

MAY 15 2018 // INNOVATIVE DESIGN COMPETITION

REES STREET PARK

Design Competition Brief >

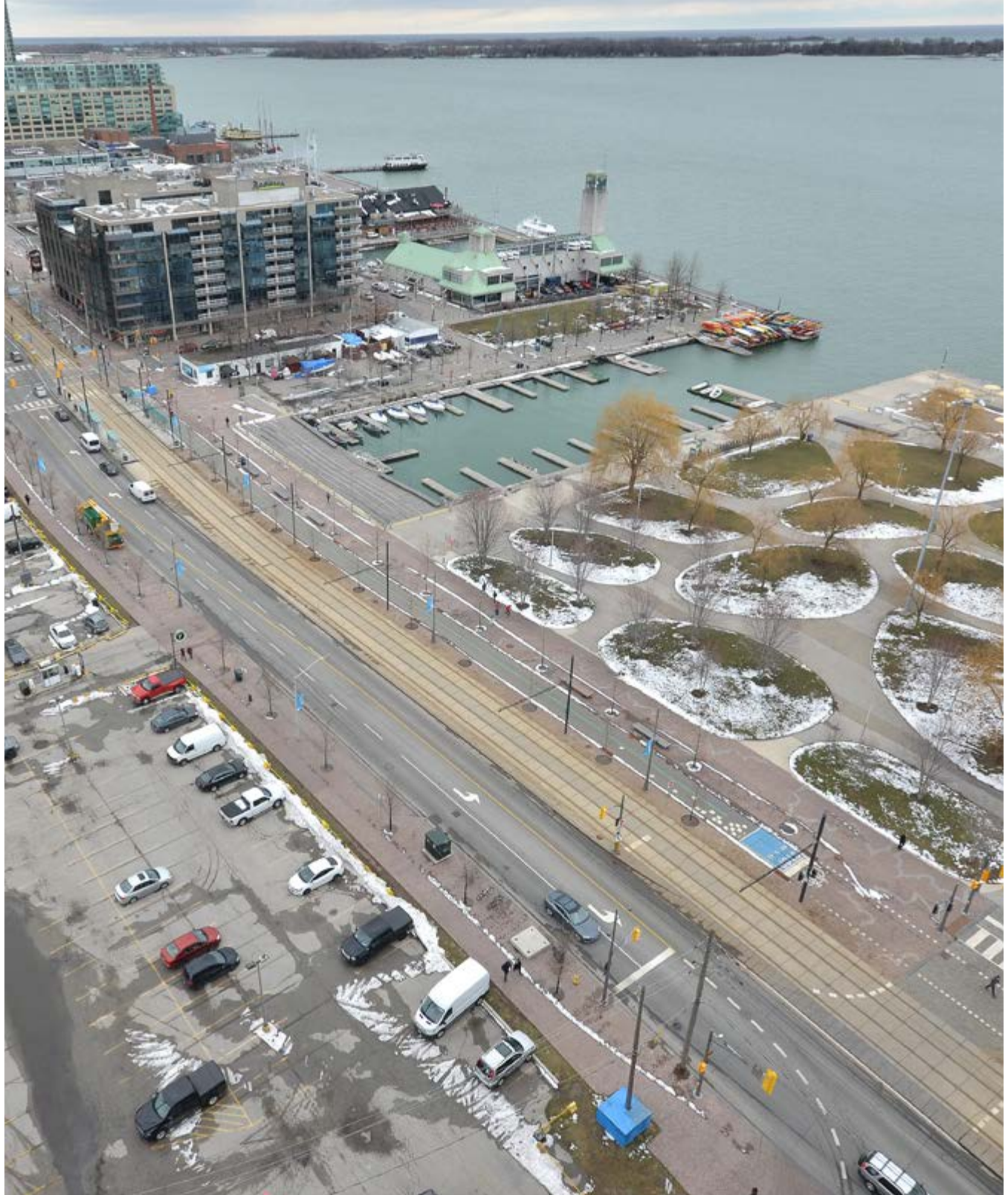


WATERFRONToronto



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	GOALS (FROM THE RFQ)	7
3.	PROGRAM FOR REES STREET PARK	8
3.1	REQUIRED DESIGN ELEMENTS:	8
3.2	SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS	14
3.3	SERVICING & INFRASTRUCTURE	18



Rees Street Park and Queens Quay, looking southeast, April 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation Department are sponsoring this six-week design competition to produce bold and innovative park designs for York Street Park and Rees Street Park in the Central Waterfront. Each of these sites will become important elements of the Toronto waterfront's growing collection of beautiful, sustainable and popular public open spaces along Queens Quay.

Five teams representing a range of different landscape design philosophies have been selected to focus on the Rees Street Park site based on the program set out in this Competition Brief. The program consists of nine Required Design Elements identified through community consultation, as well as a number of physical site opportunities and constraints that must be addressed in the design proposals.

The design competition will kick off on May 15, 2018 with an all-day orientation session – at which the teams will hear presentations from Waterfront Toronto, government officials, and key stakeholders – and a tour of the site. At the end of June, completed proposals will be put on public exhibition during which time input will be solicited from stakeholders, city staff, and the general public. A jury comprised of distinguished design and arts professionals will receive reports from these groups, and then select a winning proposal to be recommended to Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation. Further details are provided in the various sections of this Competition Brief.

The winning proposal will proceed into design development and detailed design. The City of Toronto has earmarked approximately CAD \$10 million for the construction of Rees Street Park.



Lake Shore Boulevard and Rees Street aerial, 1960. Source: City of Toronto

PRECEDENT IMAGES



1. High Line, New York NY



2. Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York NY



3. "In the Grove"



4. Corktown Common, Toronto ON



5. Campus Martius, Detroit MI



6. Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle WA



7. Berczy Park, Toronto ON

2. GOALS

The ultimate goal of this design competition is to produce designs for two parks that respond creatively and sensitively to local needs through the direction provided in this design brief.

Seven high-level aspirations have been identified for York Street Park and Rees Street Park, which should provide the foundation for the park designs, and are to be considered in the methodology for each park design. Outlined below in Section 3 are more specific descriptions of existing conditions and detailed site opportunities and constraints.

The high-level aspirations for the two parks include:

- 1. 21st Century Parks:** York Street and Rees Street Parks should address the issues of a growing city and offer ways to provide compelling new park experiences within the constraints of a dense and fast-growing downtown core
- 2. Diverse Community of Users:** Toronto has one of the most diverse urban populations in the world and both parks should support animation and social activities by a wide range of people, groups and civic organizations.
- 3. Integrated Public Art:** Art is a fundamental part of the vision for York and Rees Street Parks. The design of each park should provide opportunities for innovation and the incorporation of art and/or art programs that are unique to each site.
- 4. New Standards for Sustainability:** York Street and Rees Street Parks should set new standards for sustainability and climate resilience in both park design and operations.
- 5. Complementary and Contextual:** Both parks should complement the existing series of park experiences available on the waterfront while offering new experiences that fill any missed opportunities in existing waterfront parks while being responsive to the adjacent urban context and users in each park area.
- 6. Gateway to the Waterfront:** Both parks are located at key entry points to Toronto's waterfront neighbourhood. As such, both park spaces should fulfill the role of drawing park users and visitors to the waterfront, welcoming people and creating memorable experiences as they arrive and spend time at these key destinations.
- 7. Design Excellence:** Both parks should strive to maintain the standard of design excellence, quality of place, and attention to detail that has been delivered around the waterfront. High-quality, durable materials, innovative technologies and design excellence should be combined with careful attention to the operating parameters of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

3. PROGRAM FOR REES STREET PARK

The design of Rees Street Park should address the discontinuity on the north side of Queens Quay created by the parking lot. Currently, the heart of Queens Quay to the east is separated by the gap created at Rees Street, leaving the area west of the site feeling a world apart. The park should stitch Queens Quay together with a combination of fun recreational uses and a pavilion structure that provides for park concessions such as a café. The park should provide a new recreational space for kids and adults to relax, meet, and play. In contrast to Harbourfront Centre on the south side of Queen's Quay, where thousands of visitors and exciting programs activate the open spaces in the summertime, Rees Street Park should support spontaneous and unprogrammed summertime activities and anticipate heavy urban uses such as skateboarding. The focus in this park is on community, play, innovation, activity.

3.1 REQUIRED DESIGN ELEMENTS:

1. **Play for all ages and abilities:** This park should include specific features designed for play, for example sports courts, a playground, skateboard features. Beyond dedicated play features, the park should have playfulness and opportunities for fun embedded in all designed aspects. Designers are welcome to propose unique program ideas to create recreational animation.



Grange Park, Toronto ON

2. **Interactive Water Feature:** This should include a feature that allows visitors to see, hear and play with water, such as a splashpad, wading area, cooling spray or other typology.



Front Street Promenade, West Don Lands, Toronto ON

3. **Architectural Pavilion:** The building in this park should be a social hub that supports community-based activities and provides a base for organized events. The building should include: space for food service such as a café; a multipurpose community room that includes a domestic kitchen; washrooms to accommodate up to four stalls and separate change facility; accommodation for all service panels and mechanical controls for the park, and a storage room for Parks equipment (hoses, hand tools, portable/movable park elements, etc.) The building should be designed to conceal and accommodate any venting required by the stormwater shaft once it is constructed.



Corktown Common, Toronto ON

4. **Market Zone:** an area that can support up to 25 stalls and their servicing requirements for daytime, evening, and winter market activities.



The Stop's Night Market, Toronto ON

5. **Open Lawn:** A large, open, relatively flat space for pick-up games, lounging and sunbathing, organized events and activities, temporary exhibits, etc.



Central Park, New York, NY

6. **Public Art:** The design should include a proposal for how public art could be integrated into the park.



“Out of The Dark, Fiel”, Hyde Park South , Australia

7. **Accommodation for Dogs:** While Parks, Forestry and Recreation has determined that Rees Street Park does not meet the requirements for the establishment of a Dog Off-Leash Area (DOLA) as described in “People, Dogs and Parks – Off-leash Policy”, there is a high density of dogs in the area. The design for this park should create spaces and places that are accessible for all park users to enjoy. The park design may include innovative design features that accommodate dogs and reduce the impacts of dogs on the park, ensuring that the benefit of the park design is for all users.



Dogs at the park

8. Integrate Lake Shore Boulevard and Gardiner Expressway: The design of this park is an opportunity to beckon to pedestrians crossing from the north that it is safe to cross to a comfortable, welcoming waterfront on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard. The Gardiner Expressway could serve not only as a frame for the site but also as a potential canvas for art/lighting/animation and as shelter from the elements.



The Bentway Park, Toronto ON

9. Park Amenities: The design should include a full spectrum of park amenities including benches, lighting, bike racks, drinking fountain, and wayfinding.



Lighting and benches on Merchants' Wharf Water's Edge Promenade



Rees Street Park, April 2018

3.2 SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The Rees Street Park site was created through landfill between 1924 and 1939. The site served as a storage yard for railway cars and other equipment until the 1980s and has been a parking lot since that time. The lot is currently operated under lease to Harbourfront Centre, however the lease will end in 2020, allowing construction of the new park to begin.

The Rees Street Park site sits at a key location on the waterfront, with frontage on one of the main streets connecting the waterfront to the downtown core. The site is approximately 9,500 square metres (2.3 acres) in area. The key conditions that will affect design are listed below and illustrated in Figure 4.1.

REES STREET PARK SITE

- 1a Parking:** The site currently functions as a surface parking lot that is essentially flat to meet grades of the adjacent streets; it is paved in asphalt and graded to catchbasins within the site. There are no significant high points across the site, although the grades dip along the western edge of the property to meet the retail entrances at the east façade of 350 Queens Quay.

No public parking will be maintained following the site's conversion to a park.

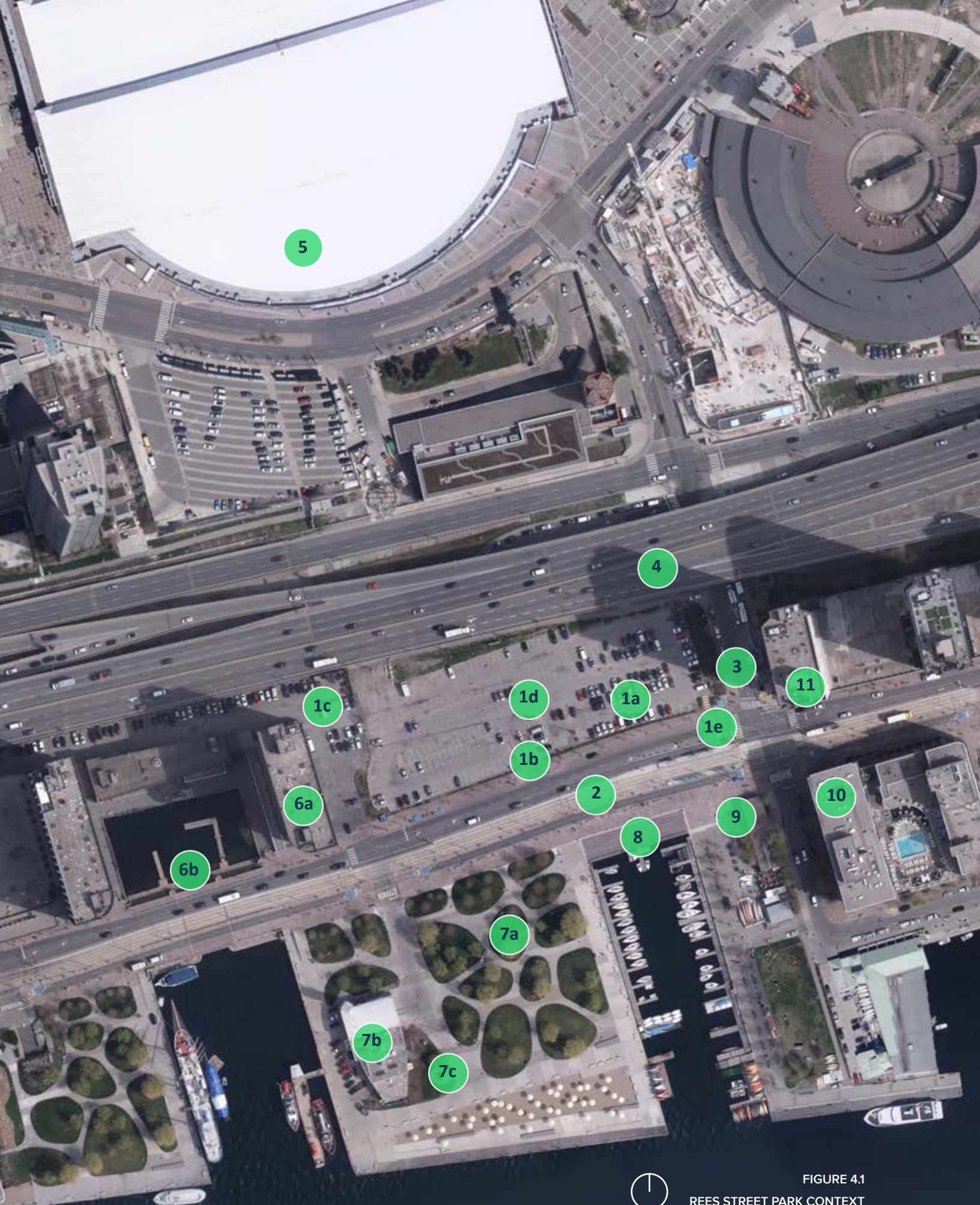
- 1b Driveway:** The red granite pedestrian pavement on the north side of Queens Quay currently has a large curb cut halfway along the frontage to allow vehicles to enter the parking lot. Access to the park for maintenance vehicles should be maintained at an appropriate location but this curb cut should be considered for elimination to improve the pedestrian experience on Queens Quay.

- 1c North-West Corner Parcel:** A development proposal has been submitted for the buildings to the west of Rees Street Park, which could result in the north-west corner parcel being dedicated to the park via an on-site parkland dedication.

The design of the park should include the north-west corner parcel and assume that the dedication is part of the park, however in the event that the dedication/transfer is delayed, this portion of the park design should be able to be delivered as a separate phase or removed from the scope of construction without significantly affecting the integrity of the design.

- 1d Stormwater Shaft:** Toronto Water is planning a 16-metre diameter stormwater management shaft for the Rees Street Park Site. The top of the shaft will sit approximately 1.5 metres above the current grade of the site and can be covered with up to 1.0 m of soil. Proponents may propose a site for the shaft that adheres to the parameters set out by Toronto Water. The shaft will be constructed in 10-15 years. It is critical that the design of the park incorporate the shaft as seamlessly as possible.

- 1e Public Washroom:** This public washroom station is part of the City's Street Furniture Program and is part of a contract the City holds with Astral Media. The washroom may be relocated within the site or may, with the permission of the City of Toronto, be relocated to another location on the waterfront.



5

4

1c

1d

1a

3

11

1b

1e

6a

2

10

6b

8

9

7a

7b

7c



FIGURE 4.1
REES STREET PARK CONTEXT

REES STREET PARK SURROUNDING CONTEXT

- 2 Queens Quay:** With its redesign and construction completed in June 2015, Queens Quay Boulevard is Toronto's main waterfront street and the main frontage for Rees Street Park. Queens Quay features two lanes of east-west traffic on the north side of the street with a dedicated Light Rail Transit (LRT) line in the middle. On the south side, a generous granite pedestrian promenade defined by a double row of trees runs alongside the Martin Goodman Trail, a multi-use recreational trail. Businesses and condominiums on the north side of the street now front onto widened granite sidewalks and a row of new trees.

Two lay-by parking areas along the Queens Quay frontage of the park serve as loading for buses and will remain, delivering large numbers of people directly to the park.

- 3 Rees Street:** Located on the east side of the park, is one of only a few north-south connector streets that go under the railway tracks north of the site. It is from this street that the park takes its name. Since Rees Street offers physical connection northward this street will act a prominent gateway to and from the waterfront from the Arts and Entertainment District to the north.

Proposals should include a streetscape for the west side of Rees Street from Lake Shore Boulevard to Queens Quay that recognizes the importance of this route and the critical importance of the Queens Quay-Rees Street intersection.

- 4 Lake Shore Boulevard/ Gardiner Expressway:** Lake Shore Boulevard West forms the north frontage of the park. In the Central Waterfront, Lake Shore Boulevard runs underneath the Gardiner Expressway, the elevated highway that provides access to and from the City's downtown core. Supporting structural bents punctuate the ground plane in a regular rhythm at the north edge of the future park site. This is also the location of a 3-4 metre wide paved area consisting of an informal concrete sidewalk and asphalt pathway running east-west parallel to Lake Shore Boulevard creating an undefined and uncomfortable pedestrian environment.

When standing on the future park site the views northward are dominated by these two important and constantly busy vehicular routes. The Gardiner Expressway provides a unique opportunity for addressing the scale and proportion of this park. Access for maintenance of the overhead structure and management of storm water run-off from the overhead expressway deck are important considerations at the Lake Shore edge of the park.

Projects such as the Bentway to the west and the Gardiner Public Realm Project to the east should be used as precedent to allow the frontage of this park to integrate into a connected series of public spaces along this corridor.

- 5 Rogers Centre:** As seen from Queens Quay, the retractable roof of the Rogers Centre and CN Tower rises over the deck of the Gardiner Expressway north of Rees Street Park. Lit at night and bright white by day, the architectural form of Roger's Centre roof and the CN Tower dominate the current view of the park from Queens Quay Boulevard.

Proposals should recognize that the park will be seen and represented as part of the iconic skyline that includes the Rogers Centre roof and the CN tower.

- 6a** **350-390 Queens Quay Complex:** a two-tower rental apartment building located on the north side of Queens Quay Boulevard immediately west of the future Rees Street Park site. Two rental towers frame the Peter Street Basin which is a protected waterfront courtyard connected along the Queens Quay Boulevard frontage. The site is the subject of a development application for further residential development and additions to the existing buildings. Design and planning documents submitted to the City of Toronto by the owner of the site in the most recent application for the 350-390 Queens Quay site are available publicly through the City’s development projects site.. These documents provide an understanding of the scope of the proposed development of the site but should not be considered final, complete or approved.

350 Queens Quay is currently occupied by two businesses: a ship chandlery and a Beer Store. These businesses currently have entrances on both the east and west façades. The eastern façade of this building interfaces with the west edge of the Rees Street Park site. The ground floor retail at the east tower of 350 Queens Quay is currently accessed by an asphalt driveway extending north from Queens Quay Boulevard. This retail frontage has little to no delineation between vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Designs for Rees Street Park should propose more appropriate interface between the park and the building. Consideration should be given in the proposals for how Rees Street Park will relate to the Peter Street Basin and how the ground floor of the building could address the park.

- 6b** **Peter Street Basin:** West of Rees Street, the Peter Street Basin is the only location where Lake Ontario extends north of Queens Quay. Surrounded by retail storefronts and twin 21-storey rental apartment buildings of 350-390 Queens Quay, the Peter Street Basin and the public walkway surrounding it are public parkland managed by Parks, Forestry & Recreation.

- 7a** **HTO Park:** Directly across Queens Quay from Rees Street Park lies HTO Park, designed by Janet Rosenberg + Associates Landscape Architects, Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes Inc. and Hariri Pontarini Architects and completed in 2007. HTO Park includes a sandy water’s edge “beach” and a series of hillocks planted with weeping willows and interwoven with paved sinuous walkways.

The position of this iconic park in relation to the future site of Rees Street Park creates a unique streetscape on the waterfront, where the street will pass through parkland on both sides. Designs should take advantage of this condition and respond to HTO Park.

- 7b** **Toronto Fire Station 34:** This station deploys two fire boats used in marine emergencies and fires on Toronto’s Central Waterfront.

- 7c** **The “Last Alarm”:** On the east side of the fire station sits the “Last Alarm” monument dedicated firefighters who have lost their lives in the service of the citizens of Toronto.

- 8** **Rees Wave Deck:** One of Toronto’s iconic waterfront public spaces lies south of Rees Street Park. Designed by West8 + DTAH, the WaveDecks were built out over the water, creating generous new public spaces in areas where sidewalks were previously narrow and congested.

9 John Quay Powerboating/Sailing Centre: The main location for small craft rental, water-based activities and lessons in the Central Waterfront, the Rees Street Slip sees plenty of marine recreational activity and foot traffic. Harbourfront Centre operates sailing camps from this location, bringing large groups of young boaters to the area. Rees Street Park could accommodate some of the day camp activities organized by Harbourfront Centre.

10 249 Queen's Quay West: The Radisson Admiral Toronto includes 157 rooms and conference facilities. Ground floor retail includes: Wheel Excitement Bike Shop & Rentals, Tim Hortons, Shoeless Joe's Sports Grill, Starbucks, Mama Pizza. This building also has a residential component.

11 250-270 Queens Quay: This three-tower condominium complex to the immediate east of the site includes 31 stories with 220 units in each of three buildings. Ground floor retail includes: Pizzaiolo Gourmet Pizza, Harvey's, UPS store, Swiss Chalet and Rabba Fine Foods Grocery.

3.3 SERVICING & INFRASTRUCTURE

The successful Proponent will be required to design the municipal services and they will be constructed and installed as part of the construction contract. Servicing Requirements include:

- 200 Amp Electrical Service complete with electrical panel and cabinet, meter, etc. as per the then most current City of Toronto standards.
- 150mm dia Water Service complete with chamber, meter, back-flow prevention device etc. as per the then most current City of Toronto standards.
- Storm Sewer connection(s) as required by the design.
- Sanitary sewer connection if required by program elements in the Proponent's submission.

The park will include connections required to provide free wireless internet. This service will be designed and provided free of charge by Beanfield Technologies Inc. Coordination only will be required by the successful Proponent.

