2. Campus Martius Park

**Detroit, Michigan**

Landscape Architect: Rundell Ernstberger Associates, Muncie, Indiana

The two-acre (0.8-ha) Campus Martius Park opened in November 2004, transforming what had been a little-used concrete plaza into a venue hosting outdoor movies, live concerts, and a winter-time ice rink. The performance stage platforms can recess into the ground, leaving clear sight lines and opening up space for other uses. Movable park furniture allows for flexibility, and seat walls surround the large central fountain and planting beds. The project even involved rerouting a number of downtown streets to make the area more pedestrian friendly—quite a feat in the heart of Motor City. The municipality worked with the nonprofit Detroit 300 Conservancy to build the project; funding came from corporate, foundation, and individual donors. According to the New York–based nonprofit Project for Public Spaces, which worked with the city and community on the project, since plans for Campus Martius Park were announced in 1999, $500 million of new investment has come into the immediate area, including new restaurants, the Compuware headquarters, and a Borders bookstore.

3. Capitol Plaza

**New York, New York**


Only 40 feet (12 m) wide by 200 feet (61 m) long, Capitol Plaza is one of the smallest projects on this list, but also one of the most heavily trafficked. The mid-block park, opened in 2003, is one of New York City’s “bonus plazas”—street-level spaces added by developers in exchange for the right to build more floors than zoning regulations otherwise permitted. This one came about when New York–based Witkoff Properties built a condominium on Sixth Avenue. While Madison Square Park is close by, Capitol Plaza carves out its own identity, designed to appeal to the area’s youthful creative class. A corrugated metal wall, 100 feet (30.5 m) long, catches pedestrians’ eyes with bright orange paint and elliptical cutouts. The seating options include benches with laptop-sized tables and picnic tables. Bamboo is intended to provide a sense of tranquility and shelter without obscuring sight lines. To help keep the space active, retail shops line an eight-foot-by-100-foot (2.4-m-by-30.5-m) slice of land at the northeast side.