



# Rally Round Ontario Place January 12, 2019



# Welcome!



# Agenda

- Ken Greenberg: History and Vision
- Mark Mattson: Toronto's Best Swimming Hole
- Karen Carter: Your Stories
- Zahra Ebrahim: Future Visions
- Support from Spadina – Fort York elected representatives
- How you can help

# Ken Greenberg

## Alternative Futures: Ambitions and Vulnerabilities



An aerial photograph of a city waterfront. A wide river flows from the top left towards the bottom left. A large peninsula is situated in the middle of the river, featuring a mix of urban development, including buildings, parking lots, and some green spaces. To the right of the peninsula, there's a large, dark, rectangular area that appears to be a construction site or a large industrial building. In the bottom right corner, there's a small inset showing a different perspective or a specific area of interest, possibly a bridge or a waterfront promenade. The overall image is in black and white, giving it a historical or archival feel.

# Alternative Futures

## Exhibition Place/ Ontario Place

### Ambitions and Vulnerabilities





**CNE on grounds by the Lake since 1879**





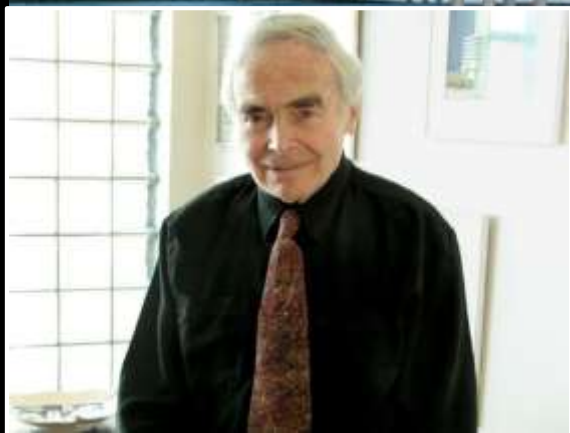
**Expo 67 in Montreal**





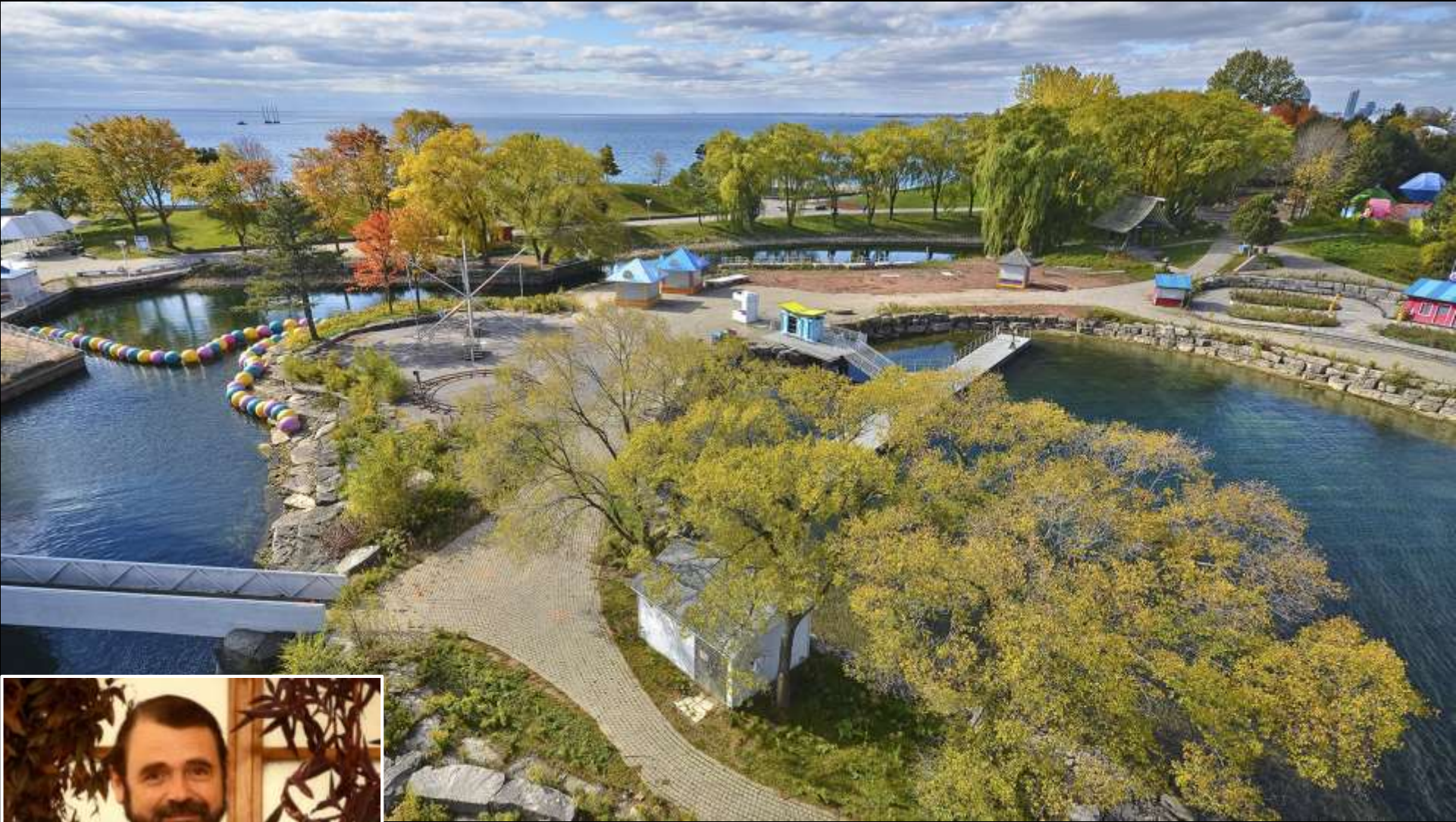
**Ontario Place 1971 in Toronto**





**Eberhard Zeidler**





**Michael Hough**

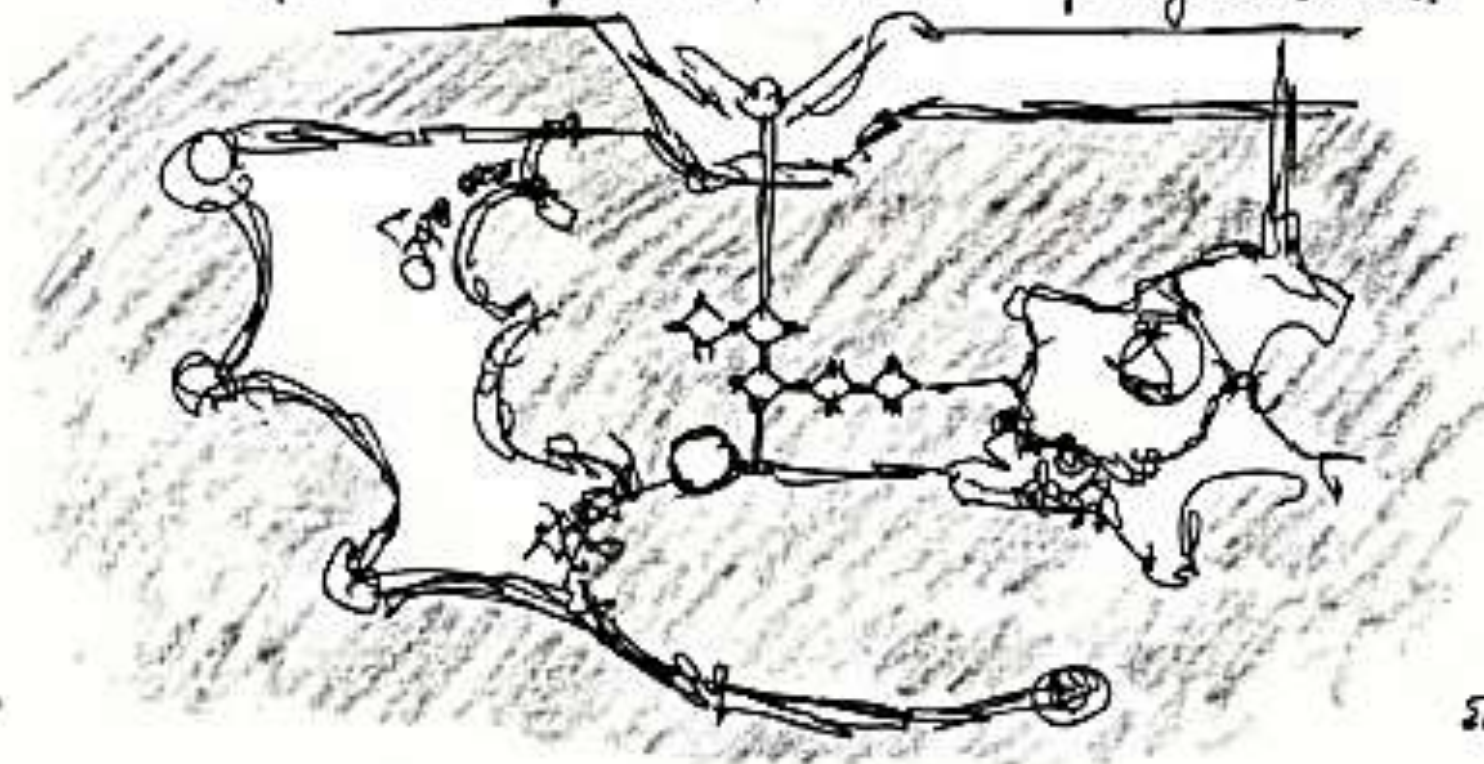


# The Machine in the Garden



② CREATION OF URBAN PARK LAND.

The idea of wave protection through land fill leads to the addition of **ISLANDS** that can be used as urban Parks or the villages for shops and restaurants, Canals for boating places, Childrens play areas etc.





REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE JOHN ROBARTS  
PRIME MINISTER OF ONTARIO  
AT ONTARIO PLACE COUNTDOWN RECEPTION AND TOUR  
TORONTO, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, 1970

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IT IS WITH A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF PERSONAL EXCITEMENT THAT I WELCOME YOU TO THIS SPECIAL PREVIEW TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF OUR FINAL SIX MONTH COUNTDOWN IN THE PREPARATION OF ONTARIO PLACE.....

THERE WAS A NEED FOR A PLACE WHERE WE COULD EXAMINE OUR HISTORY, LOOK AT OUR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CONTEMPLATE THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE. IN SHORT, WE WANTED A PLACE TO RE-AFFIRM OUR IDENTITY AS ONTARIANS AND CANADIANS.

WITH ALL OF THIS IN MIND, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT A PROVINCIAL SHOWCASE SHOULD BE NOT ONLY A PLACE TO REFLECT, BUT A PLACE WHICH REFLECTS US THE WAY WE ARE. IT SHOULD BE AN EXCITING PLACE, JUST AS ONTARIO IS AN EXCITING AND DYNAMIC PROVINCE. A PLACE BRIMMING WITH ACTIVITY AND VITALITY. IT SHOULD BE COSMOPOLITAN TO MATCH THE COSMOPOLITAN PERSONALITY OF THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO.



**Loss of direction - Initial Success followed by a Period of Confusion, Uncertainty and Neglect – a failure to understand the true value. Still seen as an isolated ‘theme park’. In a Series of Studies about the future of Ontario Place/Exhibition Place the idea of a ‘consolidation’ of Ontario Place and Exhibition Place emerges by the late 1990’s.**

1. Economic Research Associates (1973), Progress Report on Ontario Place and Master Plan
2. Zeidler Roberts Partnership Architects (1982), Master Plan for the Long Range Development of Ontario Place
3. Executive Task Force Report (March 1987) Future Uses of Exhibition Place
4. Laventhol & Horwath Management Consultants (November 1987). Ontario Place Corporation Long Range Strategic Plan.
5. Ed Cieszkowski (1989), 1989-1998 Development Plan
6. Laventhol & Horwath (1989), Strategic Plan Stage II- SWOT Analysis
7. Robinson, Griffith & Company Inc. (January 1993). Proposal for Casino Operations at Ontario Place by Great Lakes Casino Company Inc.
8. The Economic Planning Group. (1993). Ontario Place Master Plan
9. Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Dark Gabor. (June 1995). Ontario Exhibition Place
10. Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism (1996). Ontario Place Corporation (OPC) Program Review Stage 1, Report1.
11. Metro Planning (June 1996) Guidelines for Public Access, Circulation and Open Space Improvements at Exhibition Place
12. Sportcom (June 1997), Ontario Place and Exhibition Place Joint Redevelopment Proposal
13. **OPC/EPC Interim Joint Board (1997) *Ontario Exhibition Place Integration Strategy Prepared for the Boards of Directors of Ontario Place Corporation and Exhibition Place Corporation***
14. **Ontario Exhibition Place Amalgamation Strategy (1997)**
15. Coopers & Lybrand (November 19, 1997) Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Attraction and Event Product Development Strategy
16. Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Dark Gabor Concept Master Plan Initial Principles Exhibition Place and Ontario Place (January 1998)
17. Board of Governors of Exhibition Place, Program and Development Concept Plan (May 1998)
18. Ison, Poy, Lynch, Thompson (December, 1999) Revitalizing Exhibition Place through Social Planning prepared for City Planning
19. Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force (March 2000) *Our Toronto Waterfront -Gateway to the New Canada.*
20. Cameron Hawkins & Associates and the Tourism Company (2001). *City of Toronto Tourism Needs Assessment Study -Final Report* Prepared for the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario
21. Board of Governors of Exhibition Place, Development Concept Plan (May, 2004)





**10 January, 2006**

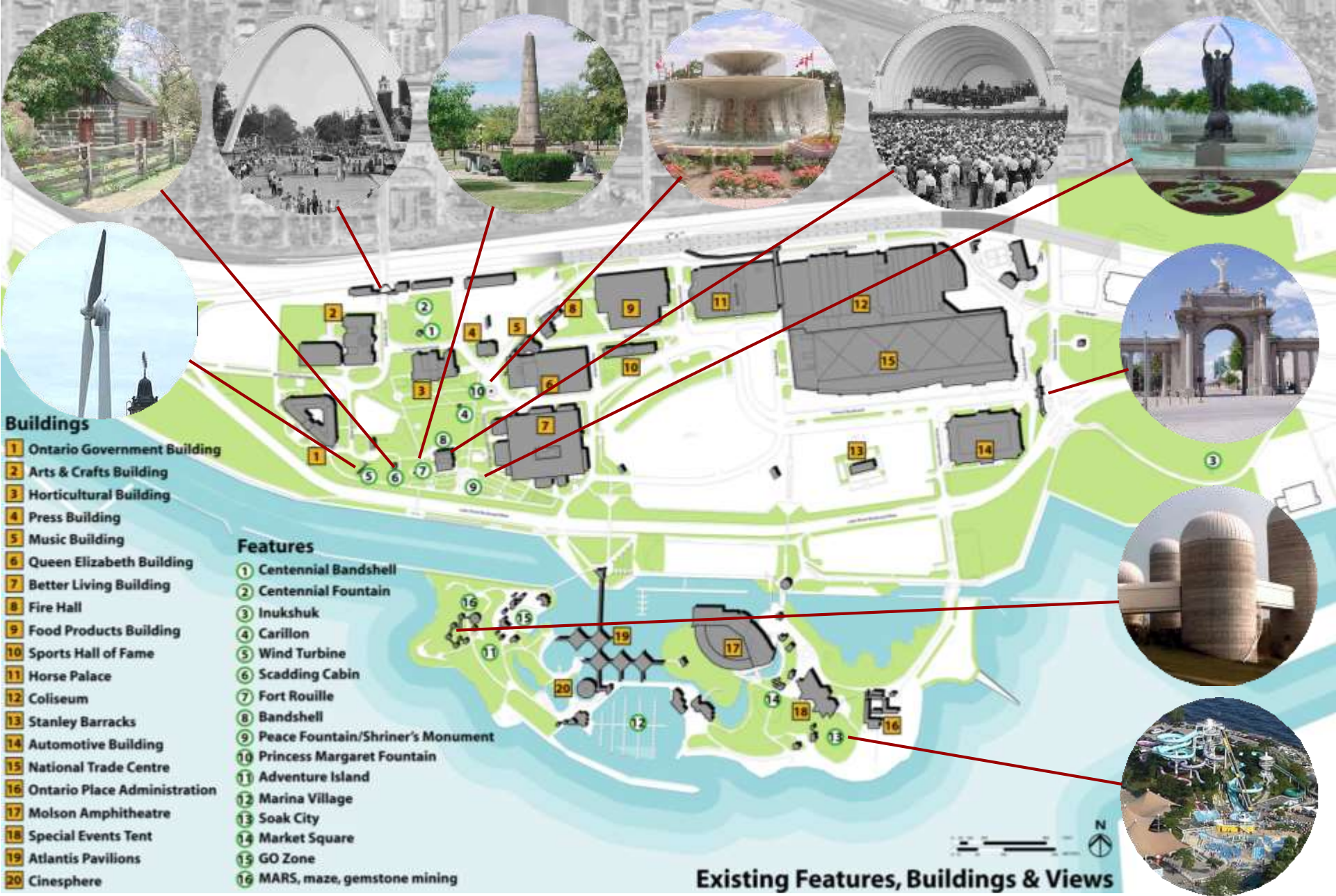
**Greenberg Consultants  
The Planning Partnership**

**Coming Together: Lakefront Park**  
*A Vision for a combined Ontario Place/ Exhibition Place*

## A framework for a different kind of Parkland

The combined Ontario Place/Exhibition Place site presents an extraordinary opportunity for a new beginning on the Toronto waterfront. **The consolidated “Lakefront Park” would offer an expanded array of experiences and a grand new waterfront gathering place including recreation, entertainment, major annual events, theatres, marinas, art galleries, restaurants and heritage sites that would act as a major international tourism draw.** Between buildings and stretching across Lakeshore Boulevard, attractive landscapes would be preserved as freely accessible park spaces that **would extend like an emerald arm across the waterfront. It would serve the needs of an expanding population for vibrant cultural, commercial and tourism activities.** A series of linked parks would draw populations to it from the surrounding city and create a seamlessly connected lakefront.



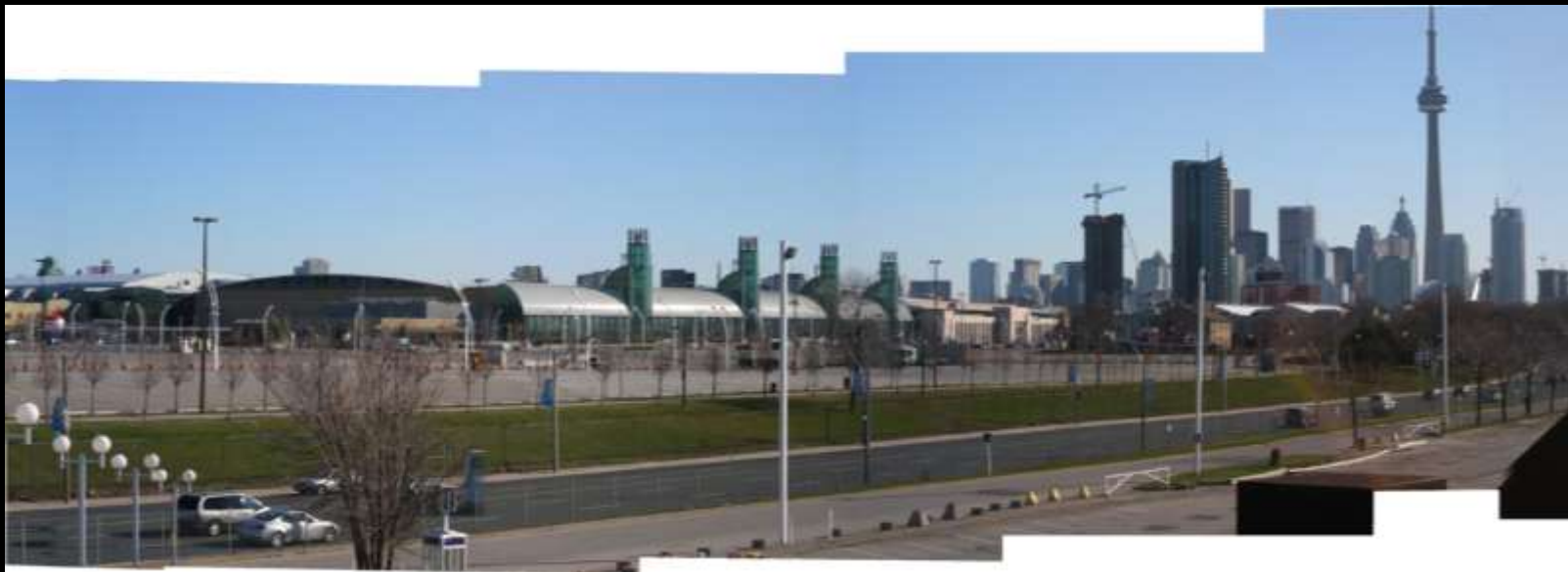












**Benefits of consolidation**  
**Overcoming Barrier of Lakeshore Boulevard**





**Benefits of consolidation**  
**Extending the Park & Martin Goodman trail to the Water's Edge**



**Benefits of consolidation**  
**Making the inland waterway a centrepiece of the Park**





**Early win projects identified to begin consolidation**  
**For a variety of reasons the full merger does not proceed but**  
**things happen incrementally and *ad hoc* on the combined sites**

**In a vacuum and faced with mounting concern about the potential of a 'sell-off' of Ontario Place a new study is done by the Province**



**2012 Minister's Advisory Panel Report Chaired by John Tory**



## letter from the chair



1

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 our recommended new vision for Ontario Place.

In this report we provide a new course of action for Ontario Place — a new direction that will bring Ontario Place into the twenty-first century and over time create a new iconic public park that celebrates its connection to the waterfront of Lake Ontario.

Our work over the past five months has been greatly assisted by previous research and consultations, as well as presentations by stakeholders to the panel. This input has provided us with keen insight into the significant challenges Ontario Place has faced over the years, from declining attendance levels and revenues, to infrastructure repairs, to issues of accessibility.

We also heard directly from the people of Ontario through the many submissions received online and at the panel's public town hall, which included an Ontario-wide webcast. People from across Ontario — Sault Ste. Marie, Gravenhurst, Manitoulin Island, Peterborough, St. Catharines, Ottawa and the Greater Toronto Area — all contributed their boundless ideas.

People care deeply about Ontario Place and would like this landmark destination to be a vibrant hub of activity once again. It is very clear to the panel that there is tremendous potential in Ontario Place to be an exceptional space that better reflects the dynamic province in which we live. With more than 155 acres of land-water lot property, it is an incredible site that commands a majestic view of Lake Ontario and the city of Toronto.

We are seeing remarkable and inspiring projects in Canada and around the world in which cities are revitalizing their parks and waterfronts — examples the panel drew from included Sugar Beach on Toronto's waterfront, Vancouver's Granville Island, Chicago's Millennium Park, and the eco-friendly waterfront community of Barangaroo, Australia. These urban spaces as well as many others have been great sources of inspiration to the panel and practical examples to help us understand the range of costs involved in transforming public spaces.

All of these ideas, insights and areas of expertise have been instrumental in helping us put together our report — and have provided us with an excellent context for our discussions on how best to renew Ontario Place.

What we offer for your consideration is a new model for Ontario Place that is a significant departure from the summer-only amusement park attraction of years past. We propose a new Ontario Place that is open year-round and provides open access to the waterfront — where a significant portion of the site is parkland for individuals and families to gather and enjoy the area's natural surroundings and sweeping views of Lake Ontario.

The new model of Ontario Place also takes into consideration a new set of financial realities and responsibilities. The new Ontario Place must leverage a wide range of public and private partnerships to ensure it is financially sustainable and operates efficiently. A range of revenue streams should be encouraged to fund its development as well as finance its ongoing operations.

We invite you to read the full report and the series of concrete recommendations — 18 in total — as well as the next steps the government must take to ensure the success of the revitalization project. Our aim with this report is to guide government in creating a roadmap for this important revitalization project as well as provide a framework to inspire world-class ideas from Canadian and international organizations on how to use their ingenuity and creativity to revitalize this important waterfront destination.

I would like to conclude by saying on behalf of myself and the panel that it has been an honour to participate in this stage of the Ontario Place revitalization project. We would also like to thank the many presenters, partners, communities and individuals who contributed so generously their expertise and ideas.

We look forward to hearing from you about our report and the recommendations and new vision for Ontario Place contained within.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Tory'.

John Tory | Chair of the Ontario Place Revitalization Panel

It announces “a new direction that will bring Ontario Place into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and **over time create a new iconic public park that celebrates its connection to the waterfront of Lake Ontario**”

# Reaffirms the Park vision

an **ICONIC PUBLIC PARK** that will **RECONNECT ONTARIANS** to the

First and foremost, **ONTARIO PLACE MUST PROVIDE OPEN ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT.** No one should have to pay admission to enjoy the natural beauty of Lake Ontario.

The area should be **OPEN YEAR-ROUND – NOT JUST FOR THE SUMMER.** Any new development on the property must fully consider all the seasons and explore ways to adapt to the changing weather.

A significant portion of **THE SITE MUST BE PARKLAND** where individuals and families can gather for picnics or for play.

Our vision is of **A STATE-OF-THE-ART PARK ON THE EDGE OF ONTARIO'S GREAT LAKE** that sets an example for urban and waterfront design excellence in one of Canada's most vibrant cities.

Our vision is of **A WATERFRONT COMMUNITY** that offers Ontarians a new opportunity to **LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND DISCOVER** along the water's edge. We say, be bold and excellent in design, and use sustainable and green building principles. We should not shy away from being architecturally adventurous with a new Ontario Place.

To help this vision become reality, it is imperative that the government opens the area to a new set of partnership possibilities. The future of Ontario Place will be limited if it continues to be primarily a publicly-funded asset. **IT IS TIME TO EMBRACE A NEW COLLABORATIVE MODEL IN WHICH A RANGE OF REVENUE SOURCES FUND AND OPERATE THE NEW ONTARIO PLACE.**

reimagine.

reconnect.

revitalize.



## How do Ontario Place/Exhibition Place fit into the larger picture?



For the past several decades a remarkable transformation of the Toronto waterfront has been underway from Mimico to the Scarborough Bluffs and beyond



**Our particularity:**

**Toronto will never have the grand vision of Burnham's Chicago Waterfront Plan.**

**What it does have is something else – an improvised incremental transformation as we embrace our waterfront in a way that fuses park and city**

**Our version of A WATERRONT FOR ALL**





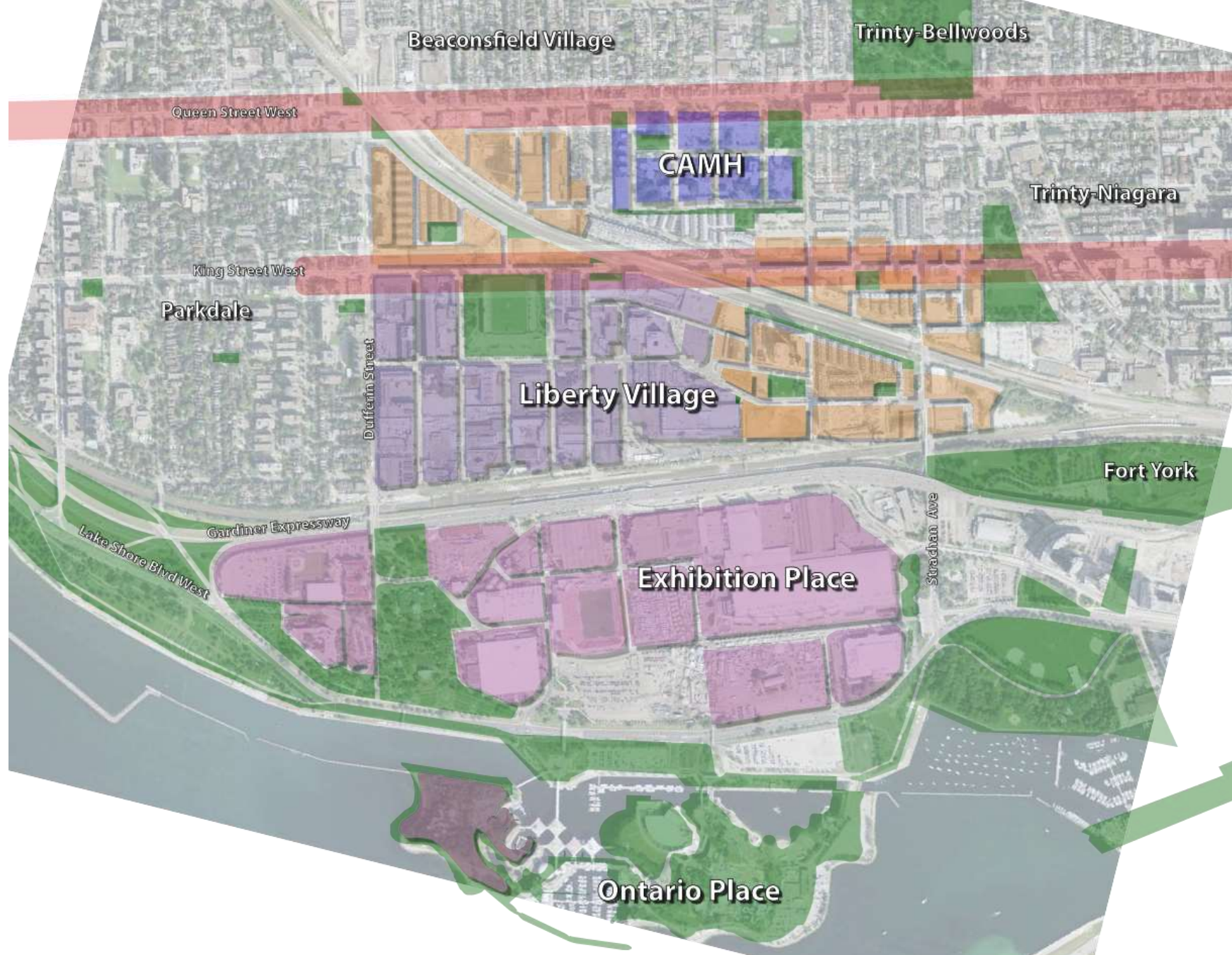
**A continuation of this same Toronto phenomenon – weaving together repurposed spaces to form a green waterfront park network**

# **West of Downtown**

**Strategy Meeting**

**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Meanwhile the city surrounding the combined EP/OP site continues to change dramatically – a ‘Summit’ is called together to assess the impacts**



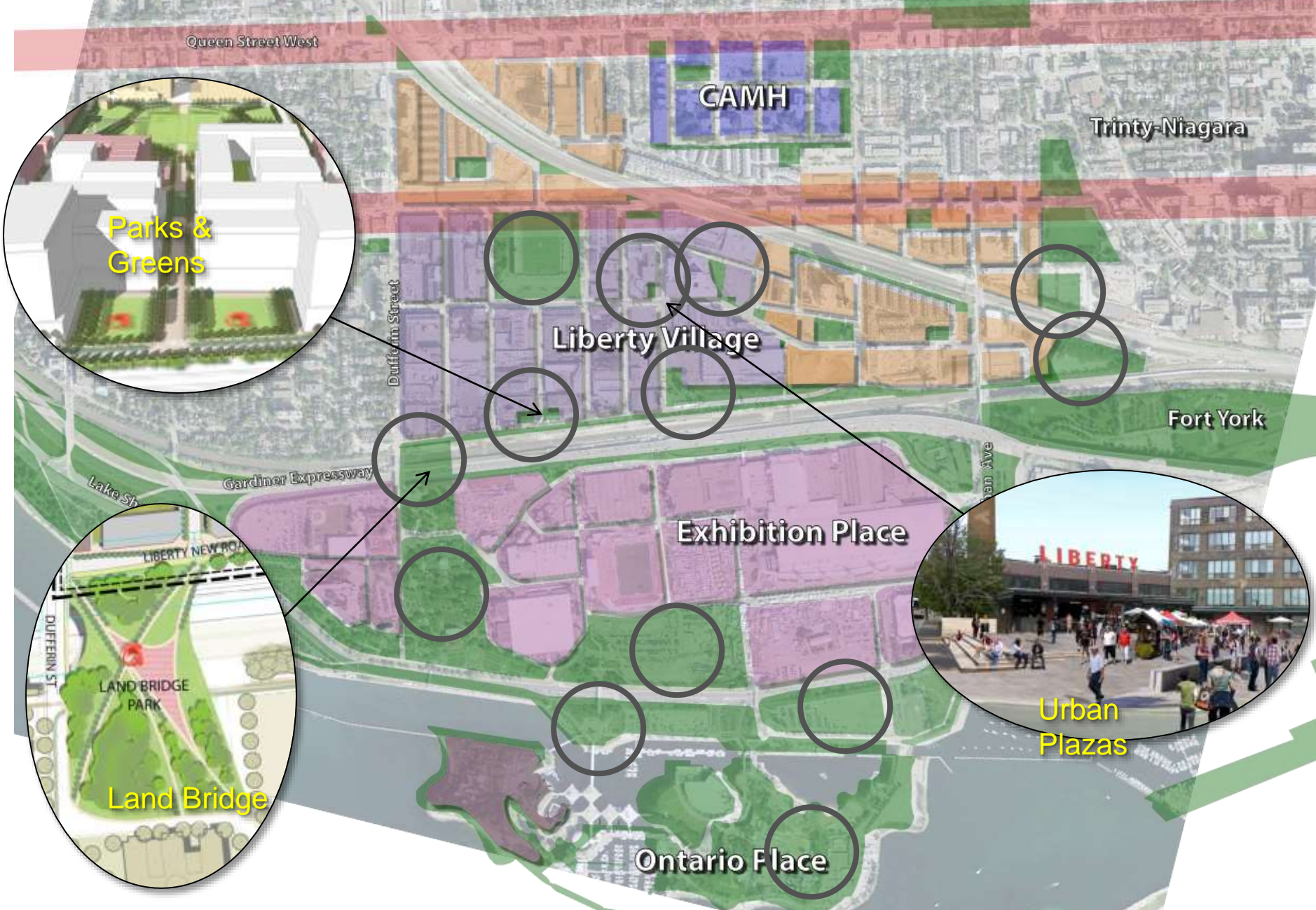
**West of Downtown – The World in Motion**





**Key Strategies advanced for Putting these Distinct but Complementary Districts & Neighbourhoods Together by Connecting the Dots**





**New & Improved Open Spaces**





**Potential for a West of Downtown Structure Plan**



# The larger emerging vision for a 'Clean, Green Accessible to All' Toronto waterfront sets the stage

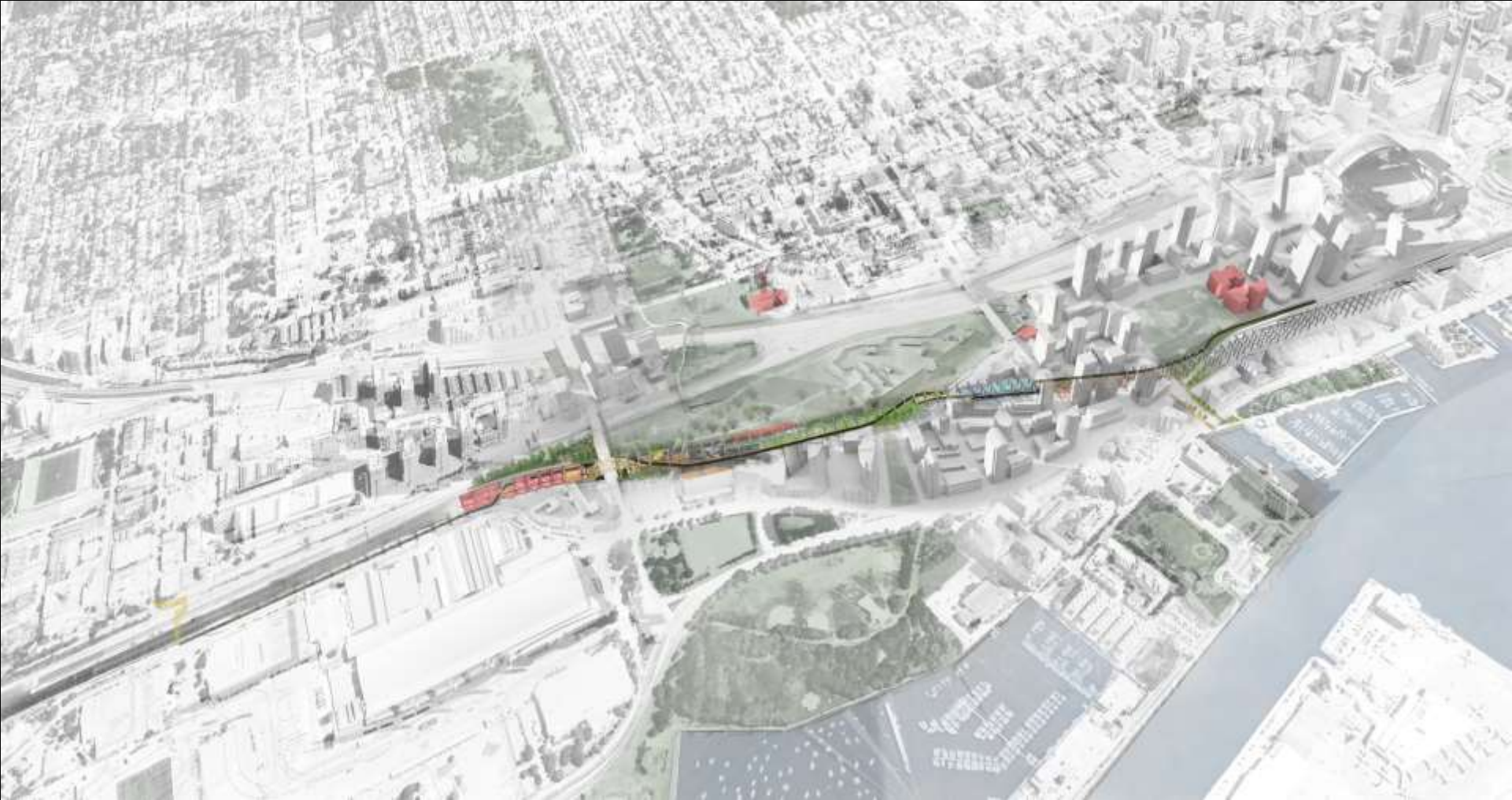


This map represents the revitalized Toronto waterfront in its full vision. This includes parks, public spaces and amenities, and residential and commercial developments that are completed, under construction, or planned. In addition to Waterfront Toronto projects, this map represents City of Toronto and other government agency projects to be completed.

- |                              |                                |                                  |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 The Bentway                | 4 Waterfront Innovation Centre | 7 Bayside Phase II               | 10 River City 4  |
| 2 Jack Layton Ferry Terminal | 5 George Brown College         | 8 Stormwater Management Facility | 11 Port Lands Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure |
| 3 Queens Quay East           | 6 Quayside                     | 9 Gardiner Expressway            | 12 Lake Ontario Park                                       |

## Coming from the east Waterfront Toronto key projects





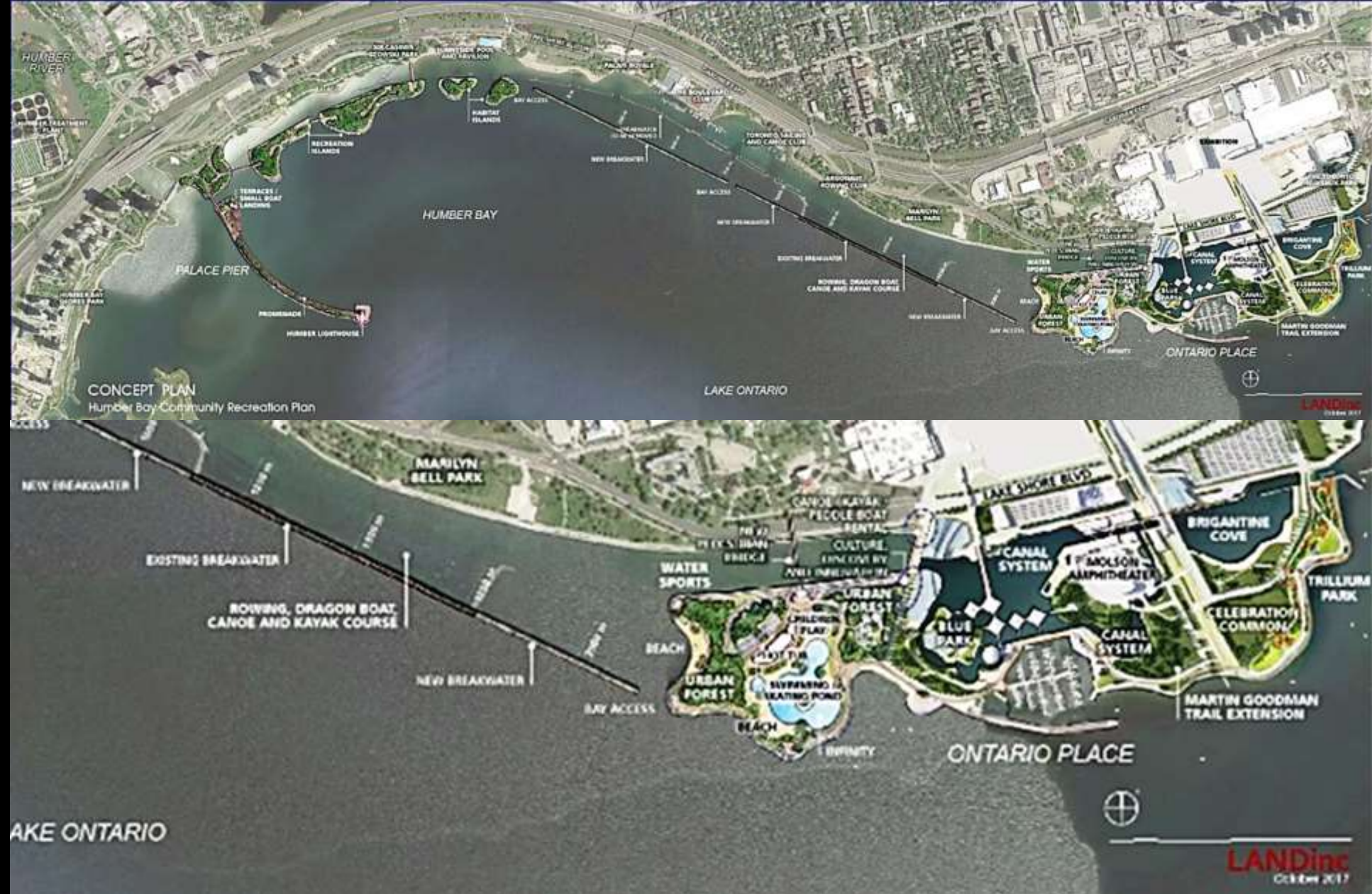
**Coming from the east – the Bentway 2017**





**Coming from the east and north TOCore**





Coming from the west – the Western Beaches and Humber Bay

**Converging on the site as starting points  
for a plan – new context and on site  
assets**

**Remarkable bones both landscape and  
structures**

**A concert venue amphitheatre Cinesphere  
IMAX cinema reopened over a year ago**

**Pavilion pods have a detailed renovation plan**

**The 7.5-acre parkland park named after Bill  
Davis opened in 2017 after \$30 million worth  
of construction**





**Province begins to implement its revitalization vision with June 2017 opening of remarkable Trillium Park and William G. Davis Trail**







ON SITE/IN/FUTURE

Onsite Gallery presents a four-part speaker series that asks:  
What is worth discussing, sharing and exploring in a post-apocalyptic state?

**Lectures for the End of the World(s)**

Saturdays and Sundays at 1 p.m. from Sept. 17 to 25

Visit [infuture.ca](http://infuture.ca) for tickets

**WANDA NANIBUSH**  
Saturday, September 17  
HASE AND WORD WARRIOR AND  
CURATOR OF INDIGENOUS ART AT  
THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

**JORDON VEIRA**  
Sunday, September 18  
POET AND DIRECTOR OF SPOKE N' HEARD

**GABRIEL ALLAHDUA**  
Saturday, September 24  
FARMWORKER AND ORGANIZED WITH  
COLLECTIVE OF ACTIVISTS PROMOTING  
MIGRANT WORKER RIGHTS

**ROUZBEH AKHBARI**  
Sunday, September 25  
ARTIST AND RESEARCHER

Presented as part of **in/future**: a  
transformative art experience, a  
multidisciplinary arts and music festival  
presented by Art Spin and Small World  
Music Festival. The inaugural festival will  
reimagine Ontario Place and the West  
Island through arts-based programming  
to activate the 14-acre waterfront park  
from Sept. 15 to 25.

Visit [infuture.ca](http://infuture.ca) for tickets.  
Space is wheelchair accessible.

in preparation for the launch of Onsite Gallery's new  
location at June 2011 and 2012 (2011/12) programming  
beginning and includes what a public gallery can be  
BARRACKS/2011

ON SITE AT OCAD U

in future

NEXUS

IGNITE IMAGINATION

OCAD U



Art Spin introduces experimental uses of the site demonstrating its unique potential as an arts and culture venue





**On deck there is a long-term vision with plans for an expanded Celebration Common**  
**A site map of the proposed plan for Ontario Place includes ideas for: a hub for culture, discovery and innovation; a canal district with shops and restaurants; a waterscaped park around the Cinesphere and pods; a celebration common; a green pedestrian land bridge over Lake Shore Boulevard connecting to Exhibition Place; the park and trail on the eastern most edge of the site – all linked by a continuous waterfront trail around the islands.**



## **Ongoing life on the site**

### **Winter Program this weekend:**

**Winter Light Exhibition**  
**Fairly Lights 4pm - 12am**  
**Skating 3pm - 10pm**  
**Bonfire 4pm - 10pm**  
**Food & Beverage 3pm - 10pm**  
**Admission is Free**

### **Movies at the Cinesphere this weekend :**

**"Free Solo"**  
**Princess Bride"**

**Movies coming later:**  
**Indiana Jones,**  
**Purple Rain**  
**Titanic**  
**and Spirited Away.**

**Next steps building on those bones and assets - great opportunities now for enlarging a community-based vision and creative engagement on adaptive reuse & partnerships**

**Permanent year round**

- Activities for Children
- Adventure Play
- First Nations activities
- Swimming, skating
- Arts, culture, movies, performing arts, visual arts

**Seasonal celebrations**

- City-wide events
- Camps and programs

**Year round access to nature and the lake and inland waterways**

- Martin Goodman trail
- Shoreline, beaches, boardwalks and lookouts
- Restored landscaped parks and open areas





**By contrast the false promise of the top down “Big Bang” that makes us “world class” - A threat in 2013 with fire sale proposal for a Mega-Casino Resort - Pushed back by NOCasino Toronto and rejected by the City**





**The burning question is can we hold onto the emerging vision for this strategic park as a lynchpin in our emerging waterfront public realm**



**Great cities are known for their great parks and open spaces  
Why would we ever squander the inherent value of irreplaceable asset**



**...when from a purely financial standpoint an expansive and generous waterfront park network is a powerful economic development strategy for the city and the province**

**Well-designed signature open spaces in urban contexts result in significant and measurable benefits.**



PROPERTY VALUE PREMIUMS



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



PARK-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY



TOURISM SPENDING



WORKER ATTRACTION & RETENTION

\* I have worked with HR&A on similar opportunities – The Bentway, Brooklyn Bridge Park, St. Louis, Austin, Denver, Tulsa, Boston where public realm generates significant economic value.



**Open spaces can draw new visitors to a city, and encourage other visitors to stay longer.**



## TOURISM SPENDING

**Chicago Parks District**  
Chicago, IL



**\$1.4B economic impact**  
(major parks)

**The High Line**  
New York, NY



**\$35M new sales and hotel  
tax revenues (2007-2027)**

**Millennium Park**  
Chicago, IL



**\$1.9-2.6B in visitor  
spending (2005-2015)**

**Sandlot**  
Baltimore, MD



**12X more visitors per acre  
than nearby parks (2018)**

Sources, left to right: Chicago Parks District; HR&A Analysis (2018); Economic Development Journal (2015); Landscape Architecture Foundation (2018)  
HR&A Advisors, Inc.

## Workers want to live and work in dense, walkable environments with quality open space that facilitates social interaction.



### WORKER ATTRACTION & RETENTION

**Yards Park**  
*Washington, DC*



**12% employment growth**  
(versus 10% citywide)

**The High Line**  
*New York, NY*



**23,000 new jobs** (a 19%  
increase above Manhattan)

**Brooklyn Bridge Park**  
*Brooklyn, NY*



**20,000 new jobs**  
(a 45% increase)

**Klyde Warren Park**  
*Dallas, TX*



**13,000 new jobs** (3% above  
regional growth)

Sources, left to right: Emsi & HR&A Analysis (2017); Emsi & HR&A Analysis (2017); Emsi & HR&A Analysis (2017); Emsi & HR&A Analysis (2017)

HR&A Advisors, Inc.

DRAFT 7



## **We are now at a critical decision point**

The provincial government has now dissolved the Ontario Place Board and says that ***“the current state of Ontario Place is disgraceful and there is nothing that can be saved”....“we need to turn it into a ‘world class attraction’” ... “nothing is off the table” and “the site will become more of an ‘amusement’ destination than a waterfront one”***

**We are entering a new period of great vulnerability with the allure of privatization and short term monetization of irreplaceable public assets**

**The abandonment of an unified park vision for this highly strategic public site on the Toronto waterfront would be a tragically short-sighted mistake**

**That evolving ‘Park Vision’ dating back 5 decades is still valid  
It is more needed than ever given our population growth  
Its latent potential is even greater in the current context  
To save it will require powerful public support and commitment**

# Mark Mattson

## Ontario Place – Toronto's Best Swimming Hole





















# Ontario Place Stories

## Karen Carter





# Zahra Ebrahim

## WHAT IS YOUR BEST IDEA?

- Who needs this place and why?
- How could this be a place that brings people together?
- Who should govern?
- Who should be involved in a community design process and why?

# What's To Be Done?

How can we work together?

How can you help?

Next steps . . .





# ONTARIO PLACE FOR ALL

sign up at: <http://OntarioPlaceforAll.com>

Let's work together



# Words of Support from Spadina – Fort York Representatives

Adam Vaughan, MP

Chris Glover, MPP

Joe Cressy, Councillor





[www.ontarioplaceforall.com](http://www.ontarioplaceforall.com)

[www.waterfrontforall.ca](http://www.waterfrontforall.ca)

[www.parkpeople.ca](http://www.parkpeople.ca)



Sign up Today!

