

Dear Councillor,

I'm writing to let you know of an important community-led initiative, pertaining to the 347 acres of publicly owned lands associated with Exhibition Place and Ontario Place, and to ask for your assistance.

These lakeside public lands, owned by the City and the Province, respectively, were created as permanent parklands for hosting public-oriented cultural and exhibition/fairground events. Given Toronto's huge need for public parks and green space—a need so great that costly initiatives such as the Rail Deck are being seriously considered—it is astounding that this huge amount of publicly owned acreage has (with few exceptions, such as the beautiful but comparatively tiny 7.5 acre Trillium Park) been largely neglected as public parklands by both City and Province.

Indeed, and on the contrary, in recent years several initiatives have been implemented whose impact has been to effectively place these public lands in private hands. These initiatives occurred under the radar, with effectively no public consultations.

For example, in 2006 the majority of Exhibition Place was converted from 'Parks and Open Space' lands to 'Regeneration' lands, encouraging development and allowing 21+ year leases. And in 2010 both Exhibition Place and Ontario Place adopted directives requiring their administrators to 'maximize revenue from all sources'—a directive which is being used to justify increasing effective privatization and private control of these publicly owned lands.

A website has been created—[www.excluded.ca](http://www.excluded.ca)—that contains more information about these problematic initiatives. We ask that you explore the website, and join forces with the people of Toronto, as an elected representative, in regaining and retaining public control, public access, and public enjoyment of these potentially incredible Western Waterfront parks.

I hope that as a publicly elected member of local government, you can help to:

- ensure that these precious public assets are primarily directed towards fulfilling Toronto's pressing need for publicly accessible parkland and green space.
- get the scheduled Master Plan for Exhibition Place running as soon as possible, and ensure that the outcome reflects a fully consultative process with local communities and other residents of Toronto. Similarly, pressure the Province to initiate a Master Plan for Ontario Place, to be conducted as quickly as possible, again in full consultation with Toronto residents.
- walk back the recently changed Relationship Frameworks for Exhibition Place and Ontario Place, which subvert the traditional, public park space mandate of these lands by directing administrators to 'maximize revenue from all sources'.
- reject the current Exhibition Place Board of Governors' request for an Official Plan Amendment allowing private leases of Heritage Buildings for longer than 21 years (in the remaining Parks and Open Space lands), effectively disposing of these historic buildings.

Sincerely,