

## Giant park to link Eiffel Tower and Paris monuments

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Kathryn Gustafson, a London landscape architect, will transform the area around the Eiffel Tower  
AUTODESK/ CITY OF PARIS/WSP

Parisians who want a quiet walk have long steered clear of the tourist-packed expanse around the Eiffel Tower with its trinket stalls and traffic. Anne Hidalgo, the mayor, believes that the natives will flock back to stroll in a grand new park that will link the monuments in the west of the city.

The park and its garden bridge will be designed by Kathryn Gustafson, an American landscape architect based in London. The €72 million project will transform the Champ de Mars, the stretch of greenery around the tower, in time for the 2024 Olympic Games. Work will begin next year.

At present, the Champ de Mars and the Trocadero gardens across a bridge on the other side of the Seine are criss-crossed by several roads. The new park will be created by joining them up with pedestrian-only zones.

"We're going to have an extraordinary garden where we'll hear birds singing once again," Ms Hidalgo said as she announced the mile-long stretch that will run through the Left Bank from the 18th-century Ecole Militaire to the Place du Trocadero. Roads will be diverted and a new vista created by turning the polluted Pont d'Iena into a lawn. At 133 acres, it will be the largest public green space in the city.

The aim is to transform an area in which visitors to the tower now have to be herded within a glass security wall because of the terrorism threat.

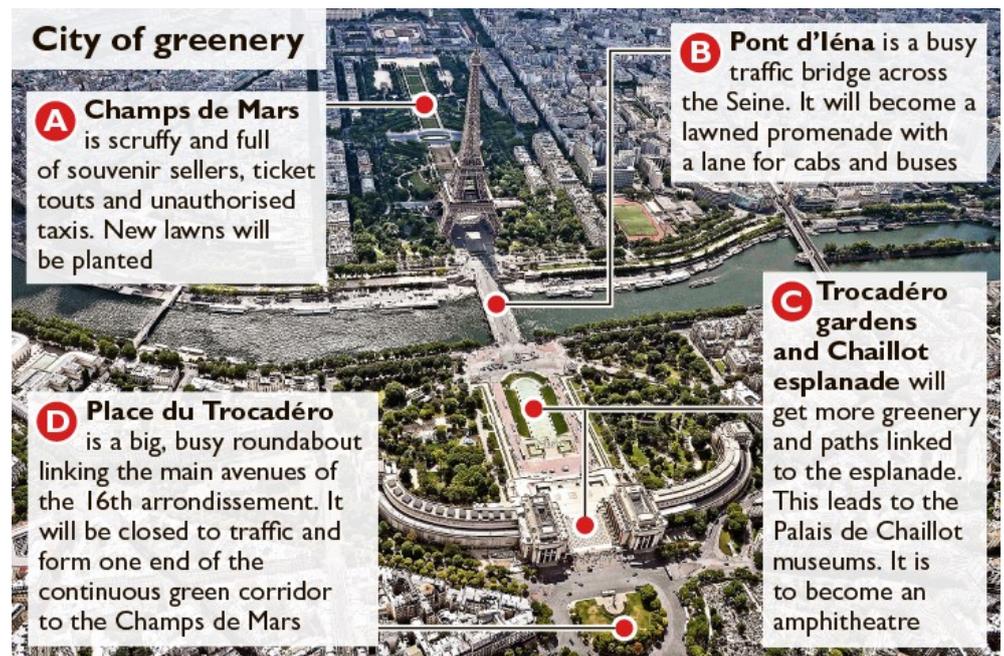
"I was horrified by the state of the place," Gustafson, 68, told *Le Parisien*

"They are not equipped to accommodate the flow of pedestrians and visitors. We must entirely rethink this space. This will be the biggest garden in Paris."

The city will now have its own Hyde Park, the newspaper said, with a little exaggeration.

Gustafson, a former fashion designer who trained in the 1970s at the National School of Landscape Architecture in Versailles, created the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain in Hyde Park with fellow architect Neil Porter.

Her new project, developed by her firm, Gustafson Porter + Bowman, will provide a showcase for the Eiffel Tower, which is visited by 150,000 people every day in high season, and shape the city in the longer term, she said. "I want to do something very simple, very respectful, with this historic axis," she said. "This is such a romantic place, where young people want to be married or kiss. It has to be elegant and balanced."



One of the most spectacular aspects will be a remake of the art deco era Trocadero esplanade. The spot is dense with people taking selfies with the tower as a backdrop across the Seine and it is a favourite with young couples celebrating their marriages. The spot will become an "amphitheatre of greenery" leading down to the promenade bridge.

The project is the most ambitious in Ms Hidalgo's push to give a green feel to the city, which is one of the most densely populated and congested of western capitals.

Since her election in 2014, she has followed Bertrand Delanoë, her Socialist predecessor, in trying to curb traffic, building bicycle lanes and pedestrian zones. Her policies have made her a hate figure for drivers from outside the inner city.

"Paris must keep its international leadership on the environment," she said. "This very dense city needs wide space to breathe."

Jean-Louis Missika, the deputy mayor in charge of urban planning, said that the new design should "restore the wish of Parisians to come back" to the neighbourhood.

*Le Monde* said that the council would measure the project's success "not by a growth in the number of tourists coming to see the tower, but by whether residents of Paris turn up".