

## 2.4. PUBLIC REALM CONSTRAINTS

Dense urban areas like the King-Spadina East Precinct require ample, well-designed open spaces to ensure a high quality of life. Acquiring open spaces in such areas may be a challenge due to:

- **Land availability** for parkland acquisition, park expansion, etc.
- **Mature urban fabric and hard frontages:** These conditions limit opportunities for future POPS and/or wider sidewalks on private properties. There is a strong heritage fabric and major developments within the Study Area with fixed frontages (See Figure 16).

In contrast, buildings or properties with flexible frontages can provide potential future opportunities for small scale urban open spaces, such as forecourts, parkettes and front landscaped areas. Additionally they can contribute to the widening of sidewalks and creating wider zones for tree planting and street furniture.

### Legend

— Fixed frontages

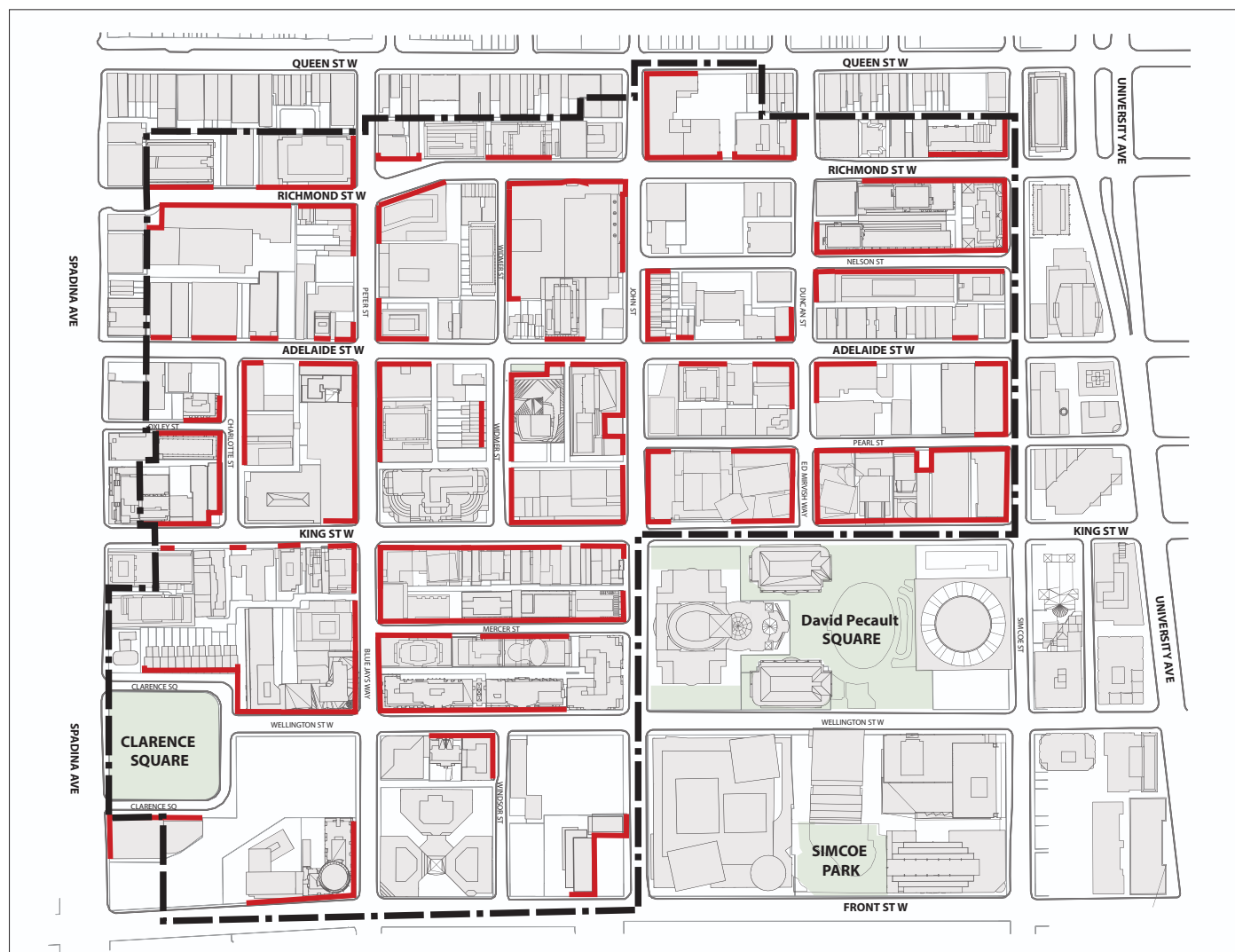


Figure 16. Fixed frontages

- **Fixed right-of-ways (ROW):** Most of the ROWs are predetermined within the City of Toronto Official Plan and create constraints for sidewalk expansion. Reducing or narrowing traffic lanes may result in adverse traffic impacts; therefore, traffic studies and Environmental Assessment (E.A.) studies may be required for such initiatives.
- **Land value:** as a result of fast-paced growth in recent years, land value has increased dramatically, which has made public realm expansion through acquisition more of a challenge.

Considering the high density and limited opportunities within the Study Area, innovative approaches should be considered for the creation of a more desirable, more enhanced and a more sustainable public realm network.



Example of fixed frontage within the Study Area







### 3. PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

In this chapter, opportunities for public realm enhancements will be discussed. In general, the public realm network can be improved by:

- Expanding, enhancing and improving the existing parks and open spaces
- Creating new public parks and open spaces
- Designing POPS in different shapes and forms, including forecourts, plazas and green spaces
- Designing front landscaped areas to complement the streetscape design of streets
- Providing opportunities for better and easier movement

To ensure quality, safety and comfort, new public realm elements should be:

- Accessible
- Barrier free
- Visible
- Well designed for the enjoyment of all users
- Efficient
- Well-lit
- Well-programmed
- Well-connected to the larger public realm network
- Designed with places to gather and sit

A number of opportunities have been informed by the Entertainment District BIA Master Plan, as well as the outcome of the public realm analysis, which will be discussed on the following pages.



### 3.1. POTENTIAL FUTURE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

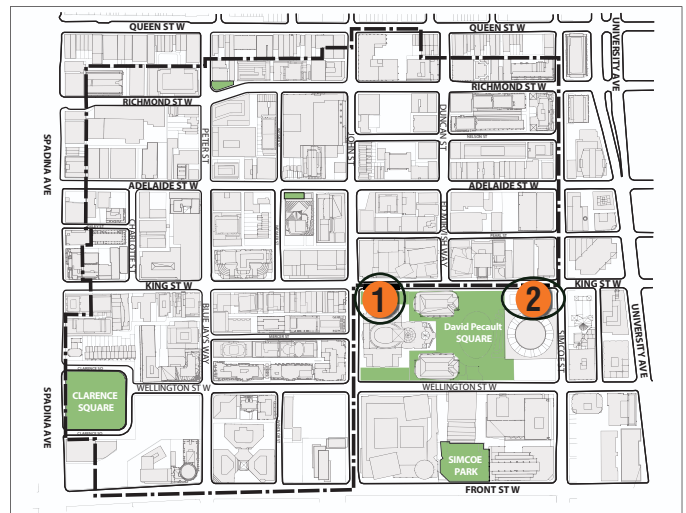
#### 3.1.1. Entertainment District BIA Master Plan Initiatives

The Entertainment District BIA Master Plan suggests two major public realm improvements at the periphery of the King-Spadina East Precinct boundary:

1. **Festival Plaza:** Potential transformation of the area in front of Metro Hall and at the southeast corner of King Street West and John Street into an Urban Plaza (Festival Plaza). Please refer to Page 56 in the Entertainment District BIA Master Plan and see Figure 18 below.
2. **Roy Thomson Hall Reflecting Pool:** As stated in the Entertainment District BIA Master Plan, *"Transforming the reflective pool in front of Roy Thomson Hall into a major attraction and urban oasis on King Street West. This will be achieved by introducing new uses such as restaurant, sitting places, stage area, cascading water fountain to the PATH and enabling the pool to become an ice skating ring during winter time."* Please refer to page 58 in the Entertainment District BIA Master Plan and see Figure 19 on the opposite page.

These public realm initiatives are important and are part of the open space network as contemplated by this study.

Figure 17. Key map showing the location of Festival Plaza and Roy Thomson Hall Reflecting Pool



- 1 Festival Plaza      2 Roy Thomson Hall Reflecting Pool

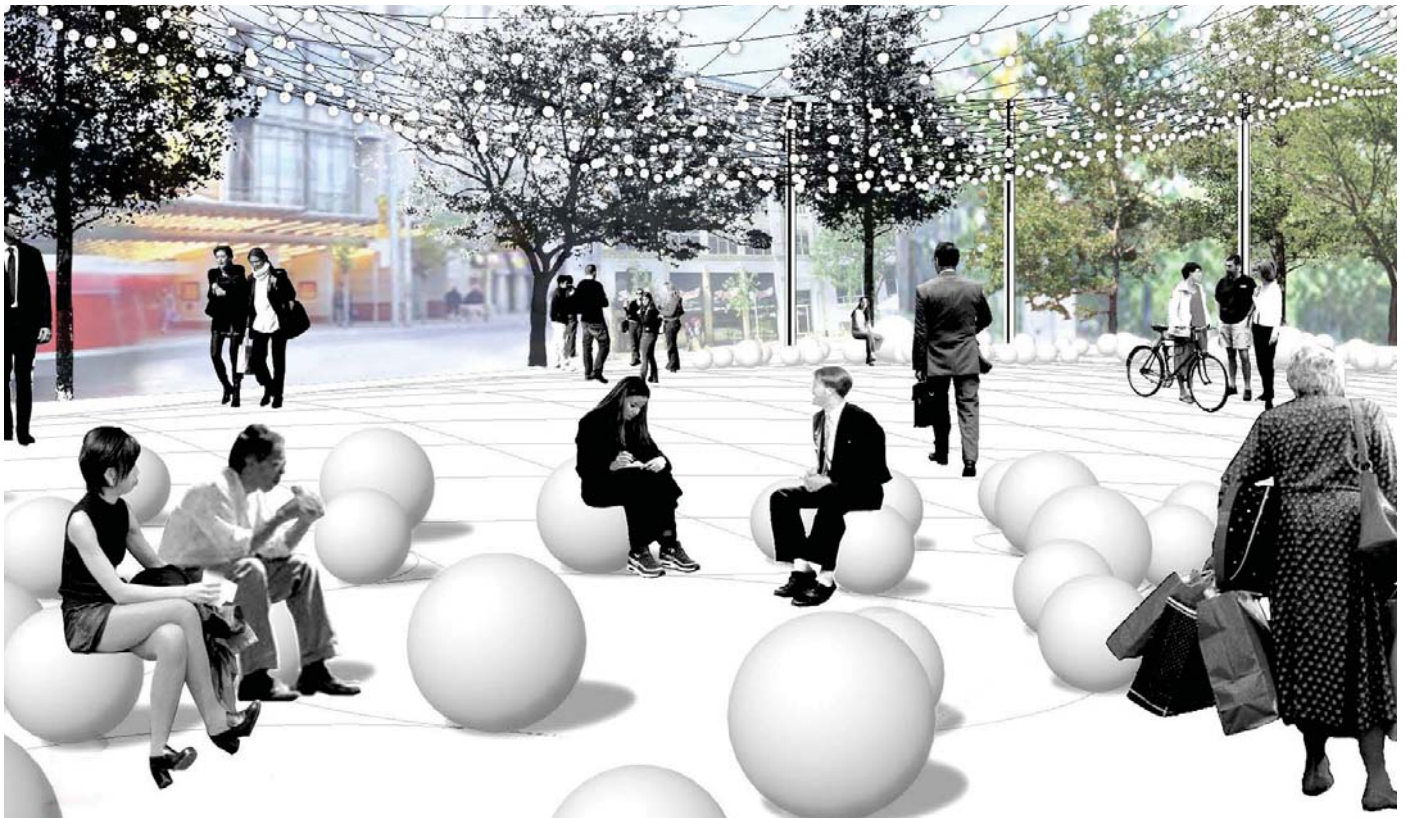


Figure 18. The Urban Ball Room (winning design for Festival Plaza), Image extracted from page 57 of the "Entertainment District BIA Master Plan" (February 2013, as amended) by The Planning Partnership



Existing condition of the reflecting pool looking west towards David Pecaut Square



Illustration of improvements and utilization of the space during the day in the warmer months



Illustration of improvements and utilization of the space during the day in the winter months

Figure 19. Roy Thomson Hall Reflecting Pool, Images extracted from page 58 of the "Entertainment District BIA Master Plan" (February 2013, as amended) by The Planning Partnership



### 3.1.2. Sites Under Study and Potential Open Space Enhancements

City Staff have studied a number of properties within the King-Spadina East Precinct and have identified opportunities for further enhancement. These opportunities will be called "sites under study" throughout the document. The sites under study (Figure 20) will include:

- surface parking lots
- parking decks
- existing buildings in need of repair
- other properties

The sites under study will provide different opportunities depending on their location, size and their relationship with their adjacent properties and the larger context. The size and programming of these open spaces are not determined yet and the diagram only reflects potential locations for future enhancements. Some sites may provide opportunities for future parks or POPS (as part of development applications), while some may have the potential for front landscaped areas, forecourts and/or wider sidewalks. Other improvement include the combination of POPS and mid-block connections, which will be further discussed in this document.

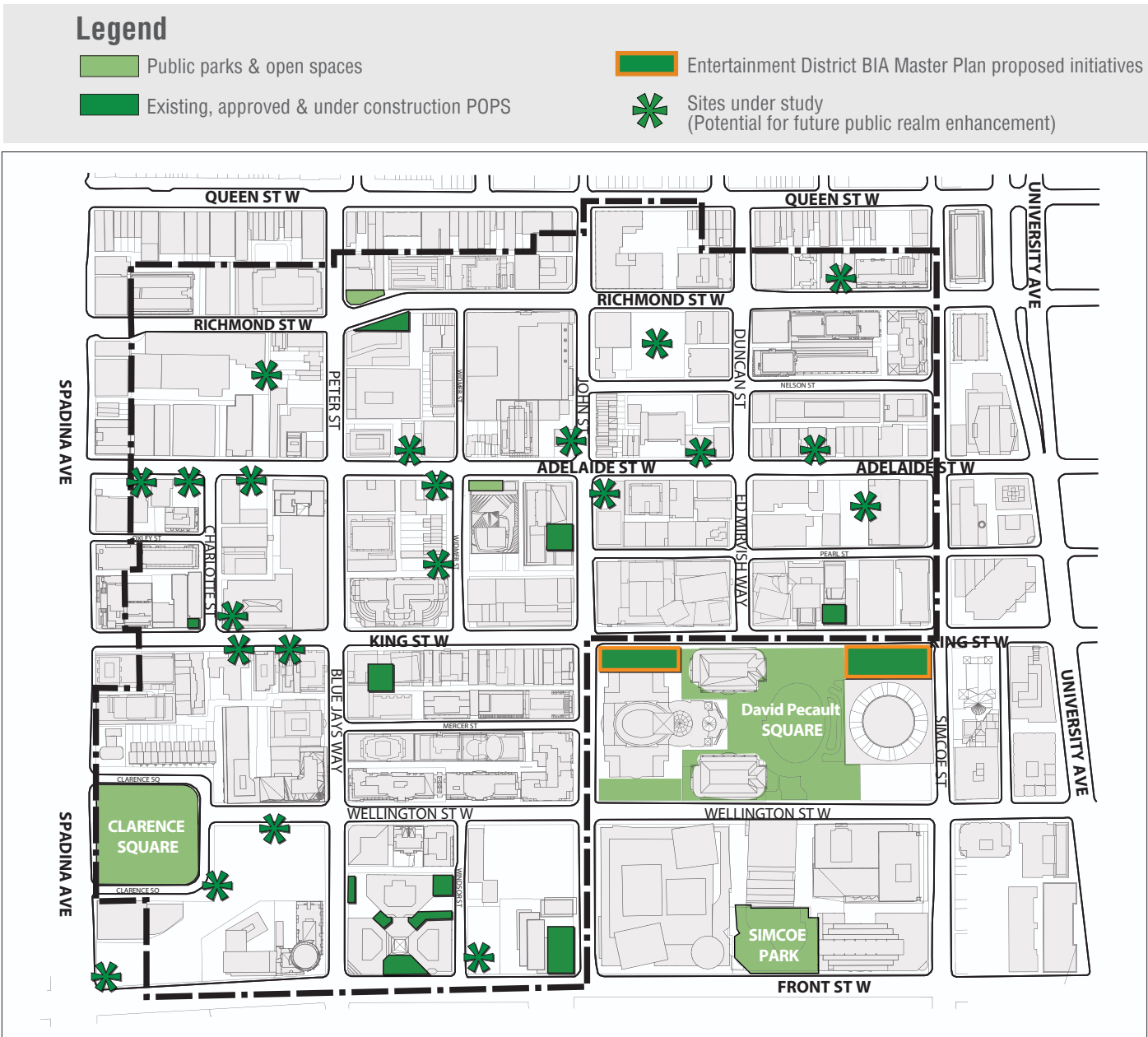


Figure 20. Potential future parks & open spaces