

## A New Playground! Harry Potter Theme Park to Open in Tokyo in 2023

A new amusement park featuring characters and stories of the Harry Potter novel and film will be built on the site of "Toshimaen," the Seibu group's long-established Tokyo playground, by the spring of 2023.

Toshimaen, run by the Japanese railway company Seibu group, will soon be closed.

If the new project is realized, the Tokyo metropolitan area will have a new spot for tourists, and competition among amusement parks will be accelerated.

Warner Brothers Entertainment, Inc., a major United States media and entertainment company, is reported to be arranging to rent part of the Toshimaen land from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which plans to purchase the grounds. The concept for the park envisages Warner Bros building the popular Harry Potter movie's sets on the site.

Currently Warner Bros is in talks with both the Seibu group and Tokyo Metropolitan Government to fill out the plan for an amusement park along the lines of the "Warner Bros Studio Tour London The Making of Harry Potter," which it operates in the United Kingdom.

In Osaka, the Harry Potter area of Universal Studios Japan amusement park has proven its ability to pull in many visitors. USJ replicates the Hogwarts School, where the main characters in both the novel and the film learn wizardry. Visitors can enjoy attractions, such as rides that feel like the experience of flying, and drinking "butterbeer," a favorite beverage of Harry Potter and other characters in the novel and the film.

USJ experienced a decline in ticket sales after its initial success. However, after the groundbreaking for the "Wizarding World of Harry Potter" in 2014, ticket sales reached a record high. Since then, it has been one of the hottest tourism spots in the Kansai region in Western Japan.

The "Harry Potter effect," with its high ticket sales, is considered to have been a significant factor in the recovery of USJ's business operations. Therefore, the question has been raised whether the Warner Bros project at the soon-to-be-vacant Toshimaen site might pull customers away from USJ. However, at this point, USJ's public relations officer has taken a wait-and-see approach.

The Tokyo attraction would have other competition as well. Tokyo Disney Resort in Urayasu City, Chiba Prefecture, is next door and in the Tokyo metropolitan area. The resort has demonstrated its strong ability to attract many visitors for many years. According to operator Oriental Land Co., Ltd., TDR maintained its customer numbers even after the groundbreaking of the USJ's Harry Potter attraction in Osaka. For example, TDR reached record-high numbers from April 2018 to March 2019 in terms of both sales per customer and number of visitors.

An Oriental Land Co. representative commented to the Sankei Shimbun and JAPAN Forward on the revealed Warner Bros project, emphasizing, "We would liven up the amusement industry together."

For the Seibu group, it is vital to improve attractiveness along its railway line to improve business stability while Japanese society is depopulating. Its Toshimaen amusement park has experienced a decrease of visitors since its peak in 1992 (April 1992 to March 1993). The group likely aims to attract touring passengers by virtue of the new theme park project.

Source: **A New Playground! Harry Potter Theme Park to Open in Tokyo in 2023**

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## テーマパーク集中の首都圏 としまえん跡地計画で集客競争激化

東京都内の遊園地「としまえん」跡地に「ハリー・ポッター」のテーマパークを開業する計画が実現すれば、首都圏に新たな観光スポットが生まれ、テーマパーク間の集客競争がさらに激化する可能性がある。同じ首都圏にある東京ディズニーリゾート（TDR、千葉県浦安市）や、ハリー・ポッターをテーマとしたエリアが人気のUSJは静観の構えだが、訪日客も含めた人の流れが首都圏にますます集中することも想定される。

TDRを運営するオリエンタルランドは、USJの誕生後も集客を維持しており、平成30年度には入園者数、1人当たり売上高ともに過去最高となった。オリエンタルランドの担当者は今回明らかになった計画について、「一緒にアミューズメント業界を盛り上げていけると思う」と相乗効果を強調した。

一方、USJの広報担当者は今回の発表について「コメントする立場にない」と静観している。ただ、USJのハリー・ポッターのエリアはUSJの業績のV字回復に貢献するほどの集客力を見せてきただけに、としまえん跡地の新計画は脅威になる可能性がある。

西武グループとしては西武鉄道沿線の魅力の向上は重大な課題で、埼玉県所沢市の西武園ゆうえんちでは大規模なリニューアル計画を打ち出している。としまえんは、平成4年度をピークに来場者数の減少傾向が続いており、新たなテーマパーク構想で観光客の呼び込みを図りたいとみられる。

出典:テーマパーク集中の首都圏 としまえん跡地計画で集客競争激化  
<https://www.sankei.com/economy/news/200203/ecn2002030025-n1.html>