

# Project Summary

**Downtown** urban environments can vary enormously in character, quality and livability. Issues such as microclimate, light, shade and wind levels become more acute as buildings become taller, as do issues of how tall buildings meet the ground; how they integrate with their setting and how they engage, define and support pedestrian life on the street.

Compatibility of new development and the ability of buildings to work together to help define a street, a neighbourhood or public park or space, is a matter of scale and scale is relative to: height, bulk and massing, spacing, location of building components, design and context, the last of which takes into account historic and landmark buildings and sites; significant parks and public spaces; view corridors, important vistas, and more.

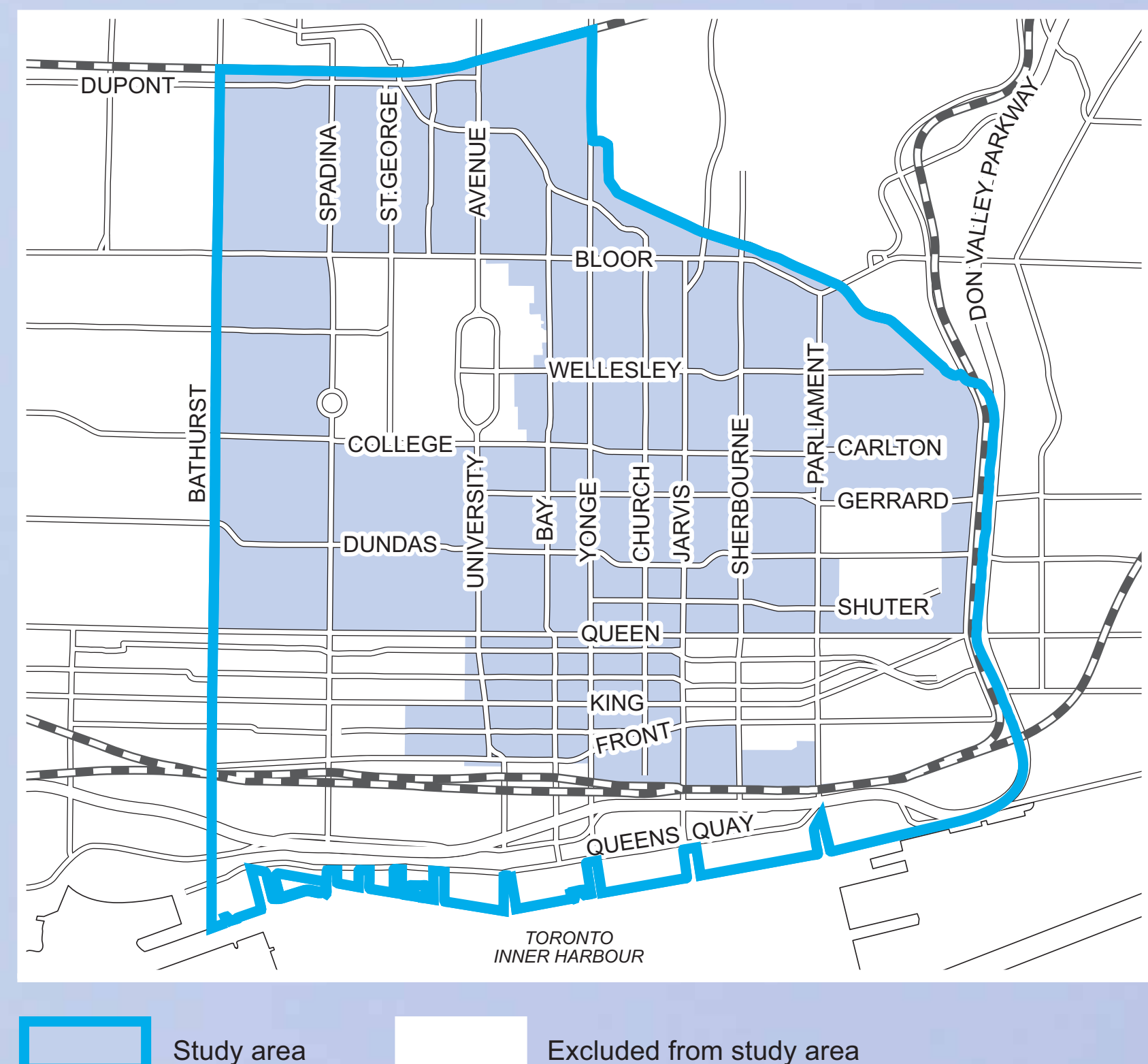
During the past decade residential and mixed-use development in Downtown Toronto has increased dramatically, much of it through buildings which are much taller than the City's current zoning by-law maximum height limit provisions anticipated. The style/character of tall buildings has changed over time from one with a shorter and bulkier floorplate to taller point towers with smaller floor plates. Today, tall buildings are being sited closer to each other and to the edges of established mid and low-rise areas. The smaller lot sizes in the Downtown and the fragmented nature of lot ownership which makes land assembly more difficult; the somewhat irregular laneway system that causes challenges for servicing of multi-storey buildings and a sensitive historic context, have created special locational challenges for assessing/reviewing tall building development.

Downtown Toronto is characterized by tall buildings. As it grows and evolves, tall buildings will continue to accommodate people and jobs drawn to the City's core. The objective of the Tall Buildings Downtown Project is to create a vision for tall buildings which identifies which downtown streets tall buildings should be located on and the height ranges and built form typologies that these tall buildings should adhere to in order to enhance the pedestrian environment; minimize shadowing of sidewalks, parks and public squares; protect landmark views and heritage resources and improve the quality of life (access to natural light, sky views and privacy) for people living and working in the core.

As part of this Project, a consultant's study, undertaken by Urban Strategies Inc. and Hariri Pontarini Architects, in consultation with City Planning staff, is recommending a set of customized performance standards for tall buildings downtown. The Study draws upon pre-existing Toronto-wide design guidelines known as the *Design Criteria for Review of Tall Buildings Proposals*; an on-the-ground assessment of local conditions and the results of selective testing of chosen sites in Downtown Toronto; and an assessment of experiences of comparable cities from around North America. Together, the vision and performance standards are intended to add a finer grain of detail to the review of tall building applications in Downtown Toronto.

## Project Area

The Tall Buildings Downtown Project area encompasses portions of Wards 20, 27 and 28. It is bounded by Bathurst Street on the west, Dupont Street on the north, the Don Valley Parkway on the east and Lake Ontario on the south. Secondary Plan Areas falling within the study boundaries have been excluded from the Study.



# TALL BUILDINGS DOWNTOWN PROJECT

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