

King-Spadina East Precinct Built Form Study – Status Update Report

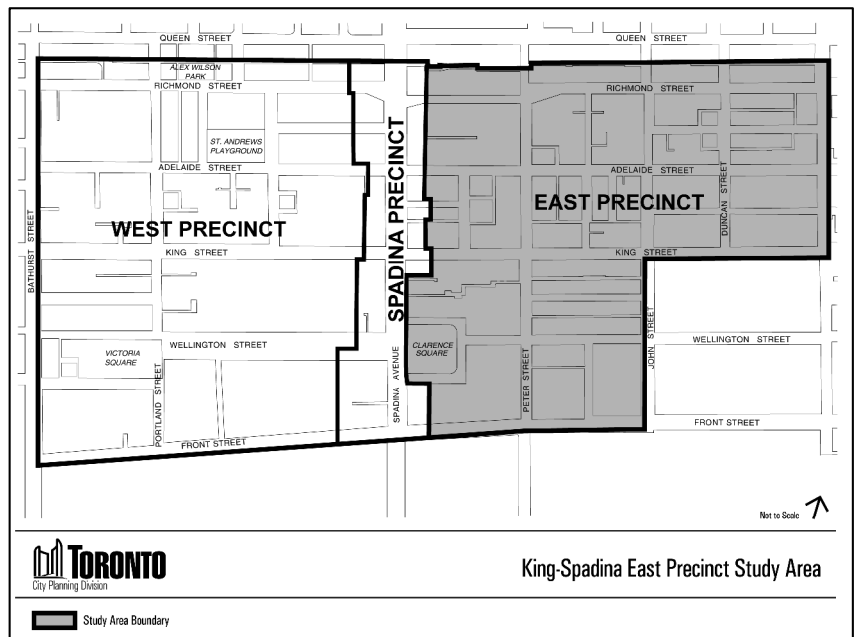
Date:	November 4, 2013
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 20 – Trinity Spadina
Reference Number:	09 123346 SPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

This report outlines the King-Spadina East Precinct Built Form Study preliminary findings and potential directions. The East Precinct is a *Regeneration Area* bounded by Front Street West to the south, Richmond Street West to the north, Simcoe and John Streets to the east, and Spadina Avenue to the west. Major Secondary Plan policy objectives aim to encourage reinvestment in the area for a diverse range of employment and residential uses while preserving and reinforcing the historic scale and character of the area and enhancing the public realm.

With over 30 applications at various stages of review, the East Precinct has a high concentration of tall building proposals. These developments are creating a tower neighbourhood east of Spadina which was not contemplated by the in-force Plan.

The King Spadina Plan was created to maintain and enhance the distinct warehouse and heritage character of the area while at the same time attracting



investment by opening up land use permissions. This plan has been largely successful in repurposing medium scale warehouse buildings and using that unique character to support the branding and visual amenity of the area. The result has been the preservation of many heritage buildings and one of the largest concentrations of creative industries in the City.

However, as with some other areas of the City, this area has evolved and has now effectively become a tower neighbourhood. The Built Form review of the area seeks to re-imagine the King Spadina East Precinct in a way that accommodates tower forms while incorporating the character of the area that distinguishes this part of the City. To do this, preliminary directions are to:

- reinforce and maintain the special heritage character of the area;
- permit tall buildings within the precinct which comply with the City's tall building guidelines (subject to the results of the on-going Heritage Conservation District Study);
- update the public realm plan for the area to guide and secure higher quality sidewalks, public spaces and connections throughout the area;
- complete a parks, recreation and community services study to identify services to be provided in tandem with growth;
- assess hard services, transit, water, sewer and transportation for upgrades; and
- achieve a balanced mix of entertainment, employment and residential uses.

The Built Form Study will refocus the policies for King-Spadina East Precinct to manage new towers, create an infrastructure plan and define the overall capacity of the area to absorb growth while maintaining a high quality of life for residents, employees and visitors. This will be accompanied by clear direction to enhance the quality of the public realm and character of the neighbourhood through carefully planned and managed intensification.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Divisions recommends that:

1. City Council receive for information the report (November 4, 2013) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, entitled "King-Spadina East Precinct Built Form Study - Status Update Report".

DECISION HISTORY

In April 1996 (former) Toronto City Council approved Part II Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments in King-Spadina and King-Parliament (the "Kings") to encourage reinvestment and regeneration in these historic manufacturing districts directly east and

west of the downtown. The Part II Plan for King-Spadina was carried forward as Section 16, Chapter 6 of the new City of Toronto Official Plan (2003).

The major objective of the King-Spadina Plan is to encourage reinvestment in the area for a broad range of uses in a manner that reinforces the historic built form. The Plan objectives are implemented through the Reinvestment Area (RA) zoning that applies to the area, and are supported by urban design guidelines and a community improvement plan. Density limits are not included in the RA zone provisions, rather maximum building heights and various setback and stepback provisions implement built form objectives. The King-Spadina Urban Design Guidelines were adopted by City Council in 1996 and primarily focus on the Plan's identified 'areas of special identity'. The King-Spadina Community Improvement Plan was adopted by City Council in 1998 and provides direction regarding investment in the public realm.

On April 8, 2008 Toronto and East York Community Council directed the then-Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division to undertake the King-Spadina East Precinct Built Form Study:

- “1. to conduct a built form study for the area bounded by Front Street West, Spadina Avenue, Richmond Street West and Simcoe Street in the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area, to determine appropriate heights, massing and physical relationships in the context of, but not necessarily limited to the following:
 - a) The public policy goals and objectives of the Official Plan;
 - b) The goals and objectives of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan;
 - c) The emerging “Living Downtown Study” principles;
 - d) The Heritage character of the area including enhancements to the area's heritage policy framework;
 - e) The maintaining and enhancing of employment opportunities in the area; and,
 - f) The impact on pedestrian safety and the public realm.
2. to hold community consultations with area stakeholders, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, to include residents, landowners, resident and business associations and the development industry; and,
3. to report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council in the third quarter of 2008.”

Staff completed the Study in 2009 and were directed by City Council to undertake further consultation on the study recommendations. Since that time there has been ongoing and increasing pressure for development at heights not contemplated by the study's recommended planning framework, including tall building applications to demolish

and/or build on top of heritage buildings. A re-evaluation of the earlier study work in light of development since 2009 was recommended in 2012 with a view to reporting out to City Council in early 2014.

A link to the 2009 report may be found here:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-21936.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The East Precinct has a large concentration of development applications with over 30 buildings under construction, approved for development, or currently under review (Attachment 1). Development applications are dominated by tall buildings which exceed considerably the height and density of development envisioned by the King-Spadina Secondary Plan or permitted by the Zoning By-law and which do not meet the Tall Buildings Guidelines. The 2003 Official Plan tall building policies (Section 3.1.3) envisioned ways to introduce more tall buildings city-wide. Staff have supported some tall building applications in King-Spadina in acknowledgement of the changing context even though tall buildings were not clearly anticipated by the King Spadina Secondary Plan policy.

New development typically proposes a majority (82%) of residential use, a trend which could compromise the mixed-use dynamic of the area. The neighbourhood is reaching a tipping point as preliminary study work indicates that infrastructure to serve this new population such as daycare spaces, parks and transit have not kept pace with development. Many residents fear that development has already exceeded the neighbourhood's capacity for growth, stating that new buildings are too tall, too dense, and too close together. They have also expressed that the very assets that have drawn them to move into the neighbourhood are now threatened by development. The character warehouse buildings, Theatre Row, and Restaurant Row among other attributes, are key to the neighbourhood's success, yet protection of heritage and character buildings in the East Precinct has increasingly been challenged by development applications that propose tall buildings in their place.

Population and Employment

Due to the high number of developments over the last ten years, growth in the East Precinct has been exponential:

- In 2012 there were 21,900 employees in the King Spadina East Precinct, which is an increase of 9,300 employees, or a 74% increase, from 1996. Over the same time period, employment in the City as a whole increased by only 15% (City of Toronto Annual Toronto Employment Survey, 2012).
- Approximately 9,000 to 10,000 additional employees will be working in the East Precinct if all of the current development applications are constructed. This forecast is based on an analysis of planning applications submitted between January 1, 2008 and October 28, 2013 and is calculated based on 1 employee per

20m² of office use and for all other non-residential uses is calculated at 1 employee per 30-35m².

- There is more employment in the East Precinct than 3 of the 4 Centres in the Official Plan (excluding the Downtown):

Centre	2012 Employment
Etobicoke	8,700 employees
Scarborough	15,400 employees
Yonge-Eglinton	17,700 employees
North York	36,100 employees
Downtown	446,800 employees

Source: City of Toronto Annual Toronto Employment Survey, 2012

Office space comprises the majority of employment uses in the East Precinct (66%, or a total of approximately 308,000m²). Most of this office space is located in mid-rise brick and beam character warehouse buildings, which are increasingly the location of tall building development applications.

Population in the East Precinct is also increasing:

- In 1996 Canada Census reported there were approximately 148 people living in the East Precinct. According to the last Census, population in the King Spadina East Precinct was approximately 3,600 people in 2011. This is an increase of 167% from the previous census in 2006.

Population and Occupied Dwellings in the East Precinct by Census Year

	1996	2001	2006	2011
Population	148	231	1,353	3,616
Occupied Dwellings	101	178	901	2,495

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census.

Even accounting for illegal lofts and potential under counting by the Canada Census in 1996 and 2001, the most rapid population growth has been since 2006 as new buildings have been approved, constructed and occupied.

- Approximately 18,000 additional people will be living in the East Precinct if all of the current development applications are constructed. This forecast is based on an analysis of planning applications submitted between January 1, 2008 and October 28, 2013 and is calculated based on 1.5 people per unit (source for development applications: IBMS/LUISII, October 2013; source for people per unit: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census, Census Tract 11).

- The majority of new development in the East Precinct is for residential gross floor area rather than employment use. According to City records, in May 2013 residential units made up approximately 82% of the gross floor area in new development applications.

Policy History

Since 1996 when the King-Spadina Secondary Plan policies were introduced, the area has experienced significant reinvestment through new construction, conversion of existing buildings, and most recently, development applications for tall buildings which are not in alignment with the general Secondary Plan built form objectives. A number of studies and policy reviews have been undertaken in light of this development pressure, all focussed on directing heights away from major collections of heritage buildings, and looking to carefully locate height in limited areas.

Staff acknowledge the proximity of the East Precinct to the downtown core and the Financial District. This has created a tension that has increased land values and taken development in a direction that is inconsistent with the 1996 vision for the area.

In 2009 staff carried out a Built Form Study for the East Precinct which recommended, among many other recommendations, a two-tiered approach to building heights that would implement a general downward height transition westward from University Avenue to Spadina Avenue. The First Tier heights retain the existing height limit of 30 metres plus 5 metres for mechanical for the entire East Precinct. This maintained the emphasis on the protection of the heritage building stock and scale within the East Precinct and required all applications for taller buildings to proceed only by way of a rezoning.

The Second Tier of height is intended to be granted only if specific built form criteria can be met, as well as adherence to the proposed (but currently not in force) amended Secondary Plan policies as outlined in the 2009 report, including but not limited to:

- Respect for heritage in the immediate context, including podium scale, materiality, proportion and architectural rhythm;
- Preservation of sunlight on parks (Clarence Square Park) and important pedestrian streets (King Street, Queen Street, John Street);
- Conformity with the King-Spadina Built Form Guidelines; and
- Achieving a 25 m tower separation and a maximum 750 sq. m floor plate to address light, view and privacy.
- Implementing a general downward height transition westward from University Avenue to Spadina Avenue, and northward from Front Street to Queen Street.

The original 1996 planning framework which recognized the King-Spadina Secondary Plan area as a *Regeneration Area* was carried forward in Section 16, Chapter 6 of the Official Plan (2002). *Regeneration Areas* are guided by Official Plan land use policy to provide "... a broad mix of commercial, residential, light industrial, parks and open space, institutional, live/work and utility uses in an urban form" (Policy 4.7.1).

King-Spadina Secondary Plan objectives are implemented through the Reinvestment Area (RA) zoning that is supported by urban design guidelines and a community improvement plan. Density limits are not included in the RA zone provisions; rather maximum building heights and setback and stepback provisions implement built form objectives based on the existing heights and context. Major Secondary Plan policy objectives include:

- The King-Spadina Area will provide for a mixture of compatible land uses with the flexibility to evolve as the neighbourhood matures;
- The King-Spadina Area is an important employment area. Accordingly, the retention and promotion of commercial and light industrial uses including media, design and fashion businesses within the area is a priority.
- Commercial activity, including the retail service industry, which supports the changing demands of the King-Spadina Area will be provided for, to ensure the necessary services for the new residents and businesses of the area.
- Heritage buildings and other important buildings within the King-Spadina Area, will be retained, restored and re-used.

COMMENTS

The King-Spadina East Precinct Built Form Study is providing an update to the planning framework and will make recommendations for amendments to the Secondary Plan policy, urban design guidelines, and zoning permissions to:

- address the needs of people who live and/or work in this emerging mixed-use, tall building neighbourhood;
- provide directions for enhanced public realm and new public space;
- guide new development to protect the long term quality of life in the neighbourhood; and
- maintain a balance of employment, residential and entertainment uses.

A Heritage Conservation District Study is underway for the King-Spadina Secondary Plan area (on both sides of Spadina Ave). Final recommendations from that study are anticipated in February 2014, and will be incorporated into the East Precinct study.

Study Schedule

The Study was initiated in early 2013 and a final report to TEYCC is anticipated in the second quarter of 2014 in order to align with the recommendations of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study. A consultant (IBI) has been retained to complete a Community Services and Facilities study by December 2013 to identify service and infrastructure needs for this growing community. The urban design analysis is underway including a detailed block-by-block assessment of existing and anticipated development and public realm improvements, and will also be finalized in 2014.

Preliminary Feedback From Community Consultation

The first round of consultation meetings with the Toronto Entertainment District BIA, Resident Associations, and a separate community consultation meeting were held in June 2013. The second community meeting (November 25, 2013) will focus on parks, open spaces and key findings of the Community Services and Facilities Study. A final round of consultation (Winter 2014) will focus on recommendations for urban design, Secondary Plan Policy, and zoning controls. Comments from the first round of community consultation include:

- The neighbourhood is at capacity
- Residential density is too high and too big
- Buildings are too close
- Protect employment uses, particularly office and non-retail uses
- Protect heritage resources, including Restaurant Row and Theatre Row
- More parks and open space are needed
- King Street car is too slow and street car movements need to be prioritized to decrease travel time on King Street
- Widen sidewalks and plant trees to improve pedestrian experience
- Provide more day care spaces
- Provide more small scale retail for residential population
- Improve subway capacity downtown
- Provide car parking for residential use

Preliminary Policy Directions for the East Precinct

A number of preliminary policy directions are emerging based on community consultation, population and employment statistics, early findings of the community facilities and services work, and block-by-block urban design analysis, including:

- Create three separate sets of policies in King-Spadina for the East Precinct, West Precinct, and Spadina Precinct;
- Require tall building applications to improve the public realm, to provide for community services and facilities, and to create diversity in architecture;
- Amend the Zoning By-law to add key elements of the new Tall Building Design Guidelines in the zoning permissions in terms of massing; tower placement on the site; a minimum 25 metre tower separation; and increased tower separation distances beyond 25 meters to correspond with increasing tower height;
- Require new development to be of a scale and form that complements the historic building stock and structure of the public realm, taking into consideration the immediate context, podium scale, materiality, proportion and architectural rhythm;

- Reduce heights from east to west to create a transition down from the Financial District using the Shangri-La (214m) adjacent to the East Precinct as the elevation mark for the highest elevation, followed by the TIFF building at King and John (157m) as the next elevation mark, and transitioning down to the Charlie building (123m) (Attachment 2) as a means to moderate scale and density, thereby managing population growth;
- Reduce heights towards the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District to prevent shadows on the north sidewalk past the noon spring and fall equinox;
- Create a transition downwards in scale and heights to respect the Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District;
- Incorporate results of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study into the East Precinct final recommendations;
- Limit or prohibit net new shadows on parks (including Clarence Square Park) and limit new shadows on important pedestrian streets (King Street, John Street) with time-of-day standards;
- Re-state and reinforce existing Secondary Plan policy to retain, conserve, restore and re-use heritage buildings;
- Conserve the heritage character of the Richmond, Adelaide and Duncan Street “Warehouse District” through listing or designation of heritage buildings and design new development to respect and contribute to the warehouse character of the area;
- Protect key views through the precinct, such as views of the CN Tower; and
- Improve the public realm including planting of street trees; improvements to the pedestrian, transit and cycling infrastructure; and improving laneways;
- Create a strategy to acquire new park land and open spaces, as well as expanded
- community facilities and services;

- Require new development to result in a net gain of employment gross floor area in the East Precinct, to protect the existing employment mix of light industrial, arts, culture, entertainment and office;
- Identify transportation and servicing infrastructure required to be secured prior to the approval of any increase in development density in order to keep pace with population and employment projections.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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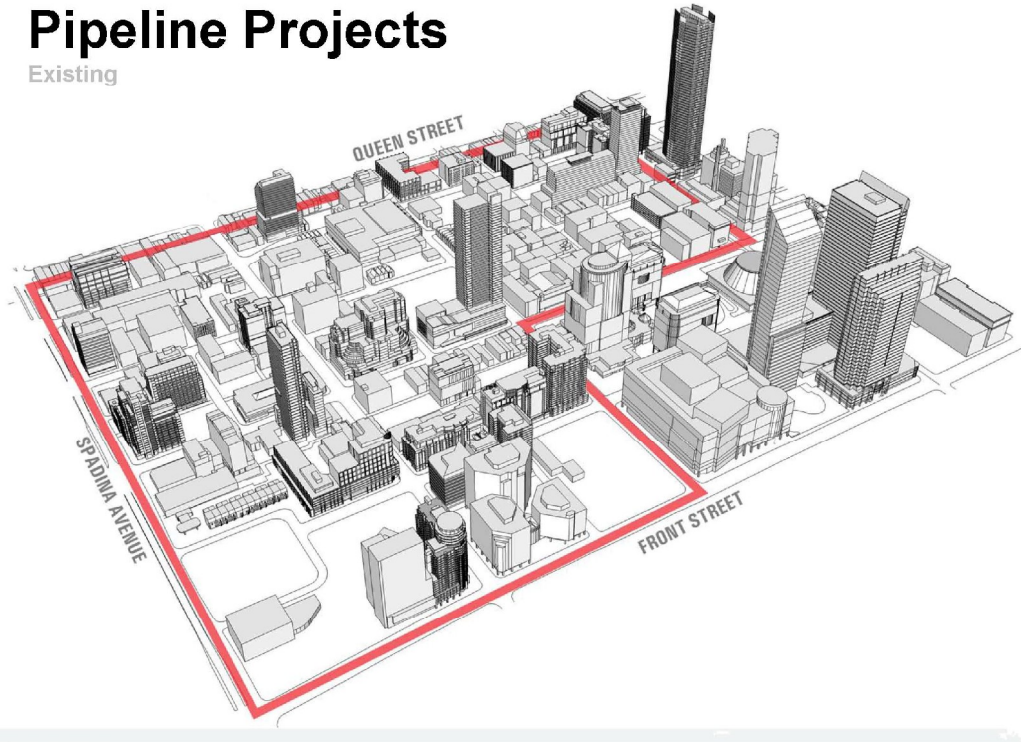
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Development Applications, King-Spadina East Precinct (October 2013)
Attachment 2: Recommended Height Transition Line
Attachment 3: King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study Area

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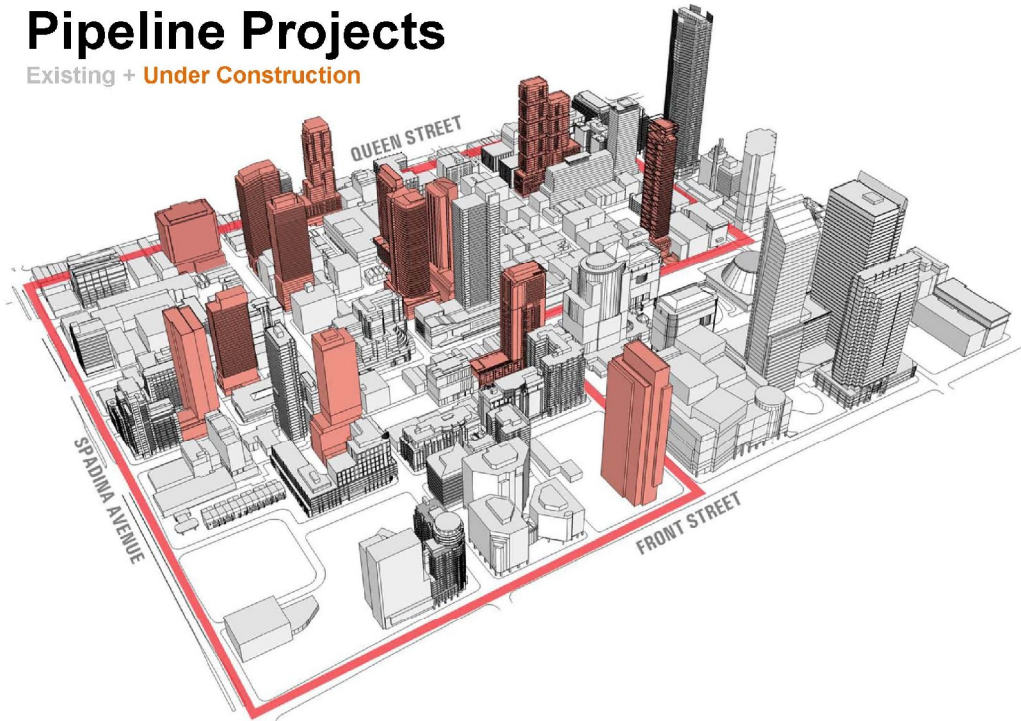
Pipeline Projects

Existing



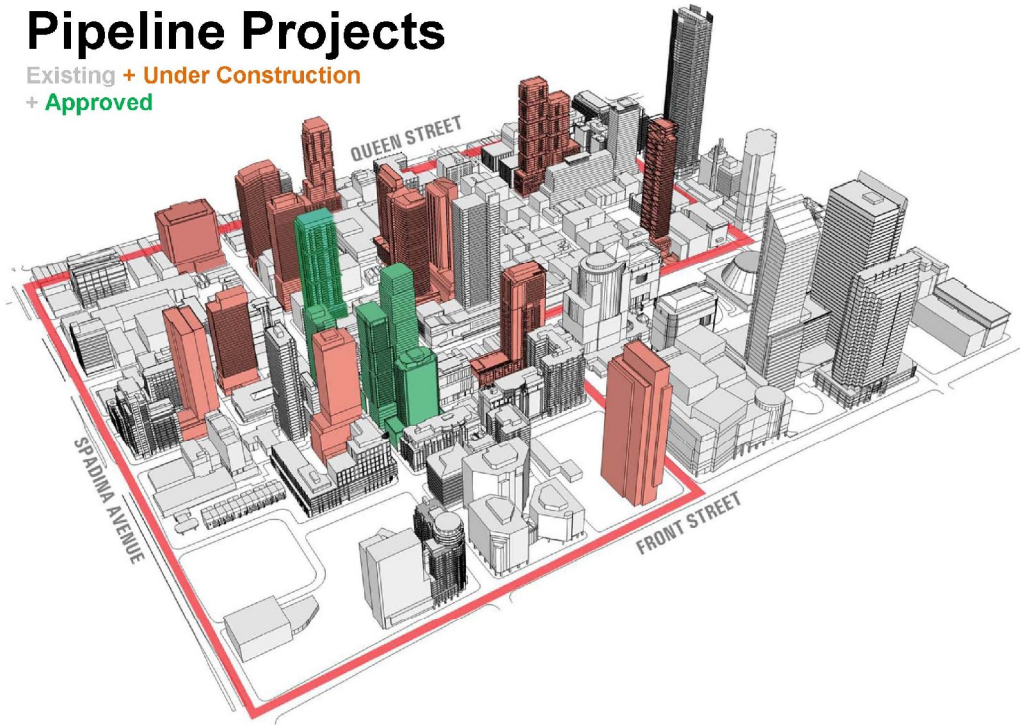
Pipeline Projects

Existing + Under Construction



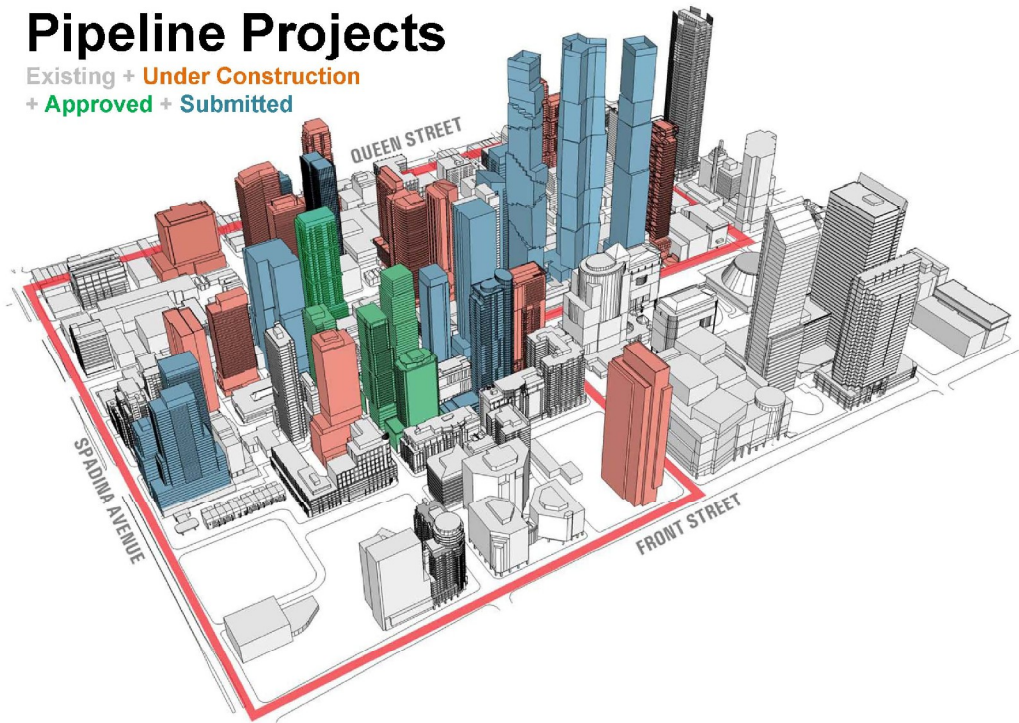
Pipeline Projects

Existing + Under Construction
+ Approved

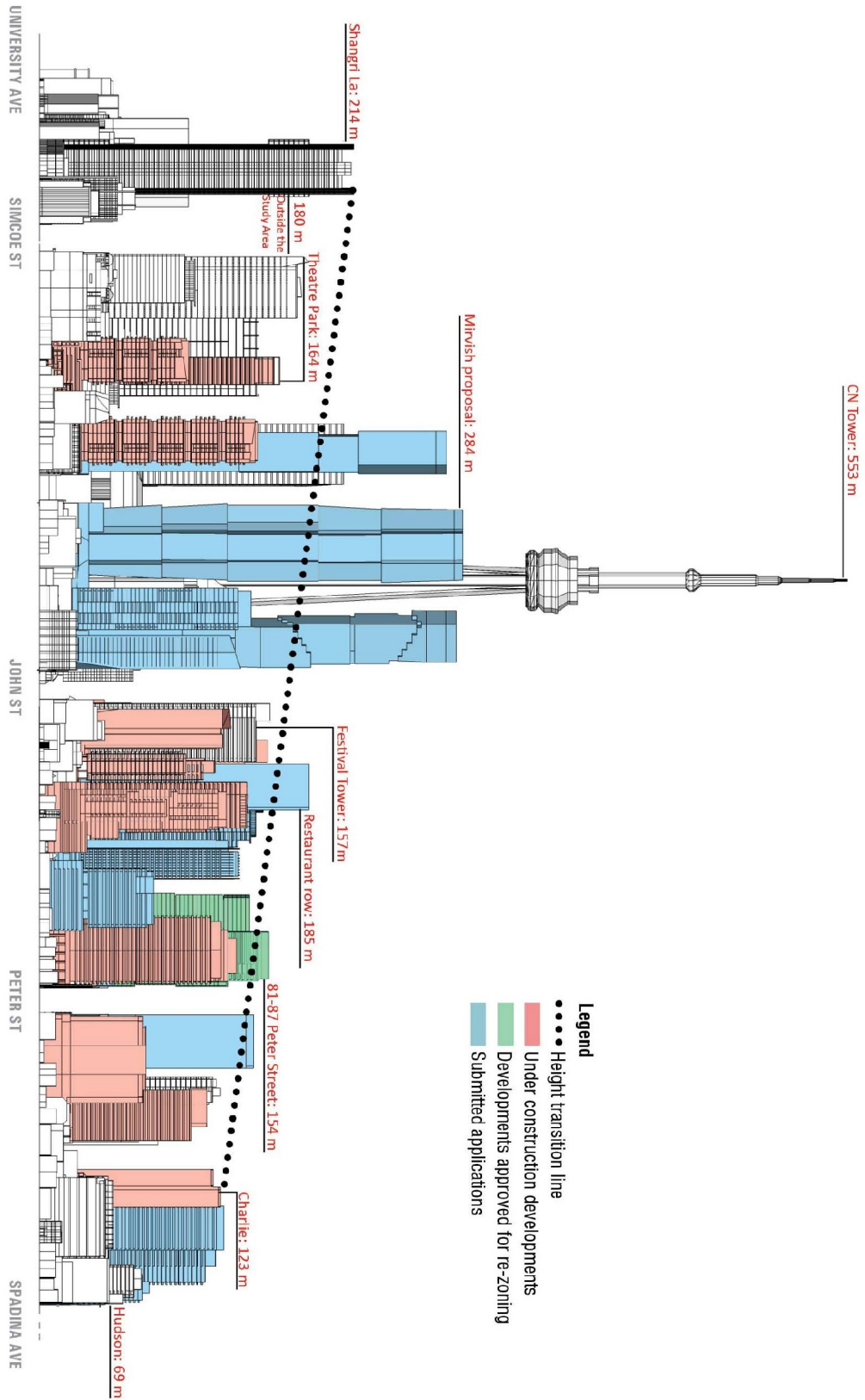


Pipeline Projects

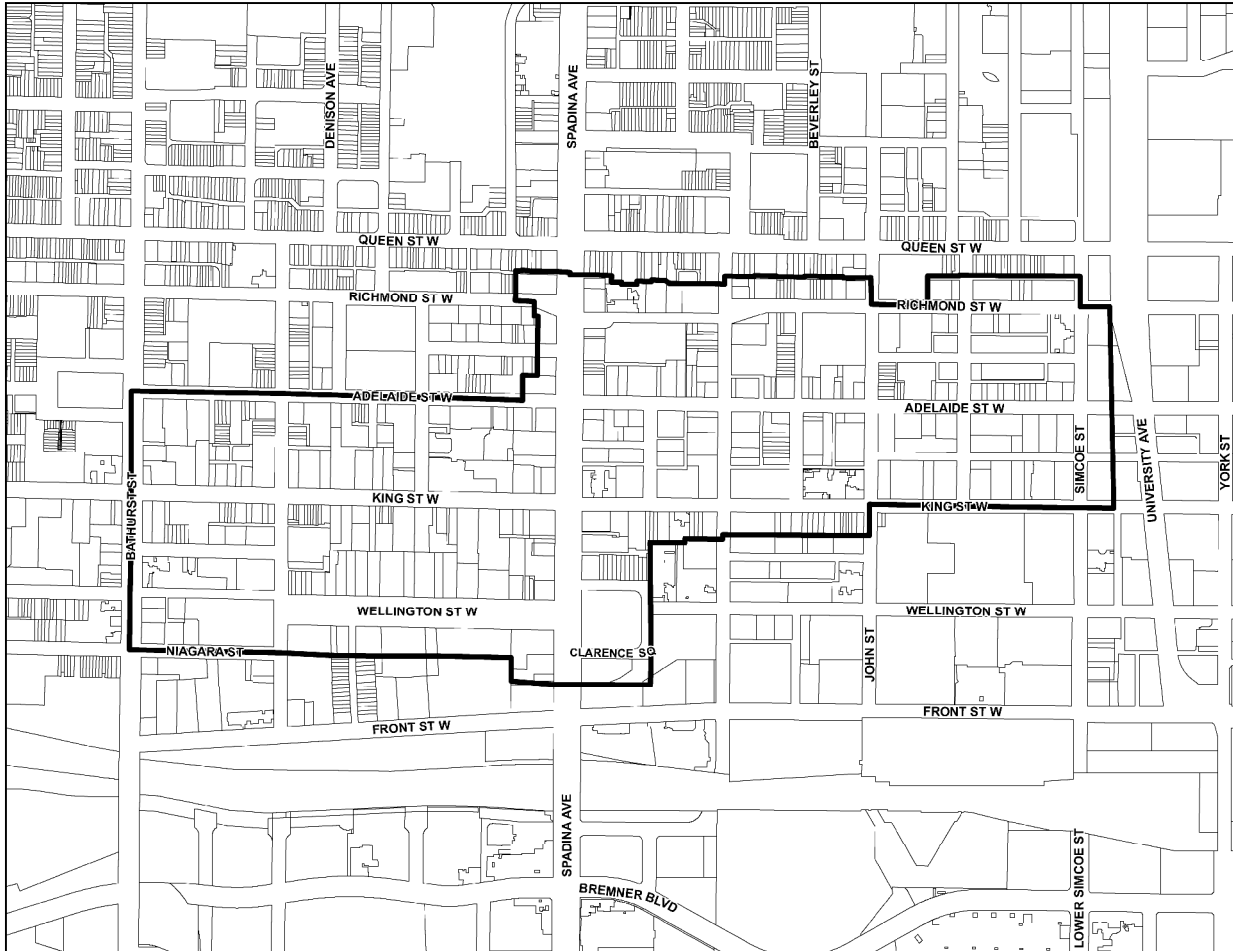
Existing + Under Construction
+ Approved + Submitted



Attachment 2: Recommended Height Transition Line, Looking South from Queen Street Towards the Waterfront



Attachment 3: King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Study Area



 Study Area