that could provide shade for public users.

## Environmental Assessment (EA)

Attendees expressed confusion related to the EA process, particularly for the West Island. There was a desire for more transparency related to the process and where information could be found.

## Climate Change and GHG Emissions

Several questions were asked about the energy use of the spa building and how the proposed energy use would further advance both City and provincial climate goals. There were additional questions related to how the proposed parking plan aligns with City and provincial climate goals. Some people suggested adding more bike storage and cycling infrastructure at Ontario Place. People stated that the redevelopment should focus on heat and climate change mitigation. There were also concerns that the north shore is at risk of being susceptible to the Heat Island Effect.

## Flooding

Generally, people wanted to know what the applicant was going to do to reduce and manage flooding. People shared concerns that the depth required to accommodate the parking garage will increase the chance of flooding at Ontario Place.

## Miscellaneous

In addition to the comments summarized above, there were other comments made by members of the public concerning the lack of details regarding the lease agreement between Therme and the Province, the lack of transparency in the redevelopment process, and the use of public dollars for private benefit.

The relocation of the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place was also mentioned several times. Some people were in favour of this and others were against it. These comments fall outside the scope of the City of Toronto's development review process but have been noted as part of the public record.



Image: Youth drawings on a feedback form

# Virtual Community Consultation Meeting (April 18<sup>th</sup>)

The virtual meeting was held in the evening on Tuesday, April 18th, 2023 using WebEx. 1078 people registered for the event, 500 people attended the meeting. The virtual meeting began with an introductory presentation from Gladki Planning Associates and the City of Toronto, and was followed by an applicant presentation. The remainder of the meeting was a question and commenting period. Questions and comments were accepted using the raise-your-hand function or through the Q&A box function on WebEx. 407 questions and comments were submitted using the Q&A function. 27 questions and comments were responded to live.

A recording of this meeting is available on the [City's Study webpage](#).

## Q&A and Comments Summary

Figure 4 captures the number of times key areas of interest were mentioned in the 407 questions submitted during the virtual community consultation meeting. Refer to Appendix C for the full Q&A transcript. Miscellaneous responses that fall outside the scope of the City's development review process have been noted as part of the public record but are not depicted in Figure 4.

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses from City Staff and the Applicant team have been summarized. A miscellaneous section has been included at the end to highlight comments that fall outside of the scope of the development review process.

## Built Form, Heritage, and Character

There were multiple comments and questions from the public concerning the spa building. Some did not want a spa to be built at all and proposed using the land for additional public park space. Others were concerned that the building was too large relative to the West Island. Several people noted that they were not against the spa, they were just against the spa at this location. The applicant shared that the spa building covers 50% of the area of the West Island and 13% of the overall Ontario Place site. A member of the public raised a concern regarding the potential noise pollution with the expansion of Live Nation. The applicant indicated that Live Nation will be a closed facility and will reflect all the current noise mitigation standards.

A question was asked about how Indigenous heritage is incorporated in the design. The applicant responded that they are focused on education and reconciliation to ensure that Indigenous heritage is reflected in the landscape. Additionally, the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) are design partners and have provided meaningful input. The applicant is working closely with knowledge keepers and Elders to make sure things like plant materials are appropriate. There will also be space for Pow Wows and fire pits for ceremonial uses.

## Frequency of Questions and Comments Related to Key Areas of Public Interest

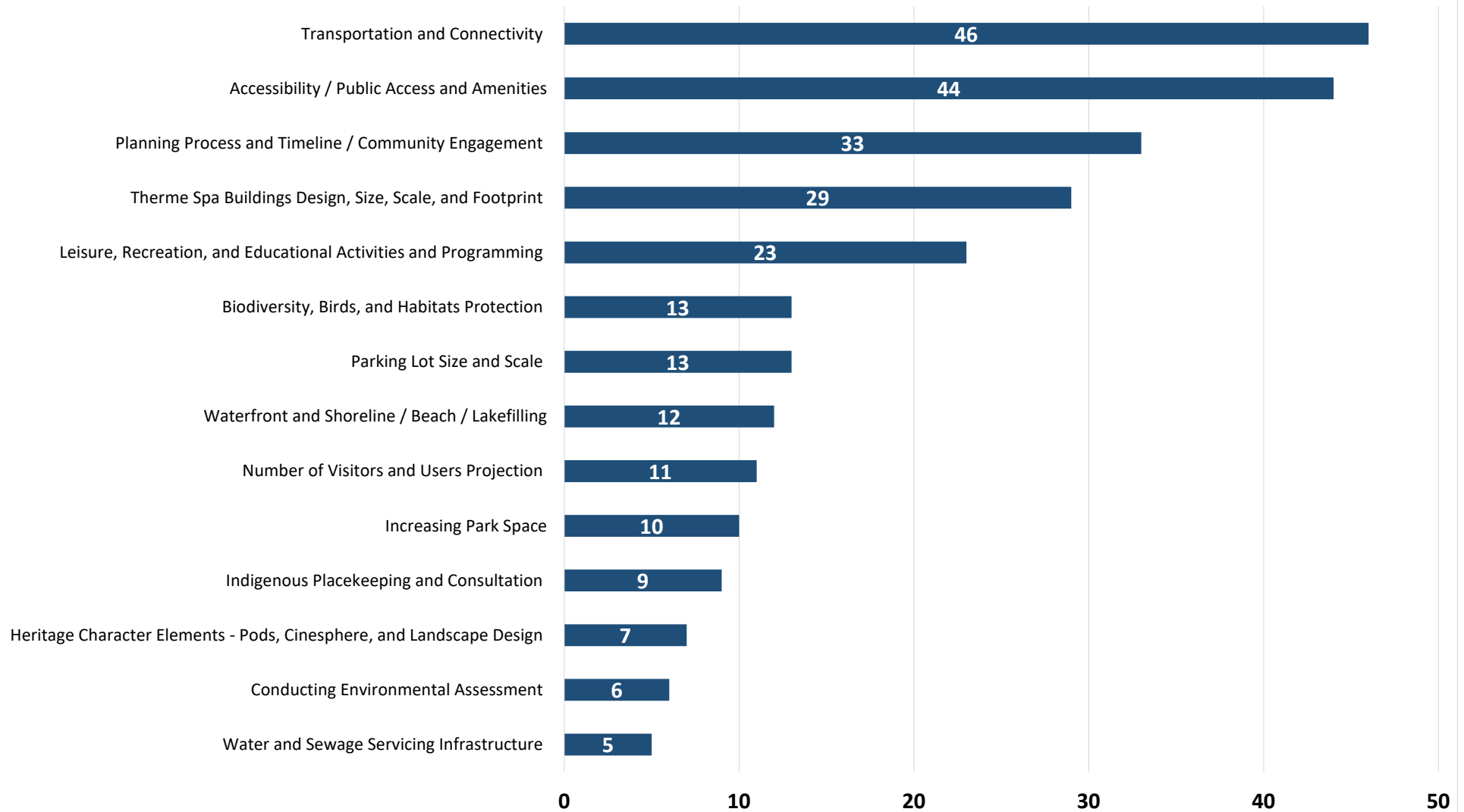


Figure 4 - Frequency of questions and comments related to key areas of public interest

## Public Spaces and Activities

There were many questions from members of the public about different public uses for the site. For example, someone wanted to know how far they will have to carry their canoe to the water's edge. The applicant noted that the drop-off location on the West Island will be at the Therme pavilion building and the other will be at the East Island. There were multiple questions about what kind of public facilities would be open all year. The applicant shared that the Forum will be a multi-use space that will be used both in the summer and winter months, and that there will be sheltered areas, washrooms, changerooms, and food services all year round.

There was some concern from members of the public regarding the projected number of visitors per year and the anticipated traffic congestion in the area. The applicant indicated that they are trying to increase tourism in the area and have been working with their consultants to update the design of the intersections, specifically left turn lanes, to accommodate the anticipated number of users. Finally, there were multiple questions and comments regarding accessibility to the site. Some members of the public wanted to know more about how the proposed designs will accommodate people of all abilities. The applicant responded that the site will be AODA compliant. Additionally, someone asked about making sure that the site was accessible to racialized, Indigenous, and marginalized groups. The applicant shared that they are introducing innovative ways through their procurement process to ensure that there are economic opportunities for certain communities across the province.

## Environment and Sustainability

Several members of the public expressed favour for the landscaping master plan. One person specifically indicated that they liked the expansion of the trail systems. There was some concern regarding the amount of proposed parking and how this aligns with provincial sustainability objectives. The applicant shared that they have looked at user demand profiles to determine how much parking is necessary while trying to minimize the amount being provided. The current modal split is 10% driving. The City added that they are looking at the City Official Plan and Secondary Plan policies and a parking facility of this size does not align with those planning documents. Finally, the public asked about why an Environmental Assessment (EA) is not required for this site. The applicant stated that all tenants are required to secure any statutory permits and approvals including environmental approvals. The issue is that the public works Class EA does not apply to the private sector so its not accessible for Therme to use. Therme is working with City and Province to figure out something that is similar to an EA but its not a statutory public process. The City added that Official Plan and Secondary Plan require an Environmental Assessment for lakefill works of this scale.

## Miscellaneous

During the virtual question and commenting period members of the public asked questions about the provincial decision-making and consultation process, moving the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place, and the details of the provincial lease with Therme. All of these comments and questions have been noted as part of the public record, however, they fall outside the scope of the City's development review process.

# Feedback Forms

Feedback Forms were available to the public in paper form at the in-person community consultation meeting on April 15th, 2023 and available digitally from April 15th to April 28th, 2023. People were asked to submit feedback, comments, and questions pertaining to the Ontario Place development application. 107 paper feedback forms and 174 digital feedback forms were collected. In total there was 219 responses related to the built form, character, and heritage of Ontario Place, 246 responses related to public spaces and activities, and 239 responses related to the environment and sustainability. For the purposes of this report, the responses from both the printed and digital form were analyzed together. Please see Appendix D for the transcripts of the feedback forms.

## Built Form, Heritage and Character

Generally, respondents agreed that the spa building's height, massing, and scale are too big. Key areas of interest are shown in Figure 5. Miscellaneous responses are not depicted.

### Spa Facility Height, Massing, and Scale

Generally, many people were concerned that the buildings would block views of the Pods, Cinesphere, and waterfront. The size and footprint of the spa building was described as being too large, that it would negatively impact the West Island's original landscape design, and that it would remove public green spaces. Many agreed that the main building does not respond to the current context or the scale of the existing Pods and Cinesphere. Additionally, many people mentioned that the main building's architecture and

materials do not reflect the character of Ontario Place, or Ontarian and Torontonians heritage. Suggestions for the built form included reducing the height and size of the main building and entrance pavilion to protect heritage attributes, and increasing the amount of public green space.

### Heritage Protection – Pods, Cinesphere, and Landscape Design

Several people mentioned the importance of continuing the original vision of Ontario Place as a public place that is accessible for all to use. Many people appreciated that the Pods and Cinesphere will be preserved and refurbished to maintain the architectural heritage of Ontario Place. Several people mentioned protecting Michael Hough's landscape design as heritage attributes on the West Island. A few people wanted to know what would happen to the Japanese Canadian Centennial Temple Bell designed by Raymond Moriyama on the West Island. Suggestions for improving landscape design include incorporating Indigenous placekeeping and design, ensuring public that there are public amenities, and all-year weather protection.

## Frequency of Comments Related to Built Form, Character, and Heritage

- Therme Spa Main and Entrance Building - Large Size and Scale
- Character Elements - Protecting Michael Hough's Landscape Architecture
- Character Elements - Protecting and Preserving the Pods and Cinesphere
- Maintain Original Vision of Ontario Place - Publicly Accesible
- Incorporating Indigenous Placekeeping

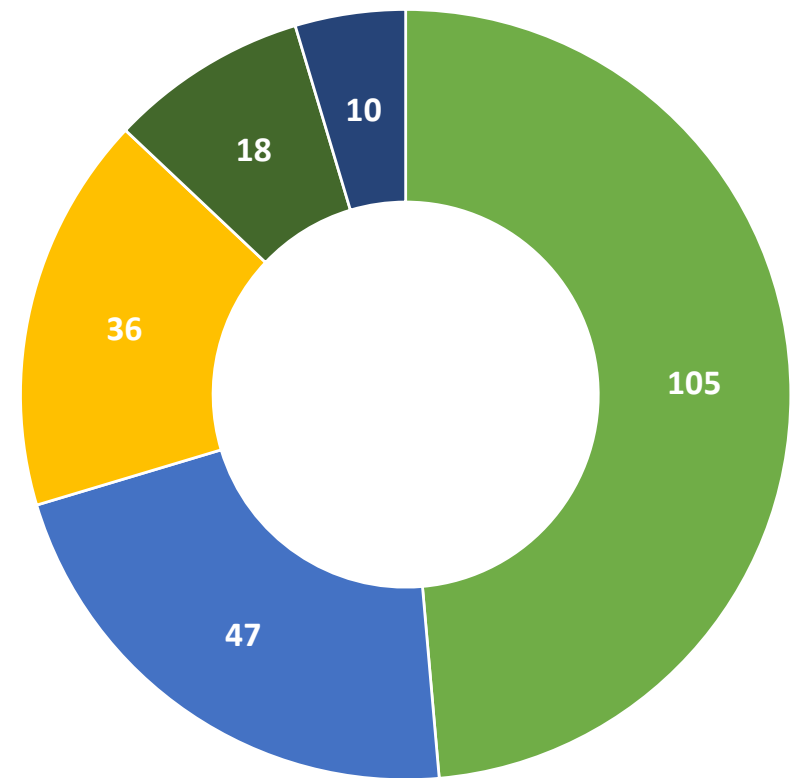


Figure 5 - Frequency of comments related to Built Form, Character, and Heritage



## What We Heard - Built Form, Heritage, and Character

*"[Therme main building] Too tall and large. Could be palatable if less dominating of the west island. Need net zero carbon targets. More walls and insulation and not just glass box. Need to design buildings for flexibility and reuse. Should have much stronger Indigenous elements in design and programming."*

*"A welcome pavilion and giant expansive spa change one's experience of the space. Ontario Place is a special place. That needs a bit of care and love. These new buildings will negatively impact the heritage & character aspects of the place - where is the Ontario in Ontario Place redesign? Keep it all free for public - not just 2/3 of it."*

*"I do not feel that Therme's glass and metal gigantic spa building reflects anything about Ontario. Currently Ontario Place is an iconic heritage site. The designs proposed by Therme do nothing to celebrate our beautiful province and doesn't align at all with the heritage of Ontario. Place and overshadows/ visually obliterates any views of the pods and Cinesphere. The planned massive and barrier like entranceway will block any views of the heritage buildings from the city side and from the west."*

*"The spa is wildly oversized, aesthetically hostile, outright dangerous to wildlife, blocks views to the existing heritage buildings, and is entirely out of character with the existing spaces."*

*"This is a cherished area of the waterfront and this project severely damages this area from being accessible. So much of the waterfront area in Toronto is not dedicated to public space. The building itself will dominate the landscape."*

*"We need to keep the original vision of Ontario Place as being free and accessible for everyone. Ontario Place is a Provincial Heritage Property of Provincial Significance. The Cinesphere and the pods are elements that we must fix up and keep in any plans for the site."*

*"The pods and sphere are very interesting elements of built heritage, part of what makes Ontario Place a unique and special environment. Dwarfing them with the massive spa complex would be a huge mistake."*

*"The Cinesphere and pods are heritage to our city. The proposed monstrosity of the Waterpark (50 m high! And larger than the BMO Field) is energy inefficient and takes away desperately needed public space with all the condo developments been built in the past decade."*

*"Protecting architecture involves not just the existing pods, cinesphere etc. But also the sightlines landscape architecture, general geography. Focus on flexible space should be prioritized over large scaled fixed buildings."*

*"Indigenous reconciliation should be the forefront of anything for our heritage. I loved the mention of space for Pow-wows, and the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is so great! I'd like to see even more of this. It says so much more than just a plaque or a sculpture."*

## Public Spaces and Activities

The main concerns from respondents include the loss of public green space, the reduction of public spaces, and a lack of space for public recreation and leisure. Key areas of interest are described in Figure 6. The chart does not include miscellaneous responses.

### Public Green Space

Many people were concerned that they would not have adequate access to public spaces and identified the need for more on the West Island. People noted that the spa building's size and scale would overwhelm the West Island and occupy land which could be otherwise allocated for open public green space and parks. The public walkway on the West Island was identified as a narrow pinch point that needed to be wider to accommodate the number of projected public and private visitors to the site. Several people mentioned that the proposed walkway discourages people from staying and lingering. Additionally, there was concern providing public space only at the edges of the island will limit access.

### Public Access

It was important for many people that Ontario Place remain an accessible, public and free place. In particular, ensuring priority access for all residents and visitors, especially for equity-deserving communities was a reoccurring sentiment expressed by respondents. Residents that live nearby and use the park often noted the importance of public access because they have limited options for leisure and recreation in the area.

### Inclusion of Leisure and Recreation Spaces, Activities, and Programming

Maintaining and adding new affordable and free recreation activities on the West Island was important for current users. People suggested adding slacklines; improving water quality for swimming; expanding kayaking and canoeing options; incorporating family-friendly activities and children's play areas; and adding winter activities such as ice skating. However, several people responded positively to the inclusion the public realm improvements, landscape design, opportunities for water recreation activities, and trails for cycling and walking.

### Connectivity

Some people appreciated the public walkways in the proposal but thought there was an opportunity to add more. People also highlighted the importance of building safe cycling infrastructure. People also stated that it was important to improve trail connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians. Those that use the water for activities such as kayaking and canoeing shared that there needs to be better access to the water.

## Frequency of Comments Related to Public Spaces and Activities

- Loss of Public Spaces and Green Space
- Affordable Public Access for Everyone
- Inclusion of Leisure and Recreation Spaces
- Therme Spa Building Size and Scale
- Transit, Pedestrian, and Cycling Connections
- Winter and Year-round Uses and Activities

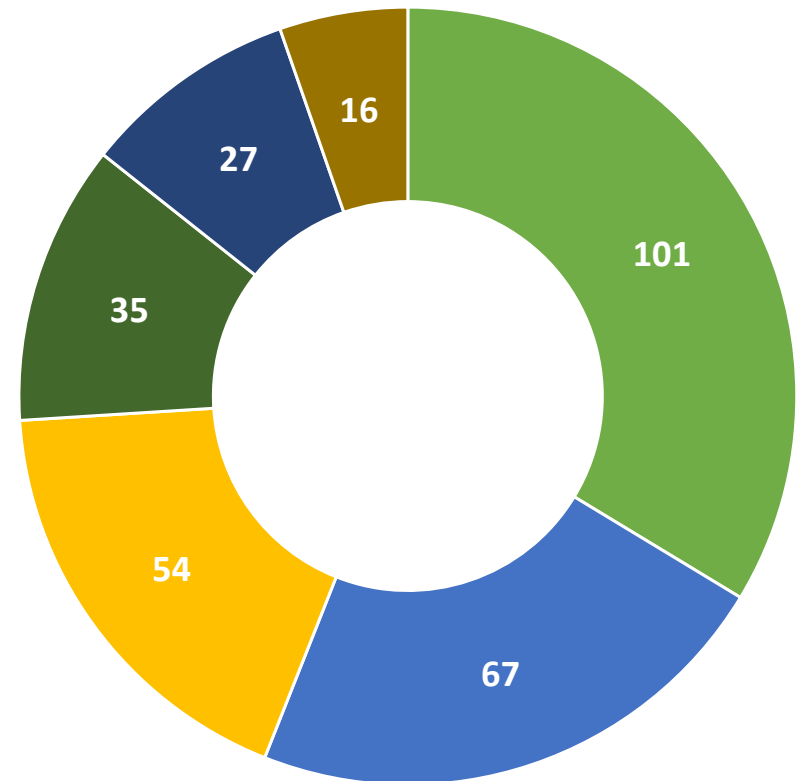


Figure 6 - Frequency of comments related to Public Spaces and Activities

## What We Heard - Public Spaces and Activities

*"I am encouraged by the public parkland development proposals, they are creative and attractive. However, I am quite concerned that 1) the size of the Therme facility will overwhelm the proposed parkland developments, 2) that the scale of the redevelopment will essentially take existing parkland out of service for several years while the Therme facility is built, 3) If the Therme plan were to not happen, the existing Ontario Place could be reimaged as all-public parkland with many of the ideas already developed and presented, with less disruption to public use."*

*"We're saying 2/3 will be publicly accessible but it seems, the public space snakes around - if there's truly about 8k-14k visitors a year, how will we fit comfortably + use the space?... All pictures of the public show us on the outskirts of the private amenities. It's shameful."*

*"I love spending time at Ontario Place on my bike and on foot, and think it would be phenomenal to adapt the West Island with more native plants and some updates to the open space, with Trillium Park as a great model. The proposal would abandon this potential and destroy much of what makes it special now. I can't imagine ever wanting to visit a narrow band around the spa complex."*

*"This project is a reduction of public space and a reduction in the amount of public activities that can occur on site. We need more green public space, not less."*

*"Public spaces should be bigger, and should include areas of lawn where people and families can picnic or toss a ball, not just walk on a path around or through the site."*

*"Affordability a key concern. Ensure continuation of popular no-cost activities: pick up basketball, beach volleyball, ping pong. Ensure west channel continues to provide for rowing & dragon boating uses. Keep movies at IMAX theatre in Cineplex! Very popular. Pods - art space."*

*"We are a low-income family. We have no car no backyard so we depend on public spaces for recreation, meeting with friends + enjoyment. This is especially important in summer as we don't own a cottage. I cycle with my son often to the waterfront + Trillium Park. We love it there. It does not seem fair or equitable that we shall not have fair access to Ontario Place. It should be a public space."*

*"I like the focus on supporting a variety of activities, including marine activities and family-oriented activities. I strongly disagree with replacing the free, publicly accessible space on the West Island today with any event centre, let alone a private spa. We should revitalize the West Island first and foremost as a public park"*

*"The landscape redesign has many kinds of accessible walkways and trails. On the other hand, not much thought has gone into how the site can be used in the winter months. Is the site accessible to someone launching a canoe or kayak? This would require the addition of a marine ramp or boat trollies from a parking lot. The Therme building and parking garage are too large and do not make sense in the provision of public spaces within the redevelopment proposal."*

*"There should be more consideration for winter activities like fire pits or skating rinks. I'm concerned about Ontario Place being closed + publicly inaccessible for several years during construction. Could construction be phased to allow for parts of the site to be accessible during construction. The current design seems to prioritize moving people through the space rather than rest and relaxation."*

## Environment and Sustainability

Generally, respondents identified three main concerns. These include the underground parking lot size and scale, emissions associated with the spa and parking facilities, and wildlife and habitat protection. Key areas of interest are described in Figure 7. Miscellaneous responses are not depicted.

### Parking Lot Size and Scale

Generally, many people shared that the size of the underground parking lot is not aligned with the City's environmental and sustainability goals. Specifically, people were concerned about the amount of concrete being used, increased vehicle congestion and air pollution, construction and maintenance costs, and the large carbon footprint associated with personal automotive vehicles. Investing in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and improving public transit connections were mentioned as alternatives to the underground parking lot.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In addition to the parking lot, people shared concerns regarding greenhouse gas emissions from the building. People were particularly concerned about the amount of energy required for heating and cooling that would maintain certain temperatures within the spa.

### Wildlife and Habitat Protection

Protecting different species of migratory and local birds was a priority for many people. Protecting existing natural habitats on

the West Island and along the shoreline was also a reoccurring sentiment from respondents. People were particularly concerned that the construction and demolition required to build the main building and parking lot would negatively impact wildlife habitats.

### Tree Canopy Protection

Many people were concerned about changes to the tree canopy due to the replacement of mature trees with younger trees. Respondents generally agreed on protecting and maintaining and increasing the tree canopy, planting more local trees and plants, increasing public green space, and naturalizing the West Island.

### Water

Several people recognized that it was important to protect and improve water quality those wanting to use the beach. It was important to respondents that there is adequate sewage and water servicing infrastructure to clean water used by Therme. A few people were supportive of the proposal in terms of the shoreline rehabilitation and landscape design improvements.

### Miscellaneous

In addition to the comments summarized above, people also commented on other potential locations for the spa and Ontario Science Centre, the cost of Therme spa services and activities, and the lease agreement between the Province and Therme. These comments do not directly influence the development review process, however, are part of the public record.

## Frequency of Comments Related to the Environment and Sustainability

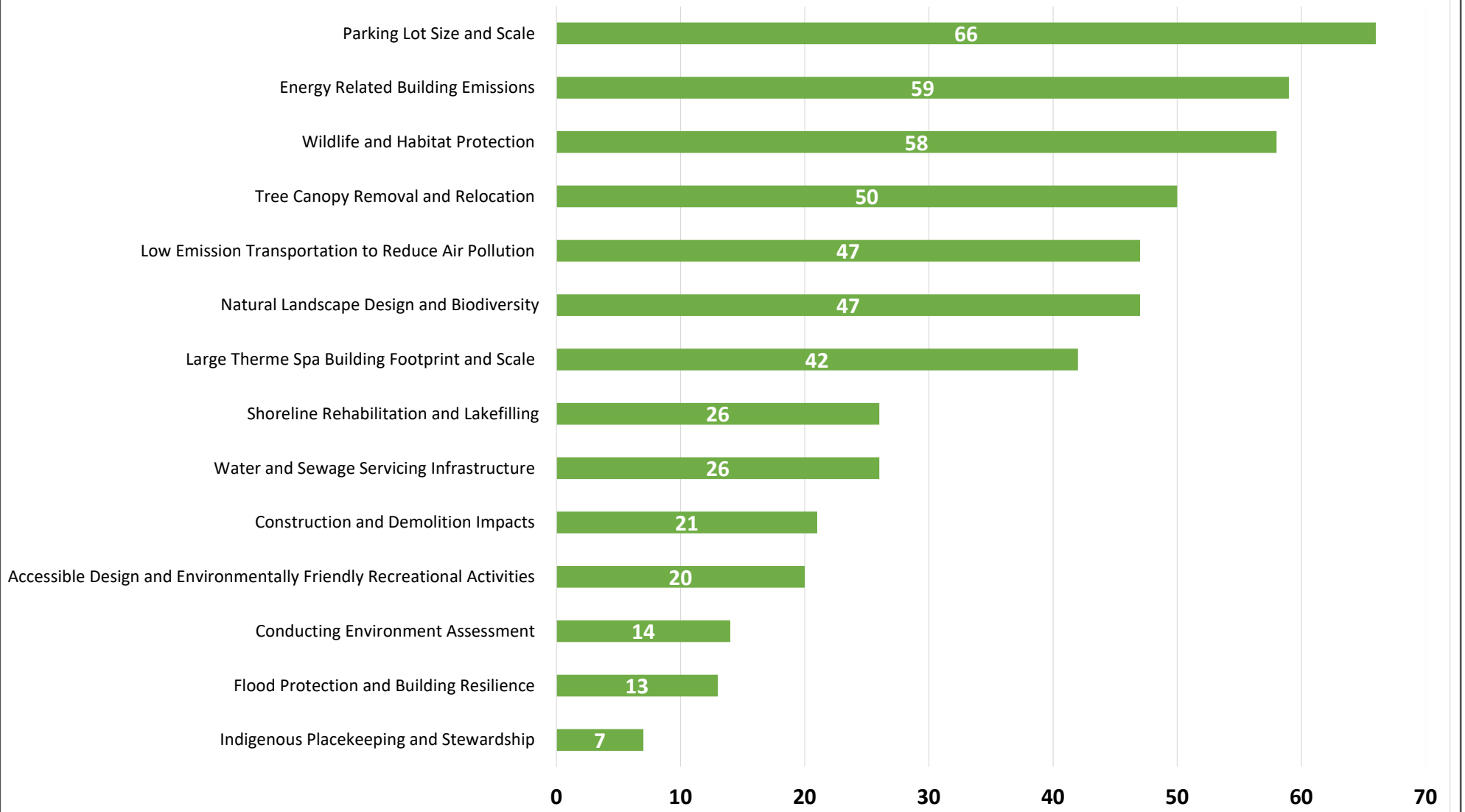


Figure 7 - Frequency of comments related to Environment and Sustainability

## What We Heard - Environment and Sustainability

*"The spa will require the removal of many trees - planting new trees or transplanting. This does not maintain the ecological integrity of the area. The glass will be a hazard to birds. Underground parking undermines our TransformTO climate goals. We need to deprioritize cars."*

*"My primary concerns are with the scale of the Therme development, the excess glazing, the microclimates, out of place with the Ontario context, and the huge underground parking allowance allocated for a projected 10% of visitors arriving by car. Please prioritize visitors coming on foot, by bike, or by public transit."*

*"This plan does not conform to the city's Transform TO's goals, or the Vision Zero road safety plan. So many reasons why this plan is bad for sustainability- cutting down 850 trees, building a 7-storey glassed in spa, and a 5-storey underground parking garage for 2100 car parking spaces, and 600 other parking spaces. We need to be encouraging more active transportation not building underground parking on the Waterfront. We will also have good transit there - TTC, GO and the Ontario Line, and we need to encourage people to use transit. Ontario Place should be park land and similar to Trillium Park and the William G Davis Trail."*

*"The development will also result in a lot of gas emissions from the traffic generated, the loss through extensive glazing, the high interior temperature, the vast amount of water to be heated. Huge water consumption will also require a lot of energy while the treatment of used water could generate water quality loss and environmental degradation and have large ecological impacts in particular in case of systems failure. The large demolition proposed will generate gas emissions and waste from the concrete of the "silos" to the loss of trees with their emissions sequestration"*

*"The spa building is a large green house that needs to be cooled in summer and heated in winter. How does this spend of energy correlate with the city's climate goals?"*

*"The extensive paved/hard finish areas will generate increased heat island effects and the large mass of the building. The construction will result in huge emissions and the mitigation will require a hugely expensive effort (if truly envisioned). In my opinion the mitigation measures mentioned but not truly committed will not address the impacts"*

*"I am not confident in the ability of new replacement trees to survive and thrive in an urban environment. Countless studies have shown that replacement trees are not successful at truly replacing older mature trees in urban environments and new developments. I would like to see a greater effort to protect more of the existing trees."*

*“Putting in the Therme spa will be a detriment to the local environment - the waterline there is currently home to a variety of bird species, some that are fairly rare! I counted 15 different bird species living there, utilizing the habitat, and they will all be out of a home if the redevelopment proposal goes ahead. The tall glass walls of the spa do not consider bird-friendly architecture, and will result in fatal window collisions killing many birds passing through the area. Not to mention that the demolition and building of a large spa and a gas-powered parking garage will be horribly unsustainable, given we’re in the middle of a climate crisis.”*

*“Proposed Therme building does not at all seem to be in keeping with sustainable approaches to construction (amount of glass, size and massing, proposed use, etc.). Proposal should adaptively reuse existing buildings where at all possible. Why waste so many resources to build and operate what will be a private use on public land. We are in a climate emergency - we do not need tropical trees in Toronto.”*

*“Some of the landscaping and revitalization of the park areas look nice, but it seems like there is a true environmental assessment lacking for the project as a whole. I don’t see how a huge glassed-in spa building and 5-storey underground parking garage do anything but undermine environmental and sustainability goals.”*

*“Excited to see marshland restoration and creation of a beach. What will be done to ensure the water is safe to swim in?”*

*“We are facing a fresh water crisis, I have concerns regarding how much public water a thermal spa will be using. There is often mention of Therme “cleaning the water” without explanation of how and no allotment on the renderings of where that “cleaning” process will happen.”*

*“I like the tree planting and greening aspects of the East Island plans. I do not like plans to fill in more lake area to increase the area beyond the existing Ontario Place. Ontario Place has a unique and interesting aquatic ecosystem in the various channels and bays. And I like the idea of a small amount of science study and programming at this site.”*



# Next Steps

City staff provided detailed comments to the proponent on the development application as well as summary feedback materials. A resubmission package from the proponent addressing City staff feedback is anticipated in Summer 2023. Additional City-hosted engagement activities and opportunities will be planned for Fall 2023.

Public feedback is vital to development review process. The City project team will continue to collect input from the public and stakeholders on an on-going basis. Questions and comments can be submitted to Colin Wolfe directly.

## **Colin Wolfe**

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