Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

## PERFORMANCE AUDIT: ONTARIO PLACE REDEVELOPMENT

(2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF ONTARIO)

1st Session, 44th Parliament
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The Honourable Donna Skelly, MPP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Madam,

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

Tom Rakocevic, MPP
Chair of the Committee

Queen's Park
October 2026

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1

BACKGROUND 1
- Previous Plans to Renew Ontario Place 1
  - *Minister's Advisory Panel Report* *2*
  - *2017 Call for Submissions* *2*
- 2019 Call for Development 2
- Change of Ministry Oversight 3
- Types of Procurement 3
- Recent Legislation 3

2024 AUDIT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE 4

AUDIT CONCLUSIONS 4

ISSUES RAISED IN THE AUDIT AND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE 6
- CFD Process Design, Open Period and Cabinet Submission 6
- Tenant Selection Due Diligence and Lease Agreements 9
- Public Consultations and Indigenous Groups Engagement 11
- Project Plan and Current Progress 12
- Other Topics 14

CONSOLIDATED COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS 15

## INTRODUCTION

On November 3, 2025, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held public hearings on the Ontario Place Redevelopment performance audit (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, *2024 Annual Report*).

The Committee thanks the Auditor for the audit. In this report, the Committee presents its own findings, views, and recommendations. The Committee requests that the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming; and Infrastructure Ontario provide the Clerk of the Committee with written responses to the recommendations within 120 calendar days of the tabling of this report with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, unless otherwise specified.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming; and Infrastructure Ontario. The Committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee, and Legislative Research.

## BACKGROUND

Ontario Place is a 155-acre park on Toronto's waterfront that opened to the public in 1971. The park included attractions such as the Cinesphere (a movie theatre), the Forum (a concert venue), the Pods (spherical structures with exhibitions and restaurants), shops and restaurants. A waterpark and a children's activities complex were added later on, among other attractions. In 1990, the Ontario Place Corporation (OPC) was established as a provincial Crown agency under the *Ontario Place Corporation Act, 1990*, to oversee and manage the operations of Ontario Place. In 1995, the Forum was demolished, replaced by a new concert venue (currently named RBC Amphitheatre, formerly Budweiser Stage). Following a period of declining attendance, Ontario Place eventually ceased operations in February 2012. The concert venue is still in operation, with the current lease agreement with Live Nation expiring in 2030.[1]

### Previous Plans to Renew Ontario Place

From 2010 to 2017, efforts were made to engage the public and stakeholders in the renewal of Ontario Place. A Request for Information (RFI) in 2010 received 35 submissions. Technical consultations were conducted in 2011 but did not result in any action. In February 2012, the Province closed key attractions and announced plans to redevelop the site. In the following five years (2012-2017), parts of Ontario Place remained open for public use and hosted events like the 2015 Pan Am Games and Canada 150. During the same period, the government launched a website and phone line to gather public input and formed a Minister's Advisory Panel to guide future planning.

[1] Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (AG), "Ontario Place Redevelopment", *2024 Annual Report*, pp. 11-12.

### *Minister's Advisory Panel Report*

The Minister's Advisory Panel was assembled in 2012. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport at the time instructed the panel to

- "provide strategic advice to the government to move forward with a full revitalization of Ontario Place;
- provide input into a new vision for the OPC; and
- help set parameters with the government regarding public and private sector roles and expectations."[2]

The panel's report, published in July 2012, drew on public consultations and the aforementioned 2010 RFI submissions, and included 18 recommendations to the Minister. The recommendations envisioned a fully accessible, year-round site that respected and enhanced the natural beauty of the surroundings by protecting sightlines to the water and celebrating the natural landscape, with limited residential use (no more than 10–15%), space for business and hospitality, an ideal site for a research or education hub, and diverse cultural and entertainment offerings. More public consultations followed in 2013 and 2014 on conceptual design, themes of identity/connectivity, and features of Trillium Park and the William G. Davis Trail, both on the East Island.[3]

### *2017 Call for Submissions*

In July 2017, the Ontario government announced a search for an "innovative partner" to redevelop the West Island of Ontario Place. Infrastructure Ontario (IO) was tasked with designing and managing a customized Call for Submissions (CFS) to attract proposals that could strike a balance between delivering the government's vision for the West Island and developing an economically viable concept requiring minimal public subsidies. IO received 24 submissions, which were evaluated based on alignment with the vision, concept viability, and team qualifications. To determine which submissions would proceed to due diligence meetings, IO used the alignment with vision criteria. Ten proposals were rated as moderately to highly aligned with the government's vision, two required more information, and twelve were eliminated due to low alignment. In November 2017, IO was directed to hold due diligence meetings with all 10 of the moderate to high alignment submissions as well as the two requiring further information. One proponent later withdrew.

Following due diligence meetings with the remaining 11 participants in December 2017, IO identified three potential anchor tenants. The CFS process was paused in April 2018, pending a scheduled provincial election.[4]

## 2019 Call for Development

On May 28, 2019, the government announced a Call for Development (CFD) entitled "Toronto Waterfront Opportunity," for "[a] world-class year-round destination that would attract local, provincial and international visitors – with

[2] AG, p. 13.
[3] AG, pp. 13-15.
[4] AG, pp. 16-17.

potential landmarks such as sports and entertainment attractions and retail. These landmarks could be complemented by recreational facilities, public space/parks, and the existing amphitheatre."[5] This CFD was the focus of the audit.[6]

## Change of Ministry Oversight

Prior to May 2022, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS, renamed to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, or MHSTCI in 2019 and back to MTCS in June 2022[7]) oversaw the Ontario Place redevelopment, with IO providing advisory services. In May 2022, responsibility for the project was transferred from MHSTCI to the Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI), along with relevant staff and records. MTCS also oversaw the OPC, which managed park operations until it was dissolved by Order in Council on June 9, 2023. Operational responsibilities were also transferred to MOI as of January 1, 2024.[8]

## Types of Procurement

Procurement processes can vary in complexity. A Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) is used to gather information about supplier interest, capabilities and qualifications, but typically does not pre-qualify vendors. A Request for Information (RFI) gathers market data on potential products or services available and also does not influence future selection. A Request for Pre-Qualification (RFPQ or RFQ) is used to shortlist vendors based on technical qualifications and capabilities, and only those qualified can respond to a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP). An RFP is a formal method of soliciting detailed proposals, including a pre-defined scope of work, numeric evaluation criteria that consider many factors, including qualifications, resumes of teams, and the understanding of the project and pricing.

In the case of Ontario Place, IO categorized the 2017 CFS and 2019 CFD as real estate transactions, not procurements. As such, they were not subject to Ontario's Procurement Directive, a decision later supported by external legal advice. The Auditor General noted that other comparable large waterfront projects proceeded as procurements.[9]

## Recent Legislation

The *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act, 2023* (Act) provides the Province with new authority with respect to the redevelopment of Ontario Place. Specifically, the legislation:

- gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council (Cabinet) authority to make regulations imposing limits or conditions on the powers of the City of Toronto if deemed necessary for construction at the Ontario Place site;

[5] AG, p. 18.
[6] AG, p. 20.
[7] On June 6, 2024, MHSTCI was split into the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG) and the Ministry of Sport.
[8] AG, pp. 18-19.
[9] AG, p. 15.

- exempts the site from the *Environmental Assessment Act*, which normally requires evaluation of potential environmental impacts before the development of public projects;

- exempts the site from the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which provides for the designation and protection of culturally significant properties;

- states that no cause of action can arise against the Province, IO, and associated individuals regarding any action taken under the Act, and no costs, compensation, or damages, including for loss of revenues or loss of profit, are owing or payable to any person, and no remedy, including but not limited to a remedy in contract, restitution, tort, misfeasance, bad faith, trust, or fiduciary obligation, any equitable remedy or any remedy under any statute; and

- grants the Minister of Infrastructure the power to issue a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO)[10] for the Ontario Place site.[11]

## 2024 Audit Objective and Scope

The objective of the audit was to "assess whether MOI, in conjunction with IO, has effective systems and procedures in place to:

- design and conduct the CFD and the resulting redevelopment of Ontario Place in accordance with applicable legislation, policies and best practices; and

- negotiate lease terms and contract agreements with successful participants with due regard for social, environmental and economic benefits and costs."

The audit focused on the period between July 2018 and October 2024.[12]

## Audit Conclusions

The Auditor concluded that "the Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI), in conjunction with Infrastructure Ontario (IO), did not design and conduct the CFD and the resulting redevelopment of Ontario Place in accordance with the published CFD process, and best practices for large-scale, modern land-use development projects."[13]

[10] A Ministerial Zoning Order ("MZO") is a planning tool that allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to directly zone lands for a specific purpose to by-pass the usual planning and appeals process.
[11] AG, p. 19.
[12] AG, p. 20.
[13] AG, p. 1.

Specifically, the Auditor found:

- The CFD process and realty decisions were not fair, transparent, or accountable to all participants as would be required by the Realty Directive,[14] the CFD document, and best practices. In many instances, the rules and guidelines outlined in the CFD document were not followed.

- The submission assessment process used a qualitative scoring framework and criteria that were finalized only after the submission deadline. Additionally, no relative weight was assigned to the criteria, leading to uneven scoring of submissions by assessors.[15]

- The CFD envisioned two types of bids: a comprehensive site-wide solution or multiple single tenants. The same criteria were applied to evaluate these vastly different approaches. As well, the full implications of the provincial cost of each solution were not provided to decision-makers when IO and MHSTCI recommended that the Province take on the role of Master Developer.

- Social and environmental benefits and costs of redevelopment were not factored into the assessment framework or considered in the redevelopment, including lease negotiations with anchor tenants. Public input was not sought by either IO or MOI until August 2021, after the tenants had already been announced.

- Key environmental assessments will not be conducted on the Ontario Place site even though many concerns were raised by the Toronto City Council and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The *Rebuilding Ontario Place Act, 2023*, exempts future government-led developments on the site from having to be assessed.[16]

[14] The Realty Directive, updated in 2019, establishes the government's policy regarding the acquisition of land, buildings, and structures, and the management and disposition of realty. It emphasizes transparency, coordination, alignment with provincial interests, and sustainability in realty decisions.
[15] AG, p. 2.
[16] AG, pp. 1-2.

## ISSUES RAISED IN THE AUDIT AND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

### CFD Process Design, Open Period and Cabinet Submission

The Committee had several questions about the design of the CFD, and the reasoning behind using this process as opposed to the traditional processes of an RFQ and RFP. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (Ministry, or MTCG)[17] explained that, at the time, the process was designed to ensure flexibility. IO added that some of the best practices of RFPs and RFQs were used, allowing for the comparison of different types of submissions. IO's board approved a policy mandating best practices for competitive realty development solicitations, which is now applied to all future procurements. Further, IO assured the Committee that the new policy includes a prohibition on any contact outside the formal channels outlined in the solicitation processes with IO staff.[18]

Another line of questioning involved the Auditor's findings regarding the CFD open period. The Committee asked why one of the proponents (Triple Five) was given a three-week extension to submit their documents. IO explained that requests for extensions during a CFD process are a common occurrence. Given the comprehensive nature of the submission, an extension of three weeks was given to all participants. Communication between government officials and participants was permitted through a designated email address.

IO stated that all submissions were received by the revised deadline of September 24, 2019, following an extension provided to all participants. IO further testified that a clarification was requested from Triple Five, which allowed the proponent to provide additional information after the submission deadline. IO could not comment on what the other CFD participants knew about the additional information request from Triple Five.

The Auditor General reported that, following the assessment process, Infrastructure Ontario contacted Triple Five to request additional information to support a reassessment of its submission, and that Triple Five subsequently provided an enhanced submission after the deadline. The Auditor General also reported that other participants with insufficient information in their submissions were not similarly contacted.

When asked whether there was any pressure from the Premier's or Ministers' offices to favour the Triple Five submission, IO stated that they have not found any evidence that there was pressure on behalf of any elected official in connection to Triple Five.[19]

The Auditor recommended that MOI provide Cabinet and Treasury Board with the full cost implications of alternatives in their business cases for informed decision-making. When asked whether insufficient training for Ministry staff was the reason behind this omission, MOI stated that the CFD process was new, and staff training will be more focused on the criteria and process in the future. MTCG

[17] Formerly called MTCS and MHSTCI.
[18] Standing Committee on Public Accounts *Hansard*, November 3, 2025, pp. 55-56.
[19] *Hansard*, pp. 55, 69.

added that it is actively deepening the business case writing and economic analysis skills within its staff by, among other things, collaborating with MOI.[20]

When asked whether they still believed that the CFD process was fair and transparent (given the Auditor's findings to the contrary), the former IO CEO stated that they stand by the probity and integrity of the process.[21]

**Committee Recommendations**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Infrastructure, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, the Ministry of Finance, and the Treasury Board Secretariat, apply life-cycle-cost and value-for-money methodologies to all major public redevelopments, and ensure that key development and cost options, risks, contingencies, and site-readiness considerations are clearly presented to decision-makers through established Treasury Board and Cabinet submission processes, while providing periodic, aggregate public updates through existing reporting mechanisms.

2. Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure,

    a. continue to apply the Realty Development Solicitation Policy where appropriate, including pre-established evaluation criteria and weighting, pre-published evaluation frameworks, assessor training, and fairness-monitor oversight, and publish general information about procurement frameworks and fairness-monitor findings following project completion through IO's public-reporting channels where consistent with commercial confidentiality; and

    b. consider approaches to provide greater clarity on the circumstances under which real estate or procurement-based practices are applied to major development projects, including instances where the Province acts as a Master Developer. For example, the Auditor General recommended that, where the government is the Master Developer on a project, it should follow procurement-based practices rather than the real estate procurement process.

3. The Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO), consistent with IO's continuous-improvement process,

    a. prepare a summary of lessons learned following completion of the Ontario Place redevelopment and include it, as appropriate, within IO's annual reporting; and

    b. further develop a structured internal framework to ensure these lessons are captured and applied to future large-scale projects.

[20] *Hansard*, p. 57.
[21] *Hansard*, p. 59.

4. That Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, monitor and document the application of the Realty Development Solicitation Policy in future real-estate development solicitations to confirm that evaluation criteria and weighting are finalized and disclosed prior to launch, applied consistently, and supported by assessor training and fairness-monitor oversight.

5. Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, ensure that future solicitations of government real estate developments

    a. apply pre-established and disclosed evaluation criteria and weighting, with individual assessor scoring completed prior to consensus meetings and documented rationale for all scores;

    b. maintain attendee lists and minutes for all meetings with participants; ensure communications between government officials and participants during open periods occur through formal channels only; and

    c. treat long-term public benefit and durable use of the public asset as primary considerations in major realty and infrastructure decision-making.

6. Infrastructure Ontario, for future solicitations of government real estate developments, apply consistent procedural discipline by

    a. establishing participation form and Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) cut-offs in advance of submission deadlines;

    b. granting any necessary deadline extensions early in the open period rather than near its conclusion;

    c. ensuring that all information-sharing deadlines and data room access are governed by documented protocols; and

    d. providing equivalent access to non-commercially confidential information to all participants.

7. IO follow its guidelines for future solicitations of government real estate developments to ensure fairness for all participants by

    a. not allowing participants to submit information after the submission deadline;

    b. not changing the scoring of participants' submissions after a consensus score has been reached; and

    c. recommending the highest scoring participant as the primary partner to undertake the development.

## Tenant Selection Due Diligence and Lease Agreements

The issues around due diligence in tenant selection, as well as certain provisions in the subsequent lease agreement, were prominent topics of discussion.

The Auditor found that IO staff had concerns about the financial position of Therme Group, the parent company of Therme, one of the tenants eventually chosen by the government to develop Ontario Place.[22] When asked why Therme Group was still chosen given the concerns around its financial viability, IO stated that, consistent with best practices, the CFD required participants to demonstrate relevant experience and identify all team members. IO's assessment considered the quality of both the team members and the ownership, with due diligence done to ensure the team's track record and Therme's financial capacity. A review of audited financial statements, informed by IO's independent adviser Ernst & Young, confirmed that Therme met the required $100 million net worth test. Both IO and MTCG confirmed that they used the audited financial statements to evaluate Therme's financial position, and IO continued to check Therme's financial viability over time. IO added that the lease includes a provision that requires Therme to maintain a minimum net worth of at least $100 million, with failure to do so constituting a default.[23]

The Committee was interested in the risks to the Province in case Therme ceases operations, citing a provision that allowed Therme to sell the property to a third party for 50% of its value if they cease operations or declare bankruptcy. IO confirmed that, in case of Therme's default, the Province will pay Therme 50% of the value of the facility and the business, and lease it to another party.

IO referenced public statements indicating that Therme's proposed investment in the project included approximately $700 million in upfront capital, with approximately $500 million allocated to the construction of the Therme facility and approximately $200 million associated with public-realm elements such as parkland, shoreline protection, and publicly accessible amenities. However, IO confirmed that the lease agreement itself does not specify a required investment amount.[24] IO also mentioned that Therme was close to making an announcement on a partnership with a large investor.[25]

According to the original lease, the Province was required to pay Therme $250,000 every 180 days if the site was not ready by January 1, 2025. IO was asked whether the Province had already paid the first penalty, as, at the time of the hearing, the site was not ready to be handed over to Therme. IO reassured the Committee that the Province renegotiated the lease terms with Therme to extend the handover period, effectively waiving the Province's obligation to make the payments.[26]

[22] AG, p. 77.
[23] *Hansard*, p. 54, 58-59.
[24] *Hansard*, p. 58.
[25] *Hansard*, p. 60.
[26] *Hansard*, pp. 59-60.

Another line of questioning touched on Therme's submission, and the Auditor's finding that five of the six spas cited by Therme in their submission were not owned or operated by the Therme Group.[27] When asked to explain this apparent inconsistency, IO stated that Therme's submission included several members who had experience constructing and operating similar spas across Europe. The CFD allowed for partnering approaches, and Therme Group's proposal included members from Therme Group, as well as Therme Wund, and several other Canadian and international firms.[28] The Auditor General found that IO did not verify whether the spas cited in Therme's submission were owned or operated by Therme Group, and that the ownership and operating experience described in the submission was not accurate for five of the six spas cited.[29]

The Committee asked for clarification about the role of Therme Wund, and the former IO CEO further explained that large international companies typically set up a Canadian domicile business (incorporated in Canada for tax purposes) that is a part of a parent group of international firms. The former CEO further added that they were not aware of any pressure on IO from any Minister or Ministry to consider Therme as a preferred submission.[30]

The Committee was also interested in the reasons behind a submission by Triple Five being presented as the top-ranked comprehensive site-wide submission to Treasury Board. The former CEO of IO explained that IO never recommended a single-party, comprehensive development of the entire island. Rather, IO recommended a multi-partner approach, which the government endorsed.[31] The submission by Triple Five (a comprehensive site-wide solution) was presented as another option, in case the government rejected IO's recommendation of a multi-partner approach or could not agree with the parties on IO's shortlist for a multi-partner site. IO stated that five comprehensive site-wide submissions were presented as options to decision-makers.

The Auditor General found that Infrastructure Ontario received a larger number of comprehensive site-wide submissions, and that only a subset of these were presented to decision-makers, including Triple Five as the primary comprehensive site-wide option. The Auditor General also found that some submissions with higher rankings in certain categories were not presented.[32]

When asked whether the five parties that were presented as options for a comprehensive site-wide proposal knew in advance that IO's recommendation would be to proceed with a multi-partner approach, the former CEO of IO stated that the goal of the CFD was to get different types of proposals for Ontario Place, and that the assessment criteria was spelled out in the CFD as four main areas of consideration: alignment with the government's vision; viability of the proposed concept; qualifications and experience of the team; and the benefit to the province.[33]

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[27] AG, p. 78.
[28] *Hansard*, pp. 59-60.
[29] AG, p. 78.
[30] *Hansard*, p. 59.
[31] *Hansard*, p. 56.
[32] AG, pp. 51-52, 55
[33] *Hansard*, pp. 56-57, 64.

IO was also asked why it reengaged the participant Ontario Live in January 2020 after stating in December 2019 that there would be no more talks with that participant. IO explained that the process allowed for the government to return to certain proposals even if the participant was unsuccessful in their initial submission. In this specific case, even though Ontario Live was not initially chosen as a tenant, IO received direction in April 2023 to speak to Ontario Live specifically about opportunities to provide food and beverage services across the site, public realm, site maintenance and management, and potentially people-moving infrastructure. MOI added that, in the summer of 2024, the Ministry instructed IO to move forward with a competitive tender for food and beverage.[34]

The Auditor found that, following IO's recommendation, the government decided to manage the parking for all of Ontario Place, despite many of the comprehensive site-wide submissions committing to providing parking facilities.[35] Asked to explain this decision, MTCG stated that the government's plan includes more parking stalls, and will pay for itself quickly in terms of the infrastructure investment.[36]

## Public Consultations and Indigenous Groups Engagement

A number of questions were raised regarding public consultations and Indigenous group engagement. The Committee heard that the Ministry had a duty to consult with seven communities, and that it has developed a relationship with all of them. Further, the Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mississaugas of the Credit outlining the parties' collaboration in the redevelopment of Ontario Place. The Committee also heard that the Ministry met with a number of Indigenous leaders to ensure that the Ontario Place redevelopment respectfully reflects First Nations culture through design elements and an Indigenous cultural pavilion.[37]

The Committee asked whether the consultations informed the criteria that submissions were assessed against, and IO confirmed that consultations informed the four main criteria: alignment with the government's vision; viability of the proposed concept; qualifications and experience of the team; and the benefit to the province.[38]

The Auditor General found that public consultation did not inform the selection of development partners, as consultation occurred after tenants had already been announced.[39]

[34] *Hansard*, p. 70.
[35] AG, p. 37.
[36] *Hansard*, pp. 66-67.
[37] *Hansard*, pp. 60-61.
[38] *Hansard*, p. 64.
[39] AG, pp. 28, 30.

## Project Plan and Current Progress

Several Committee members were interested in the various plans for the Ontario Place site, and the current progress on the project. The Committee heard that site preparations are still under way, and IO expects to hand the site over to Therme in early 2026, at which point Therme would start constructing their facility.[40]

One of the Auditor's recommendations was for IO to "negotiate a long-term legal easement with the City of Toronto to allow it access to municipal infrastructure at Ontario Place for servicing and maintenance."[41] When asked to provide an update on the progress on this recommendation, IO confirmed that it was in discussion with the City of Toronto, but could not provide a timeline for implementing the recommendation.[42]

IO was asked about the current progress on the Science Centre relocation project, and stated that the organization was involved in an active procurement on that project. IO confirmed that the goal is still to have the site open by 2029. IO also shared that responsibility for the project was transferred to MTCG as lead, with MOI and IO assisting with capital investment and the procurement of infrastructure, and Treasury Board as the central agency overseeing the project progress and financials. When the Committee expressed concerns about project oversight, IO stated that it will have ongoing monitoring of construction for all partners in the site (including Therme and Live Nation), as well as oversight of the Ontario Science Centre, the parking structure, and the public realm. MTCG added that the RFPs detailing the costs for various components of the project will be made public when the vendors are selected.[43]

The officials were also asked about how the development would transform the waterfront. MTCG shared that the connection between land and water is central to the site's beauty and visitors' experience, and that the site will feature canoe and kayak launches, lake access, and a marina.[44]

The Committee also inquired about the planned green space at the site and heard that the site will include over 50 acres of parkland and green space with trails, playgrounds, and beaches. Trees removed to facilitate construction will be replaced at least 2-to-1 with large, native species suited to the lakefront.[45]

MTCG was asked how the redevelopment of Ontario Place fits in Ontario's overall tourism strategy, and the Committee heard that the Ministry sees strong potential to boost tourism in the province and extend visitor stays by linking Ontario Place with other provincial attractions, such as Niagara Falls and provincial parks.[46]

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[40] *Hansard*, pp. 59-60.
[41] AG, p. 72.
[42] *Hansard*, p. 64.
[43] *Hansard*, pp. 64-65.
[44] *Hansard*, pp. 62-63.
[45] *Hansard*, pp. 70-71.
[46] *Hansard*, pp. 72-73.

## Committee Recommendations

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

8. The Ministry of Infrastructure, through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), continue to maintain clear documentation of roles, accountabilities, and approval processes, and communicate summary information on project governance and oversight publicly, where appropriate, through IO's existing reporting channels.

9. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG), in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario (IO), continue to communicate publicly on Ontario Place redevelopment milestones, community benefits, and public-realm features through existing channels, and that MTCG and IO evaluate the effectiveness of these engagement activities and share lessons learned internally to strengthen future public-infrastructure planning.

10. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, continue to implement environmental- and heritage-mitigation measures identified through completed assessments, maintain engagement with relevant environmental authorities, and, where appropriate, make non-technical summaries of outcomes publicly available through existing reporting channels.

11. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario (IO), communicate publicly, through IO's project-information webpages and ministry announcements, the scope of public-realm and accessibility improvements delivered through the Ontario Place redevelopment.

12. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, maintain comprehensive site-readiness and risk-management frameworks for the Ontario Place redevelopment and provide high-level public updates on milestones and completion timelines through existing communications channels.

13. That Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, continue to present information on major redevelopment projects in a consistent, easy-to-understand format across its public-reporting platforms, including project milestones, scope, and key investment highlights.

14. For future government real estate projects, Infrastructure Ontario should clearly define project scopes upfront, coordinate contractors to prevent overlap and site inefficiencies, actively track and document contractor progress, and use open or comparable procurement processes to ensure competitive pricing.

## Other Topics

Other topics of discussion included the economic impacts of the project, private investment, and stakeholder coordination.

The economic impact of the redevelopment was also discussed, with the Committee interested in the job-creation aspect of the project. The Committee heard two differing versions. The Auditor General used figures from the Ministry's October 2024 press release. MTCG shared that, during the construction phase, the project will create approximately 4,700 jobs and add around $420 million to Ontario's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Construction is further expected to generate $68 million in provincial tax revenue and around $500 million in private investment. After construction is complete, the project is expected to support more than 2,000 full-time and part-time jobs on the site, adding around $184 million to Ontario's GDP.[47]

In terms of private investment in the project, MTCG confirmed that Therme is expected to invest $700 million into the site, with the aforementioned $500 million invested in the facility and $200 million in shoreline works and public realm, with Live Nation's investment in the amphitheatre also mentioned.[48]

The Committee was interested in how MTCG coordinates the work on the project, both across the government and with external stakeholders. MTCG explained that it is working closely with IO, MOI, other ministries and central agencies through interministerial groups and the Ontario Place secretariat.[49]

**Committee Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

15. The Ministry of Infrastructure reconcile the apparent discrepancy between the figures presented to the Committee during the November 3, 2025 hearing, and those in the October 2024 press release mentioned in the Auditor's report, and report back to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the latest expected number of jobs (during and post construction), GDP impact, and provincial tax benefits as a result of the Ontario Place Redevelopment project, within 120 calendar days of tabling the final report.

[47] *Hansard*, p. 70.
[48] *Hansard*, p. 73.
[49] *Hansard*, pp. 70-71.

## CONSOLIDATED COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Infrastructure, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, the Ministry of Finance, and the Treasury Board Secretariat, apply life-cycle-cost and value-for-money methodologies to all major public redevelopments, and ensure that key development and cost options, risks, contingencies, and site-readiness considerations are clearly presented to decision-makers through established Treasury Board and Cabinet submission processes, while providing periodic, aggregate public updates through existing reporting mechanisms.

2. Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure,

    a. continue to apply the Realty Development Solicitation Policy where appropriate, including pre-established evaluation criteria and weighting, pre-published evaluation frameworks, assessor training, and fairness-monitor oversight, and publish general information about procurement frameworks and fairness-monitor findings following project completion through IO's public-reporting channels where consistent with commercial confidentiality; and

    b. consider approaches to provide greater clarity on the circumstances under which real estate or procurement-based practices are applied to major development projects, including instances where the Province acts as a Master Developer. For example, the Auditor General recommended that, where the government is the Master Developer on a project, it should follow procurement-based practices rather than the real estate procurement process.

3. The Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO), consistent with IO's continuous-improvement process,

    a. prepare a summary of lessons learned following completion of the Ontario Place redevelopment and include it, as appropriate, within IO's annual reporting; and

    b. further develop a structured internal framework to ensure these lessons are captured and applied to future large-scale projects.

4. That Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, monitor and document the application of the Realty Development Solicitation Policy in future real-estate development solicitations to confirm that evaluation criteria and weighting are finalized and disclosed prior to launch, applied consistently, and supported by assessor training and fairness-monitor oversight.

5. Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, ensure that future solicitations of government real estate developments

a. apply pre-established and disclosed evaluation criteria and weighting, with individual assessor scoring completed prior to consensus meetings and documented rationale for all scores;

b. maintain attendee lists and minutes for all meetings with participants; ensure communications between government officials and participants during open periods occur through formal channels only; and

c. treat long-term public benefit and durable use of the public asset as primary considerations in major realty and infrastructure decision-making.

6. Infrastructure Ontario, for future solicitations of government real estate developments, apply consistent procedural discipline by

    a. establishing participation form and Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) cut-offs in advance of submission deadlines;

    b. granting any necessary deadline extensions early in the open period rather than near its conclusion;

    c. ensuring that all information-sharing deadlines and data room access are governed by documented protocols; and

    d. providing equivalent access to non-commercially confidential information to all participants.

7. IO follow its guidelines for future solicitations of government real estate developments to ensure fairness for all participants by:

    a. not allowing participants to submit information after the submission deadline;

    b. not changing the scoring of participants' submissions after a consensus score has been reached; and

    c. recommending the highest scoring participant as the primary partner to undertake the development.

8. The Ministry of Infrastructure, through Infrastructure Ontario (IO), continue to maintain clear documentation of roles, accountabilities, and approval processes, and communicate summary information on project governance and oversight publicly, where appropriate, through IO's existing reporting channels.

9. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG), in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario (IO), continue to communicate publicly on Ontario Place redevelopment milestones, community benefits, and public-realm features through existing channels, and that MTCG and IO evaluate the effectiveness of these engagement activities and share lessons learned internally to strengthen future public-infrastructure planning.

10. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, continue to implement environmental- and heritage-mitigation measures identified through completed assessments, maintain engagement with relevant environmental authorities, and, where appropriate, make non-technical summaries of outcomes publicly available through existing reporting channels.

11. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with IO, communicate publicly, through Infrastructure Ontario's project-information webpages and ministry announcements, the scope of public-realm and accessibility improvements delivered through the Ontario Place redevelopment.

12. That the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, in collaboration with Infrastructure Ontario, maintain comprehensive site-readiness and risk-management frameworks for the Ontario Place redevelopment and provide high-level public updates on milestones and completion timelines through existing communications channels.

13. That Infrastructure Ontario, in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure, continue to present information on major redevelopment projects in a consistent, easy-to-understand format across its public-reporting platforms, including project milestones, scope, and key investment highlights.

14. For future government real estate projects, Infrastructure Ontario should clearly define project scopes upfront, coordinate contractors to prevent overlap and site inefficiencies, actively track and document contractor progress, and use open or comparable procurement processes to ensure competitive pricing.

15. The Ministry of Infrastructure reconcile the apparent discrepancy between the figures presented to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Committee) during the November 3, 2025 hearing, and those in the October 2024 press release mentioned in the Auditor's report, and report back to the Committee on the latest expected number of jobs (during and post construction), GDP impact, and provincial tax benefits as a result of the Ontario Place Redevelopment project, within 120 calendar days of tabling the final report.