OPEN THE PARK

Exhibition in the Lower East Gallery
THE PARK
Ontario Place is world-famous for Cinesphere, built in 1971 and now closed. There's also a huge PARK area, also closed. The PARK doesn't need to be closed.

Proof? It was open for a public arts festival for ten days last summer.
THE PUSH
This exhibition is propaganda. It’s meant to stir up discussion. It promotes a simple idea: The Ontario Place Park should be open. Now.
WAITING
It's really easy to get to the PARK by bike. The trees and paths, hills and lagoons, and the stony beach are just waiting for people to enjoy them. Nothing has to be built. It's all there.
THE COST

Modest security and maintenance costs now used to keep The Ontario Place Park mothballed could be transferred to running it. The total additional cost for directional signs would be about $700. By contrast, the budget for the recently proposed Rail Deck Park is “tens of millions of dollars per acre.”
THE OFFICIAL LINE

The Ontario Place business plans for 2015 and 2016 are on the table behind you. Lots of charts... No park.
"When we’re finished, it should look like God made it."

—Eb Zeidler, quoted in "The $19 Million Magical Mystery Tour," Toronto Week, May 22, 1971

Ontario Place was imagined as an integrated project, seamlessly fusing architecture, art, nature, and city, each element complementing and learning from the others. Landscape architect Michael Hough designed the islands as a complex network of wooded areas to explore, providing countless views of the Pods, Toronto's skyline, Ontario Place's 230-slip harbour, and the grounds themselves. Hough intended the islands to eventually evolve into an untouched woodland, more like Tommy Thompson Park than the lawns and gardens of High Park.

Out of this landscape rose the East, West and Harbour Villages, the Forum, and the Children's Village, which all used repetitive patterns to evoke the kind of beauty commonly found in nature. The Villages, in particular, were meant to appear from one side like a rock formation jutting out of the land, and like the Pods, new modules could be added to them, growing in geometric patterns like crystals. From the other side, however, this natural image gave way to an urban one. Storefronts inspired by pop art and contemporary graphic design exploded with colour and liveliness, and crowded restaurant patios spilled onto the waterfront promenade.

This balance between tranquil natural settings and bustling urban ones offered visitors a variety of experiences, but this subtle balance has slowly been crowded out by the ever-growing number of attractions.

1 Study models. 2 footage. 3 London Canada Games & restaurant patio. 4 5 West Island Village. 7 walkabout boards. 8 aerial view of islands, 1972.
OPEN THE PARK
CLOSED?
The Ontario Place Park has been closed to the public for six years, and the Ontario Place full-time staff of 21 seems to have forgotten it.
The Ontario Place Park is a great resource for the people of Toronto. It should be open.
NOW!
This beautiful woodland PARK needs no special maintenance or security. But there are still no provincial plans for redesigning or reopening it. Open it now. **This summer.**
THE PLACE

An artificial seven-acre "naturalized urban park and trail" is under construction on one of the Ontario Place parking lots, including a new three-million-pound rock wall. Why? Ontario Place already has a 50-year-old woodland PARK on the west island that's been closed for six years. Open it now.
Before John Tory was mayor he chaired a provincial task force on the future of Ontario Place. The 2012 report said private investment would be required to revitalize the area, but the whole area should not be turned over to commercial development. The report said transportation should be improved and admission should be free. The report said nothing about maintaining the west island’s 50-year-old established woodland park.

The cost of inaction in public space.

Kate Fiechtner is a leader of the firm Fiechtner Architectural Partners and a founder of the design firm Fiechtner Architects, based in New York City. With the help of Frankfurt-based architects Peter Eisenman and Michael Jantzen, she designed the Iridescent Park for the 2015 Venice Biennale, and the pair’s work has been exhibited worldwide. Their projects often feature a mix of contemporary materials and styles, often incorporating existing urban elements to create public spaces that are both functional and visually striking.

In this article, Fiechtner argues that public space is critical to our well-being, and that inaction in its design and development can have negative consequences. She emphasizes the importance of considering the cultural and historical context of a site when designing public spaces, and the need for collaboration between designers, community members, and local authorities.

The cost of inaction in public space can be significant, both in terms of lost opportunities for social interaction and in terms of the economic value of usable public space. Fiechtner suggests that by investing in the design and development of public spaces, we can create environments that are more engaging, more accessible, and more sustainable.

In conclusion, Fiechtner argues that public space is a vital part of our urban landscapes, and that its design and development is a critical responsibility of architects and designers. By working together with community members and local authorities, we can create public spaces that are both beautiful and functional, and that contribute to the well-being of our communities.
OPEN ONTARIO PLACE PARK!
was devised by Max Allen.

The barbed-wire logo is from a photograph by Logan King.

A 2012 Urbanspace Gallery exhibition *Your Ontario Place* was curated by Nathan Storring.

The photos of Ontario Place in its early days are from the book *Buildings Cities Life* by architect Eberhard Zeidler.

The photographs of last summer's temporary use of the park are by Sharon VanderKaay.