
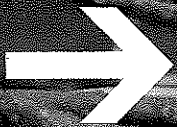


4' wide in window

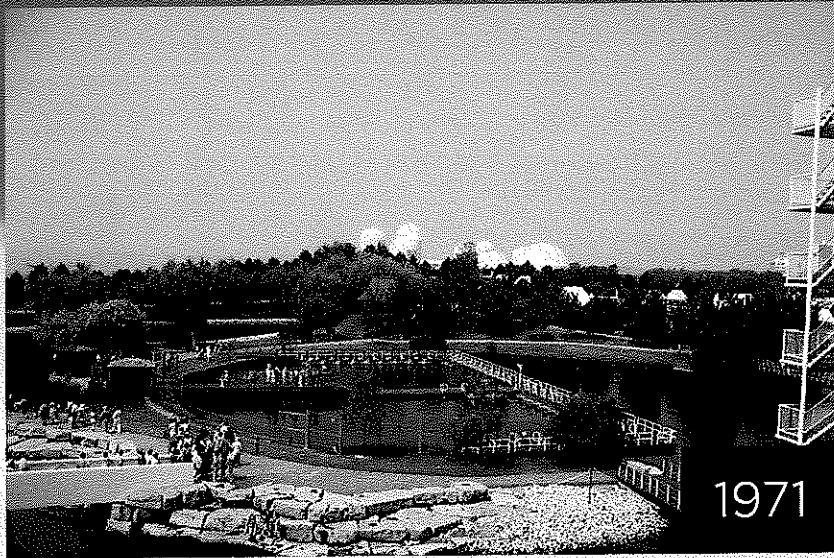


# OPEN THE PARK

Exhibition in the  
Lower East Gallery



A-1  
North



# **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.**

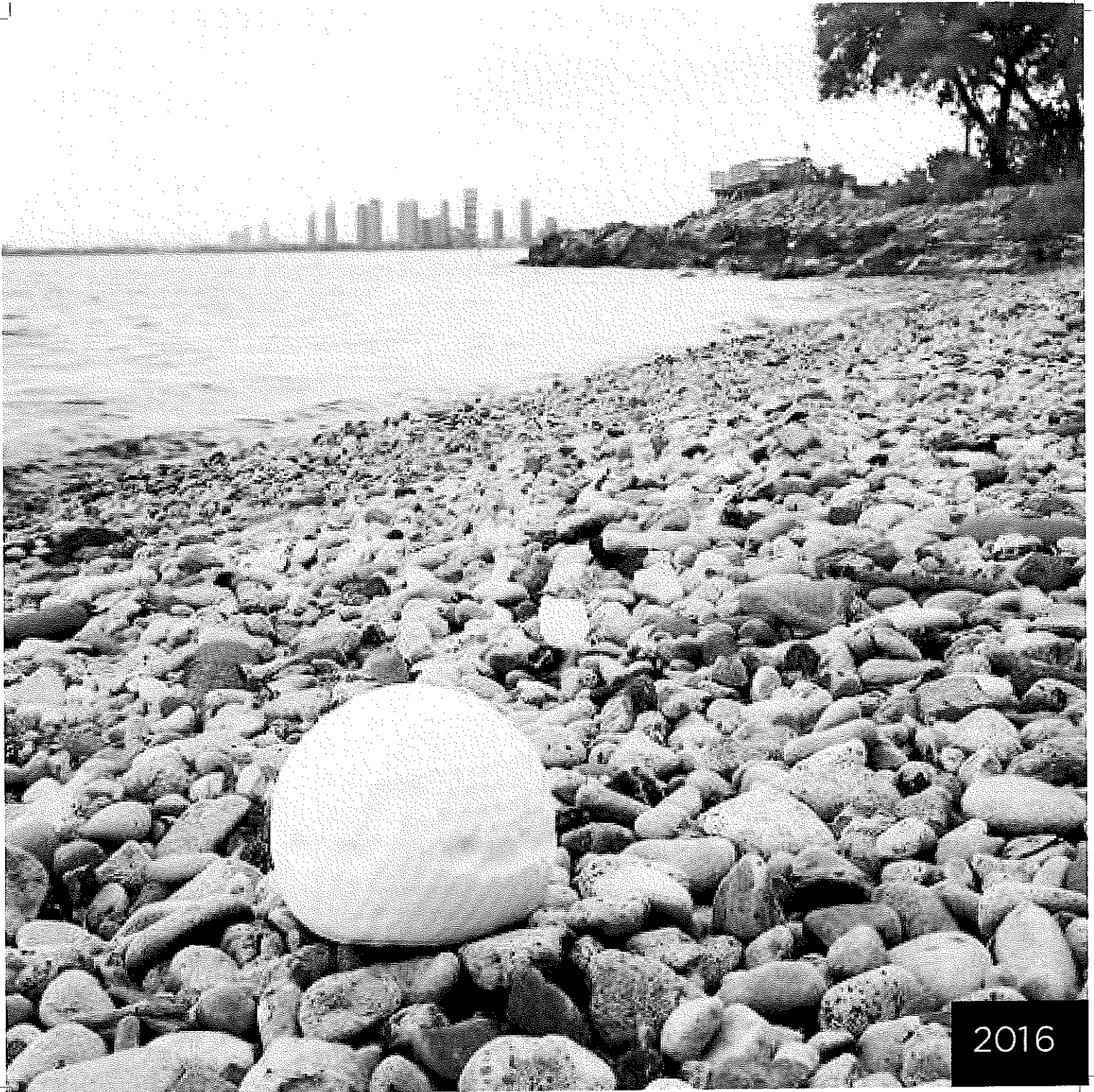
Nothing has to be built. **It's all there.**

A-6



2016

A-7



2016





# 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.”

A-10



A-11



2016

A-12

# **THE OFFICIAL LINE**

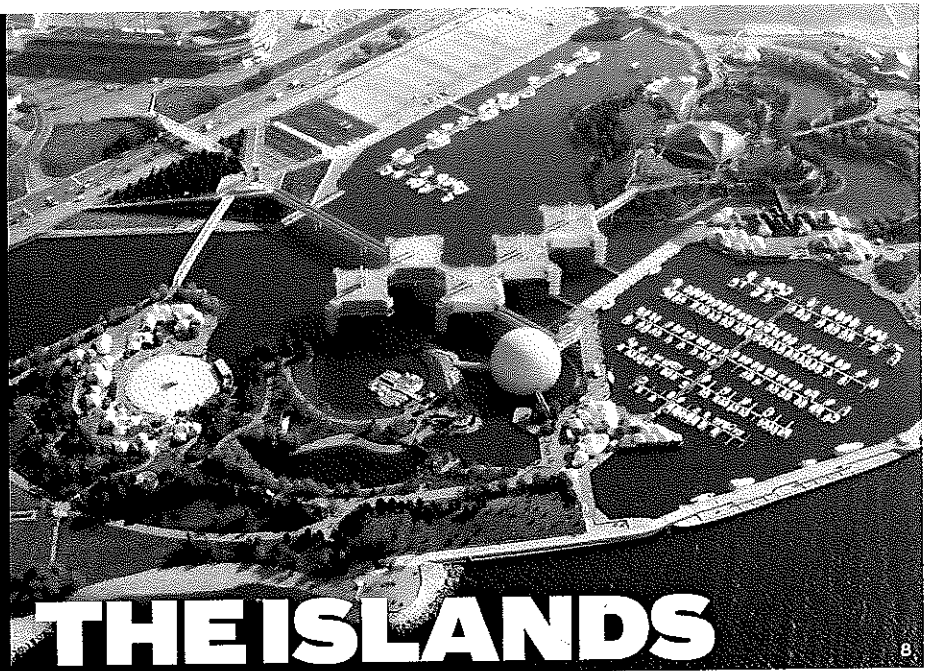
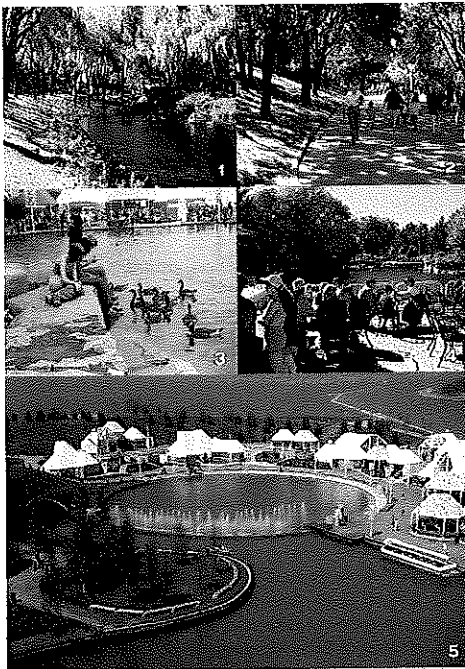
The Ontario Place  
business plans for  
**2015 and 2016** are on  
the table behind you.

**Lots of charts...**

**No park.**

B-1

EAST SOUTH



**“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 350-slip harbour, and the grounds themselves. Hough intended the islands to eventually evolve into an untended 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 Villages, 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 waterside promenades.

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 Shady canal; 2 footpath; 3 feeding Canada geese; 4 restaurant patio; 5-6 West Island Village; 7 secluded beach; 8 aerial view of islands, 1979.





**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.**

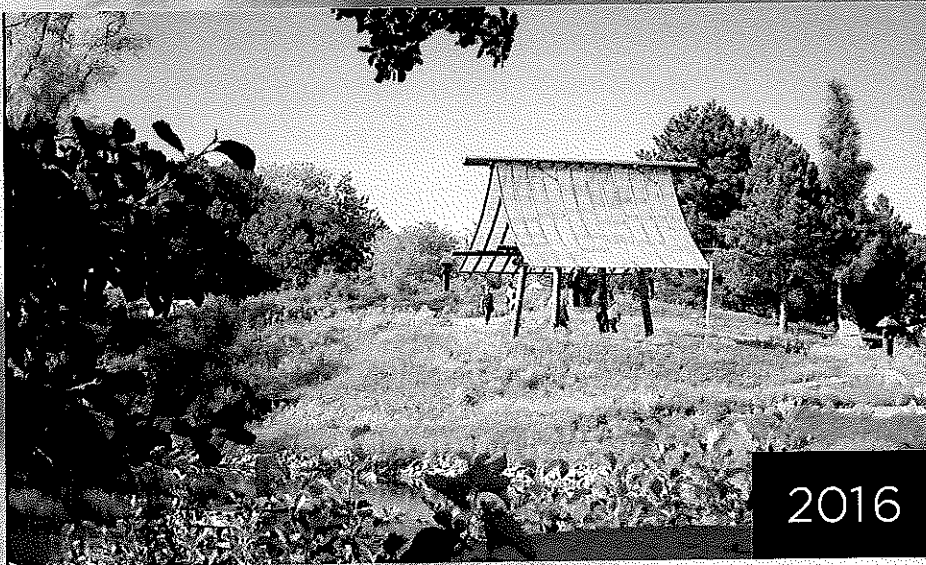


B-4



2016

B-5



B-6

**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.



2016

B-10

John Tory | Chair of the Ontario Place Revitalization Panel

### letter from the chair



Dear Minister Chan,

Thank you for inviting me to chair the Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization. This is a critical time for Ontario Place as we determine the best way to transform this cherished landmark.

As chair I welcome the opportunity to present the ideas contained in the panel's report and recommended new vision for Ontario Place.

In this report we provide a new course of action for Ontario Place — a plan to transform Ontario Place into the twenty-first century and over time create a new landmark that celebrates its connection to the waterfront of Lake Ontario.

Our work over the past five months has been grounded in listening to the views of stakeholders, as well as presentations by stakeholders. We have taken a deep and keen insight into the significant challenges facing Ontario Place, including low attendance levels and revenues, the need for a new vision, and the need for a new plan.

We also heard directly from the public and at the panel's public consultations in Ontario — Scarborough, Toronto, and the Greater Toronto Area.

Respectfully,

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.

B-11

# ON ICONIC PUBLIC PARK THAT RECONNECT ONTARIANS TO THE

Fast and forward, **ONTARIO PLACE MUST PROVIDE OPEN ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT.** To ensure it can be enjoyed by all, it must be open to everyone, every day.

The area should be **OPEN YEAR-ROUND – NOT JUST FOR THE SUMMER.** Any new development on the property must be designed to be open and accessible year-round.

A big, bright park **THE SITE MUST BE PARKLAND** where residents and visitors can gather for recreation in the city.

Our vision is of **A STATE-OF-THE-ART PARK ON THE EDGE OF ONTARIO'S GREAT LAKE.** It is a place where the urban and natural landscapes and the history of Ontario meet.

On behalf of a **WATERFRONT COMMUNITY** that offers Ontarians a new opportunity to **LAKE, WORK, PLAY AND DISCOVER** along the water's edge. We hope that our study will be a design, and not a substitute for public listening principles. We should not shy away from being forthcoming and transparent with a new Ontario Place.

To help us learn from our history, it is important that the government open up a new set of public listening opportunities. The future of Ontario Place must be an added dimension to be primarily a public domain. **IT IS TIME TO DISPLACE A NEW COLLABORATIVE MODEL IN WHICH A RANGE OF PUBLIC PURPOSES CAN AID OPENING THE NEW ONTARIO PLACE.**

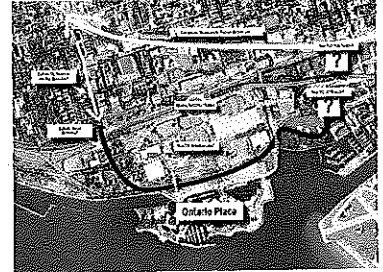
reimagine.  
reconnect.  
revitalize.

# Create direct transit access and make it easier for us to get there by foot or bike.

**WE SEE A NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE ACCESS REQUIRED** to generate the needed Ontario Place access to attract, first, a wider public. Street-level access to provide direct bus access to the site and extend the streetcar loop from Ed Stree Place. Second, create more south-south pedestrian and bicycle links. Finally, create storage and rental facilities to support the goal – to encourage riders to bring their own bicycles – in order to link to the growing network of bicycle rentals.

**WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CURRENT FISCAL SITUATION OF GOVERNMENTS** across the country means there is limited funding for new or enhanced transportation projects. But we also need to emphasize that improving connectivity ensures a more vibrant and prosperous site in the long term.

Public transit linkage possibilities | by Toronto Transit Commission



Ontario Place could be reached by several rapid transit (RT) lines and integrated with existing, planned, and proposed transit services. The map shows the proposed transit services and the location of Ontario Place. (Source: TTC, 2011)

## The cost of investing in public space

**JUST AS THERE IS A RANGE OF KEY PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A PUBLIC PARKLAND PROJECT, SO TOO IS THERE A RANGE OF COSTS INVOLVED IN BUILDING THE PARKLAND.**

With the help of preliminary analysis from Infrastructure Ontario and Bay AECOM, we gained a better understanding of the infrastructure costs involved – anywhere from \$20 million to \$50 million.<sup>1</sup> These estimates include demolition, site preparation and removal of existing services, such as, sanitary sewer, electrical, existing pathways; the amount, however, does not include costs associated with potential remediation.

We were also able to study a wide range of urban park projects that offered valuable insights into the kind of projects that could be appropriate for Ontario Place – and the corresponding costs that would ensue. We specifically looked at projects across three distinct price points.

At the lowest cost end of public realm development is **DON RIVER PARK**, an 18-acre park being developed on an abandoned post-industrial site.<sup>2</sup> It is being converted into a versatile park with signature of the Toronto skyline. The 8.9-acre, dry hill of the park varies topography and woodland plants to create flexible spaces,



including a starting hill, soccer field, feature point, and a small amphitheatre. The wet hill is an urban prairie setting featuring meadows for ecological diversity. The cost of this multi-purpose park is estimated at \$1 million per acre.

In the middle of the cost range is Canada's **SUGAR BEACH**, a two-acre waterfront park that has transformed and revitalized a former industrial area.<sup>3</sup> The park features a sandy beach with chairs and brightly coloured umbrellas, a promenade, rock outcroppings, grass mounds, a splash pad, mature maple trees and a plaza for public performances. It is part of Waterfront Toronto's LEED for Neighbourhood Development GOLD plan for East Bayfront, and designed around a number of sustainability goals and principles,



Park developers incorporated recycled content in construction materials, easy access to public transportation and storage for bicycles. Canada's Sugar Beach was developed at a cost of just over \$7 million per acre and now offers the community an active and vibrant social gathering space.

At the higher cost end is Chicago's **MILLENNIUM PARK**, a recent 25-acre site just off the shores of Lake Michigan. Conceived as a transformation project to showcase Chicago's culture, it converted a former dilapidated ground level parking lot and reimagined into one of the world's largest "green roofs" covering two million sq ft parking lots (forming a total of 4,000 cars) and a commuter rail line. This unique

waterfront destination attracts nearly five million visitors a year who come to enjoy the unique urban park and some of its most attractions including the Jay Pritzker Pavilion – home to the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra and Music Festival, the Cloud Gate sculpture or "The Bean" as it has been nicknamed, and the Queen Elizabeth which showcases the faces of Chicagoans as well as the iconic 60-foot glass clock tower.

While the final project total was \$400 million (approximately \$20 million per acre) – half of which was raised through individual donors and corporate sponsorship – Millennium Park plays a significant role in generating revenue for the City of Chicago. An economic impact study released in 2011 estimates the economic impact on the City

of Chicago as \$2.95 billion from new construction near the park, over 14,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs created by new construction in the area,<sup>4</sup> and \$1.29 billion in tourism dollars.<sup>5</sup>

As a sizeable land-water lot property of 185 acres (approximately 70% which are forested and the remainder water lots) the costs to restore Ontario Place are substantial. But so too is its potential.

In the previous sections, we have shown the exciting new direction Ontario Place can take. Now we look at how to advance this new direction – by building a new network of partnerships. In the following section, we examine ways to increase the potential for ongoing programming, as well as innovative partnerships to finance the development of a large public space that is open and accessible to all Ontarians.



# **OPEN ONTARIO PLACE PARK!**

B-12

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 Storrington.

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.