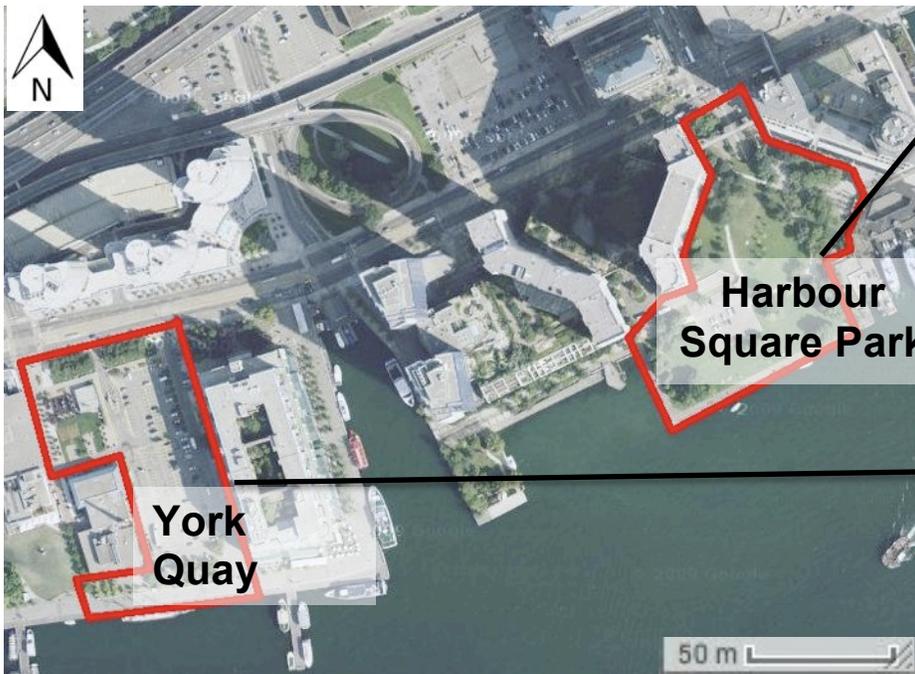


Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to investigate the evolution of uses on two waterfront public spaces. These case studies are located in close proximity on Toronto's Central Waterfront and are similar in size, but reflect radically different planning ideals and design methods.



Harbour Square Park was developed as an afterthought to a public private partnership between the City of Toronto, the Toronto Harbourfront Commission and Campeau Corporation. It is surrounded by high rise, high density buildings that enclose the public realm of Harbour Square Park. The public space has been incrementally upgraded over the years by the City of Toronto. The other study area is York Quay, located between the Harbourfront Centre and redeveloped mixed use Queens Quay Terminal. York Quay was originally a parking lot for these two structures and was redeveloped by Waterfront Toronto in 2006 as a public space designed by West 8 and DTAH. The study area is

characterized by the programming and temporary markets provided by the Harbourfront Centre. The contrasting approaches to public space redevelopment is significant to the research study, which was guided by the following research questions:

- How have the techniques, methods and ideologies evolved in waterfront public space design in Toronto?
- What components drive public use in Harbour Square Park and York Quay?
- What design interventions can improve these two waterfront public spaces in the future?

Research Methods and Evaluation Framework

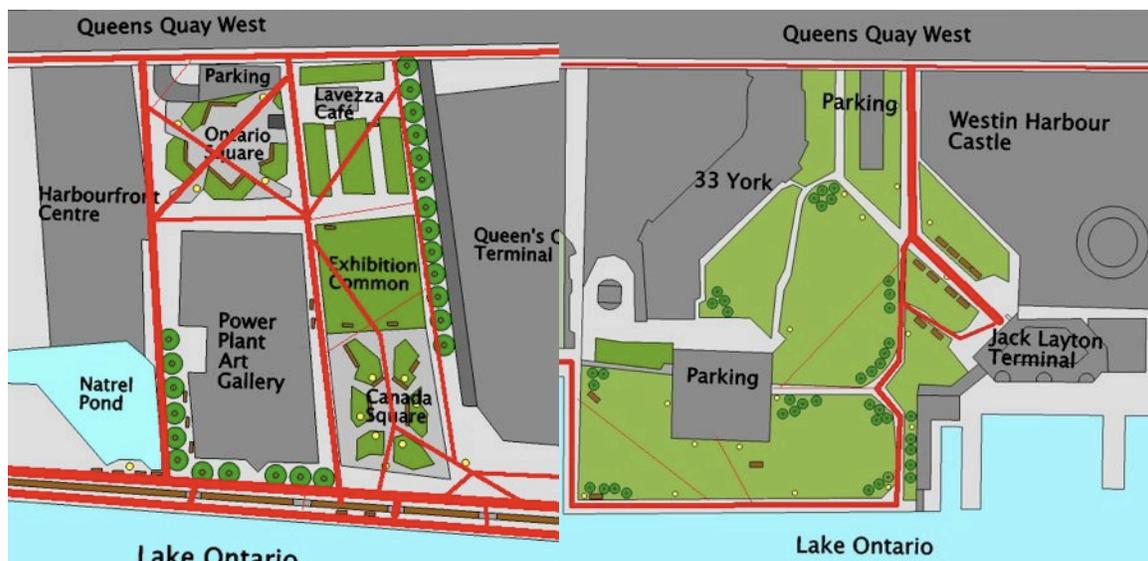
Ten evaluation criteria provided the framework for analyzing the past and present use of Harbour Square Park and York Quay. They were derived from the principles of Urban Strategies' *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework (2003)* prepared for Waterfront Toronto. These principles were reinforced through academic and scholarly sources on high quality waterfront public space design. The report evaluates the *plan for Harbour Square Park (1969)* and the *Harbourfront Development Framework (1979)* through a document analysis. The existing use of each public space is evaluated using direct observation derived from Ewing and Clemente's (2013) research methodology. Through user counts, movement mapping and walk-by observations, the uses of Harbour Square Park and York Quay were documented on two fall days and two winter days. Each case was assessed using the evaluation criteria and shown in the following table.

Legend: ○ Not Achieved, ◐ Poorly Achieved, ◑ Partially Achieved, ◒ Achieved, ◓ Well Achieved

	Harbour Square Park (1969)	Harbourfront Development Framework (1979)	Harbour Square Park (2013)	York Quay (2013)
Intricacy				
Variety of materials				
Flexibility of space				
Plazas, courtyards and gardens				
Animation				
Quantity of users		/		
Types of uses				
Location of uses				
Legibility				
Signage and path network				
Effectiveness of lighting				
Focus				
Public Art				
Types and location of seating				
Natural Features				
Major landscaped features				
Variety of vegetation				
Location and frequency of vegetation				
Public Accessibility				
Street level accessibility				
Transportation diversity				
Mobility awareness				
Connectivity				
Number of entrances				
East – West connectivity				
Surrounding Integration				
Built form scale				
Street level relationship				
Building permeability				
Asset Management				
Land use appropriateness				
Acknowledgement of waterfront				
Microclimate				
Used year round				
Protective amenities				

Results and Conclusions

The previous and existing plans for each site illustrate different redevelopment approaches. These approaches are grounded in the planning ideology of the time. The current conditions of Harbour Square Park are the product of incremental improvements in seeking to address the faults of the original plan. However, these improvements fail to address the core limitations with the public space's plan. The redevelopment of York Quay's public spaces in form of Canada Square, Ontario Square and Exhibition Common was much more



York Quay (left) demonstrates clear site legibility in comparison to Harbour Square Park (right)

effective in creating a vibrant accompaniment to the waterfront.

These case studies illustrate valuable lessons for the redevelopment of public spaces. The findings demonstrate the importance of creating active centres for public waterfront spaces. Harbour Square Park displays this through the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal. York Quay demonstrates this through the public markets at Exhibition Common. Public spaces should also have a good mix of contributing amenities and flexible site legibility. The Enbridge Theatre and Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Harbourfront Centre and Queen's Quay Terminal are valuable sources of activity-generating amenities for the York Quay public spaces. Furthermore, good public spaces utilize materials to improve the

clarity and legibility of the site. These principles are evident in the public spaces of York Quay, which weave a wide range of materials and landscapes throughout the area. In light of these findings, this report proposes the following recommendations:

Harbour Square Park	
Recommendation 1:	
Prioritize public spaces over parking	Remove the surface parking
	Integrate the underground structure better
Recommendation 2:	
Diversify Harbour Square Park's uses through temporary installations	Allow for vendors on site
	Utilize tactical urbanism to diversify land use
Recommendation 3:	
Explore opportunities for redesigning the public space by utilizing existing site strengths	Improve seating and lighting along the waterfront
	Implement the proposed gazebo
	Adhere to the principles behind the Central Waterfront Master plan
	Create a landscape plan for the central grass area of Harbour Square Park
Recommendation 4:	
Redesign the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal area to allow pedestrian connections to the east	Explore alternative locations for the fire house structure
	Relocate staff parking to adjacent structures
	Redesign the service lane to the east of the site as a shared pedestrian vehicle space
	Explore alternative fare collection systems to reduce the need for a large terminal structure
	Remove the fencing surrounding the terminal

York Quay	
Recommendation 1:	
Explore new ideas for programming and temporary events	Monitor public spaces through consultation to generate ideas for programming
	Continue to implement pilot projects based on seasonality, theme and public demand
Recommendation 2:	
Improve the integration of public spaces to Queen's Quay Terminal and Harbourfront Centre	Remove or hide waste receptacles and bollards based on need
	Continue to encourage street level retail
	Create uses that take advantage of the waterfront location