



**KING SPADINA EAST PRECINCT
PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY - DRAFT**

**King-Spadina East Precinct
Public Realm Strategy**

DRAFT

August 2014

City of Toronto

King-Spadina East Precinct Public Realm Strategy (DRAFT) - August 2014

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Objectives	3
1.3	Location / Study Area	4
2.	Public Realm Analysis	7
2.1	Existing Parks & Open Spaces	8
2.1.1	Public Parks and Open Spaces	8
2.1.2	Privately Owned, Publicly-Accessible Open Spaces (POPS)	10
2.2	Existing Mid-block Connections	14
2.3	Existing Streetscape Conditions	17
2.4	Public Realm Constraints	18
3.	Public Realm Strategy	21
3.1	Potential Future Parks and Open Spaces	22
3.1.1	Entertainment District BIA Master Plan Initiatives	22
3.1.2	Sites Under Study and Potential Open Space Enhancements	24
3.2	Gateways	26
3.3	Key Views and Vistas	28
3.4.	Potential Mid-block Connections	30
3.5.	Streetscape improvements	32
3.5.1.	Streetscape Improvement Initiatives	36
4.	Conclusion	43



King and Spadina (1901)

1. Introduction

1.1. BACKGROUND

King-Spadina has experienced unprecedented growth in the last few years. Its walkability and proximity to the Financial District, waterfront and other downtown amenities have made it an appealing place for new developments. In particular, The East Precinct of King-Spadina has seen the development of dozens of high-rise residential towers, as well as office and other commercial buildings. In order to manage this growth in the future, Toronto City Council in 2013, requested that City Planning prepare updated King-Spadina Area Urban Design Guidelines, Secondary Plan and Zoning By-Law for the East Precinct. Alongside these studies, a Heritage Conservation District Study (HCD), as well as a Community Services and Facilities study (CS&F) were requested and are underway.

The King-Spadina Area Urban Design Guidelines, Secondary Plan and Zoning By-Law for the East Precinct will be informed by the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study and will be finalized upon completion of that work. This King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy will also inform the King-Spadina Area Design Guidelines when completed.

The King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy is an important document as it includes an analysis of the existing public realm, and provides guidance on how the public realm may be expanded in the future to better suit the needs of a growing population of residents, office workers and visitors alike. The King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy is intended to provide a degree of certainty and clarity for common interpretation, however, as a public realm strategy, they should also be afforded some flexibility in application.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

As the King-Spadina area continues to grow and its population increases, there is a need and desire to revitalize existing parks and open spaces, create new parks and open spaces and connect these spaces together through revitalized and enhanced streetscapes. This Public Realm Strategy will assist in expanding and securing much needed improvements and help determine priorities, which will help achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a public realm structure and corresponding strategy for improvements to reinforce the streets and open spaces within the King-Spadina East Precinct
- Expand the open space network of parks, plazas and parkettes
- Provide different types of open spaces that are well connected, visible, barrier free and well used by the general public
- Improve the streetscape of all streets to create a sense of place, safety and ease of movement
- Enhance the pedestrian realm by providing mid-block connections, widened sidewalks and promenades
- Ensure appropriate relationships between the public realm and built form
- Ensure that new developments provide high quality, coordinated open spaces and streetscapes
- Orient buildings and massing to ensure that the public realm and adjacent properties have adequate access to light, sky view and privacy
- Protect and reinforce key views and vistas

1.3. LOCATION/ STUDY AREA

The King-Spadina East Precinct is the main focus of this study. The Study Area is bound by Simcoe and John Streets to the east and King and Wellington Streets to the south. The western edge generally aligns with the rear property lines of the lands facing onto Spadina Avenue, except for a property south of King Street West that fronts onto Spadina Avenue. On the north side, it generally aligns with the rear property lines of lands that face onto Queen Street West, except for the Bell Media property at the corner of Queen Street West and John Street (Figure 1).

The King-Spadina Area is designated as “Regeneration Area” in the City of Toronto Official Plan. The current land use controls have minimal restrictions on uses and no development density limits. Utilizing defined building envelopes, the intent of the zoning provisions is to achieve new development that is consistent with the area’s historic industrial built form fabric. The King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area has been divided into three main precincts:

- East Precinct
- Spadina Corridor
- West Precinct

The fundamental objective of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan was to attract investment that results in a vibrant mixed-use urban neighbourhood with a unique physical character rooted in its history as a manufacturing and warehouse district.

The most important policy components of the Plan are those that promote a diversity of uses within a defined built form envelope. The Plan aimed at producing a built environment that reinforces this historic character.

This Public Realm Strategy also complements the Entertainment District BIA Master Plan, as well as the ongoing HCD study. This document seeks to reinforce the physical character and identity of the King-Spadina Area and to provide a public realm framework for development.

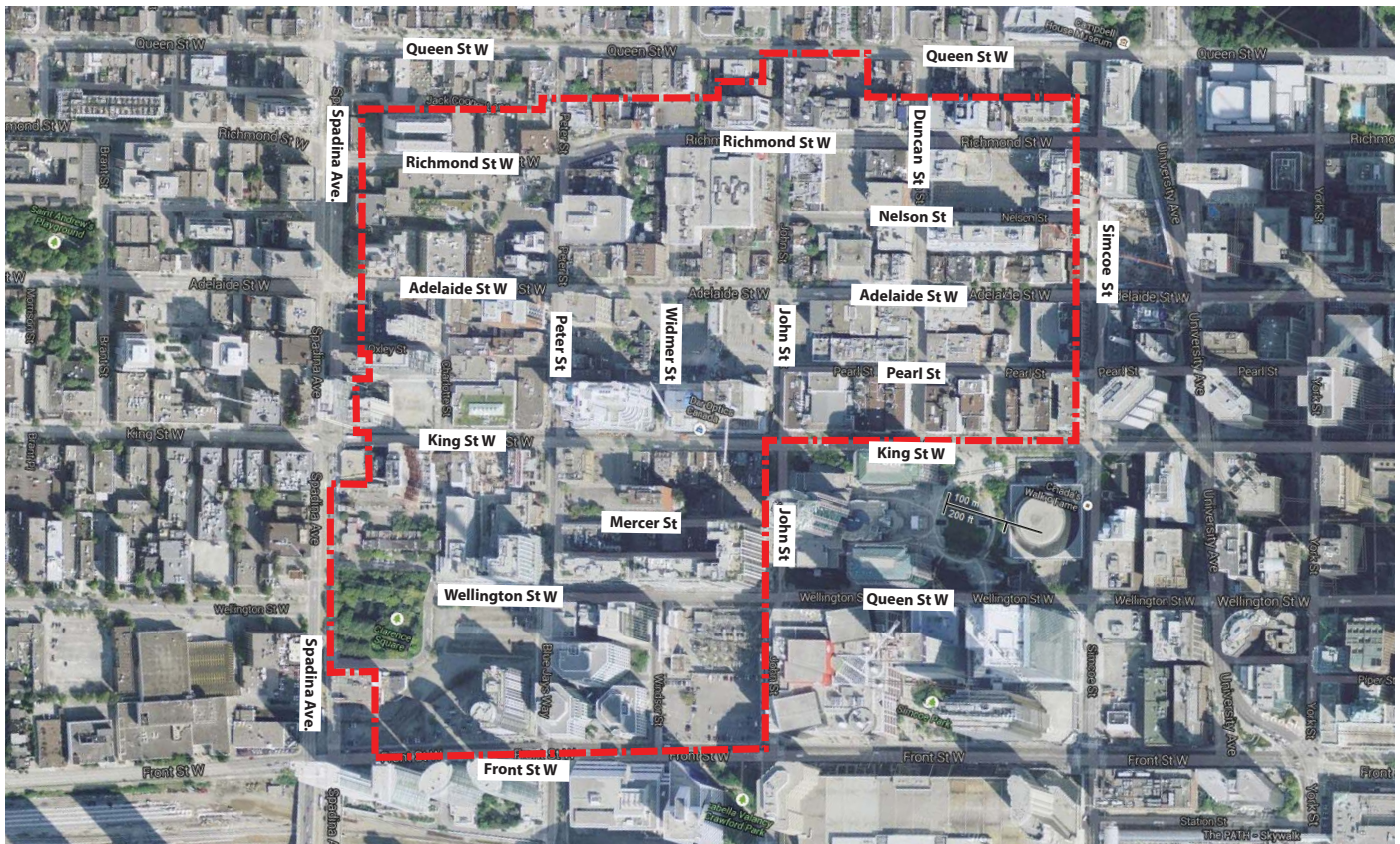


Figure 1. The Study Area



2. PUBLIC REALM ANALYSIS

A successful, high quality public realm is essential to have in dense mixed-use urban environments. Outdoor spaces and streets are where people gather, mingle and play. They can enrich our quality of life through social interaction and leisurely activities. As previously mentioned, the King-Spadina East Precinct has experienced substantial growth over the last decade, resulting in an increased demand for additional infrastructure, including parks and open spaces, as well as better, wider sidewalks. In this chapter, existing conditions, recent public realm improvements, as well as constraints will be discussed in order to identify further opportunities for improving and expanding the public realm. For the purpose of this study, public realm elements have been divided into:

- Parks and open spaces (public and private)
- Mid-block connections
- Streetscape

Public realm improvements have already taken place in the King-Spadina Area through:

- Parkland dedication through development applications
- Improvements to existing parks and open spaces
- Providing privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) through the development applications review process
- Creating new and/or enhancing existing mid-block connections
- Streetscape improvements through development applications and/or Capital Works

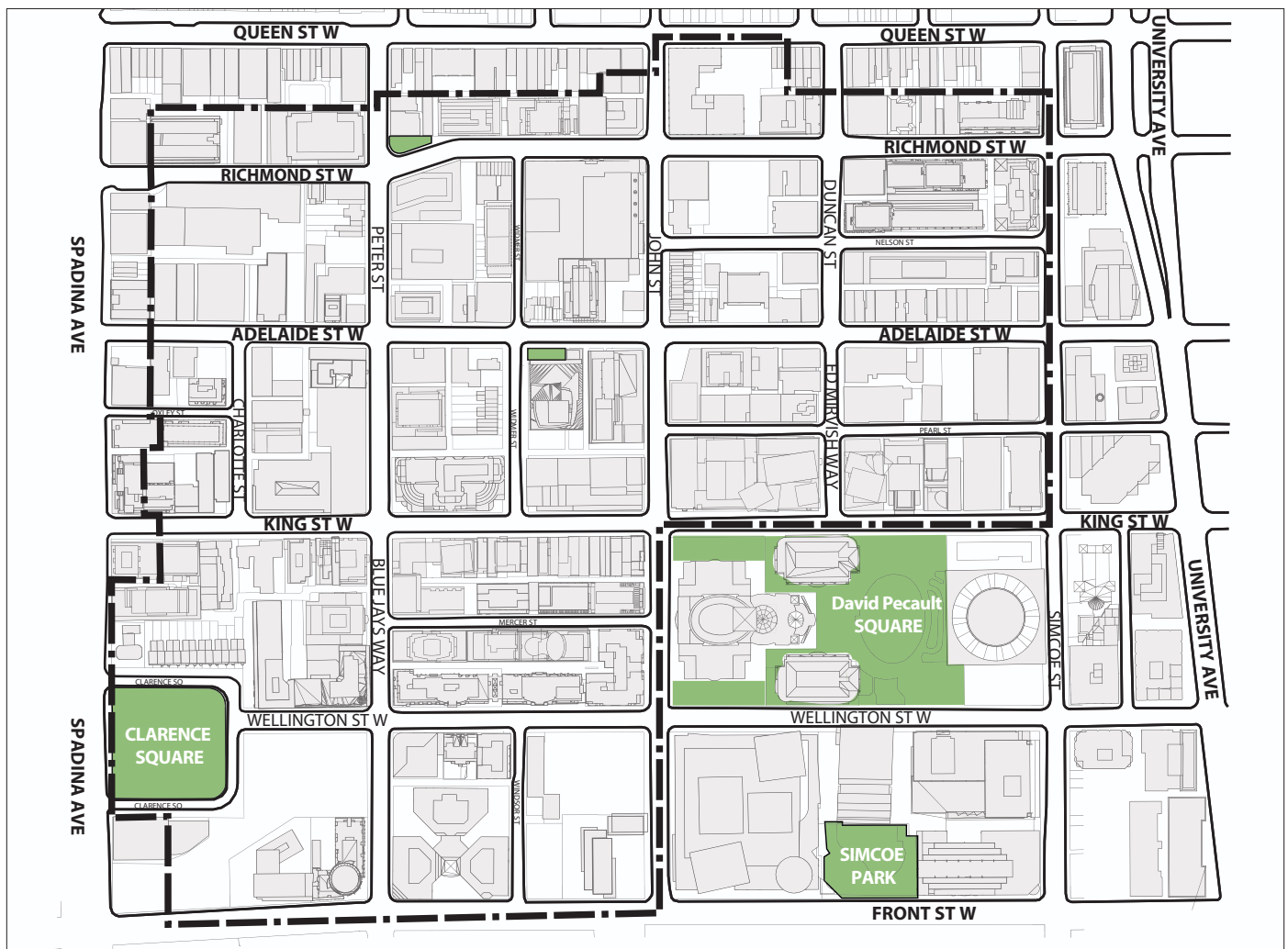


Figure 2. Existing public parks & open spaces

2.1. EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

2.1.1. Public Parks and Open Spaces

There are only a few public parks and open spaces in the King-Spadina East Precinct. These public open spaces can have different programming and are designed for different purposes and activities. Figure 2 on the previous page highlights the existing public parks and open spaces within the King-Spadina East Precinct, as well as open spaces that are located at the periphery of the Study Area and beyond. The three existing major open spaces that are within or close to the Study Area include:

Clarence Square: Clarence Square is the only large public park within the King-Spadina East Precinct that serves primarily as a passive green space for the area. It was conceived in the early 19th century as a residential urban park. It forms one part of the historic civic plan for the area that includes a broad Wellington Street West anchored by Clarence Square and Victoria Memorial Park. On the north side, it is framed by 2 storey historic Georgian townhouses. The integrity of the Square remains intact to this day and it is an important public space that serves the area. This park has been recently improved and made pet-friendly with a fenced unleashed dog-run area.

David Pecaut Square: David Pecaut Square is located adjacent to the Study Area, on the south side of King Street West, between John and Simcoe Streets. It serves as the most active Square within the Entertainment District and is constantly used by office workers, visitors and residents. It is in the form of an urban plaza, which is a combination of hard and soft landscape that accommodates many special events and programs throughout the year.

Simcoe Park: Simcoe Park, located between Wellington Street West and Front Street West is another urban park just outside the Study Area. It creates a green connection between Front Street West and David Pecaut Square through two mid-block connections, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Other smaller public open spaces include:

- Parkland dedication on the north side of Cinema Tower (fronting onto Adelaide Street West and Widmer Street), and
- Open space at the northeast corner of Peter Street and Richmond Street West (129 Peter Street), which is planned to become an urban plaza.



Clarence Square in Fall



Outdoor activity in David Pecaut Square



View of Simcoe Park from Front Street West



Parkland dedication area in front of 525 Adelaide Street West (Cinema Tower)

The diagram of the existing parks within the 5 minute walking distance of the King-Spadina East Precinct (Figure 4) demonstrates that major open space is particularly lacking in the northern half of the Study Area. The "King-Spadina Secondary Plan Review" (June 2006) by The Planning Partnership, Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co, John Swallow Association and Goldsmith Borgal & Co. articulates the same conclusion in the following statement: "Acquisition of parkland in the northeast quadrant (of East Precinct) will greatly benefit the residents (and visitors) of this area." (Figure 3)

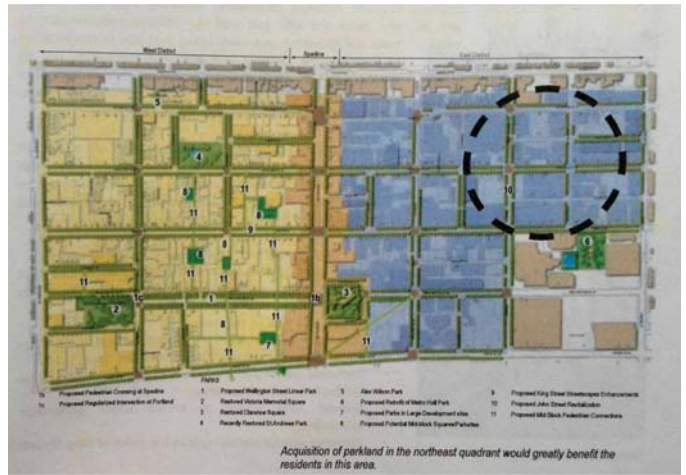


Figure 3. Map extracted from page 57 of the "King - Spadina Secondary Plan Review" (June 2006) by The Planning Partnership, Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co, John Swallow Association and Goldsmith Borgal & Co.



Figure 4. Parks & open spaces in close proximity of the Study Area within a 5 minute (400m) walking distance

2.1.2. Privately Owned, Publicly-Accessible Open Spaces (POPS)

In addition to the existing public parks, a number of initiatives have taken place to expand the public realm by creating privately owned, publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS). Figure 5 highlights existing, under construction and approved POPS within the Study Area. These open spaces are in a variety of forms or shapes: plazas, forecourts or green spaces. To ensure that these spaces are useful and efficient, they should:

- have a variety of programs, which helps animate the space;
- have a strong physical connection to the existing public realm network; and
- be well-integrated into the surrounding context.

Toronto City Council has recently adopted design guidelines for POPS, which can be found in the following link: www.toronto.ca/planning/pops

City Staff will continue working with applicants of new developments within the King-Spadina Area to expand the number of POPS as a way to contribute to the public realm.

A number of POPS have been proposed and approved through development applications within the King-Spadina East Precinct, strengthening the public realm network and providing more opportunities for sitting, watching, playing and leisure time. These POPS include:

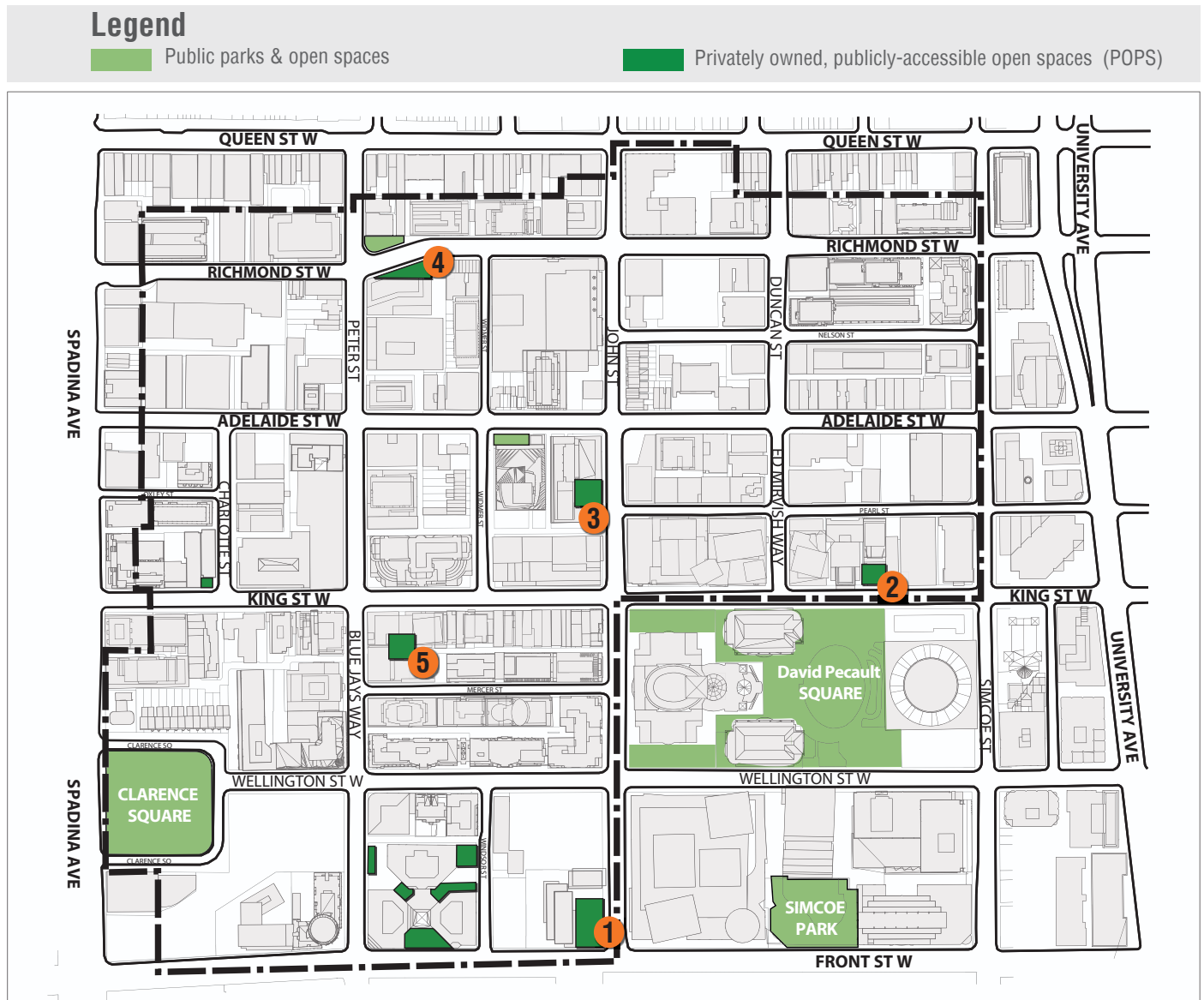
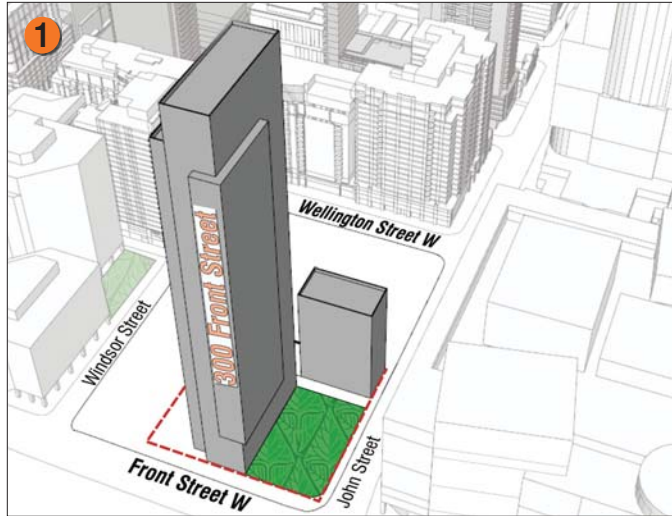


Figure 5. Existing public parks, open spaces & POPS within the Study Area

Figure 6. Illustrative rendering of POPS at 300 Front Street West



- 300 Front Street:** The southeast corner of the development has an open space with a combination of soft and hard landscape, places to sit, lighting and public art (Figure 6). This location is one of the major gateways into the Study Area that will be enhanced by a high quality landscape treatment. It is also across the street from a city park called Isabella Valency Crawford Park. As a result, the two open spaces work together to form an "urban room".
- Theatre Park at 224 King Street West:** The front of this development has been generously setback from King Street West, providing a hard surface forecourt, which includes an artist-designed water feature (Figure 7).

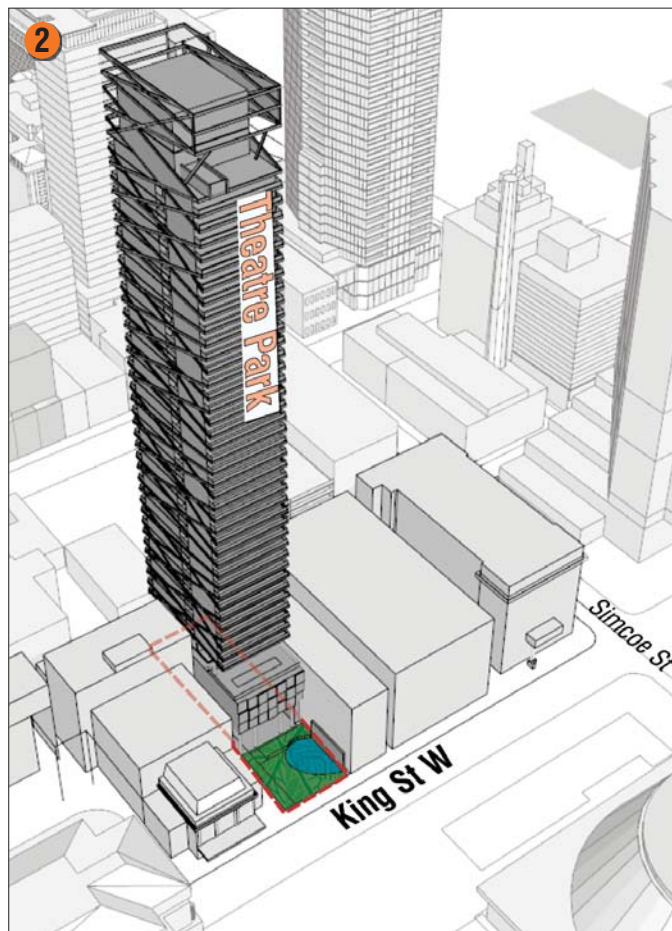


Figure 7. Illustrative rendering of POPS at Theatre Park development

- **Tableau Condominium at 117 Peter Street:**

The character-defining historic building on this property has been preserved, resulting in a triangular shaped space on the property that fronts onto Richmond Street West. This space will be transformed into an urban plaza with public art at the most easterly edge of the property. The public art will emphasize the gateway characteristic of the intersection and will reinforce a key view (view terminus) along Richmond Street West (See Figure 8). The gateways and key views (view terminus) will be discussed later in this document. The design of this space will complement the open space on the northeast side of Peter Street and Richmond Street West and will create an appealing gateway and focal point within the Study Area.

- **Pinnacle at 295 Adelaide Street West:**

The existing heritage building at this address has been relocated to frame a new open space along John Street (See Figure 9). This POPS will reinforce the cultural functions along John Street, discussed later in this document.

- **King Blue Condos at 355 King Street West:**

King Blue Condos which is located at 355 King Street West is an approved application. The proposed development consists of two towers with an urban plaza in the centre of the property. Like other open spaces, this plaza will be open to public and will form part of a mid-block pedestrian connection, linking King Street West to Mercer Street (See Figure 10).



Figure 8. Illustrative rendering of POPS at Tableau Condominium

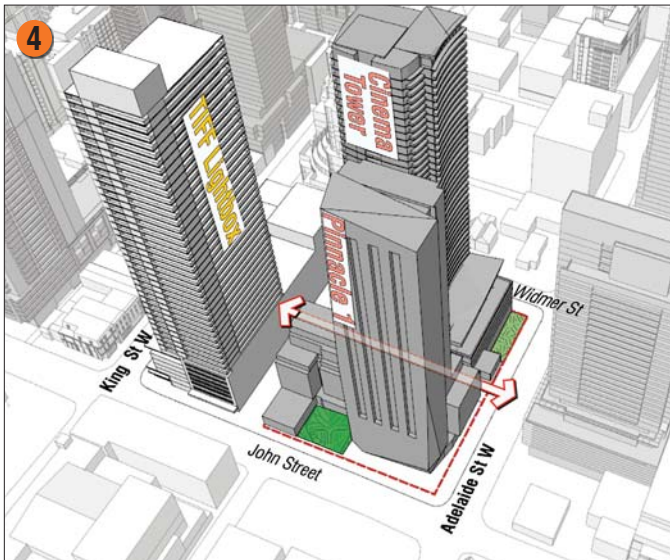


Figure 9. Illustrative rendering of POPS & parkland dedication at Pinnacle 1 & Cinema Tower



Figure 10. Illustrative rendering of POPS at King Blue Condos (355 King West)

