



TORONTO SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

May 30, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Ontario Place Redevelopment

The Toronto Society of Architects, in fulfilment of our role as advocates for the built environment, calls on the Province of Ontario to listen to the feedback of Ontarians and not only reassess the current redevelopment plans for Ontario Place but the public consultation process around it.

While we do not oppose the revitalization of this important public asset—indeed we believe Ontario Place is owed decades of deferred maintenance, repairs, and investment—we are concerned with how the process has unfolded: without the transparency, accountability and open engagement this public site deserves. Decisions have been made without public input and there has been little accountability on the integration of feedback received through online surveys and public engagement events.

In 2019, when the Ontario government first announced an Expression of Interest seeking development concepts for Ontario Place, the TSA held a design charrette open to both design professionals and the public to work together towards a shared vision for this landmark's future. While no two groups produced identical schemes, this exercise did reveal a number of key elements that formed a shared vision for Ontario Place: one that preserved the architectural and landscape heritage of this internationally significant complex and built on its history of innovation. (see attached report)

We held this charrette because we believed then—as we continue to believe now—that public consultation should be the foundation of Ontario Place's future, and that this process should start well before any design or programming decisions are taken. This has not been the case with the current redevelopment proposal.

We are convinced that the future of Ontario Place—a cultural asset that belongs to all Ontarians—is one that must be created together, through extensive public consultation and engagement, and that the success of this vision lies in the robustness of this process.

As the Province prepares to resubmit its application, we strongly urge the government to listen to the feedback of Ontarians and actively address the issues raised through public consultations, as well as by City of Toronto staff and the joint Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto Design Review Panels, all of which have expressed concerns with the current proposal as it relates to; scale, heritage preservation, sustainability and environment impact, public engagement, and ownership.

Most importantly, we urge the government to demonstrate strong leadership and vision, through an open and meaningful public engagement process that builds on the voices of Ontarians—professional and public alike—as the foundation for a shared future. We trust in the design professionals leading this project to meet this challenge, but a successful outcome for such a significant public landmark requires the trust of the public earned through purposeful participation and due process.

The redevelopment of Ontario Place should reflect the shared values of all Ontarians, crafting a vision for the future that is reflective of the ideals and aspirations of our province and its people.

As always, we make ourselves available to work together for a better Toronto and Ontario.

On behalf of the Toronto Society of Architects,



Ana-Francisca de la Mora, OAA, FRAIC
Chair



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