

LOVE PARK

Design Competition

In February 2018, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation launched a six-week long international design competition to produce a bold and innovative park design for York Street Park (as well as Rees Street Park). Located in Toronto's Central Waterfront, York Street Park will be the newest addition to Toronto's growing collection of beautiful parks that serve the diverse needs of local residents, office workers, and visitors in the busy waterfront district.

More than 40 international design teams from 18 cities world-wide submitted proposals during the pre-qualification stage of the competition. Of these, 5 design teams were shortlisted to submit a design for York Street Park.

In July 2018, all 5 proposals for York Street Park were put on display for the public to view and provide feedback for a four week period.

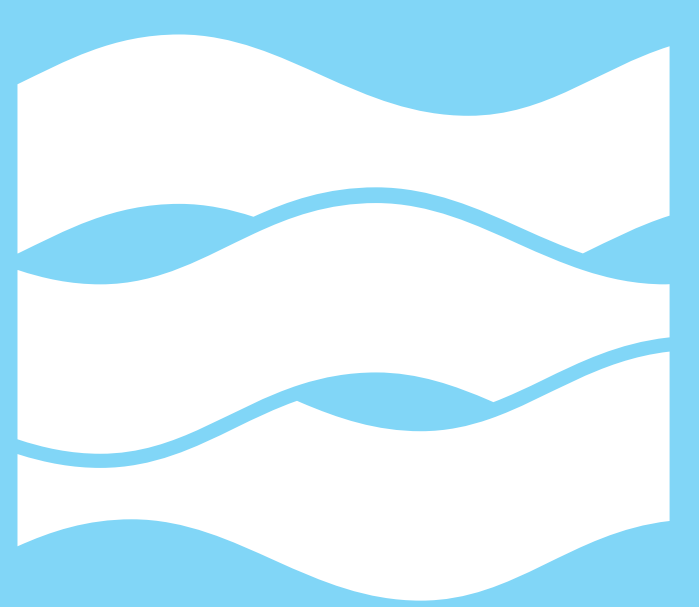
In total, feedback from 1,976 residents from Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area was received on the York Street Park design proposals. Feedback was summarized into a Public Feedback Report and submitted to the jury for consideration, along with reports from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Feedback + Winning Selection

Of the 5 submissions, the public strongly preferred *Love Park* for providing flexible programming space, attention given to maintaining and increasing the existing tree canopy, provisions for ample seating and social space, and the inclusion of an iconic water feature.

The Jury found that this proposal was simple, elegant and timeless. They also noted that *Love Park* engages the beautiful natural materials and elegant forms of a classic urban park with a charming contemporary twist that responds to all the requirements of the brief.

In October 2018, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto announced that *Love Park* by Claude Cormier et Associés was selected by the public and competition jury as the winning design for York Street Park.



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Project Timeline

2018

York Street Park
and Rees Street
Park Design
Competition

Love Park
Winning Proposal
Selected

2019

Design Contract
Awarded

Consensus
Design

Design
Development

2020

Contract
Documents

Tender +
Bidding

Construction

2021

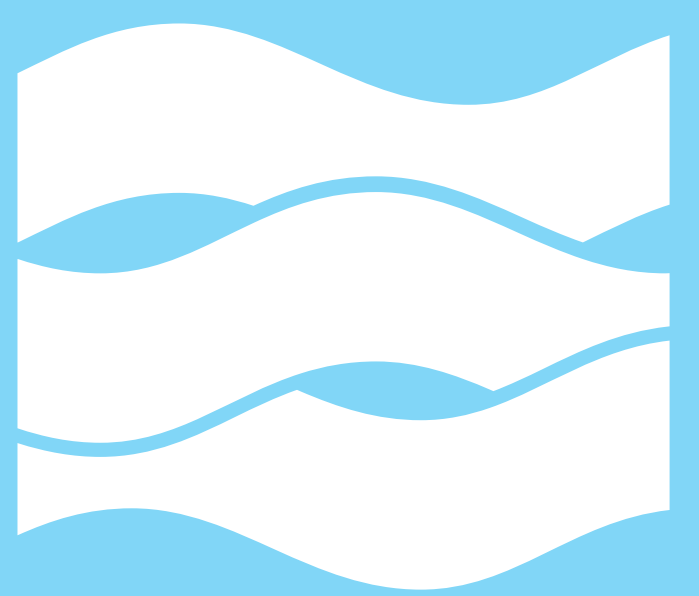
Construction

2022

Construction

Love Park
Opening

Public
Feedback



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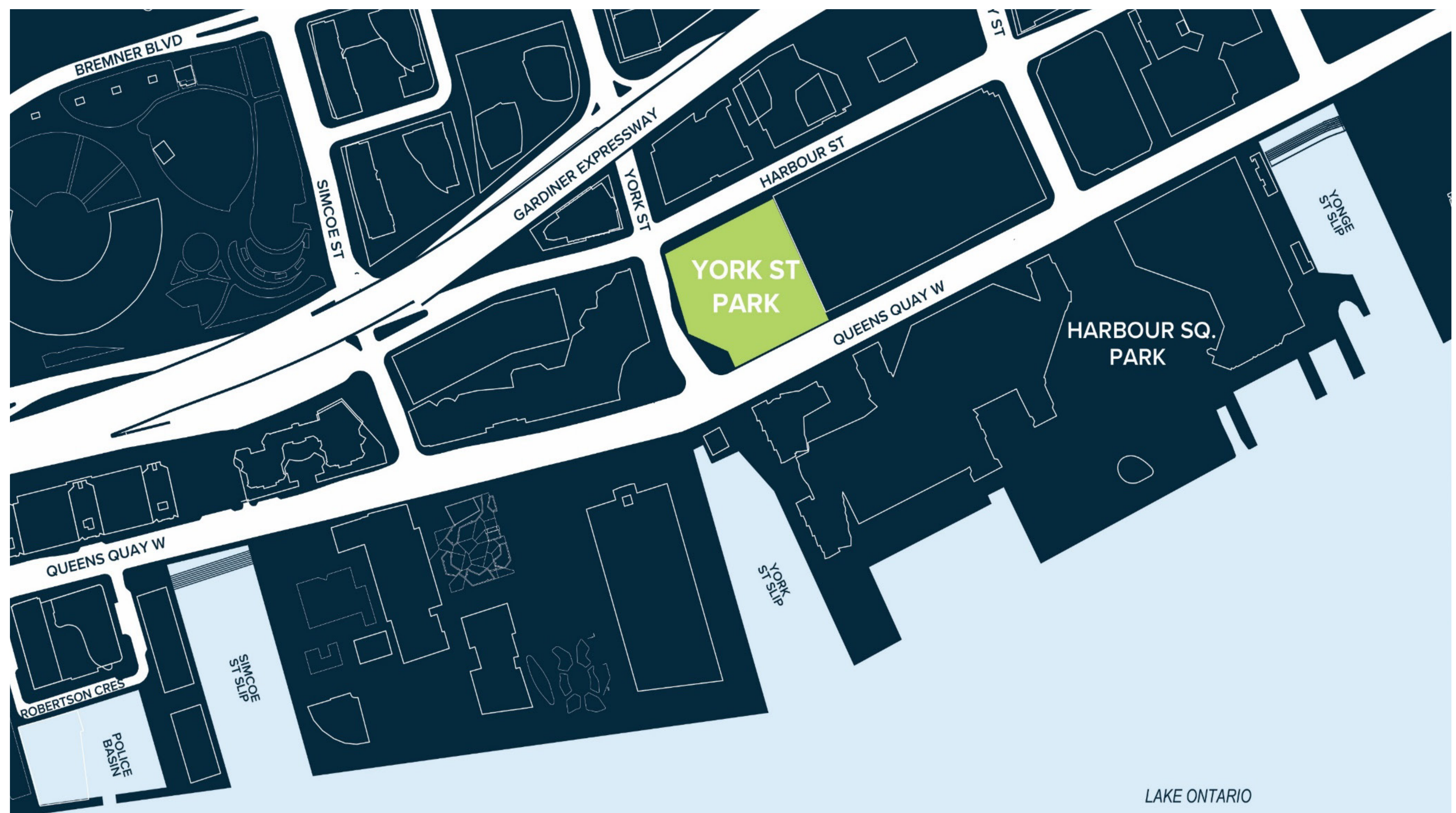


TORONTO

Project Site

The York Street Park site sits between the southern extension of the Financial District, known as South Core, and the York Quay residential neighborhood. It lines the east side of York Street, which is one of the busiest north-south streets connecting downtown to the waterfront.

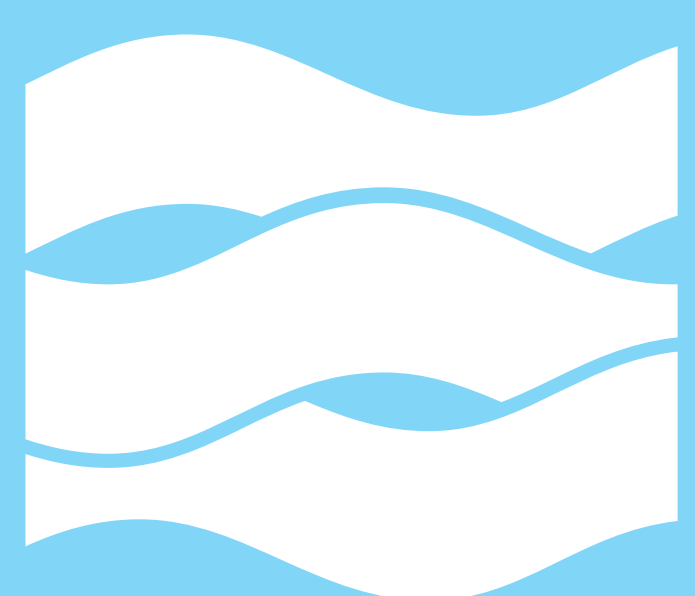
The park will occupy the site of the former York-Bay-Yonge eastbound off-ramp from the Gardiner Expressway, which was removed in 2016-2017. The site is approximately 8,000 square metres (2 acres) in area and is at the heart of all waterfront park lands.



Site Programming

The design for York Street Park effortlessly provides for a balance of needs including the local residents' preference for a green place of respite, outdoor lunch and activity space for the growing working population, and accommodations for crowds heading to Harbourfront Centre and the Toronto Islands. The park achieves this by offering a multitude of amenities and flexible uses for year-round enjoyment by all those who visit, including:

- Ample **green space** and the park's own stormwater management strategy
- **Lunching area** for small groups of up to 25 people
- **Event space** for civic celebration during special events
- **Water feature** that allows visitors to hear and see water
- **Public art** that animates and enhances the park space
- **Pavilion** to provide anchor space in the park
- **Dog relief** space that also reduces the impact of dogs on the park
- Park **amenities** like benches, lighting, bike racks, drinking fountain and wayfinding



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TORONTO

LOVE PARK

LOVE PARK AS GREEN OASIS

The interplay between clearing and tree cover, sun and shade, as well as watching and revealing all combine to make a green oasis of quiet yet stimulating repose. Comfortable for the body and invigorating for the mind, *Love Park* will become

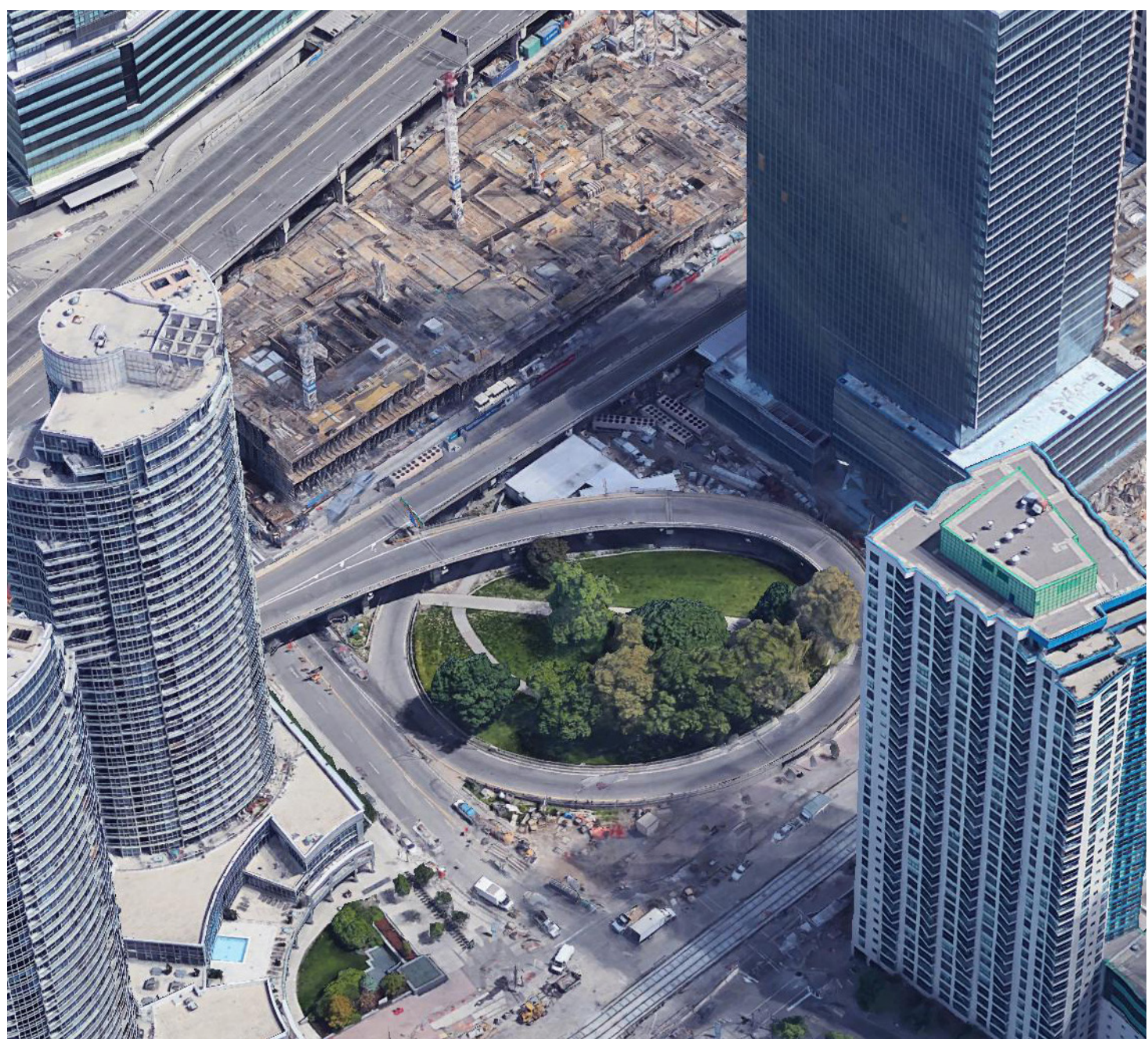
another urban catalyst, similar to other Toronto projects by Claude Cormier + Associés like Sugar Beach and Berczy Park that playfully compel people to give into their heart's desire to simply relax and let themselves feel good.



FROM FREEWAY OFF-RAMP TO LOVE PARK

Most of the building edges flanking the current York Street Park site were designed to turn eyes away from the freeway off-ramp that used to occupy the site. Scales of movement were dominated solely by high-speed automobiles and oversized off-ramp infrastructure, which dwarfed human scale and

the alternative modes of transportation that people are now increasingly using to get around the city. *Love Park* is designed to manifest this shift in civic values, leaving away from the freeway paradigm that prevailed for over half a century to reinforce the pedestrian needs and aspirations of the district.



BEFORE
YORK STREET OFF-RAMP BEFORE DEMOLITION



LOVE PARK AS AN ICON

Familiar and New, Enduring and Timeless

Love Park is designed as a bosk of trees around a clearing with a basin in the shape of a heart. Large enough to be seen from skyscrapers over the park and airplanes landing at Billy Bishop Airport, the symbolic universality of the heart will become a familiar and meaningful icon that will stand out for its contrast against the unbroken urban fabric of towers and structures that extend from the surrounding neighbourhood to the horizon beyond.



CATALPA ISLAND

One remnant flowering Northern Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) located near the centre of the park will be preserved in a highly visible location on an island in the basin. A spectacular tree, it is the last to bloom in the spring succession of blossoming trees, formally marking the beginning of summer. It is showcased off shore in the sunny central clearing, distinguished as a surreal and timeless living folly and signature of the park.

HEART-SHAPED BASIN

A heart aligned with true north manifests the tilted grid of Toronto into the layout of the park. A universal symbol of love when viewed from above, the sinuous edge of the heart-shaped basin at eye-level traces a shoreline to an implied horizon, rendering an experience of vastness despite the compact area of the site. In width and length, the basin measures approximately 40m x 50m, creating a water surface that is about 1.3 times larger than an Olympic-sized swimming pool. The water works for the basin - such as pumps, filters, and ozone treatment systems are located in a non-descript mechanical room at the north edge of the park.

A GARDEN FOR DOGS ON-LEASH

Discreetly perched in the North East corner of the park is an on-leash garden for dogs. The garden measures 15 x 22m. Connected by two accessible hard surfaced walkways that slope up from the park path network, the garden is also reached by a quick stair short cut from Harbour Street. The on-leash dog garden at Love Park is designed to be a first stop for those residents who frequent the park daily to relieve their pets. This aims to keep pup business discreet, and to help protect soft landscape surfaces elsewhere in the park from damage by dog waste.



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN LOVE PARK?

- people watching
- meetups
- sight seeing & taking photos
- picnicking & lunch-eating
- walking & relieving your dog
- informal childrens play
- reading
- relaxing & lying on the grass
- strolling & jogging
- buskers and shows
- pre-game gatherings
- community events
- civic happenings
- festival venue for Nuit Blanche & Luminato
- marriage proposal
- tinder/grindr/pokemon-go meet-up
- winter ice skating (natural ice)
- small model boating
- ...



RESPONDING TO FUTURE COMMUNITY DESIRES

A COMMONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Love Park addresses the community needs of local residents by offering a green backyard that accommodates get-togethers for groups, while also providing spaces for individuals to spend some time alone with their thoughts. Lawn surfaces are sloped for perched views over the pond and park. Children have green spaces on which to run and play. Pet owners also have a dedicated location for the twice-daily relief of their dogs, disguised as a garden to appeal to those who don't need a four-legged reason to enjoy the space.

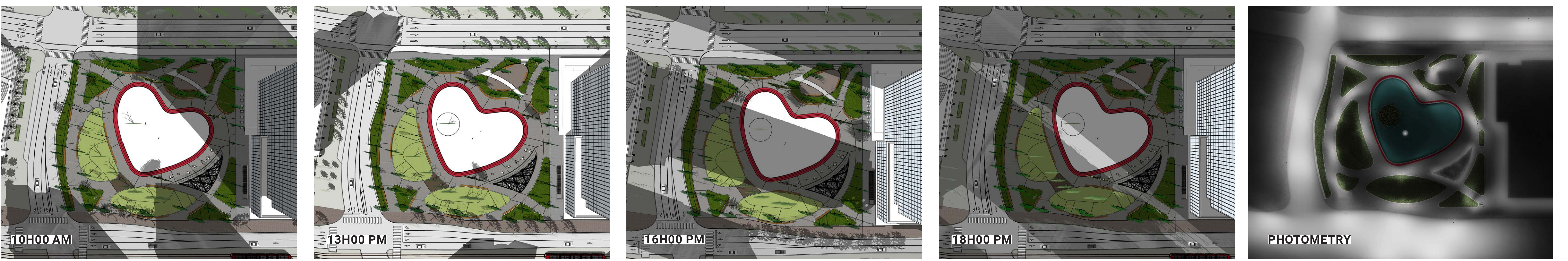
A RESPITE FOR OFFICE WORKERS

The gap in the skyline over the Queens Quay Terminal due south of the heart means the park will be sunniest at around noon-hour, providing a light-filled oasis in which office workers can take a break for lunch. Rippled rays of sunlight reflecting off the pond basin will create a dynamic dappled ambience of sparkling light throughout the park.

A DESTINATION FOR VISITORS + TOURISTS

Love Park will become a space that will surprise people as they discover it, on purpose or by accident, on their visits to the waterfront neighbourhood's key attractions. Prominently located on Queens Quay Boulevard, the space itself will become a postcard vignette among the many signature parks and public spaces that are increasingly defining the experience of the Toronto waterfront.

SUN STUDY: JUNE 21 SOLSTICE

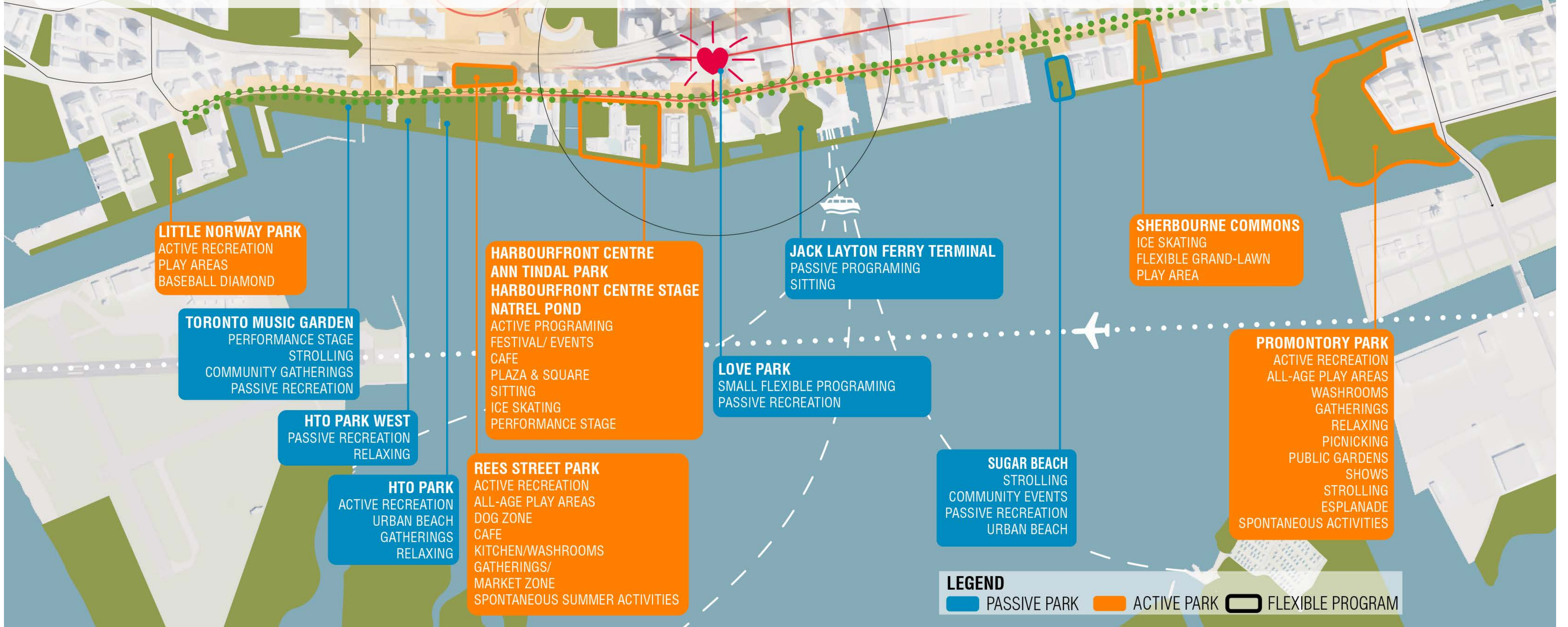


A NEW PARK IN THE HEART

Reinforcing the Existing Park Network

The small and medium-sized parks along the waterfront and in the downtown work together to perform like a single large park, interconnected by a weave of pedestrian routes. Together they shape the emerging identity of Toronto's new waterfront

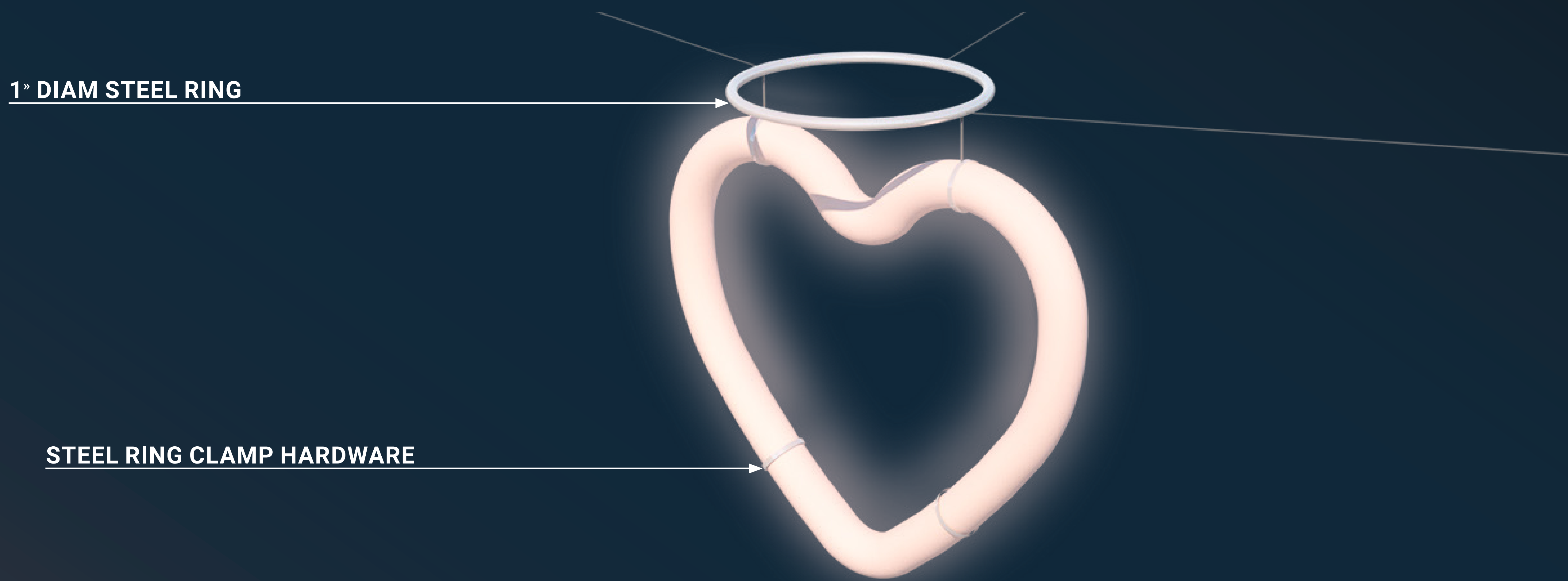
public realm. The addition of *Love Park* will reinforce this park network, and fulfill community needs not currently addressed by other parks in the vicinity, while having a distinct identity of its own.



LOVE IS IN THE AIR: THE FLOATING HEART OF LOVE PARK

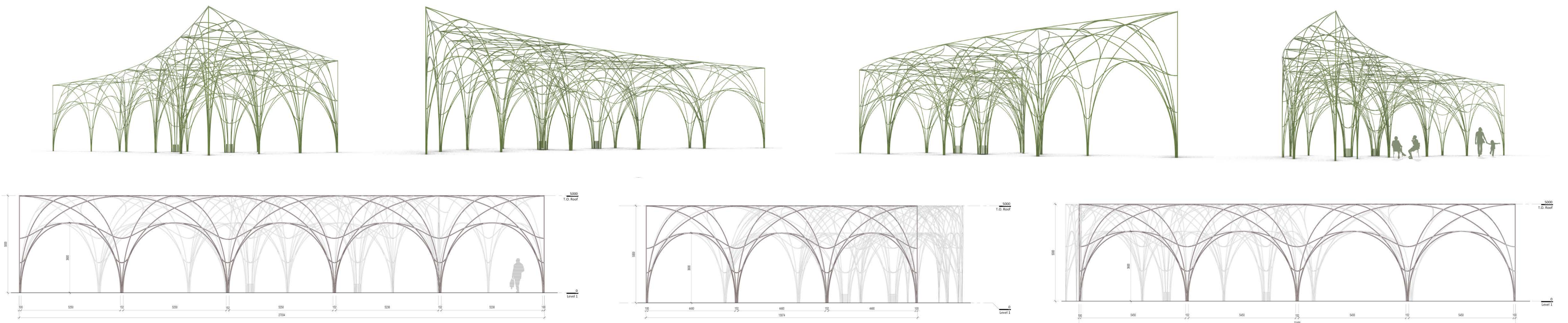
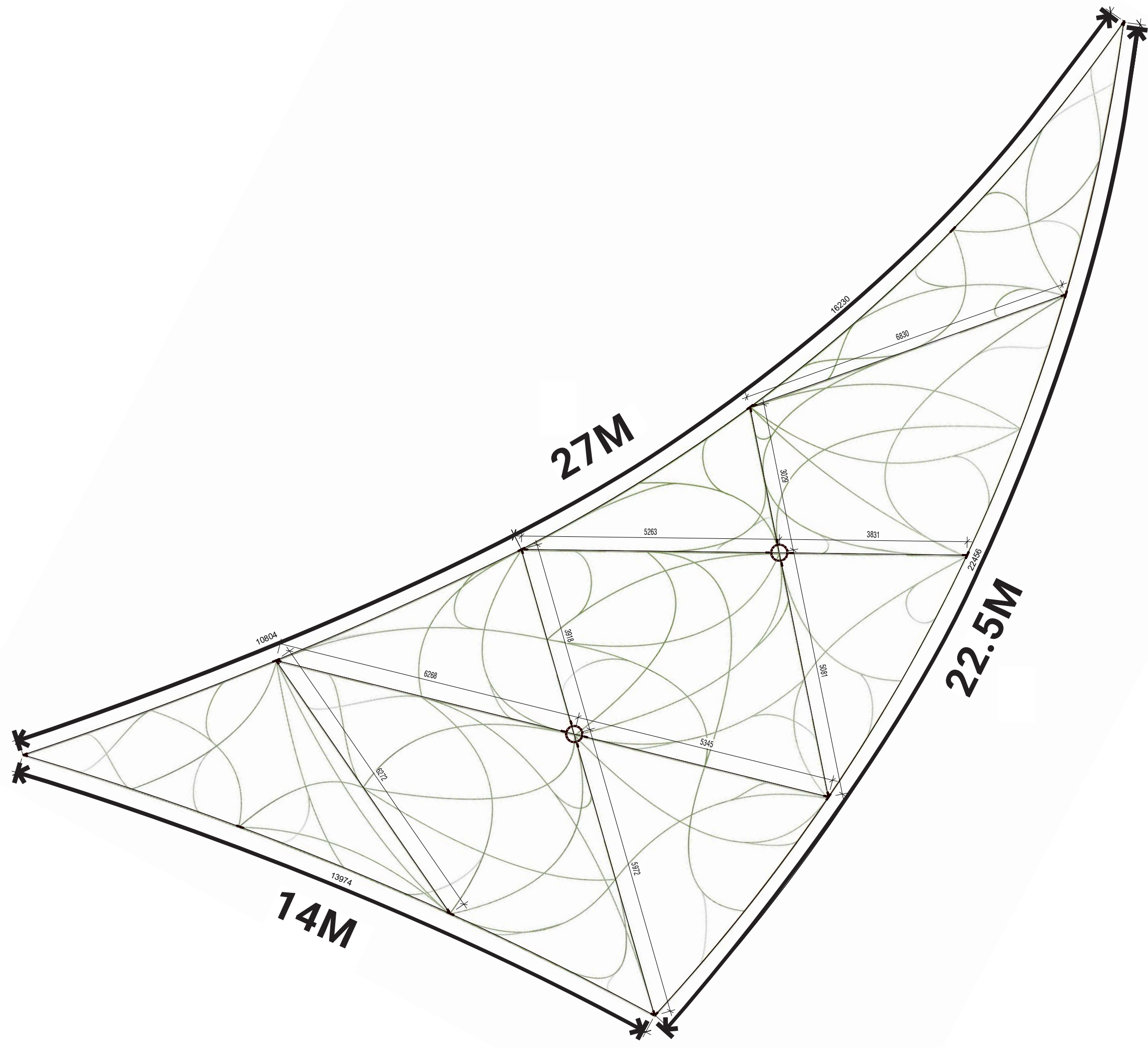
Subtle yet omnipresent, a small illuminated heart is proposed to be suspended 13m above the pond, supported by tension cables attached to three masts discreetly placed among the trees. Almost invisible during the day, the heart becomes a beacon at night, a quiet guardian with the potential to become a potent symbol for the park, the waterfront, and even the city.

Visible from the ground as well as the surrounding buildings, this illuminated feature will assert a silent presence to become a substantial landmark. As a tool for wayfinding or an object of contemplation, the suspended heart becomes a jewel that reinforces the unique qualities and conceptual foundation for *Love Park*.



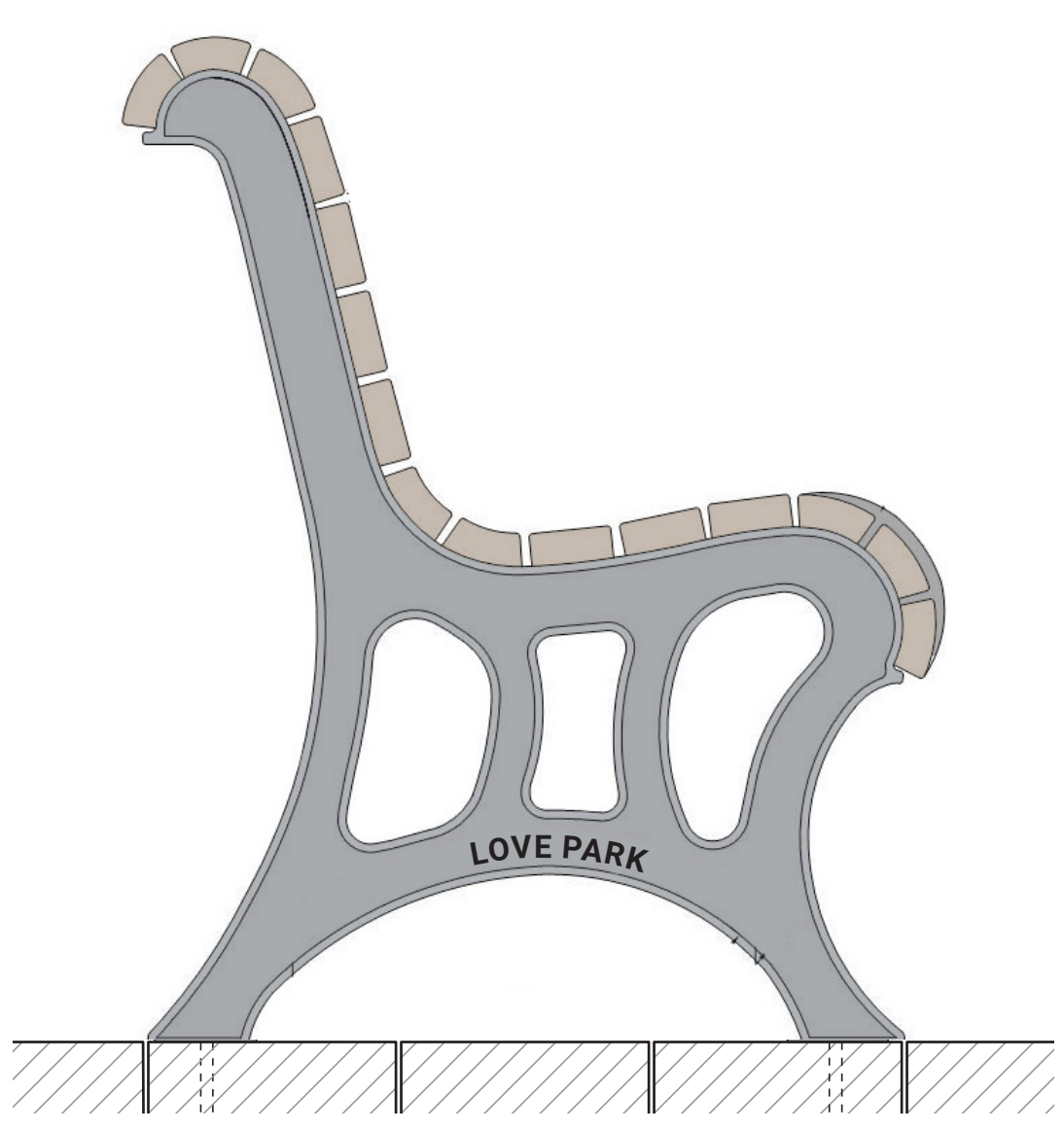
A PAVILION TRELLIS OF INTERTWINED VINES AND ARCHES

The merging of pathways defines the footprint for the *Love Park Pavilion*. Arched sides converge to three infinite corners, stretching perspectives and creating an illusion of impossible lightness. The delicate lace-like detailing of the arches will become more prominent over time as the vines take over the 5m high structure.



LOTS OF PLACES TO SIT

Love Park will provide up to 200m of linear benches and a variety of seating options.



ARMCHAIR 26



LOUNGE CHAIR LOW 12



CONE TABLE 12



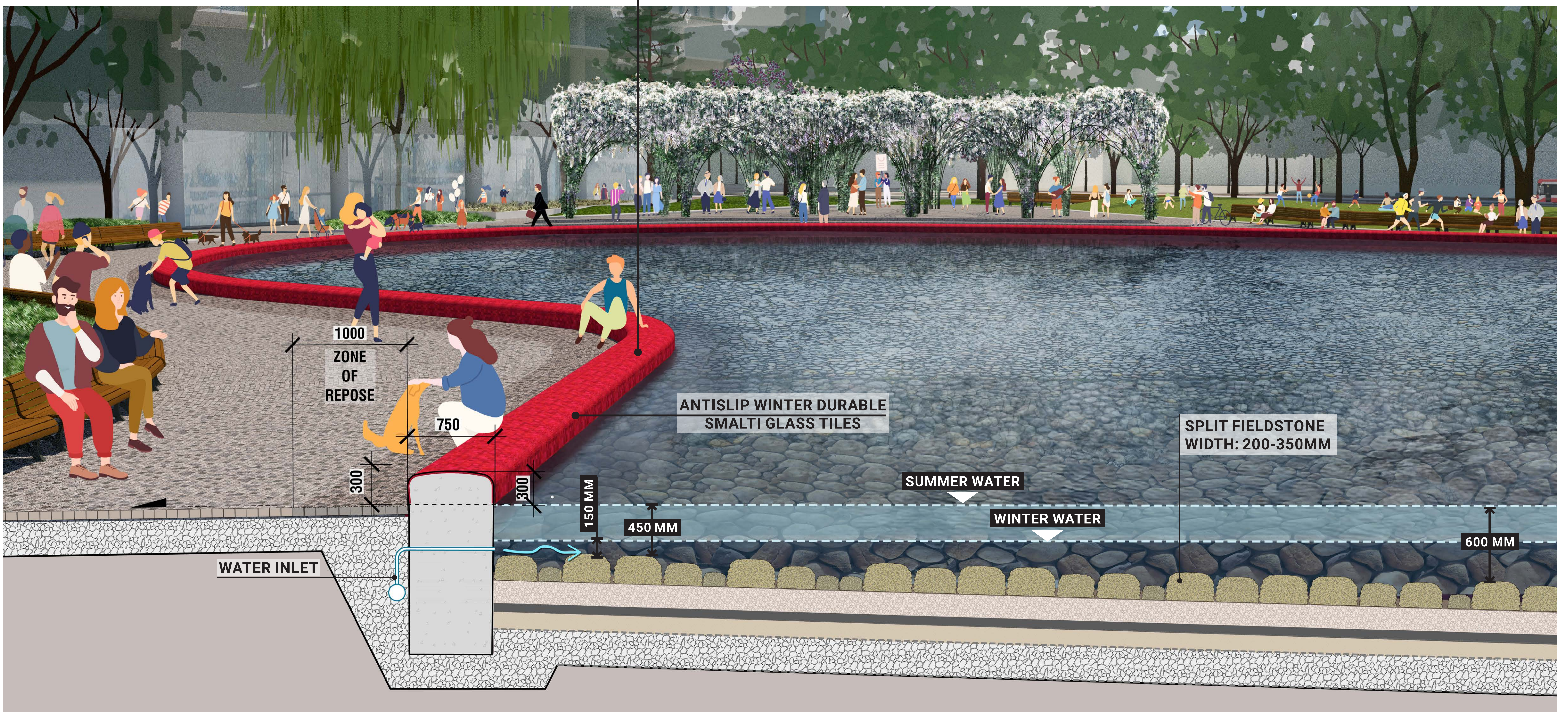
SIDECHAIR 25



CREATING AN ICON: POND EDGE AS PIXILATED ROSE BORDER MOSAIC

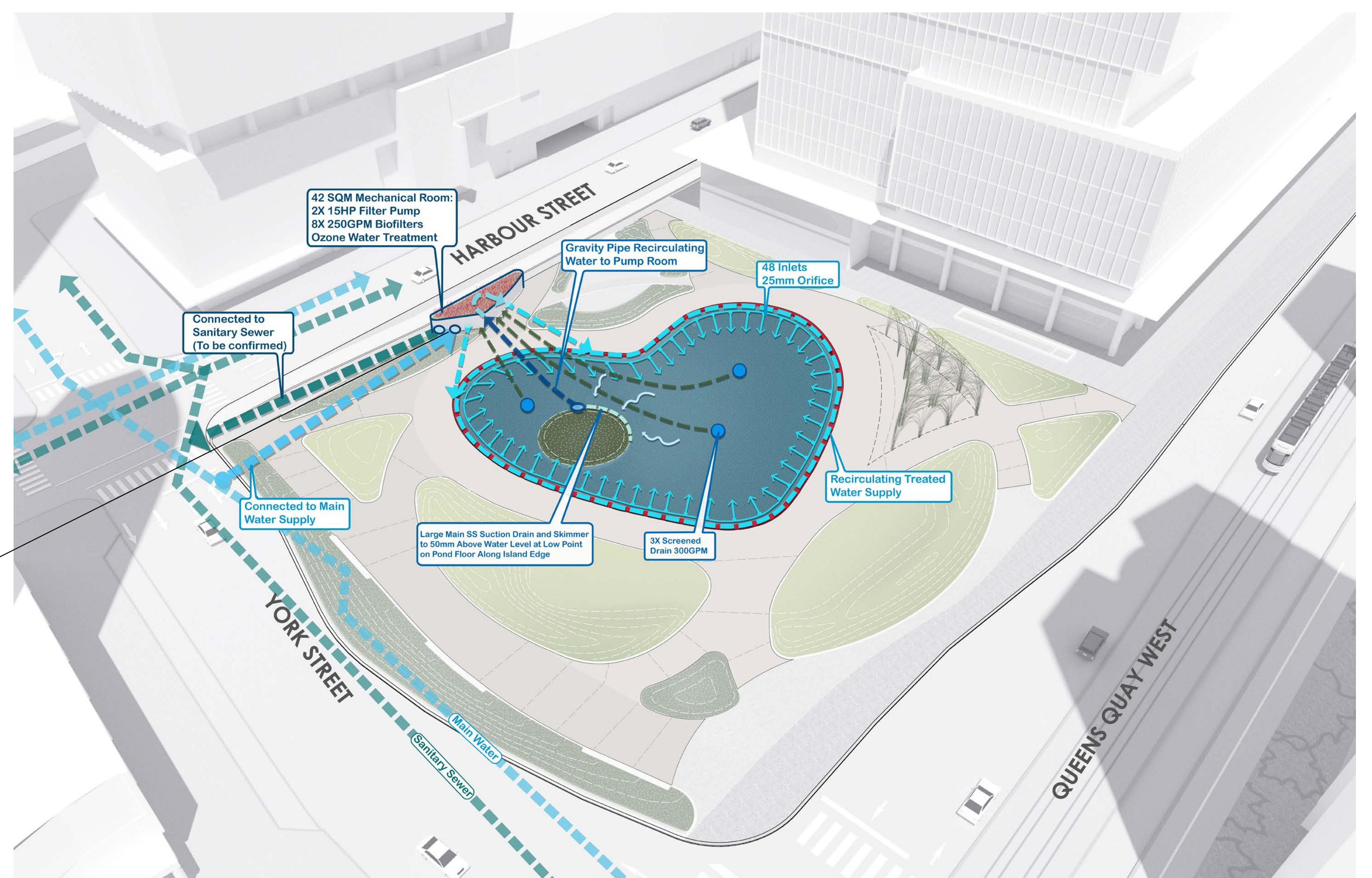


A Metropolitan 'Love Seat' 165 meters long, the edge around the pond at *Love Park* will be distinguished by a pixelated smalti glass tile mosaic border in varying shades of red. Designed for comfort and longevity, the mosaic will be crafted using best practices to ensure its durability across the seasons in what will be a busy public space.

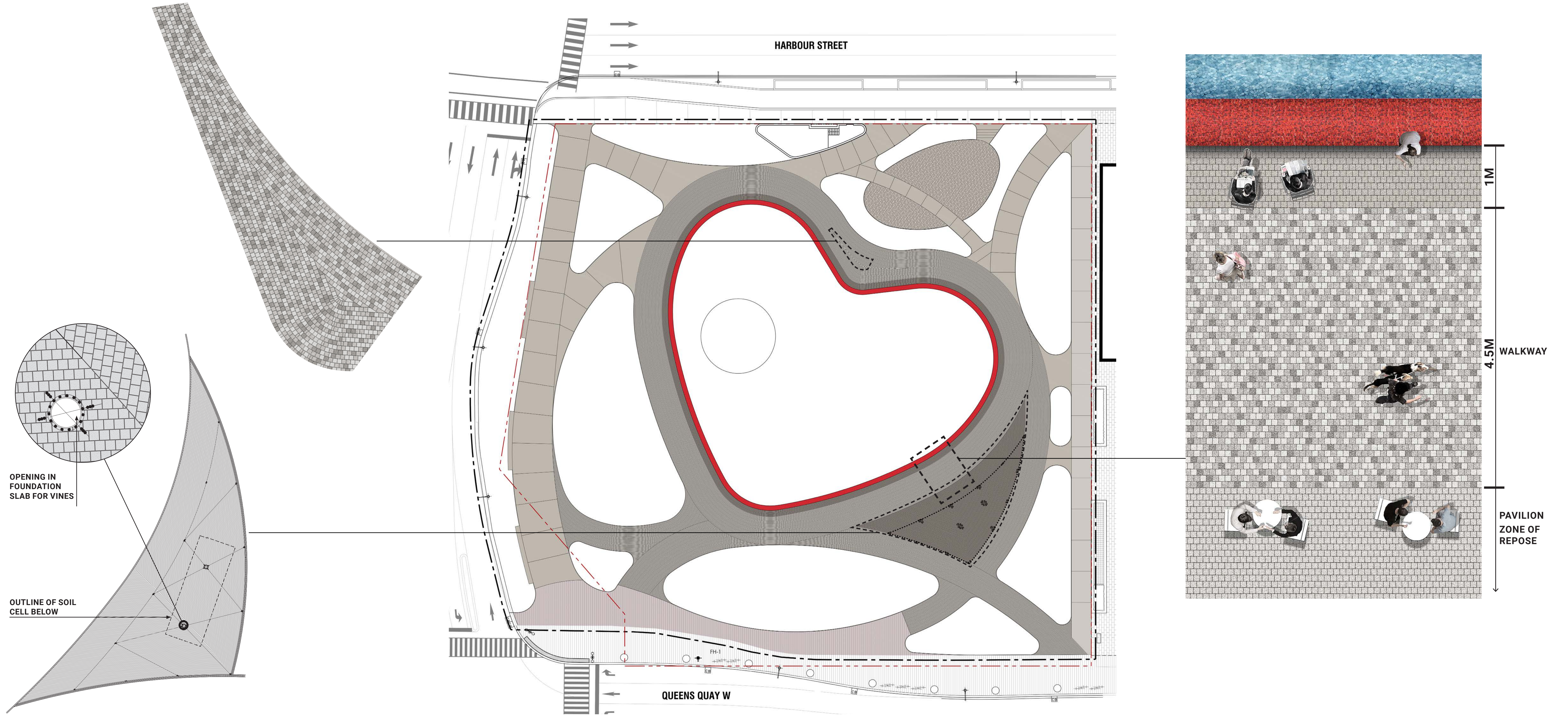


A CHEMICAL FREE 'LOVE POND'

To avoid chemical handling and chlorine typically used to keep the water cleaned and safe, the pond at *Love Park* aspires to use an ozone treatment system that turns air into O₃ eliminating smells and simplifying long term maintenance. The pond's filters, pumps, and ozone treatment systems will be housed in an "invisible" mechanical room clad in polished reflective stainless steel and topped-off with a green roof.



PAVING STRATEGY



A LEGACY OF TREES

Love Park is unencumbered neither by underground parking structures nor slabs. The design takes advantage of this unique privilege (unusual in the city centre) to maximize the needs of the **38 new and 5 preserved existing trees** proposed for the park. With proposed tree species spaced 12m apart, and soil volumes for each in excess of 30m³ each, this treatment for the extensive number of new plantings will help establish a green gateway to the waterfront filled with large mature trunks!

