

Enhance the unique characteristics of Downtown's most emblematic streets and make them outstanding civic places and connectors

# GREAT STREET

# ASSETS

## Great Streets enhance the unique characteristics of Downtown's most emblematic streets and make them outstanding civic places and connectors

All streets Downtown are important and are expected to be beautiful, comfortable, safe and accessible. Downtown's Great Streets are primarily civic streets and have a diverse character that conveys Toronto's public image to the world, setting the stage for festivals, parades and civic life. These streets hold cultural and historical significance and provide connections to the Core Circle and beyond. They are destinations in themselves, lined with landmark buildings and institutions, historic fabric and public spaces. Downtown's Great Streets play an important role supporting economic activity and fostering public life. A network of 12 Great Streets having cultural, historical and civic importance will be prioritized for public realm improvements. These streets connect to the Core Circle and are defined by their location, scale and historic role in the city, existing civic significance and their potential contribution to the public realm network.

Public realm improvements on the Great Streets will:

- Reinforce the identity and distinct characteristics of each segment of each street, including specific cultural heritage value and heritage attributes;
- Improve the scale of clearways, transit stops, and space for public gathering;
- Be required to implement and maintain a high standard of design and materials;
- Prioritize tree planting and investment in green infrastructure to support the growth of a healthy tree canopy, wherever feasible;
- Be informed by Complete Streets principles; and
- Include green infrastructure, where feasible.

Great Streets form connectors between significant

parks and open spaces. To enhance their role as a connectors, these streets should be designed to:

- Improve space for pedestrians and landscape and be designed in a unified manner to improve the role of the street as a connection between parks; and
- Improve the landscape and pedestrian space and amenity on the street edges of the significant parks and open spaces.

Intersections where two Great Streets meet are significant public spaces and will be designed to:

- Respect the character of both Great Streets; and
- Address the additional requirements necessary to support high pedestrian volumes and public life.

The locations where Great Streets meet the waterfront and the Core Circle are significant public spaces and will be designed to:

- Improve visual and physical connections; and
- Address the additional requirements necessary to support public life.

Through the development review process development along edges of Great streets will:

- Explore opportunities for adequate set-backs to widen the streetscape, provide additional room for pedestrian clearways, café patios and / or marketing displays, landscapes and where appropriate pedestrian weather protection without encroachment; and
- Explore opportunities for other open spaces along the street to complement the streetscape and provide additional space for pedestrians, landscape and amenity appropriate to the ground-floor uses.



- 1 *University Avenue*
- 2 *King Street*
- 3 *Jarvis Street Garden Street*
- 4 *Parliament Street*
- 5 *College-Carlton-Gerrard Corridor*
- 6 *Bloor Street*
- 7 *Bayview Avenue*
- 8 *Front Street*
- 9 *Spadina Avenue*
- 10 *Yonge Street Cultural Corridor*
- 11 *Queen Street*
- 12 *Queens Quay*

“Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city’s streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.”

– Jane Jacobs



Four strategies outline general principles and design directions to guide a series of initiatives that reinforce the Great Streets vision through focused interventions.

### RE-DISCOVER AND ENHANCE THE IDENTITY OF OUR GREATEST CIVIC STREETS



*University Avenue was planted with 500 horse-chestnut trees in 1829 by landscape gardener André Parmentier, shown above in 1867, Toronto, Canada*

Re-discover the original identities that make the Great Streets distinct and unique and imagine the potential of those that have been overlooked. The Great Streets are individual in character and quality, and the bones of their original form remains. Understand the story, context and historic use of each street, the distinct neighbourhood character, and build-upon, strengthen heritage attributes and / or re-balance and re-configure them as identifiable civic places and connectors. Consider the unique qualities of north-south and east-west streets, including access to sunlight and relationship to the Core Circle landscapes and the waterfront.

#### *What we heard:*

- Understand our history and the unique qualities of our different streets and neighbourhoods.

### LEVERAGE THE BEST OF TORONTO'S GRID AS CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES



*Queens Quay, the central spine of a connected network of transformed public spaces along the Central Waterfront, Toronto, Canada*

Create connections that can link and extend the reach of public realm components, creating a network of parks and public spaces. Make the experience of streets worth the journey along them, prioritizing continuity, wayfinding, legibility and navigability for pedestrians. Leverage parks and the public realm to create a better cycling network and experience. Promote a finer grain of public space on streets by providing mid-block connections and utilizing street-side open spaces, sidewalks and laneways to provide gathering places to linger and take in the city.

#### *What we heard:*

- Encourage active transportation and public transit connections between parks and public spaces.
- Increase protected cycling infrastructure routes.
- Promote midblock and laneway connections.

## MAKE STREETS 'PLACES'



*Broadway Boulevard and E 17th Street: Project for Public Spaces, New York City, United States*

Re-balance streets to better accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit, with a focus on civic life. Consider programs and pilots as a catalyst for new uses, and utilize transit infrastructure (stations, shelters and stops) to create new social gathering spaces. Plan for sidewalks to have sunshine when and where it is needed and broaden public park edges to capture adjacent streetscapes.

### *What we heard:*

- Prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and public transit.
- Improve the pedestrian experience on our streets, create more space for walking and gathering.
- Broaden park edges to spill out into streetscapes.

## STRATEGICALLY IDENTIFY AND REALIZE 'GREAT TREE STREETS'



*Commonwealth Avenue Mall, leading to Boston Public Garden and Boston Common as part of the Emerald Necklace, Boston, United States*

Enhance the urban forest experience by strategically identifying wider streets for investment in tree planting infrastructure and an enhanced maintenance program. Prioritize potential tree size and combined canopy coverage over the number of individual trees. Imagine parks and streets as connected systems where large, mature trees can be experienced in the urban environment. Integrate stormwater management, and proactively plan for underground utility lines. Realize University Avenue, Jarvis Street, Parliament Street, the College-Carleton-Gerrard Corridor, Bloor Street, Bayview Avenue, Spadina Avenue, Front Street and Queens Quay as 'Great Tree Streets'.

### *What we heard:*

- Enhance and maintain the urban forest.
- Improve growing conditions for street trees and increase native tree planting.
- Consider climate change and create resilient landscapes.

Re-discover the Downtown's most emblematic streets, enhance their unique characteristics and make them outstanding civic places and connectors.

#### INITIATIVES

- 1 *University Avenue*  
Create Linear Park and Gardens
- 2 *King Street*  
Implement Pilot to Enhance 'Transit First' Street
- 3 *Jarvis Street Garden Street*  
Revitalize Jarvis Street as a Garden Street
- 4 *Parliament Street*  
Create North 'Ravine Portal' Greenway  
Create Centre 'Local Street' with Lane Reductions  
Create South 'Waterfront Portal' Parkland
- 5 *College-Carleton-Gerrard Corridor*  
Implement Cycling and 'Green Street' Improvements
- 6 *Bloor Street*  
Revitalize Bloor West, Centre and East Segments
- 7 *Bayview Avenue*  
Improve and Connect Active Transportation Modes  
Create a Linear Riverside Park Along Bayview Ave
- 8 *Front Street*  
Implement Union Station Pedestrian Improvements  
Create East and West 'Park Bookends'
- 9 *Spadina Avenue*  
Implement North and South Pedestrian Improvements
- 10 *Yonge Street Cultural Corridor*  
Revitalize Yonge Street as a Pedestrian Priority Street
- 11 *Queen Street*  
Revitalize Queen Street in the Civic Precinct  
Investigate Future Pilot Opportunities
- 12 *Queens Quay*  
Extend Revitalization to Eastern Waterfront



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING





Map showing proposed initiatives for the Great Streets, Toronto, Canada

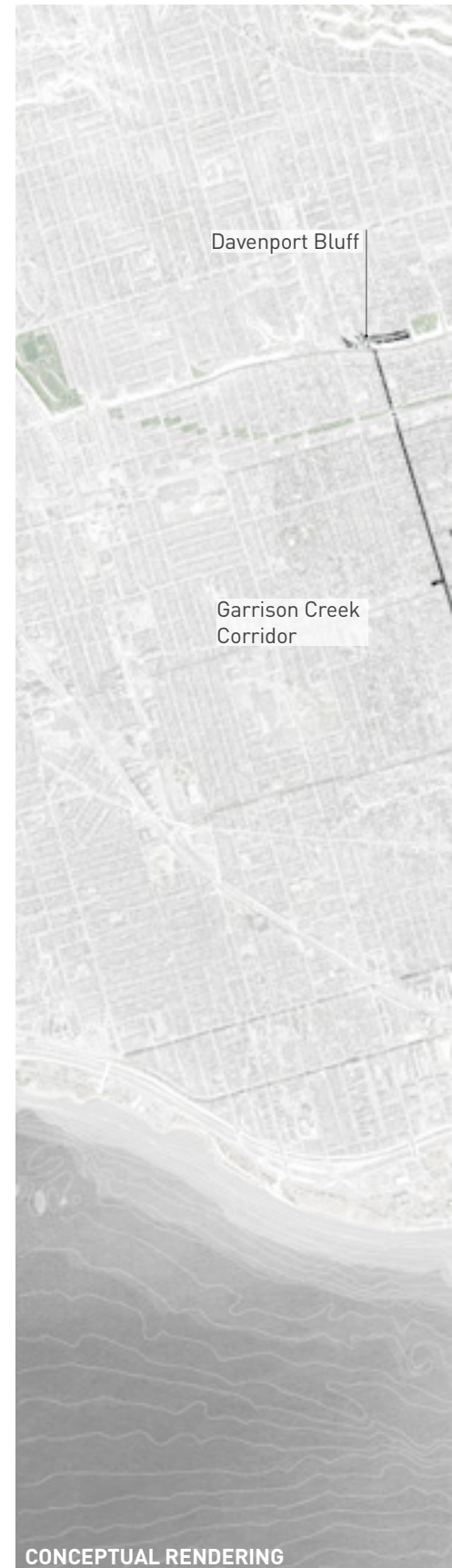
Implement absorptive landscape infrastructure corridors. Absorptive corridors adapt existing streetscapes and adjacent parks and open spaces to serve blue and green infrastructure systems, to enhance the resilience of the Downtown in the 21st century.

**PROPOSED ABSORPTIVE LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS**

- 1 *Shaw Street*  
Shaw Street Greenway  
Christie Pits Park and Bickford Park  
Trinity Bellwoods Park  
Stanley Park and Stanley Park Extension
  
- 2 *University Avenue*  
University of Toronto and Queen's Park Precinct  
University Avenue Linear Park and Gardens  
University Avenue at Front Street Traffic Island  
Conversion to Parkland  
York Quay and Central Waterfront
  
- 3 *Parliament Street*  
North 'Ravine Portal' Greenway  
Centre 'Local Street' with Lane Reductions  
South 'Waterfront Portal' Parkland at First  
Parliament Site and Eastern Waterfront
  
- 4 *Bayview Avenue*  
Don River Valley Park  
Riverdale Park  
Don River Trail  
Corktown Common / Flood Protection Landform  
Lower Don Lands and Bayview South Greenway  
Cherry Beach



*Rue Casimir Périer collects and infiltrates stormwater, utilizing water as a framework for a new type of street, Lyon, France*



**CONCEPTUAL RENDERING**





Map showing proposed corridors for investment in absorptive landscape infrastructure, Toronto, Canada

# University Avenue



University Avenue is one of Toronto's most iconic 'designed' landscapes, yet one which is considerably underperforming as a successful public space.

University Avenue is a primary civic spine in Toronto, first designed in 1829 as a tree-lined promenade by landscape gardener André Parmentier, who planted 500 horse-chestnut trees along the Avenue. By 1947, increasing volumes of automobile traffic led to the consolidation of University Avenue and what was then Park Lane into one broad street. This resulted in a significant re-alignment of the median (and civic artworks and memorials) between the two original streets, resulting in a shift of the central axis off the centreline of the Legislative Assembly, and the removal of the original trees.

In the early 1960s, when the construction of the subway was complete, the landscape architecture firm Dunington-Grubb & Stensson was commissioned

to design the central medians of University Avenue. The design has been described as one of the most significant – and overlooked – modernist works of civic landscape architecture in Toronto. Yet as architect and urbanist Jan Gehl notes, modernist landscapes are often designed as forms first, then as spaces for humans to occupy second. Today, University Avenue's iconic yet isolated garden islands attract remarkably few visitors in the heart of a densifying Downtown.

As the Downtown evolves in the 21st century, how can the iconic landscape of University Avenue be respectfully honoured, adapted and re-invigorated as an outstanding civic place and connector?

*(opposite) Elegant, yet isolated: Today, University Avenue survives as a classic piece of modern landscape design, yet attracts remarkably few visitors into the heart of its garden rooms, Toronto, Canada*



*Looking north along University Avenue and Park Lane, from the Canada Life Building, 1930, Toronto, Canada*



*Sketch of the proposed design for University Avenue, by Dunington-Grubb & Stensson, 1949, Toronto, Canada*







University Avenue's iconic boulevard offers a unique opportunity to re-imagine and enhance both the civic function of the street as well as its value for daily use as a park and public open space.



*University Avenue, Proposed Re-configuration at Queen Street*

University Avenue is the Downtown's most significant ceremonial street linking the Ontario Legislature located in the Queen's Park Precinct to Lake Ontario. It is lined with many of Toronto's most important institutions including the cluster of hospitals in the Health Sciences

District and Osgoode Hall and the new Court House in the Civic Precinct. Its iconic boulevard offers a unique opportunity to re-imagine and enhance both the civic function of the street as well as its value for daily use as a park and public space. Re-imagine University Avenue



*Water Mirror by Michel Corajoud, a model for the fog-water feature at University Avenue and Queen Street, Bordeaux, France*



*Place de la République's re-design creates an open space with multiple uses; the elimination of the traffic circle frees the site from the constraint of motor vehicles, Paris, France*



6.7m  
Sidewalk

Osgoode Hall  
Public Lawn

to transform the 3.0-acre landscaped traffic median into an 8.9-acre fully accessible linear park that connects the Civic Precinct with the Queen's Park Precinct. The vision honours and adapts the 1960s modernist gardens by Dunington-Grubb & Stensson, re-interpreting their

forms and maintaining the diversity of tree species. The Queen Street entrance is imagined as a garden gateway to the Avenue with a re-designed fog-water feature, creating a civic destination and gathering space to anchor the Civic District.



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING



6.9m  
Sidewalk

18.4m  
Six Vehicle Lanes

Cycling  
Facility

24.7m  
Linear Park and Gardens

Existing R.O.W. 52.1m

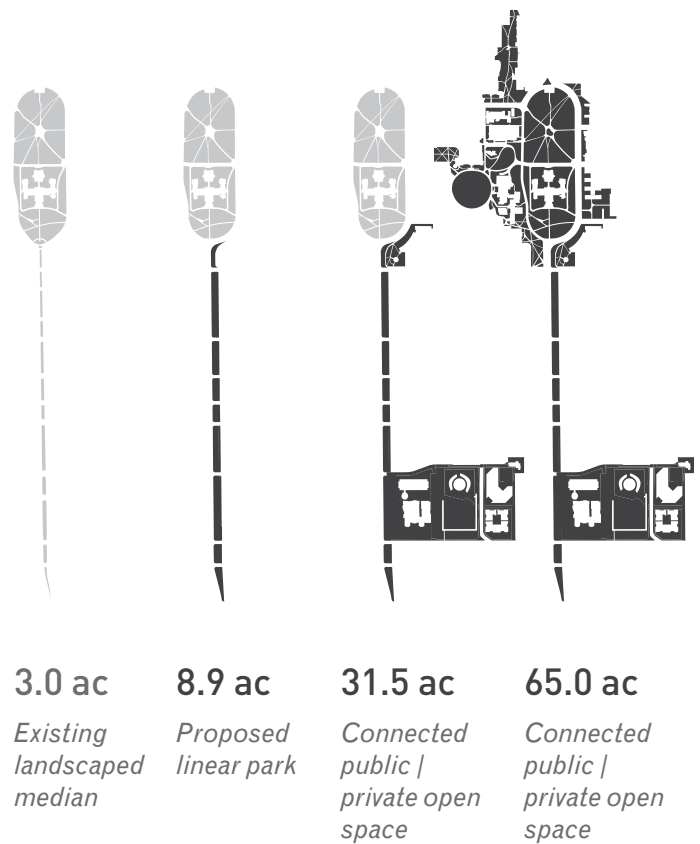
*University Avenue, Proposed Re-configuration at Orde Street*

A counterpart to the Queen Street garden entrance, University Avenue's northern gateway is also re-imagined as an interactive public garden that expands the urban forest experience of Queen's Park into the Avenue. On the western edge, the vision maintains

the towering maple trees from Dunington-Grubb & Stensson's northern gardens, and add new tree rows on the eastern edge. On the eastern edge, the new linear park is integrated with existing civic spaces and the forecourts of institutions to maximize public space



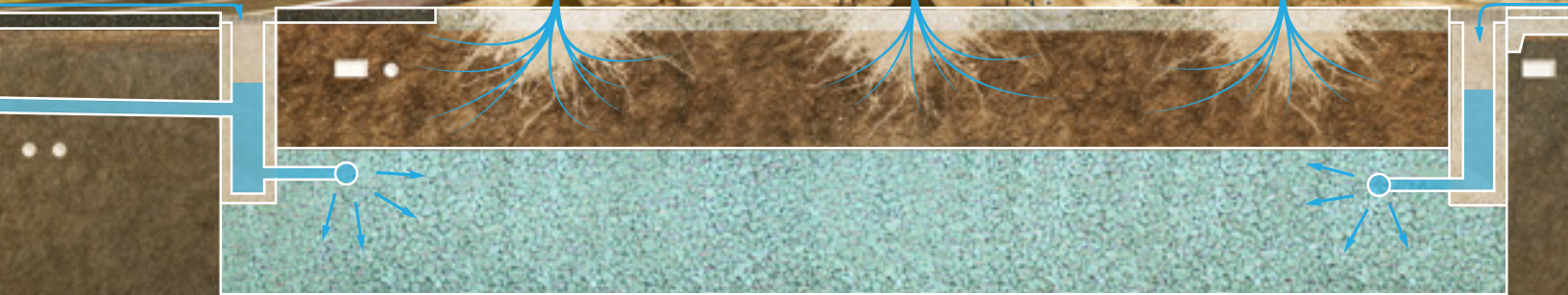
(right) Jardin du Luxembourg is a model for University Avenue, providing a large-scale landscape experience and urban resource, available and adaptable for multiple urban uses, Paris, France



and provide a generous pedestrian realm. Within this public realm is the opportunity to re-locate the existing memorials, improving their access and prominence. Between the Avenue's north and south garden gateways, a vast treed grove provides an immense open

space with multiple urban uses and introduces a cycling facility linking the Civic Precinct with the Queen's Park Precinct. Imagine University Avenue as a civic place and connector, providing a setting for civic events as well as a place for day to day uses for residents and workers.





*University Avenue – Absorptive Landscape Infrastructure Corridor*

**CONCEPTUAL RENDERING**



(right) Jardin des Tuileries is a landmark and epicentre for French culture, connecting from the Louvre in the east to the Champs-Élysées in the west; Parisians of all classes and cultures use the garden as a place to meet, eat lunch, and socialize, Paris, France



## Goals

University Avenue's iconic boulevard offers a unique opportunity to re-imagine and enhance both the civic function of the street as well as its value for daily use as a park and public open space.

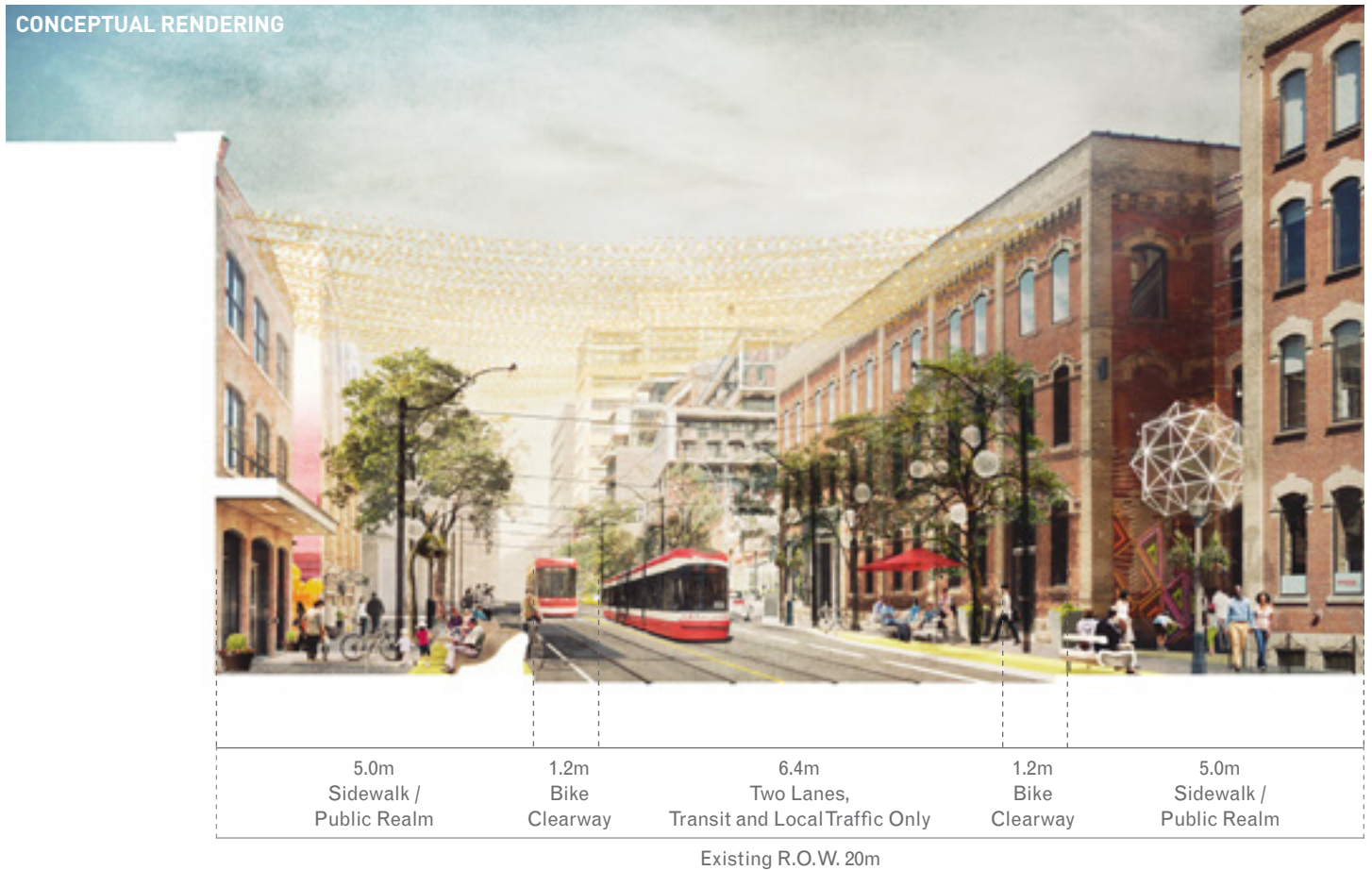
- Utilize the scale of University Avenue to optimize and enhance the park, open space, pedestrian and cycling potential.
- Enhance and expand the pedestrian realm within a park setting.
- Connect the Civic Precinct and Queen's Park Precinct with a linear park.
- Create north-south garden areas on the Avenue at College Street and Adelaide Street.
- Integrate open spaces adjacent to the street, including the existing civic spaces and forecourts of institutions.
- Provide a setting for civic events including parades, festivals and protests as well as create places for day to day use for residents and workers.
- Provide a dedicated cycling facility and provide bicycle parking where appropriate.
- Improve access to and prominence of memorials.
- Honour and adapt the heritage landscapes of landscape architects Dunnington-Grubb & Stenson and landscape gardener André Parmentier.
- Use trees and plantings to enhance the identity of the street in all seasons.
- Create conditions that will support the growth of large growing shade trees and support a healthy tree canopy.

## Actions

- Phase 1: Feasibility Analysis
  - Undertake a preliminary engineering and costing study to determine the feasibility of the project including the consideration of options.
  - Update cultural and heritage assessments.
  - Conduct technical feasibility review in partnership with the TTC and other agencies.
  - Undertake stakeholder and public consultation.
  - Report to Council.
- Phase 2: Environmental Assessment
  - Undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA).

# King Street

Re-imagine King Street and enhance its economic vitality by improving the efficiency and reliability of streetcar service and enhancing the public realm to create a significant pedestrian destination.



*Conceptual Rendering of King Street Pilot Public Realm Transformation*

The King Street pilot re-balances the street to better accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit users, with a focus on public life. The pilot is a catalyst for a permanent transformation of the street into an identifiable civic place and connector. At the

commencement of the pilot, the 504 King Street streetcar had the highest streetcar ridership numbers in the city, upwards of 65,000 riders per day. With this volume of riders comes a need to expand and improve the public realm. The King Street vision re-imagines transit stops



*(right) The transformation of Broadway Boulevard re-balanced the street to create more space for pedestrian plazas and on-street furniture, New York City, United States*



*Swanston Street offers a vibrant, safe, transit-, cycling-, pedestrian- and business-friendly street, fully integrated with adjacent parks and open spaces, Melbourne, Australia*

and improves the streetscape by creating more space for walking, social gathering, public outdoor seating, café seating and landscaping. It creates a unified streetscape that responds to King Street's distinct neighbourhood characters, improving the pedestrian realm and cycling

experience of the corridor. It activates the already rich, existing network of intimate, mid-block laneways and courtyard spaces, and leverages street-side open spaces and sidewalks to provide places for people to gather and linger along this highly-used street.





*Swanston Street's transformation blends seamlessly with adjacent parks and open spaces; showing the public lawn at the State Library of Victoria, Swanston Street, Melbourne, Australia*

The St James Park segment of King Street, between Church Street and Jarvis Street, offers the opportunity to create a park-like experience on King Street itself. This segment can provide an exceptional public life experience, since there are few vehicular access points

on this block. This opens up the potential to provide great transit, plus broaden the edges of St James Park to extend the public life experience of the park into the curbside lanes of King Street to connect via Market Lane Park to St Lawrence Market.

*(right) Extend the park experience of St James Park into King Street by integrating park features into the curbside lanes of the street, showing Hammock Grove, Governor's Island, New York, United States*



## Goals

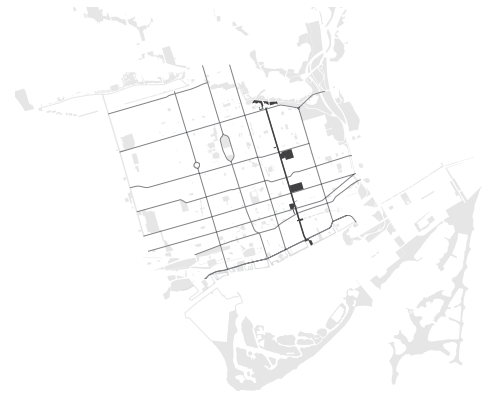
Re-imagine King Street and enhance its economic vitality by improving the efficiency and reliability of streetcar service and enhancing the public realm to create a significant pedestrian destination.

- Improve the streetscape for walking, transit stops, social gathering, public outdoor seating, café seating and landscaping.
- Create a unified streetscape that responds to and enhances King Street's distinct neighbourhood character.
- Expand the pedestrian realm and create a seamless connection between the major parks and open spaces along the corridor.
- Improve the cycling experience and provide additional bicycle parking.

## Actions

- Phase 1: Pilot Project (underway)
  - Continue to monitor the King Street pilot (transit efficiency, pedestrian and cycling counts and economic point-of-sale data).
  - Fine tune as appropriate the design of the King Street pilot.
  - Initiate a design competition to re-imagine public spaces along the corridor.
  - Partner with communities, stakeholders and the design industry to activate and transform the King Street public realm.
- Phase 2: Permanent Design
  - Implement a permanent design for King Street, responding to the lessons from the pilot, its monitoring, the goals for the street and ongoing public outreach.

## Jarvis Street Garden Street



Once a grand and elegant tree-lined promenade, Jarvis Street today is a wide, multi-laned arterial roadway, widened in 1947 in response to increasing volumes of automobile traffic. Many of the original trees were removed at this time.

Despite its re-configuration, Jarvis Street remains an important civic spine in Toronto. It has been recognized as a 'Cultural Corridor' for the city (Toronto's Urban Waterfront: Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan, 2001) – a major north-south street that connects the city's cultural resources to the waterfront. It connects a string of significant heritage structures and public places, including Allan Gardens, Moss Park, St James Park, St Lawrence Hall and Market, and the Redpath Sugar Refinery and Sugar Beach. Many of the original, stone-walled garden setbacks remain, and host remnant heritage trees that hint at what the street used to be. The 2001 report, "Market Research / Financial Viability Study for Allan Gardens,"

recommended that "the evolution of Jarvis Street into a 'Grand Allee' should be recognized." This notion was reinforced in the 2017 report, "Allan Gardens Refresh," produced by the Friends of Allan Gardens (FOAG).

As Downtown Toronto evolves in the 21st century, Jarvis Street will come under increasing pressure as a central spine for some of Toronto's fastest growing neighbourhoods, including the Yonge-Church corridor, Moss Park, Corktown and St Lawrence. How can Jarvis Street's heritage and context be honoured and re-invigorated to position the street as an identifiable civic place and connector for the city?

*(opposite) Today, Jarvis Street connects a string of significant heritage structures and public places; yet offers a poor experience for pedestrians and cyclists, Toronto, Canada*



*Jarvis Street, 1903*



*Jarvis Street, 1960*





Jarvis St

THANK YOU FOR  
GIVING COMPASSION  
A NEW HOME



Re-establish Jarvis Street as a grand tree-lined promenade that supports civic life, celebrate its significant heritage structures and connect its significant public parks.



*Jarvis Street Garden Street, showing lane reduction on Jarvis Street – from five lanes to four lanes – to increase space for pedestrians, including minimum 2.1m pedestrian clearways, Proposed Concept*

Enhance Jarvis Street's 'Garden Street' character by implementing a minimum 6.0-metre green setback on the street's east and west edges, creating a green spine for the Garden District from the Rosedale Valley Ravine to Toronto Bay. By leveraging Jarvis Street's heritage

and enhancing its role as a Cultural Corridor, the street is re-balanced as an identifiable civic place and connector. Blend the edges of the street with adjacent parks and open spaces, such as Jarvis Terrace at Allan Gardens, to assemble and connect the public realm.

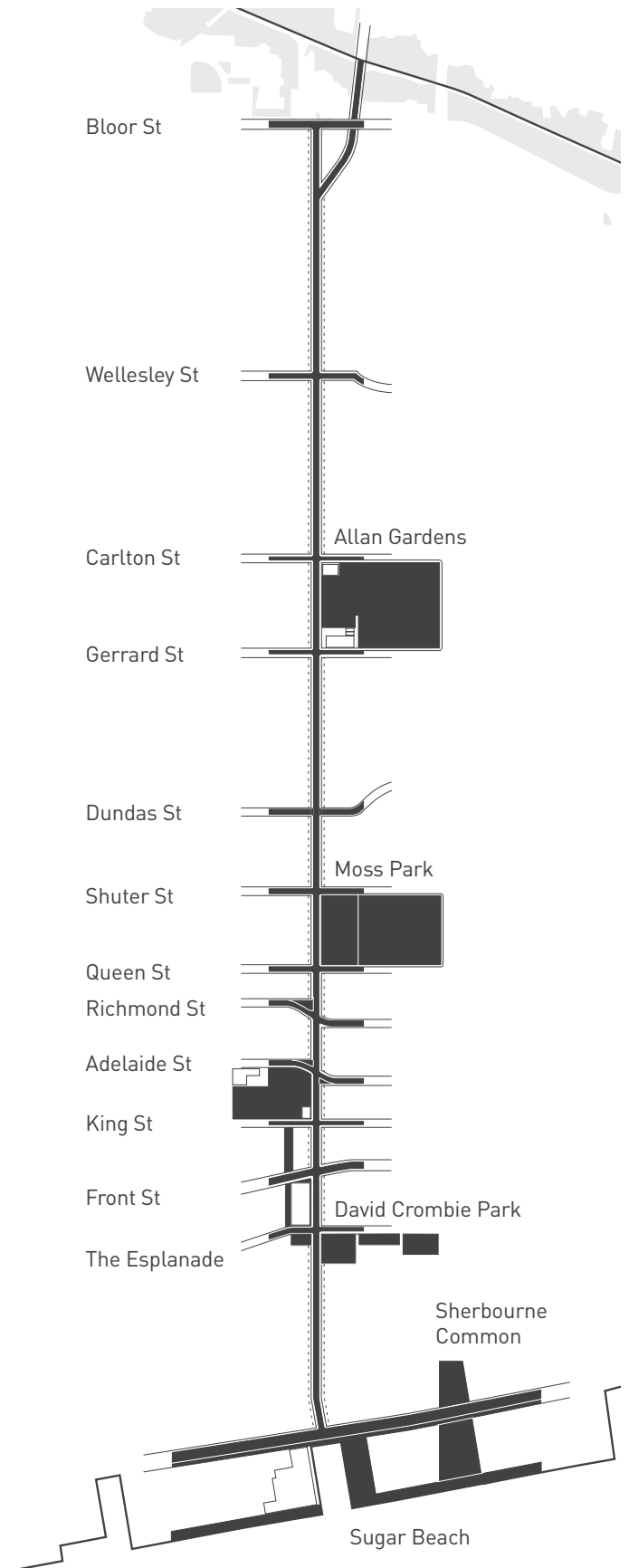


*A model for Jarvis Street, Karl Johans Gate's expanded streetside pedestrian areas, gardens and large-canopy tree rows create a strong lush green facade for the street, Oslo, Norway*



*BNMC-Ellicott Park, a streetscape designed to achieve an immersive horticultural experience, Buffalo, United States*

Create conditions that will support the growth of large-growing shade trees and support a healthy tree canopy on both sides of the street, including investing in tree planting infrastructure, bio-retention planting beds and an enhanced maintenance program.



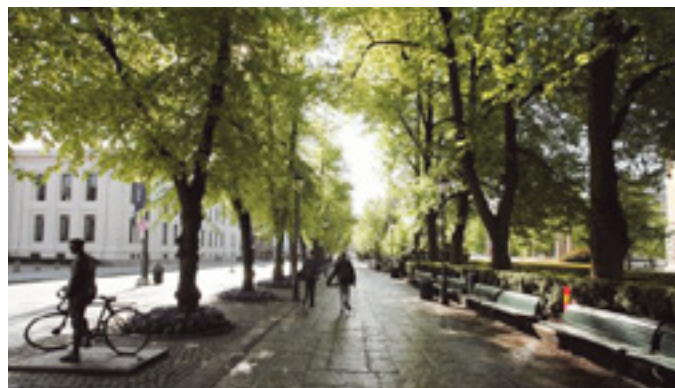
*Jarvis Street Garden Street, Framework Plan*





*Jarvis Street Garden Street, Proposed Concept*

*(right) A model for Jarvis Street, Karl Johans Gate's expanded streetside pedestrian areas, gardens and large-canopy tree rows create a strong lush green facade for the street, Oslo, Norway*



## Goals

Re-establish Jarvis Street as a grand tree-lined promenade that supports civic life, celebrate its significant heritage structures and connect its significant public parks.

- Enhance its role as a Cultural Corridor by improving the setting for existing and future cultural resources and enhancing connections between them.
- Improve connections for pedestrians between the Rosedale Valley Ravine and Toronto Bay.
- Improve connections between streets and the edges of the significant parks and open spaces along the street including Allan Gardens, Moss Park and St. James Park.
- Improve the streetscape for walking, transit stops, social gathering, public outdoor seating, café seating and landscaping.
- Create conditions that will support the growth of large-growing shade trees and support a healthy tree canopy on both sides of the street.

## Actions

- In coordination with the Downtown Mobility Strategy, explore opportunities to redesign and widen the pedestrian realm and to provide space and conditions that can support the growth of healthy shade trees on both sides of the street.
- Establish tree planting with a consistent form, structure and scale and maintenance program to ensure ongoing health and vitality.
- Represent a variety of tree species through carefully curated planting design.
- Investigate moving utilities underground.