

# Engagement Summary

## September 2023 Ontario Place Community Consultation Meetings

Report prepared by Gladki Planning Associates for the City of Toronto

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
<b>Introduction</b>	
Project Overview.....	5
<b>Development Application Review Process.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Project Phases.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Document Purpose.....	7
<b>How will Public Feedback be Used?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Promotion.....	8
<b>Youth Engagement.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Indigenous Engagement.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Methodology.....	9
<b>Feedback</b>	
Community Consultation Meeting (September 7).....	10
<b>Plenary Question and Answer Summary.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Virtual Community Consultation Meeting (September 12).....	15
<b>Question and Answer Summary.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Feedback Forms.....	23
<b>Updated Designs and Concepts in the Revised Application.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Next Steps.....	39

# Executive Summary

In November 2022, 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 the 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 has undertaken two series of community consultations. The City has retained Gladki Planning Associates (GPA) to serve as the independent facilitator of the community consultations and to report back on feedback.

In April 2023, the first series of consultation activities occurred. Activities included an in-person meeting, a virtual meeting, and digital and print feedback form. GPA produced an [Engagement Summary](#) of this first series of consultation activities.

This Engagement Summary summarizes the second series of City-hosted consultation activities regarding the Ontario Place Redevelopment application. Activities took place between September 7 and September 23, 2023. The consultation activities were intended to solicit feedback from the public on the proposed designs and concepts to be included in the resubmission package from Infrastructure Ontario.

The Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto have since been in discussions, culminating in the December 6th enactment of the *Recovery Through Growth Act (City of Toronto) (2023)* and the *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act (2023)*. These Acts are commonly referred to as the New Deal for Toronto, and speak to a number of provisions related to Ontario Place, and including a core commitment to accept the Province's legislative authority to advance the Ontario Place Rebuilding Project. This effectively ends the City review of the Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications.

- **In-person Community Consultation Meeting**  
Thursday, September 7th, 3:00-8:30pm

This meeting was held at the Beanfield Centre and consisted of two parts. During the first part, the public was invited to participate in an open house where they could view design panels and ask questions directly to the proponent. The second part was a plenary session which included presentations from the proponent and the City, as well as an hour and a half question and comment period. **22** questions were responded to live. **690** people registered for the event, and approximately **167** people attended.

- **Virtual Community Consultation Meeting**  
Tuesday, September 12th, 7:00-9:00pm

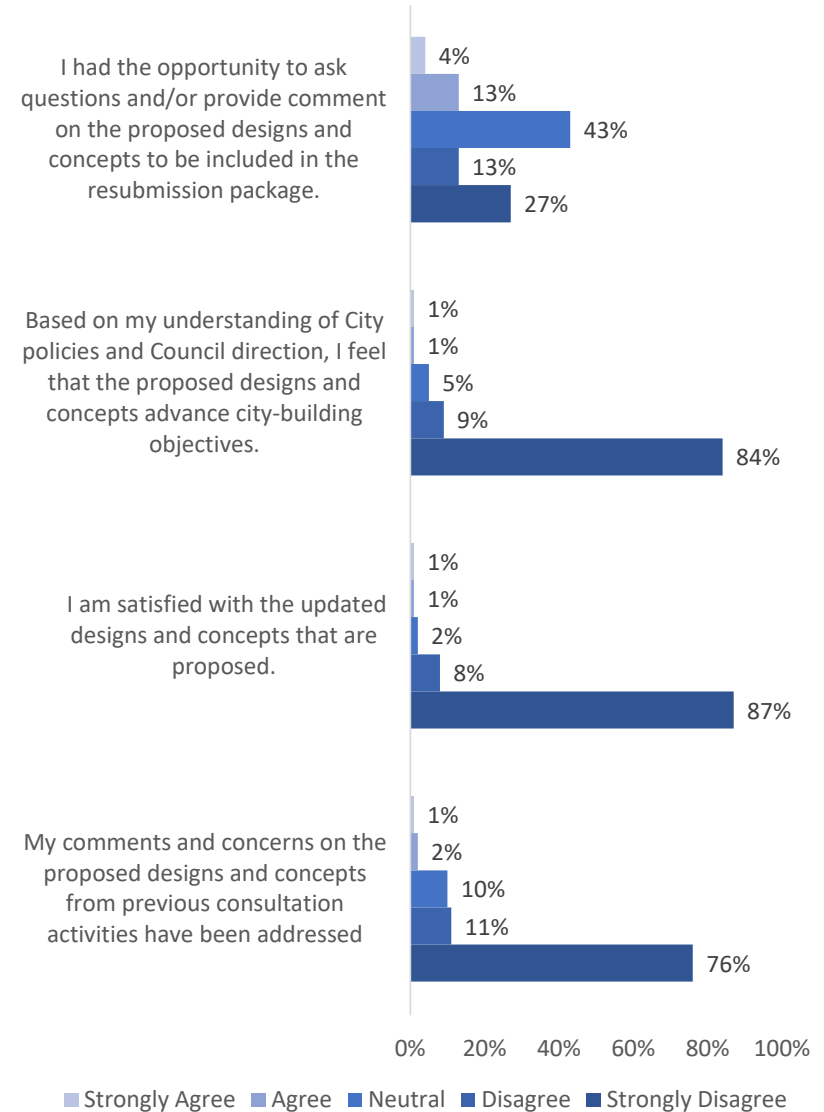
This meeting was convened virtually using WebEx. The meeting included presentations from the proponent and the City, and was followed by a question and comment period. **264** questions were submitted using the Q&A function and **15** questions and comments were responded to live. **803** people registered from the virtual meeting, and approximately **360** people were in attendance.

- **Feedback Forms (Digital and Paper)**

Thursday, September 7th – Saturday, September 23rd

Feedback forms were available to the public in paper form at the in-person community consultation meeting and available digitally using CheckMarket from September 7-23, 2023. People were asked to submit feedback, comments, and questions pertaining to the revised application. In total, **383** forms were completed.

Based on the data that was collected during the community consultations **76%** of people shared that the revised application materials did not address their comments and concerns from the first series of consultation. **87%** of people are not satisfied with the updated proposed designs and concepts. **84%** of people shared that the proposal does not advance city-building objectives in Toronto (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Level of Agreement regarding the Updated Designs and Concepts in the Revised Application

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

### **Transportation**

- Many people were concerned about the potential impacts of the underground parking lot on traffic flow and the environment. People shared that the reduction of parking spots was not sufficient and still does not align with the City's sustainability goals.
- Traffic congestion was a reoccurring concern. Many people stated that the transportation network should create more connections to Ontario Place with public transit and active transportation infrastructure.
- The public emphasized the importance of utilizing public transit, cycling, and walking as an important way to travel rather than by private vehicles. Many people were concerned about the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and encouraged the use of separated pathways and recreational trails.

### **Public Realm, Uses & Activities**

- Generally, people were not in favour of a spa as a major tourism and entertainment destination for Ontario Place, but appreciated increased public space in the updated public realm master plan. People supported more public parks and green spaces, and revitalizing the West Island's existing public realm and buildings.

- Some people appreciated improvements in the public realm design, however, people emphasized the desire for more inclusive public space and amenities, and a reduction of private space on the West Island. Many people did not support the relocation of the Ontario Science Centre, however, some people did mention that a satellite location with science programming would be appropriate on the West Island.
- It was important for many that Ontario Place remained accessible, public, and free for all to enjoy.

### **Built Form & Heritage**

- The public acknowledged the reduction in volume of the main building and entrance pavilion as an improvement, however, many people were still concerned that size and scale is too large for the site.
- People mentioned that the proposed changes to the main building do not reflect the character of Ontario Place, and are not suitable to the surrounding area. People noted this due to the size, scale, site location, and glass façade exterior of the main building.
- Protecting and preserving the Pods, Cinesphere, and Michael Hough's landscape design was important for many people.
- There were concerns about the design of the rooftop publicly accessible space in terms of grading, accessibility, weather protection, and supporting biodiversity.

## Environment & Sustainability

- The loss of mature trees and canopy was a recurring concern for many people.
- People were concerned about the absence of an Environmental Assessment for the West Island. The public expressed a desire to understand the risks and impacts on the environment, and how those risks would be mitigated.
- People were concerned about the overall impact that the building and parking garage will have on migratory birds, animals, and the environment.
- People shared concerns about the main building's energy and water consumption, glass façade, removal of existing mature trees and plants, and usage of cement.
- There was a desire to understand the viability of building a rooftop publicly accessible space. Specifically, people were concerned about the rooftop publicly accessible space's ability to support biomass, soil, vegetation, trees, and biodiversity.
- Many people were concerned about the proposed beach on the West Island. Various concerns were raised about the relocation including: the relocation and proximity to the Combined Sewer Outflow; replacing the existing pebble beach; water quality; and the orientation of the beach in relation to the sun.

## Other Concerns

- The public expressed concern about the details of the lease and land transfer. They emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability from the Province.
- Many people were concerned about the social and economic implications of relocating the existing Ontario Science Centre (OSC) to Ontario Place.
- People expressed concern that the City's application review process was too short and that more details from the Province need to be provided.



Image 1 Aerial View of Ontario Place.

*Credit: Adobe Stock*

# 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 occurred in April 2023. A report summarizing these activities can be found on the [City's webpage](#).

The second series of community consultation meetings took place in September 2023. 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 (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.



Image 2 Aerial View of Ontario Place.

*Credit: 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 25, 2022, 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. In April 2023, the City hosted the first series of community consultation activities. Comments from the community consultations and additional written comments from the City were provided to the applicant in spring 2023. In June 2023, the Councillor's Office and the City Planning department co-hosted an 'Active Open House' to provide an opportunity to walk the site, discuss the proposed redevelopment, and ask questions. The purpose of this consultation activity was to continue the conversation between the public and the City of Toronto. No new information about the application was presented.

In response to the issues raised by the City and Public on the initial application, the applicant prepared a resubmission package, submitted in September 2023. A second series of consultation activities were undertaken to allow the public to learn about the revised concept and make comments.

The Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto have since been in discussions, culminating in the December 6th enactment of the *Recovery Through Growth Act (City of Toronto) (2023)* and the *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act (2023)*. These Acts are commonly referred to as the New Deal for Toronto, and speak to a number of provisions related to Ontario Place, and including a core commitment to accept the Province's legislative authority to advance the Ontario Place Rebuilding Project. This effectively ends the City review of the Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications.

# Document Purpose

This document is a summary of the findings from the City-hosted community consultation activities on the development application that took place in September 2023. Activities included an in-person meeting with an open house and plenary session, a virtual meeting, and feedback forms. This report contains a section for each of the engagement activities.

1. In-person Meeting - Plenary Question and Answer Period
2. Virtual Meeting - Question and Commenting Period
3. Feedback Forms (Print and Digital)

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 5 main themes:

- Transportation
- Public Realm, Uses and Activities
- Built Form and Heritage
- Environment and Sustainability
- Other Comments

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 A. Additionally, notes from the in-person and virtual question and commenting periods can be found in Appendix B and C.

## How will Public Feedback be Used?

Comments received as part of the community consultation activities were used to inform the City's review of the Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications prior to the December 6th enactment of the *Recovery Through Growth Act (City of Toronto) (2023)* and the *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act (2023)*. The scope of the City's review was defined by the development application process. Issues that were considered include:

- The shape and size of the buildings;
- Public space, landscaping and public amenities;
- Transportation and parking;
- Environmental objectives; and,
- Alignment with city-building objectives.

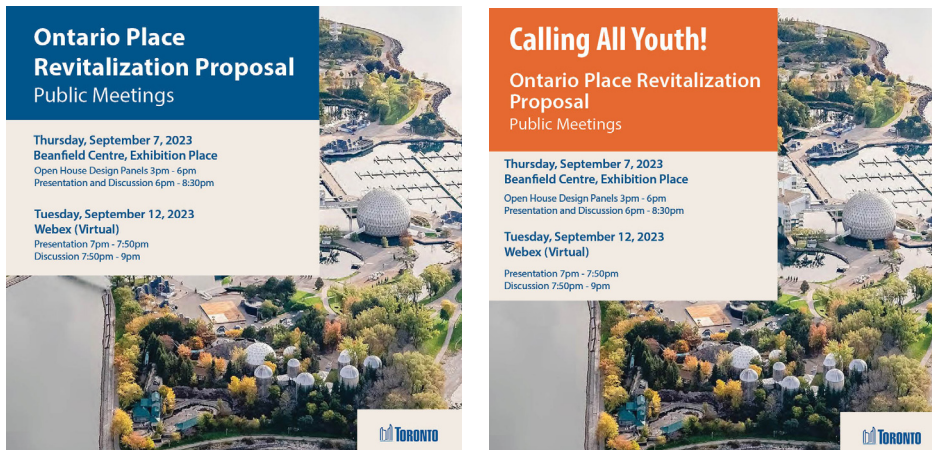
Commentary from the City-hosted community consultation meetings would not have been able to directly influence the following:

- Leasing considerations;
- Business and funding matters;
- Other potential locations;
- Land exchange matters; and,
- Other anticipated development applications (Live Nation and the Ontario Science Centre).

All commentary from the public meetings and the feedback form was noted as part of the public record. This report and accompanying appendices capture the entirety of public feedback that was received during the fall consultation period. Questions and comments that are considered to be outside of the planning development review process have been summarized under the theme of "Other Comments".

# 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 Figures 3-4). Additionally, Notices were sent using the City Planning email Listserv, Stakeholder Advisory Committee networks, lists of interested parties who reached out to City Planning via email and through local councillor newsletters.



Figures 3-4 City of Toronto Social Media Posts

## Youth Engagement

Similar to the April consultation program, 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 GPA 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.

Additionally, GPA coordinated with Urban Minds, a youth engagement practice, who shared the City's Ontario Place Public Meeting promotional materials on their Discord and other social media channels.

## 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 undertaken by the City of Toronto please contact Meg St. John ([Meg St. John](#)). Infrastructure Ontario and Therme are facilitating their own Indigenous consultation programme.

# Methodology

Public feedback was captured through written notes that were recorded by GPA during consultation activities. 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 the data sets. The data was separated into 5 main categories: Transportation; Public Realm, Uses and Activities; Built Form and Heritage; Environment and Sustainability; and Other Comments. Sub-themes within the 5 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 general consensus. 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.

The Feedback Form contained 4 ranking questions, where participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statements. GPA calculated the proportion of people that agreed and disagreed with each of the statements in order to discern how the majority of people felt in relation to the provided statements. For more details see the following section.

# Feedback

# Community Consultation Meeting (September 7)

An in-person meeting was held at the Beanfield Centre on Thursday, September 7, 2023. The meeting consisted of two segments including an open house and design panels, and a plenary session with presentations from the City and the Applicant and question and comment period. **690** people registered for the event, and approximately **167** people attended.

During the three-hour open house and design panels segment, the public were able to engage and ask questions with the applicant team and City staff on the following topics:

- Key changes;
- History, vision, and master plan;
- Future program partners;
- Built form;
- Public realm;
- Heritage and natural heritage;
- Transportation; and,
- Indigenous placekeeping.

The [design panels](#) can be viewed online on the City's project webpage. The one-hour plenary session began with an introductory presentation from GPA and the City of Toronto, and was followed by a presentation by the applicant. Following presentations there was an hour and half question and comment period, during which **22** questions and comments were shared live. The applicant team and City staff were available at the design boards to answer questions following the question and comment period (see Figure 5 and Images 3-8).

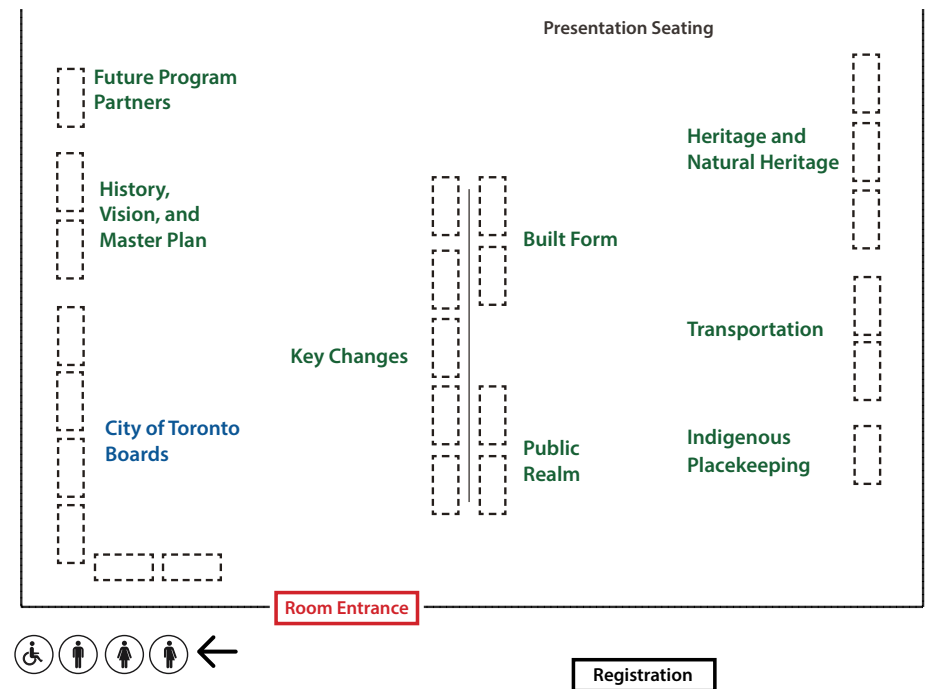
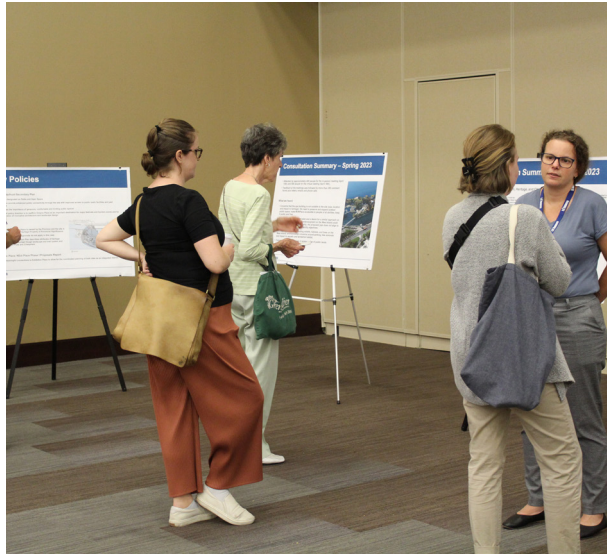


Figure 5 Open House Presentation Boards Map



Images 3-8 Attendees asking questions and learning more about the revised designs and concepts during the Open House.

Credit: GPA

# Plenary Question & Answer Summary

The public asked questions and shared comments to a panel consisting of the applicant team and City staff. **22** questions and comments were shared with the panel during the hour and half question and comment period. They are organized and summarized according to four main themes. Other comments related to the project are summarized in the following section. Refer to Appendix C for the Q&A notes.



**Image 9** Colin Wolfe, Senior Planner with City of Toronto City Planning providing an introduction presentation. *Credit: GPA*

## Transportation

### Modal Split

Members of the public asked for more clarification regarding the traffic projection of those anticipated to drive, walk, cycle, and take public transportation to Ontario Place. People wanted clarification about how the applicant determined the number of proposed parking spots, and the methodology used to determine the modal split (e.g. projection that 10% of people will arrive by car). The applicant clarified that the traffic projections and proposed parking stall numbers are based on the number of people expected to visit Ontario Place, which includes Thermo Spa and Live Nation entertainment. The projection that 10% of people will arrive by car was based on a peak demand calculation.

### Transportation Network

A question was asked about how the traffic infrastructure network will work to accommodate the number of projected visitors to Ontario Place and surrounding area. The applicant shared that a comprehensive traffic study was submitted as part of the application and it assessed traffic surges during major events such as concerts and sporting events. The traffic study analysis also considered the new Ontario Subway Line and improved infrastructure connections between the new subway station and Ontario Place. They shared that public transit, active transportation, and regional transportation will be an important way for people to get to Ontario Place. The City shared that the Transportation Services team is currently reviewing the traffic studies submitted as part of the application.



## Public Spaces, Uses and Activities

### Public vs Private Space

There were multiple comments and questions from the public regarding areas for private and public use on the West Island. People wanted more clarity regarding which areas would be free to access. Members of the public expressed concern about the affordability and accessibility of uses and activities on the West Island. Some people suggested affordable and free events and programming at Ontario Place such as children's programming, festivals, and winter activities. The applicant shared that there will be 16 acres of accessible public space on the West Island including green space areas and the rooftop publicly accessible space. They shared that the West Island public realm will be publicly accessible all-year and there will be private ticketed spaces and events. This means that public spaces could be used for private events. They indicated that the East Island will incorporate creative and nature-based children's programming, and an outdoor performance amphitheatre on the West Island. The applicant was asked to elaborate on the proposed use of the Cinesphere. The applicant explained that the intention is to include Ontario Science Centre education programming space at the Cinesphere and Pod complex.

### Public Realm Management

Members of the public asked for clarity about the management and stewardship of the public realm on the West Island. The applicant explained that the Province will continue to steward Ontario Place, and management will be similar to the current model of the Ontario Place Corporation which currently oversees Trillium Park on the East Island. The City explained that the public realm will operate

as a privately-owned publicly accessible space. A member of the public shared that previous Ontario Place programming met the provincial mandate as a public-private entertainment destination with successful festivals and events. The applicant responded that the intention is to continue the success of previous festivals and programming at Ontario Place.

## Built Form and Heritage

### Therme Building Size

A member of the public shared that they appreciated the size reduction of the Therme main building and entrance, however, they still felt that the facility was too large for the site and should be scaled down. The applicant explained that the reduction in building volume resulted in shorter building heights. The City shared that there was a 25% reduction in building volume, and a 4.8% reduction in floor space.

## Environment and Sustainability

### Beach Relocation

Members of the public expressed concern about the relocation of the current pebble beach on the West Island due to the proximity the new beach will have in relation to the Combined Sewage Outflow (CSO) location. Additionally, members of the public shared they are concerned about the placement of the proposed beach in relation to the sun, and the materials that will be used to construct the new beach on the west side of the West Island. The applicant was asked to explain the rationale to relocate the current pebble beach on the south shore to a sand beach on the west shore. They shared that as part of shoreline rehabilitation efforts, the proposed beach will be larger in size and will be sheltered by a submerged reef. In addition, the City shared there are projects across the city currently underway to reduce the impact of CSO's on water quality, however, there are currently no plans for CSO risk mitigation near Ontario Place.

### Loss of Biomass

A concern was raised about the loss of biomass, soil, and shrubs, and the applicant was asked for details about the net change in biomass and the impact on the ecosystem during construction of the spa facility and public realm updates. Additionally, members of the public raised concerns that there are not enough green spaces and trees in the proposal. The applicant shared that they have not calculated the biomass change, but will have permeable paving on the West Island to ensure water can be absorbed in the soil. The applicant explained that Trillium Park was constructed on a former parking lot on the East Island, and they intend to establish flora and fauna on the West Island in a similar manner.

## Other Comments

Members of the public shared concerns regarding the lack of publicly available details regarding the lease terms and future development applications. A concern was raised pertaining to the transparency of financing details related to the project. The applicant was asked to explain the business case for relocating the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place. The applicant indicated that the business case will be shared publicly. A question was asked if there will be opportunities for lodging and hospitality at Ontario Place. The applicant stated that there is an opportunity to utilize public transit to connect the site to hotels in the surrounding area.

# Virtual Community Consultation Meeting (September 12)

The virtual meeting was held in the evening of Tuesday, September 12, 2023, using WebEx. **803** people registered for the virtual meeting, and approximately **360** people were in attendance. The virtual meeting began with an introductory presentation from GPA 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. **264** questions were submitted using the Q&A function and **15** questions and comments were responded to live.

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

## Question & Answer Summary

Figure 3-1 captures the number of times key areas of interest were mentioned in the 264 written questions and comments submitted using the Q&A box during the virtual community consultation. In this section, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized. Figures 6 to provide further details on the frequency of comments received in the virtual Q&A box related to transportation, public realm, environment, built form, and other comments. Refer to Appendix C for the virtual meeting Q&A notes.

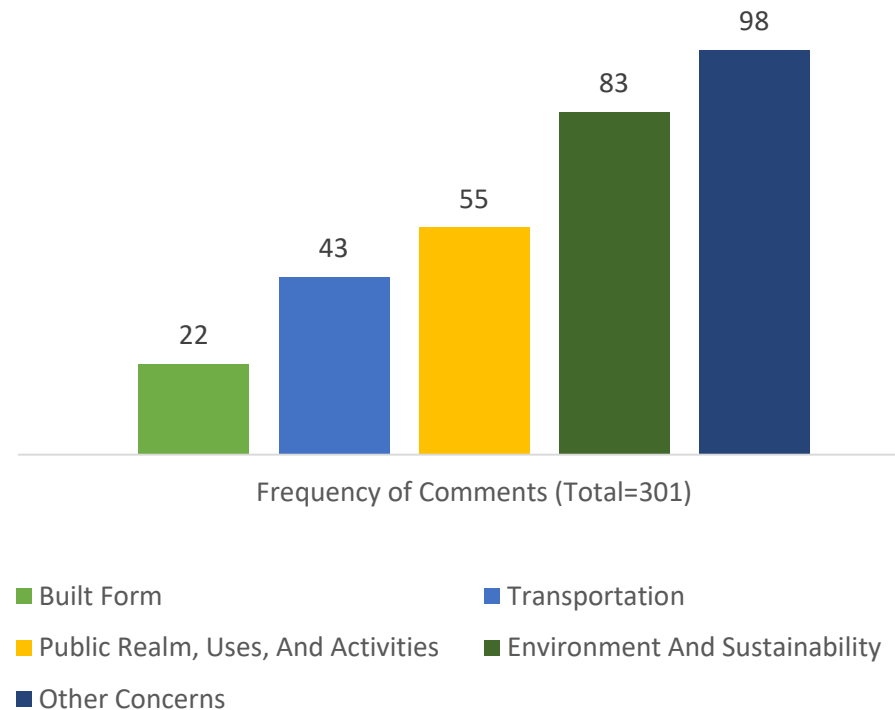
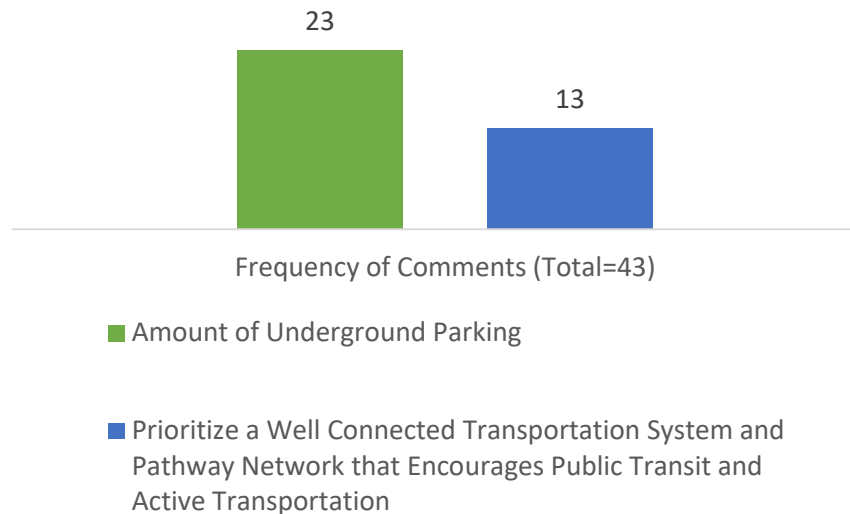


Figure 6 Frequency of Total Comments Related to Main Areas during the Virtual Community Meeting

## Transportation

Figure 7 organizes the **43** comments that were submitted on the topics of transportation into sub-themes.



**Figure 7** Frequency of Comments Related to Transportation during the Virtual Community Meeting

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses regarding transportation from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized.

### Underground Parking

The applicant was asked why the underground parking is needed considering there will be public transportation serving

Ontario Place. They explained that the underground parking lot will serve all users of Ontario Place based on user demand forecasting. The revised underground parking structure design eliminated approximately 226 parking spots from the previously submitted design. The City stated they are prioritizing improving all transportation options to ensure a balanced transportation network to and from Ontario Place.

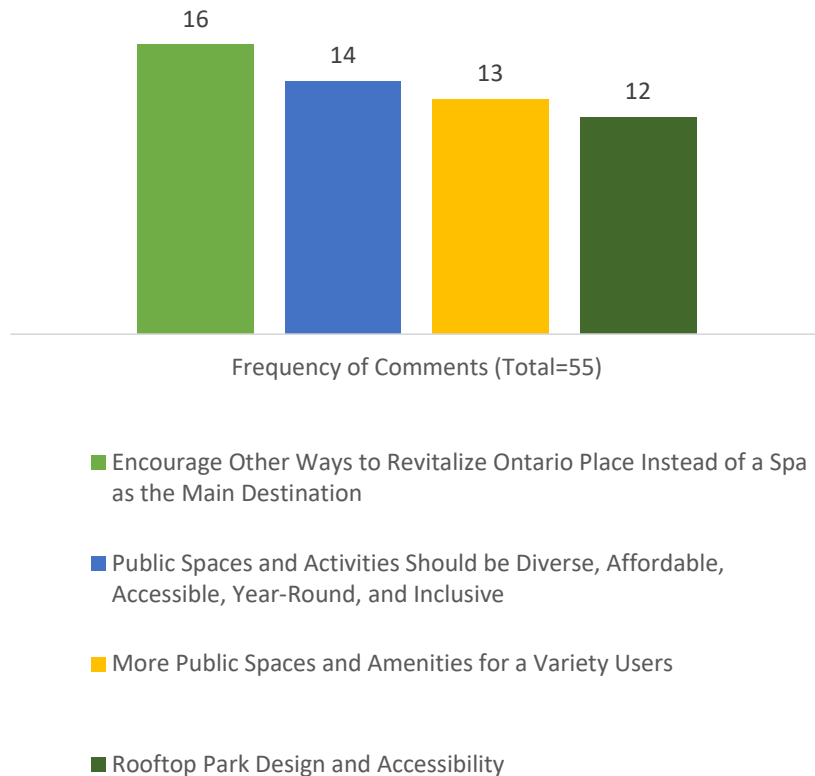
A member of the public shared that while they appreciate the reduction of parking spots in the revised proposal, the size and scale of the underground parking structure is still too large, and the cost to build the parking structure is a concern. The applicant indicated that the underground parking facility will operate commercially and generate revenue. Additionally, the concept is in an early design phase and the construction cost is not finalized. The applicant indicated that the Province will be responsible for the infrastructure construction costs. The intention is to prioritize non-motor users and rely on public transit or active transportation, and integrate Ontario Place with the broader transportation network.

### Student Transportation

A concern was raised about the use of school buses to transport children to the relocated Ontario Science Centre (OSC) location at Ontario Place. The applicant shared they are currently working with the OSC to determine bus travel requirements. Furthermore, they shared that school buses will travel during off-peak traffic times during the day and drop off and pick up will happen in the underground parking building.

## Public Spaces and Activities

Figure 8 captures and organizes the **55** comments that were submitted on the topics of public realm, uses, and activities into sub-themes.



**Figure 8** Frequency of Comments Related to the Public Realm, Uses, and Activities during the Virtual Community Meeting

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses regarding the public realm, uses, and activities from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized.

### Accessibility

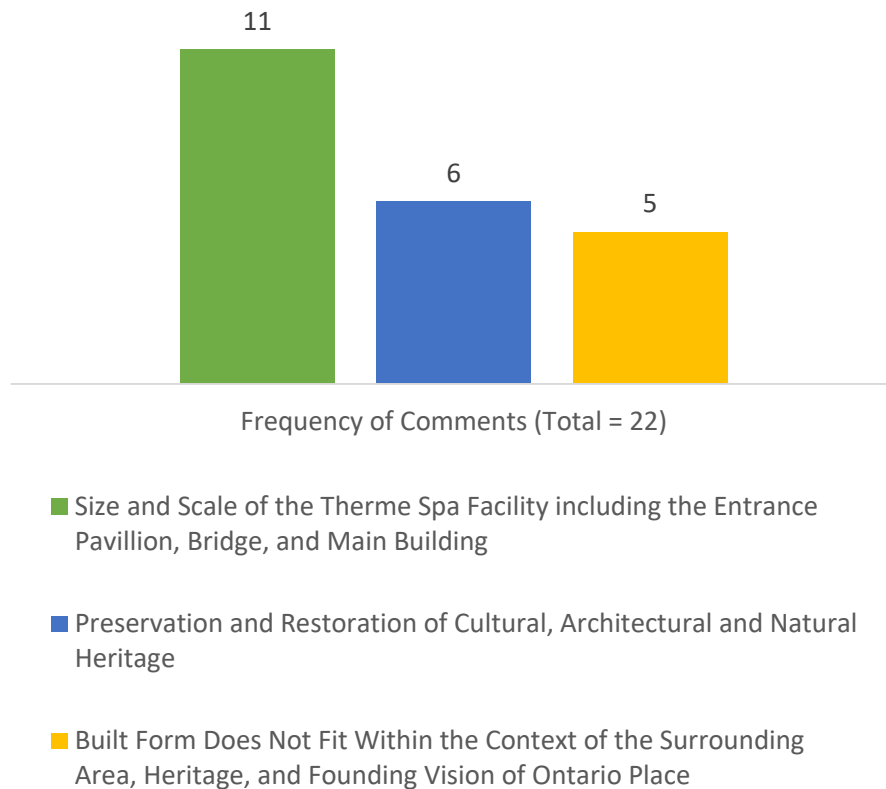
A question was asked about how they would ensure that the main building and public realm would be accessible to people of all ages and abilities. The applicant shared that accessibility is a key principle for the building design and public realm, and the focus is to ensure the West Island is fully AODA compliant so that everyone has access to Ontario Place. In addition, the applicant was asked to speak about the hours of operation and management for the rooftop public park. They shared that all public realm spaces will be accessible year-round, and that a Provincial management corporation will steward the public realm. This is similar to how Ontario Place is currently managed. The City stated that it was important for the proposal to provide a generous and pedestrian-friendly public realm.

### Public Space

The applicant was asked to speak about why there is a surface parking lot when it could be better used as more public green space. They explained that while underground parking is prioritized, the surface parking will meet projected parking demand and will be accompanied with landscaping improvements. The surface parking lot space will offer flexibility as mobility options change over time in order to accommodate future public realm improvements and programming space.

## Built Form and Heritage

Figure 9 organizes the **22** comments that were submitted on the topics of Built Form and Heritage into sub-themes.



**Figure 9** Frequency of Comments Related to Built Form and Heritage During the Virtual Community Meeting

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses regarding the built form and heritage from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized

### Therme Building

City staff were asked to speak about the built form issues they have identified in the revised proposal. They shared that while the reduced size of the entrance pavilion is an improvement, they remain concerned about the overall size and scale of the main Therme facility building. They are also concerned about heritage protection due to the historical significance of the architecture and landscape architecture design on the West Island.

### Heritage

A question was asked about the heritage protection of the Goh Ohn Bell Shelter on the West Island. The applicant explained that the Goh Ohn Bell Shelter will be retained, restored, and relocated to another site on the West Island. They are working with the National Association of Japanese Canadians to identify a new location, and are working with a conservator for restoration.

## Environment and Sustainability

Figure 10 organizes the **92** comments that were submitted on the topics of environment and sustainability into sub-themes.

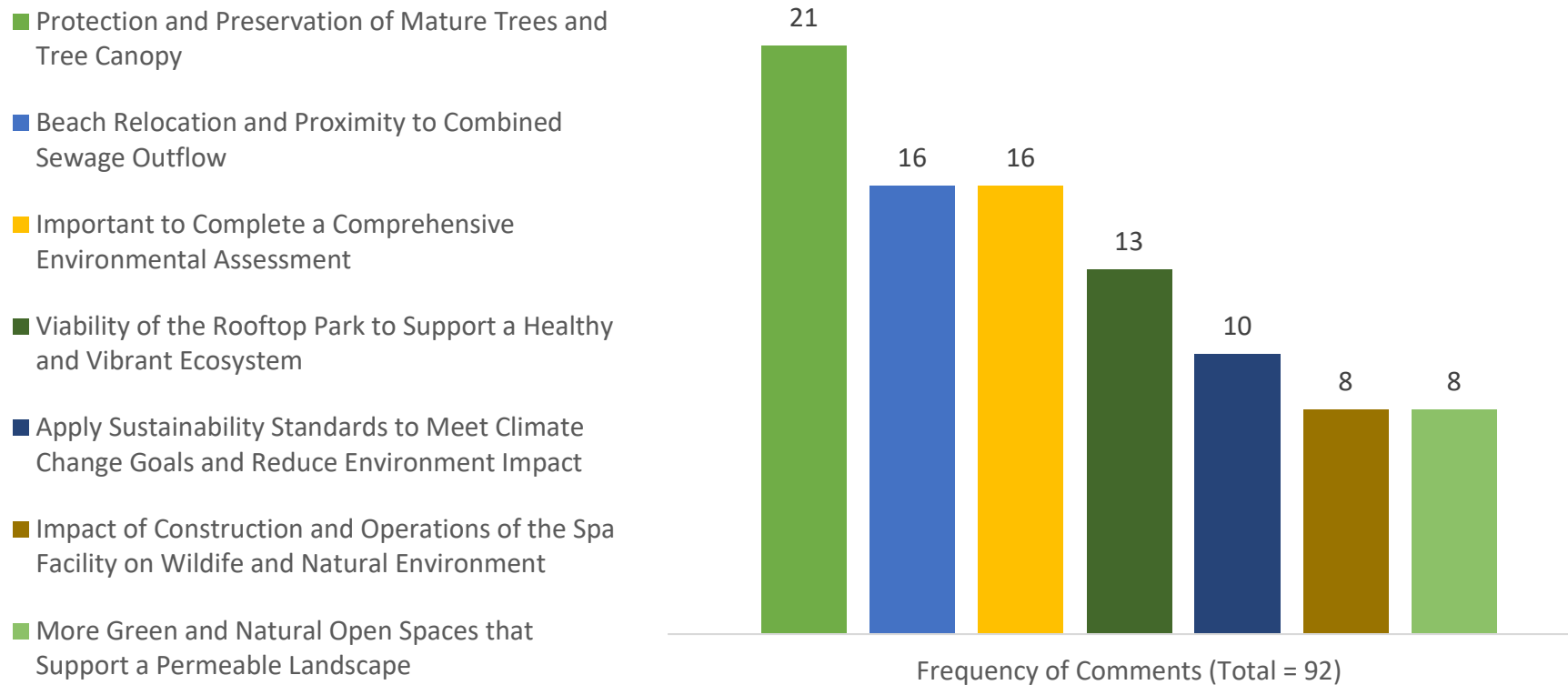


Figure 10 Frequency of Comments Related to the Environment and Sustainability During the Virtual Community Meeting

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses regarding the environment and sustainability from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized.

### Greenspace

A member of the public shared that they are concerned about the amount of concrete used and the lack of green spaces in the revised design and concepts. The applicant acknowledged that Ontario Place is a large site with a diversity of user experiences, therefore, the goal is to offer different types of parks and spaces with a variety of softscape and hardscape features. The focus is to ensure all surfaces are permeable, and that there is a balance between cultural uses and the natural environment. They further explained that natural permeable spaces will be incorporated in the promenade and plaza design, and there will be more than five acres of planted permeable spaces on the rooftop, boardwalk, and beach. To ensure that there is more green space on the East Island, the City is currently discussing the hardscape design for the Forum area with the applicant.

### Beach

The applicant was asked about why the current pebble beach on the West Island south shore cannot remain, while a new west shore beach is proposed. The applicant shared that the south shore is not an easy site to protect because it has a steep shoreline and significant resources and materials would be required for the shoreline preservation work. Therefore, the proposed beach on the west shore was selected to create a sustainable and resilient shoreline.

### Rooftop Publicly Accessible Space

A member of the public was concerned about the viability and sustainability of the rooftop publicly accessible space. The applicant acknowledged that the proposed rooftop publicly accessible space will be a challenge to design and build, however they are looking at examples to better understand the technical approaches to design and construct a park on a rooftop. They further explained that the intention is to build an ecologically responsive park with amenities and seating areas.

### Sustainability Standards

The applicant was asked to share more details about the environmental impact of the project. The applicant explained that they are currently exploring and conceptualizing innovative sustainability standards with the intention to build a sustainable and resilient spa building and public realm. This includes exploring increased permeability, improving the tree canopy, renewable and sustainable energy, carbon capture, and night sky compliant environments for bird migration. The City shared that the joint City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel are meeting in October to discuss the proposal. This discussion will include the sustainability components included in the revised design and concepts. The City shared they are in discussions with the applicant regarding retaining and conserving mature tree that are planned for removal to construct the Therme facility building.



## Environmental Assessment

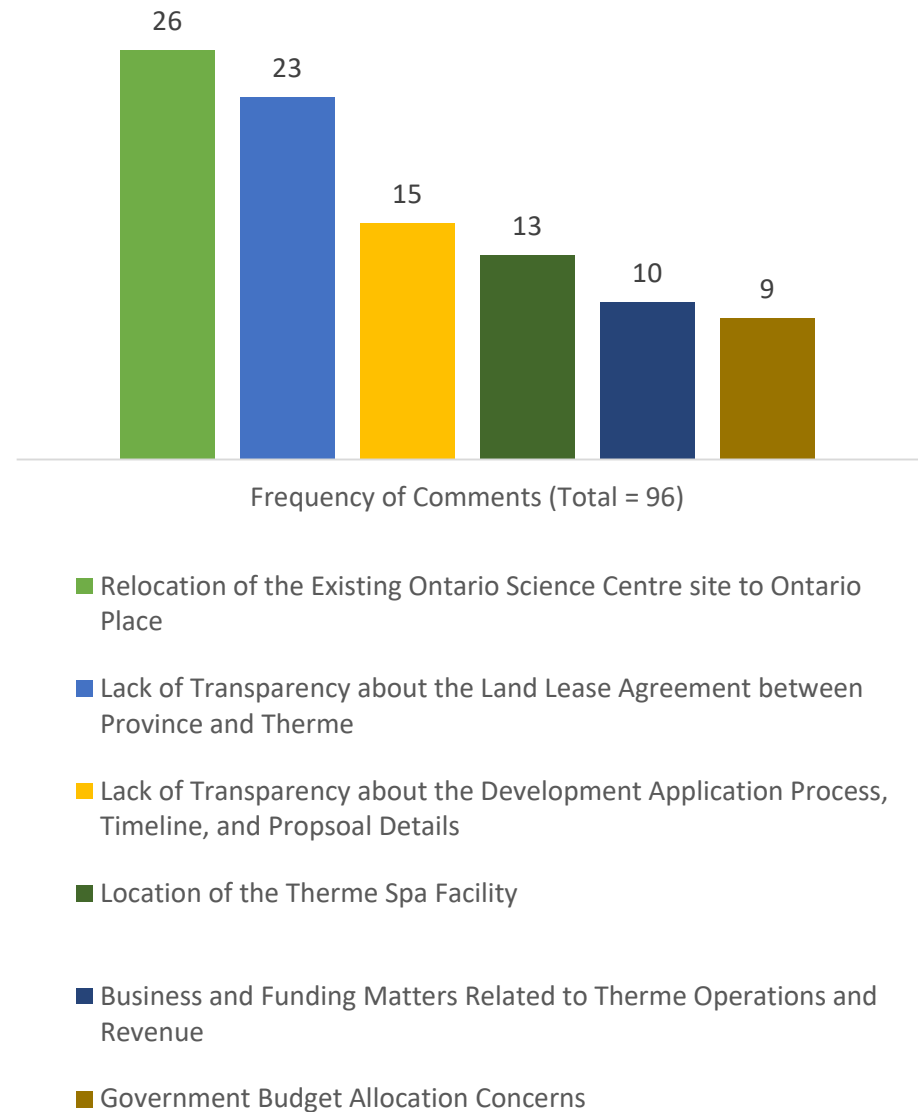
A member of the public expressed concern that Ontario Place should be subject to the same Environmental Assessment requirements and process as other projects. The applicant stated that the Province will follow all requirements of the provincial Environmental Assessment Act, however, because Therme is not undertaking a public works project that would trigger an Environmental Assessment, they are not required to have one completed.

The City explained that the City of Toronto Official Plan requires the completion of an Environmental Assessment for this site and lakefill projects of this scale. Therefore the City has requested that an Environmental Assessment is completed by Therme for the West Island.

The City was asked if the revised proposal for the West Island incorporated any public feedback received during the Province's Public Work Class Environmental Assessment Project for the East Island public realm improvements. The City stated that the feedback the Province received was specific to the East Island public realm, however, they appreciate that the plan has improved accessibility to create a welcoming environment.

## **Other Comments**

Figure 11 organizes the **96** comments that were submitted on the topics of other comments into sub-themes.



**Figure 11** Frequency of Comments Related to Other Comments During the Virtual Community Meeting

Below, questions and comments that were asked live and the subsequent responses regarding the other comments from City Staff and the Applicant Team have been summarized.

### Ontario Science Centre Relocation

A member of the public shared they do not support the relocation of the current Ontario Science Centre, and require more details from the Province as to why the relocation is needed. The applicant responded that the Province completed a business case report, and found that there are significant challenges with the current site, and there is an opportunity to cluster the Ontario Science Centre with other major tourist sites in downtown Toronto. The business case has not been shared publicly.

### Lease and Land Exchange Transparency

A concern was shared pertaining the lack of public details regarding the 99-year lease and land exchange between the Province and Therme. The applicant stated that the lease terms are not publicly available because of the commercial nature of the lease which is protected by provincial privacy laws. The applicant clarified that the land will be leased to Therme, and Therme cannot sell or transfer land which is owned by the Province. The City added that Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik tabled a [motion](#) at the General Government Committee in April (GG3.20) to defer a land exchange between the City and Province until the lease details are shared with the City.

### Planning Process

A member of the public shared a few concerns pertaining to the application process including the short application time frame, inadequate time for the public to thoroughly review the proposal, and the lack of publicly accessible details regarding the lease between the Province and Therme. The applicant explained that the Ontario Government launched a formal Call for Development in 2019. They shared that the “Call for Development” provides further details on the Province’s process to seek revitalization partners, criteria and requirements for partnership, and project timelines.

# Feedback Forms

Feedback forms were available to the public in paper form at the in-person community consultation meeting and available digitally from September 7 to September 23, 2023. People were asked to submit feedback, comments, and questions pertaining to the revised application. In total, **383** forms were collected. **143** responses related to transportation. **368** responses related to the public realm, uses, and activities. **157** responses related to the built form and heritage. **373** responses related to the environment and sustainability. **375** responses related to other comments. For the purposes of this report, the responses from both the printed and digital form were analyzed together. Please see Appendix A for the transcripts of the feedback forms.

## Updated Designs and Concepts in the Revised Application

Those that provided feedback using the Feedback Form were asked to rate their level of agreement with the four statements regarding the updated designs in the revised application (See Figure 12). To summarize, **76%** of respondents shared that the revised application materials did not address their comments and concerns from the first series of consultation. **87%** of respondents are not satisfied with the updated designs and concepts. **84%** of people shared that the proposal does not advance city-building objectives in Toronto. **43%** of respondents shared that they neither agreed or disagreed that they had the opportunity to ask questions and/or provide feedback on the proposed designs and concepts.

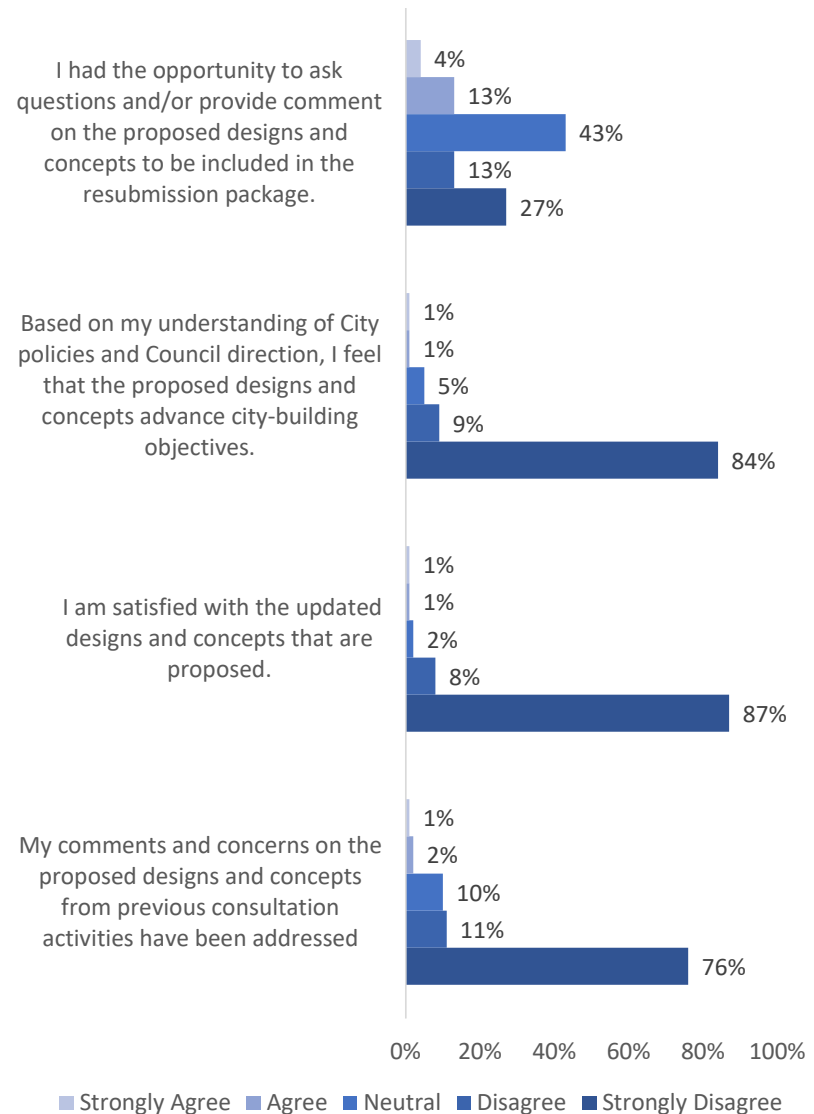


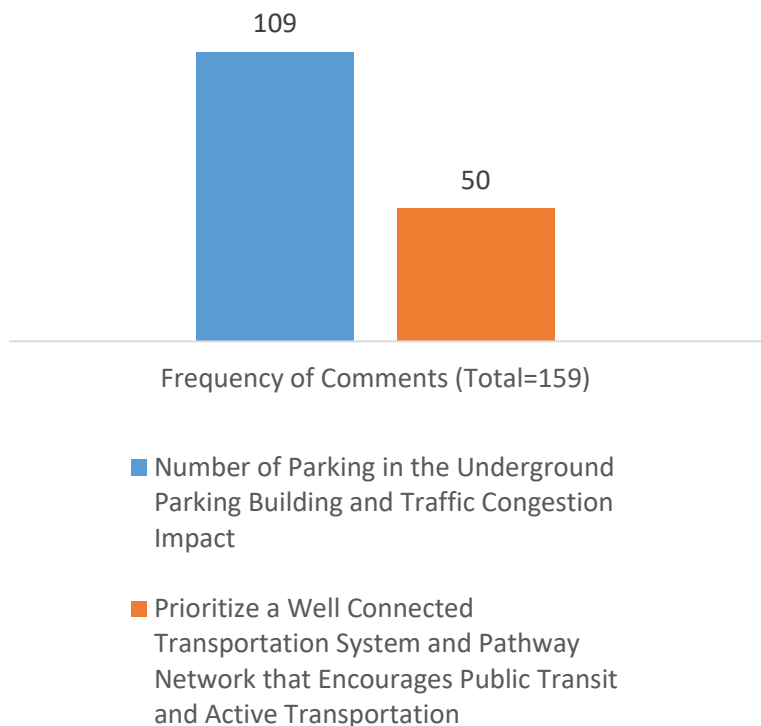
Figure 12 Level of Agreement regarding the Updated Designs and Concepts in the Revised Application

## Transportation

Generally, respondents identified two main areas of concern including:

- The parking lot size; and,
- Transportation system network.

Key areas of interest are described in Figure 13.



**Figure 13** Frequency of Comments Related to Transportation in the Feedback Forms

### Underground Parking Building Size and Scale

Generally, people expressed concern about the number of parking spots in the revised proposal and stated they would like to see further reduction in parking. However, some people appreciated the reduction of parking, and an increase of bicycle parking in the revised design for the underground parking building. Many people shared that the size and scale of the underground parking building does not align with City of Toronto climate change and sustainability goals. Specifically, people were concerned that the underground parking building would add more traffic congestion adding pressure on the transportation network in the surrounding area, and encourage people to drive instead of taking public transit, walking, or biking. Other people mentioned they are concerned about the use of cement to construct the underground parking building. Some people felt that a parking lot is not required since there will be a future TTC subway line serving the area.

### Transportation Network

Generally, many people shared that it was important to ensure Ontario Place was well connected and accessible by public transit and through modes of active transportation. People stated it was important to encourage sustainable transportation methods rather than driving by car. Many people considered other major entertainment and sport venues near Ontario Place, and expressed concern about the transportation network's ability to manage traffic congestion during major events. Improving the transportation network to support visitor capacity and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety was important for many people. Specifically, people desired better connections to public transit stations and routes, sufficient space for boat travel, and spacious bicycle and pedestrian pathways system.

## What We Heard - Transportation

*"...Good to see the parking area scaled down & highly support the introduction of a bus route that provides better access to Ontario Place. The current lack of TTC access & high traffic congestion currently makes the island unappealing for people to get to unless biking or walking from very close by..."*

*"...it is good that some parking has been moved underground, but there is still a big parking lot on the surface, which is an absolute waste of space that can be used for something else that can benefit Ontarians. Why not just have the parking lots (and bike lots) all underground (like Millenium Park in Chicago) and use the above space for more green space..."*

*"My concern is great with respect to underground parking. It should be eliminated entirely. The only exception I can see is to have 50 to 100 spaces for accessibility parking. All other parking should be eliminated. Public transportation should be encouraged whether TTC, GO trains etc. If a parking lot is built, people will drive. What happens if more people drive than spots available?..."*

*"...The path around the West Island is still inadequate and will be dangerous as we know from other area paths where cyclists are a danger to pedestrians due to their speed and location. Such paths need to be designed to protect pedestrians. The issue of traffic along Lake Shore has not been addressed and those of us who live in Liberty Village already experience heavy traffic at the best of times. Having the spa with the expected vehicular traffic (cars and buses) will be on top of what happens whenever there is an event. Providing more parking will only encourage more people to drive into this area. The walk from the Go Transit station and the Bathurst streetcar is long and unpleasant, thus adding further disincentive to travel by public transit."*

*"...Do not create a massive parking lot. The area is congested enough without encouraging more cars. Whenever there is an event (CNE, hockey game, baseball game, concert, etc) that area is severely congested and a nightmare for people who live in the area."*

*"...Building a massive parking lot [does not align with] the City's environmental goals to reduce pollution, encourage public transit..."*

*"Less parking, more active transit connections with the rest of the city. Needs to be part of the city not a destination for visitors..."*

*"...would love to see ample space for delineated biking & walking paths..."*

*"I appreciated the decreased parking spots and increased bike spots..."*

*"...Ontario Place is absolutely well served by transit and should promote last mile Integration. There is no need for over thousands of parking spots. The proposal should tackle shuttle bus, bike share, a few EV stations. Ontario Place should promote innovation, sustainability, resilience. Investing public budget on private parking is not the smartest move..."*

*"..I am very concerned about how we can handle the car traffic to Ontario Place if all 3 ventures go ahead, (spa, Live Nation, OSC). How can we encourage more transit use?..."*

## Public Realm, Uses and Activities

The most frequently mentioned concerns for respondents include:

- A private spa is an inappropriate land use for Ontario Place;
- Accessibility and affordable public programming; and,
- Access to the rooftop publicly accessible space and public realm.

Key areas of interest are described in Figure 14.

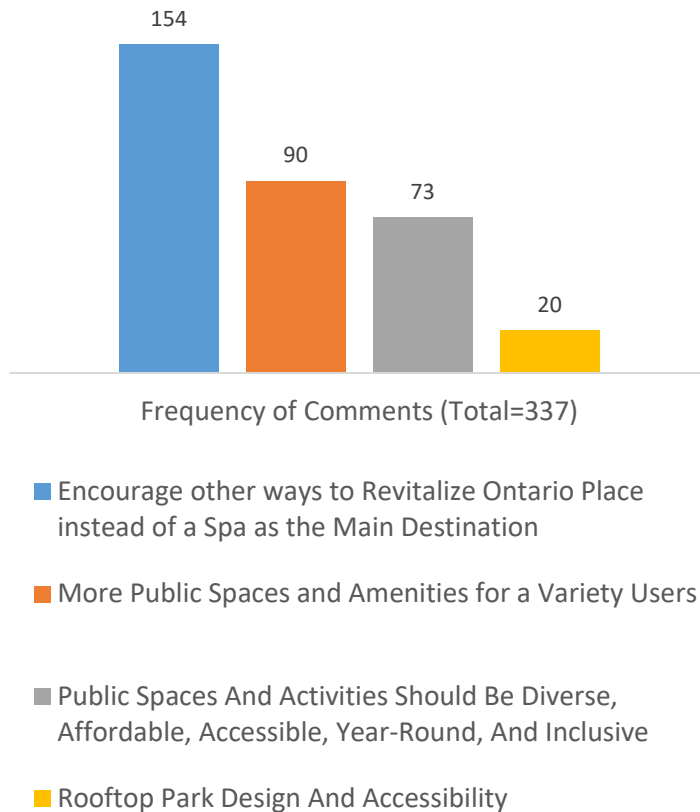


Figure 14 Frequency of Comments Related to the Public Realm, Uses, and Activities in the Feedback Forms

## Encouraging Other Uses as the Main Destination on the West Island

It was important for many that Ontario Place remain an excellent public space for everyone to use. Generally, people felt that a spa was an inappropriate land use for the site and surrounding area and should not be the main destination on the West Island. Some people acknowledged that the West Island requires repair and revitalization, and appreciated and valued the revised public realm master plan. People strongly encouraged that other uses such as a revitalized public park be considered by Infrastructure Ontario. Ensuring that the West Island was a public park with green and natural spaces for recreation and leisure activities was a priority for many.

## More Public Spaces and Amenities

Preserving or increasing the amount of public spaces including parks, green spaces, and open spaces for recreation and leisure was important for many people. Generally, people were in agreement that there is not enough welcoming and inviting public spaces on the West Island in the revised proposal. However, some people appreciated the increase of public space with the rooftop publicly accessible space in the revised proposal. Additionally, some people stated that more clarity is needed to understand which areas will be publicly accessible and which areas will be restricted for private use only. People expressed the desire that the amount of private spaces associated with the Therme spa facility be reduced in order to accommodate more public space.

### Diverse, Accessible, and Inclusive Activities and Programming

It was important for many people that Ontario Place remains publicly accessible. Many people are concerned that Ontario Place will become inaccessible due to the design of the public realm, amenities, and programming. Some people shared it was important to ensure that Ontario Place was fully accessible for all people and AODA compliant. People with disabilities should be involved during all stages of the project and accessibility should be a top priority for the project.

Generally, many people that it was important to attract diverse groups of users to Ontario Place. People suggested offering child and family-friendly programming and spaces, curated food and beverage venues, seasonal festivals and markets, winter programming, water sport activities, temporary installations and exhibits, and Indigenous placemaking opportunities. In addition, year-round free and affordable access to Ontario Place was a priority for many people.

### Rooftop Publicly Accessible Space

Some people appreciated the new rooftop publicly accessible space above the main spa building and entrance pavilion because it would provide more public space. However, many people had concerns about the overall design and concept of the rooftop publicly accessible space. They shared that the roof is not a suitable location for a welcoming and comfortable public space. Specifically, there are not enough spaces for recreation and leisure activities, a lack of trees, exposure to harsh weather conditions, accessibility concerns with the grade and elevation of the park on the roof, and visitor capacity concerns.

## What We Heard - Public Realm, Uses and Activities

*"Ontario Place has been a jewel in the city for decades and for generations. Please ensure that the re-development maintains public, accessible, natural use of the lands."*

*"...Land should be used for green space not parking, spa, parking lots and Science Centre, etc. High Park is a well-used 400 acres of outdoor space. That's what downtown Toronto needs. Free public outdoor water features for children, ice skating, tennis, deep water swimming platform(s), walking, x-country skiing, tobogganing, fire pits, etc..."*

*"...The proposed design appears ineffective in enhancing the space. The new pathways seem impractical. It doesn't appear conducive to any form of navigation aside from walking, and the overall design leaves much to be desired...."*

*"...Very happy with the increase in public space but remain very concerned with the operational implications - who is policing the area, who is maintaining the area, what is going to happen to these areas if Therme pulls out?"*

*"...We need to get inspired and think big, restore and renew Ontario Place as a Public Park. Hold a design contest and make an amazing park. The taxpaying residents of Toronto need this space to remain free, public, open and beautiful year round and for it to be leading in environmental concerns and design. This private Spa is not in the Public interest and does not represent any of these values. .."*

*"I believe that Toronto and Ontario residents need more green space, especially on our precious waterfront space. The project should focus on providing this public green space and NOT on building private spa facilities that are expensive, especially in this time of inflation and affordability crisis."*

*"I think that Ontario place is an icon that should be about parks and people enjoying the waterfront..."*

*"The new rooftop public access design certainly looks pretty in pictures but the grade would make it significantly inaccessible to many people, as well as the types of plantings suggested by the drawings. None of the rooftop park cited as precedent in the open house are as greatly exposed to harsh elements, particularly high winds, wave spray and punishing winter conditions..."*

*"... The public realm of the West Island is limited to fancy sidewalks to move us around the Spa facility. There is a lack of park space for recreation or resting. The rooftop walkway is another way to move through the space, but not stay there for any length of time. This is not creating a sense of a welcoming environment..."*

*"I had asked why there were no Accessibility/Disability consultants (and not just following AODA guidelines) as AODA guidelines are the BARE MINIMUM, and there needs to be people with actual disabilities to help design the interior and exterior of this site..."*

*"What this area really needs is public space and amenities for people coming to enjoy the lake. Look at Santa Monica - they don't have a massive privately owned spa, they have a slew of restaurants, bike rentals, outdoor event space, restrooms, stores for clothing and swimwear. The waterfront is the attraction and the structure on land supports its enjoyment, even when it's too cold to swim..."*

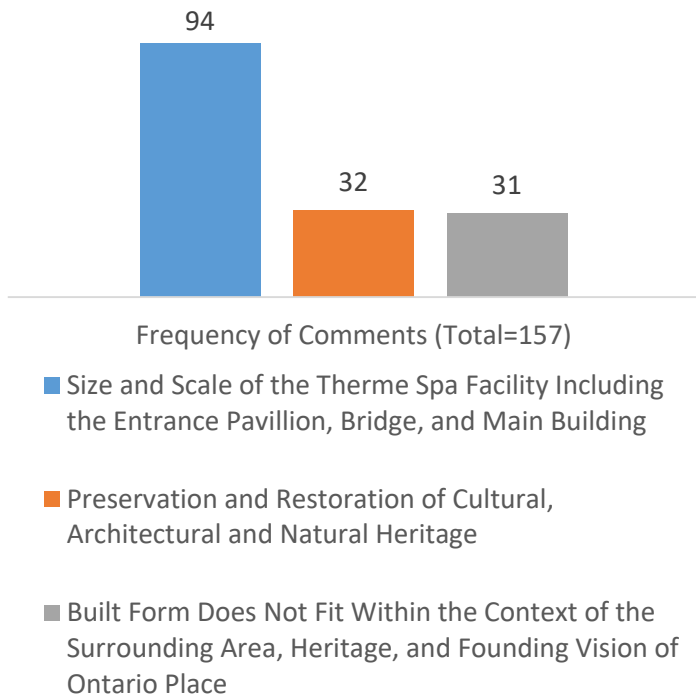


## Built Form and Heritage

The main concerns from respondents include:

- The size and scale of buildings;
- Surrounding area context; and,
- The preservation of existing heritage structures on the West Island.

Key areas of interest are described in Figure 15.



**Figure 15** Frequency of Comments Related to the Built Form and Heritage in the Feedback Forms

### Size and Scale of Buildings

Generally, people indicated that the size and scale of the spa facility is still too large and does not fit within the context of Ontario Place. Some people acknowledged and appreciated the reduction in size and scale of the entrance pavilion, bridge, and main building. However, many people felt that it was important to further reduce the size and scale of the buildings because the built form was still too large and would overwhelm the West Island. Additionally, several people shared that the revised proposal only included minor reductions of the building gross floor area and building volume. Other people were concerned that the large built form of the spa facility would restrict access from the mainland to the West Island, cast shadows on public spaces, obstruct significant views, and reduce the amount of public and natural green spaces.

### Surrounding Area Context

Many people stated that the spa facility should be integrated better with the natural environment, waterfront, and existing heritage structures. People described the orientation and location of the main building as obstructive and that it would dominate the West Island. Many people were concerned that the spa building(s) would restrict access to the waterfront and create public spaces that are not welcoming or pleasant to use and linger. Specifically, there was concern that the public spaces are located around the facility and close to the edges of the West Island. Additionally, a few people stated that the design and use of the spa does not reflect the culture, heritage, and history of Ontario or original vision of Ontario Place.

### Preservation of Existing Heritage Landscape and Structures

Generally, people stated the importance of preserving historically significant structures and landscapes at Ontario Place. However, many people felt that the revised proposal did not address concerns pertaining to heritage preservation. Specifically, many people stated they are concerned about the removal of mature trees and the preservation of the natural environment which is an integral part of Michael Hough's landscape design. Some people shared that more detail is required regarding the preservation and restoration of the Japanese Canadian Centennial Temple Bell designed by Raymond Moriyama. Some people are concerned that the spa facility will obstruct views of the Pods and Cinesphere designed by Eberhard Zeidler. Additionally, a few people shared that they appreciate the preservation of the Pods and Cinesphere, but would like more details pertaining to the proposed uses and programming in these structures.

## What We Heard - Built Form and Heritage

*"...I appreciate the design updates. I think the pavilion and bridge are great additions. I think the size of the spa is still too big and too much of the natural parkland is being paved over. I support more preservation of the current biomass landscape in exchange for a further reduction of the Therme expanse."*

*"The proposed Therme spa, even clad with shrubbery, dominates public green space and dwarfs the original cinesphere and pods. It's massive..."*

*"...The Spa still remains a very large structure, even with the "reduction" at 5.8 % which is really not much at all. The building remains massive and tall..."*

*"The entrance redesign still blocks views to the West Island, Pods and Cinesphere."*

*"The new entry area & signage of Ontario Place is more inviting & appealing..."*

*"The increased green space on entrance is an improvement, but there is not enough unstructured green space. Does not adequately replace natural greenspace - the beach, the old trees, the shade, the bird reserve. The Therme building, not to mention the private access, is overwhelming the natural space."*

*"I appreciate how the height of the built form has been minimized in response to citizens concerns over the visibility of adjacent heritage sites."*

*"While the size of the Therme facility itself has undergone some helpful height reductions, the redesigned building is still much too large in size and obstructive in location. It is simply not appropriate in size or scale for the essential, historical public waterfront location. It's planned central location on the West Island restricts pedestrian and cycling access through and across the current parkland.."*

*"Therma spa claims that it reduced the overall size of the facility by 20% but this was by volume. They made the building shorter, but did not alter the floor plan sufficiently..."*

*"...The new plan will still destroy the heritage aspects, such as the Michael Hough landscape..."*

*"...The redesign did not address the destruction of two important heritage components: what happens to Moriyama's bell shelter? And why is the destruction of all of Michael Hough's landscape being allowed?..."*

*"This design is not in alignment at all with the original vision of Ontario Place."*

*"I'm devastated by the plans that call for the destruction of the heritage impact of the Michael Hough beach, which has stood the test of time and remains functional today."*

*"[Concerned about the] complete destruction of the Michael Hough landscape which forms an integral and critical part of the cultural heritage value of Ontario Place..."*

## Environment and Sustainability

The main concerns for respondents include:

- The loss of mature trees;
- Relocation of the current beach;
- Impact on wildlife and habitats;
- Viability of the rooftop publicly accessible space;
- Green space allocation;
- Lack of environmental assessment; and,
- Sustainability performance standards.

Key areas of interest are described in Figure 16.

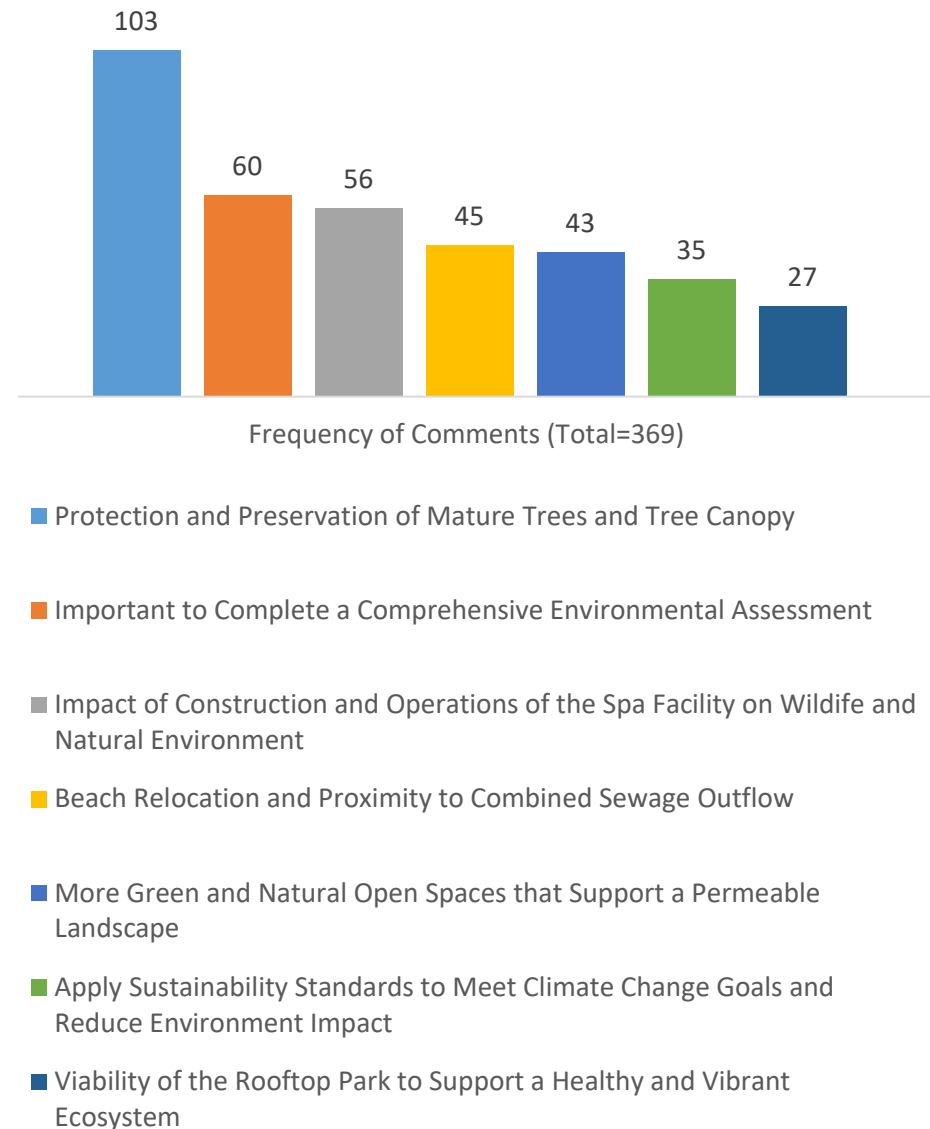


Figure 16 Frequency of Comments related to Environment and Sustainability in the Feedback Forms

### Removal of Mature Trees and Canopy

Generally, many people were concerned about the removal and replacement of mature trees and the impact to the tree canopy. There were concerns that it would take a long time for new trees to grow and establish a canopy that resembles the current canopy on the West Island. People shared that they the retention and protection of the mature trees and canopy is critical. Additionally, people indicated that the removal of mature trees does not align with the City of Toronto's climate change and environmental sustainability goals.

### Lack of Environmental Assessment

Many people were concerned that there was not enough consideration of environmental impacts and climate change. People stated that an Environmental Assessment should be undertaken. Many people indicated that completing a comprehensive Environmental Assessment is necessary in order understand the potential impacts of the development on the natural environment, and to identify mitigation efforts. People consistently highlighted that an Environmental Assessment would provide specific information on the risks associated with the proposed construction, as well, important information on the impacts to the public realm, shoreline, and waterfront amenities.

### Construction and Spa Facility Impact on Wildlife and Habitats

It was important for many people that the construction and operations of the spa facility should minimize negative impacts on wildlife and natural environment on the West Island. Many people expressed concern regarding the demolition of habitats

that support diverse species of wildlife such as birds, amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Additionally, there were concerns that the size and glass façade of the spa facility would negatively impact bird migration paths and resident birds on the West Island.

### Beach Relocation and Water Quality

People were concerned about the removal of the existing pebble beach on the south shore, which will be replaced with new a sand beach on the west shore. People were particularly concerned that the proposed beach will be unsafe to use due to polluted water related to the close proximity to a Combined Sewage Outflow (CSO) pipe. Additionally, some people shared that the existing beach is a safe distance from the CSO. People like the existing swimming areas on the West Island. People expressed a desire to maintain them.

### Green and Natural Spaces

Generally, people indicated that it is important to preserve existing green and natural spaces. People consistently remarked that any development on the West Island should promote resilient permeable landscapes. Protecting existing green and natural open spaces was important for many people because there is currently a lack of accessible parks and green space in Toronto. In addition, people were concerned there were too many paved surfaces and that the spa building will infringe on public green spaces and soft landscaping. Some people were concerned that the additional public green space at the rooftop publicly accessible space did not sufficiently address the amount of preferred soft landscaping and will not compensate for the loss of existing mature trees and natural spaces.

### Sustainability Performance Standards

Many people were concerned about the potential carbon and environmental footprint of the spa facility. In particular, there were concerns and questions about the glass façade, tree felling, water treatment and usage, and the amount of energy required to heat the spa building. Additionally, many people felt that the revised proposal does not align with the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario's climate change goals and sustainability performance standards. Some people wanted the applicant to consider wood construction and renewable energy options.

### Rooftop Publicly Accessible Space

Some people were concerned and skeptical about the capability of the rooftop publicly accessible space to sustain a landscape with a healthy ecosystem and biomass. People expressed concern about the technical and engineering aspects of building and maintaining a rooftop publicly accessible space, these include: the amount and type of soil used; growth season for trees and plants; maximum weight the roof can hold; seasonal maintenance; climate resiliency; and location of mechanical and servicing equipment on the roof.

## What We Heard - Environment and Sustainability

*"...Also would the green roof foot paths be truly accessible as they say their facility will be? There's some serious elevation going on. The green roofs proposed raises many more new questions leaving many others not addressed. Green roofs, larger drawn trees does not negate that there has been no environment assessment. Full Stop. I see huge technical and engineering concerns..."*

*"...The updated application still isn't answering to the environmental impacts to sensitive ecosystems that it will cause, or the damage to wildlife..."*

*"...the redesign has not addressed the significant concerns on the environmental footprint of this structure. The embodied carbon of this project is criminal and the use of the building does not justify the environment impact of this project."*

*"...the [spa facility] building causes problems for migrating birds. Will the windows be bird-friendly windows? How will the building and its surroundings account for habitat loss?..."*

*"How old will the trees on the rooftop be able to grow to before they're cut down? Some of the trees currently are in their 70's. The new trees won't be able to sequester as much CO2 for decades..."*

*"While the design has improved with regard to public space, I am skeptical about maintaining substantial landscape on rooftops..."*

*"The proposed designs and concepts do not fully address my environmental concerns...the lack of an environmental assessment is extremely concerning. The application does not recognize the existing natural habits that have evolved in and around Ontario place. No consideration for [bird] flight paths and risks associated with a such a monstrous glass structure..."*

*"I think the resubmitted design attempts to address concerns about destruction of habitat and loss of public greenspace by depicting a lot of green roofs and raised garden beds. But the vegetation depicted does not replace the mature trees and biodiversity that will be lost if this project goes ahead..."*

*"...there is no approval for an environmental assessment, despite the need to cut down 850 mature trees, fill in the lake, disrupt a bird migration flight pattern, and build a glass enclosed structure the size of multiple football fields. While we are in the midst of a climate emergency..."*

*"...I'm very concerned about the 840 fifty year old trees who will be cut down. Planting a few new ones on a roof garden is not a substitute because the amount of earth on a roof garden is not enough to sustain big trees. Since we are in the midst of a climate crisis, we can't afford to cut any trees! Exporting sand for creating a beach is not environmentally sustainable..."*

*"...The suggested new beach will be unusable right beside a combined sewer outlet, while destroying the great beach that is there currently..."*

*"I am concerned that there is no environmental assessment of this project even though it involves significant waterfront landfill and relocating a public beach. The combined sewer outflow into the area of the proposed 'new beach' has not been resolved..."*

## Other Comments

The main concerns from respondents include:

- Transparency of the lease agreement between Province and Therme;
- Concerns about provincial budget allocation;
- Relocation of the Ontario Science Centre;
- Business and funding matters related to Therme operations;
- Privatization of public lands;
- City budget concerns related to infrastructure and servicing costs; and
- Transparency concerns related to the application review process.

Key areas of interest are described in Figure 17.

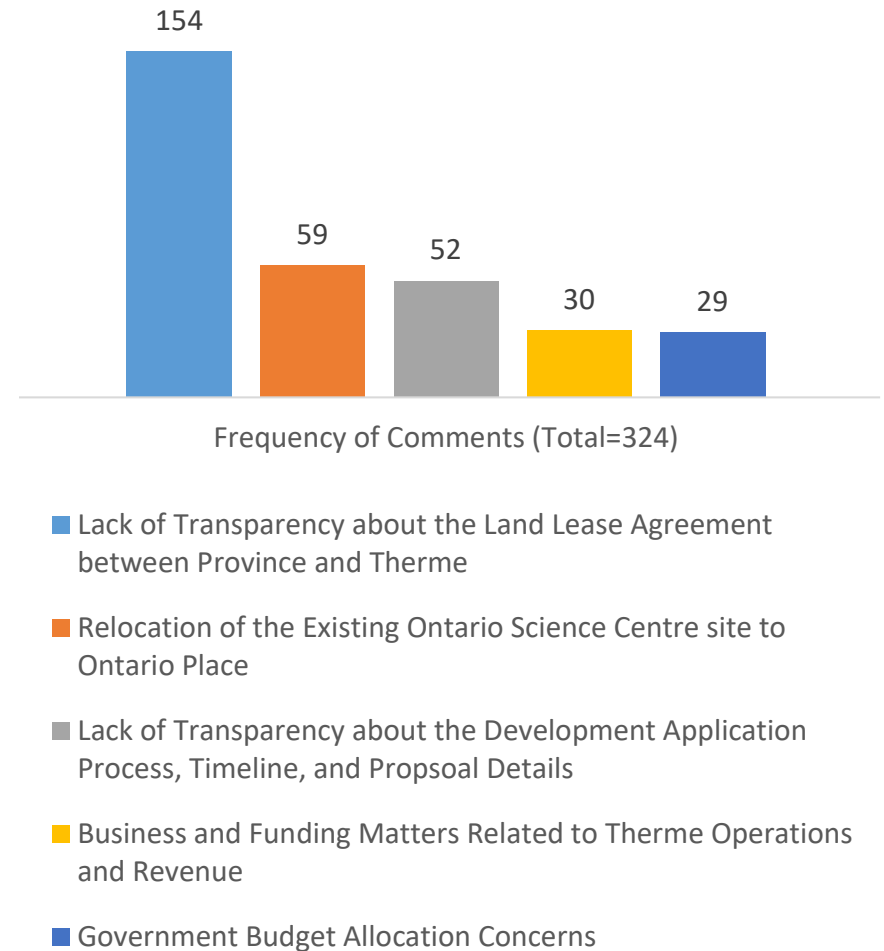


Figure 17 Frequency of Comments Related to Other Comments in the Feedback Forms



### Transparency of the Lease Agreement

Generally, many people indicated that the lease agreement details between the Infrastructure Ontario and Therme should be publicly released. Many people shared that it feels like there is a lack of transparency with the Ontario Government and Therme. Specifically, many people would like to know more details about the duration of the lease, and the justification for leasing public lands to a private international company. Many people indicated they do not approve of the Province leasing public lands to a private international company for commercial use.

### Government Budget Allocation

Many people were concerned that the provincial government is using public funds for infrastructure and maintenance-related costs that will support Therme's spa. In particular, people expressed concern about the Province paying for the construction of the underground parking building from which Therme will benefit. Additionally, people asked for more clarification on which public or private entity will pay for infrastructure improvements for the Combined Sewage Overflow.

### Relocation of the Current Ontario Science Centre Site

Generally, many people shared that relocating the current Ontario Science Centre (OSC) site was not a good idea, and that it should stay at the current site. The current location is an important community amenity to the Flemingdon Park neighbourhood. The current location can also be easily accessed by other communities

in the GTA who visit the OSC for educational programming. Many people asked for more information regarding the Province's rationale for relocating the OSC and details on business case for the relocation. Some people supported the idea of including science programming space at Ontario Place, but were concerned about the relocation.

### Business and Funding Matters related to Therme Operations

There were some concerns about financing and the business model for the Therme spa facility. Some people were concerned that the it will be operated by an international private company, and that there is lack of transparency about the funding for this project. The entrance fee and cost for the spa facility was a concern for many. Many people highlighted that they did not support the ability for an international private company to generate profits on public land, particularly on a site as unique and important as Ontario Place.

### Transparency Concerns Related to the Application Review Process

Some people were concerned about the about the timing of the development approval process for the project. In particular, people felt that there was not enough time for the public consultation period. Some people requested that the City not approve the development application due to the level of public opposition to the project.

## What We Heard - Other Comments

*"How does the 99 year lease work? Can we (the public) know the details of the deal w Therme."*

*"...If this project were to go ahead and given the reality of a 95 year lease that has not been shared with the public or even the City, [we] must demand disclosure of the lease including such details as how the public interest will be protected if the business fails..."*

*"Application does not address the fact that Ontario Place, and in particular the west island should not be privatized (i.e. leased for 95 years) to a foreign company..."*

*"I am strongly opposed to moving the Science Centre to Ontario Place, when the [proposed site] will be half the SIZE of the original. I am very supportive of building a new SATELLITE location of the Science Centre at Ontario Place, as it expands the offerings for a city that has expanded twofold since the original Science Centre was built..."*

*"...way too much public tax dollars are going towards funding the project..."*

*"I am against the use of a huge amount of taxpayer money over ten years to fund a pay-for-use amenity for the rich when we are in the middle of a healthcare, education, and housing crisis, and when this space is currently a valued public resource that is open to all, free to use and important to the health and wellbeing of residents of this city..."*

*"Very against privatizing public lands, it sounds like a substantial amount of pubic money is being funneled into this space..."*

*"...What is happening to the Science Centre and when will we see those Plans and when will the Province release the Business Case for moving the Science Centre?..."*

*"The science centre should remain at the existing locations and the Ontario pods for a satellite campus..."*

*"Why is this application proceeding without the zoning amendments for Live Nation and the Science Centre? The current amendment is for all of Ontario Place but two key parts are missing. This is not good or comprehensive planning."*

*"Bringing transparency and public consultation to any proposals is essential..."*

*"[Open and transparent process] I continue to be deeply concerned by the lack of public consultation on the part of the Province..."*

*"There is no business case for [the proposed use]... a private corporation shouldn't be allowed to take over public land."*

*"As much as the resubmission attempts to hit the check marks of earlier feedback (desire for more public green space and access points, less towering structures, proposed beach access, etc.) the revised Infrastructure Ontario/Therme application and Diamond plans are not convincing as a viable, economical or sustainable use of this space, or worth the publicly funded infrastructure costs that underlie all of the application's assumptions."*

# Next Steps

A revised development application was submitted on September 13, 2023. The Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto have since been in discussions, culminating in the December 6th enactment of the *Recovery Through Growth Act (City of Toronto) (2023)* and the *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act (2023)*. These Acts are commonly referred to as the New Deal for Toronto, and speak to a number of provisions related to Ontario Place, and including a core commitment to accept the Province's legislative authority to advance the Ontario Place Rebuilding Project. This effectively ends the City review of the Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications.

Questions and comments can be submitted to Colin Wolfe directly.

## **Colin Wolfe**

Senior Planner, Community Planning

City Planning Division

[Colin.Wolfe@toronto.ca](mailto:Colin.Wolfe@toronto.ca)



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