



King-Spadina
Public Realm Strategy
June 2021

KING - SPADINA PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Objectives	9
1.3 Location/ The King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area	12
2. Public Realm Analysis	15
2.1 Existing and Planned Parks and Open Spaces	17
2.1.1 Existing and Planned Public Parks	17
2.1.2 On-site Parkland Dedication:	21
2.1.3 Off site Parkland Dedication	23
2.1.4 Parkland Acquisition	24
2.1.5 Expansion of existing parks	29
2.1.6 Other Parks and open space Initiatives in close vicinity of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area:	30
2.1.7 Privately Owned, Publicly-Accessible Open Spaces (POPS)	34
2.2 Existing and Planned Mid-block Connections	47
2.3 Existing Streetscape Conditions/Sidewalk Widths	60
2.4 Public Realm Constraints	62

3. Public Realm Strategy	67
3.1 Potential future parks and open spaces	68
3.1.1 Toronto Downtown West BIA Master Plan Initiatives	68
3.1.2 Sites Under Study and Potential Open Space Enhancements	70
3.2 Gateways	72
3.3 Key Views and Vistas	74
3.4 Potential Mid-block Connections	76
3.5 Streetscape Improvements	78
3.5.1 Streetscape Improvement Initiatives	82
4. How this Strategy has worked since 2014	91
5. Moving Forward	93
List of Figures	96
List of Maps	104



Figure 1. Historic picture of King-Spadina Area and Clarence Square, Looking north from the intersection of Front Street West and Spadina Avenue ,1927 Fairfield Aerial Survey, Source: <http://www.wellingtonplace.org>

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

King-Spadina has experienced unprecedented growth in the last decade. 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 the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area 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 2013, Toronto City Council 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. City Planning undertook the HCD and CS&F work and the result was an update to the whole King Spadina Secondary Plan Area, not just the East Precinct. The updated Secondary Plan was adopted by City Council on January 29, 2020. Both, the updated King-Spadina Secondary Plan and the HCD Plan are currently under appeal.

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 and improved to better suit the needs of a growing population of residents, office workers and visitors alike.

The Public Realm Strategy is intended to provide a degree of certainty and clarity for common interpretation, however, as a Public Realm Strategy, it should also be afforded some flexibility in application. The first Draft of this document, which was adopted by City Council in August 2014, only included the East Precinct of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area.

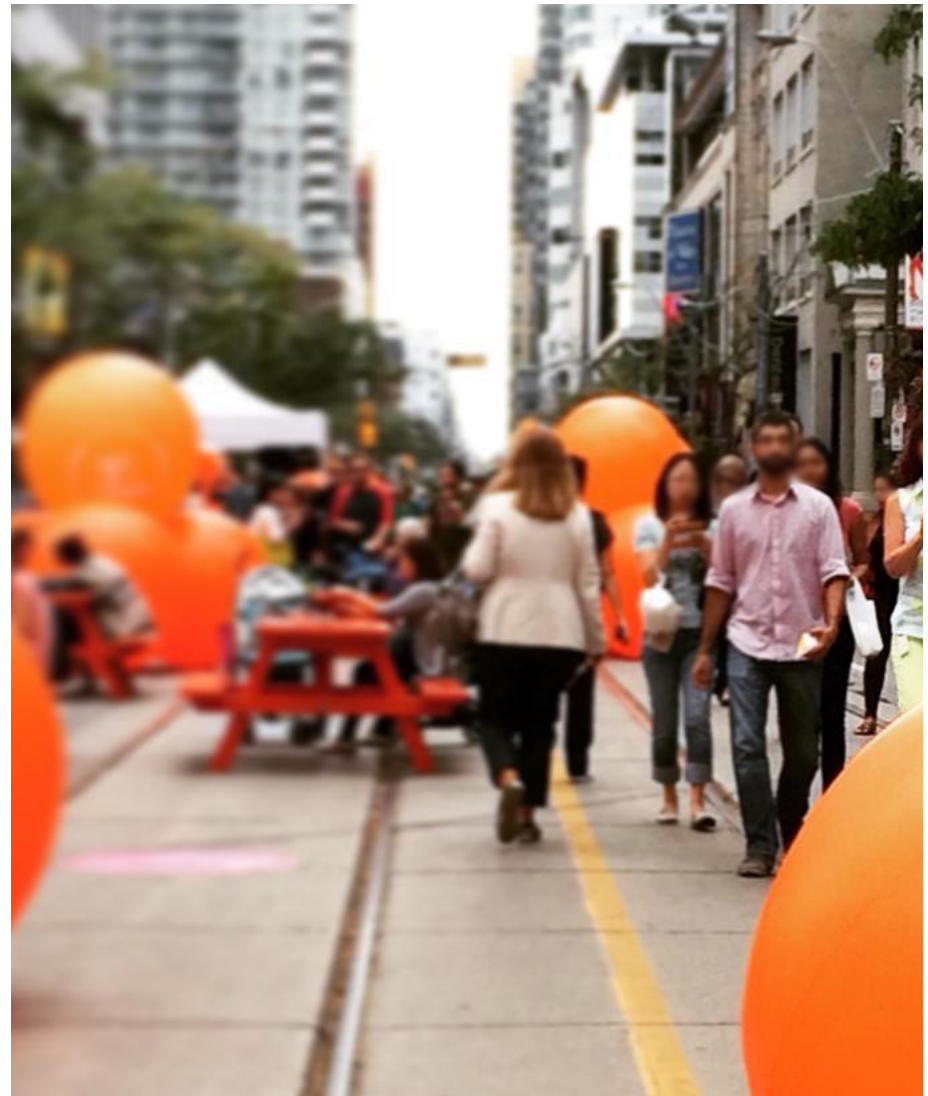
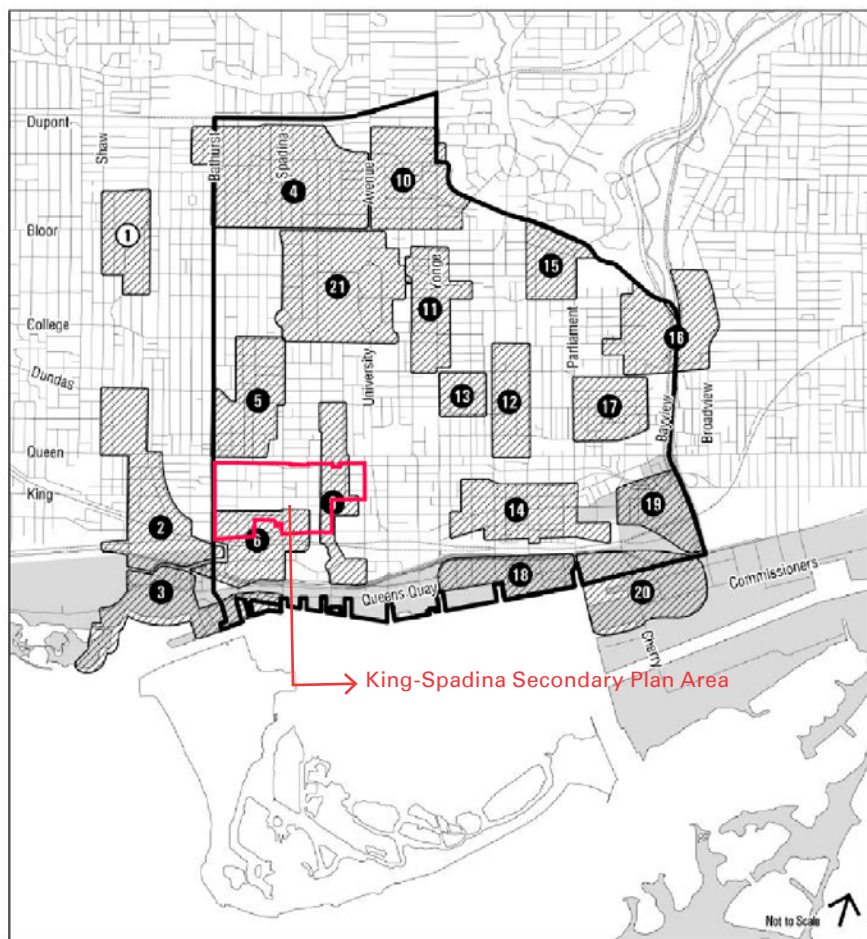


Figure 2. King Street West during Toronto International Film Festival



Downtown Plan
MAP 41-8 Park Districts

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Park Districts | 5 Kensington Market - Alexandra Park | 12 The Garden District | 17 Regent Park |
| Central Waterfront Secondary Plan | 6 West Rail District | 13 Ryerson University | 18 Lower Yonge - East Bayfront |
| 1 Christie-Bickford | 8 Grange - John Street - Roundhouse Park | 14 Old Town - St. Lawrence - Distillery | 19 West Don Lands |
| 2 The Garrison Parks - Fort York | 10 Ramsden Park - Yorkville | 15 St. James Town | 20 Lower Don Lands |
| 3 Bathurst Quay - Coronation Park - Ontario Place | 11 Bay Cloverhill Loop | 16 Cobbleton - Riverdale | 21 University of Toronto |
| 4 The Annex | | | |

Note: Depiction of areas outside of the Downtown Plan boundary are for illustrative purposes only. May 2018

Since then, the vision provided in this document has helped City staff, applicants and residents achieve a much more enhanced and expanded public realm network. The current document has built on the previous study and includes all of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area.

The King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy should be read in conjunction with the *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* (PPR Plan), as well as the *Downtown Plan*. These Plans provide a framework for the downtown core and the objectives of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan builds on them.

The Downtown PPR and Downtown Plans have identified different park districts within the Downtown Core. Parts of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area falls with the West Rail Park District and parts of it is within the Grange-John-Roundhouse Park District (Identified district number 6 and district number 9 in Map 1).

This Public Realm Strategy also complements the Toronto Downtown West BIA (Formerly known as Entertainment District BIA) Master Plan, as well as the King-Spadina HCD plan. This document seeks to reinforce the physical character and identity of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area and to provide a public realm framework for developments and public works.

This Public Realm Strategy is a vision document and not a master plan. It identifies opportunities for public realm enhancement, details of which will be explored either through individual development applications, partnership or capital works.

Map 1. Different Park Districts as identified in the Downtown Plan

1.2 Objectives

As the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area continues to grow and its population increases, there is a need and desire to revitalize its existing parks and open spaces, create new parks and open spaces and connect these spaces together through revitalized and enhanced streetscapes. As per the Downtown PPR Plan :

"The Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan (the Plan) establishes a vision and framework designed to achieve an expanded, improved and connected parks and public realm network within Downtown Toronto's mature urban fabric to support future growth. It presents a shared vision to achieve a more desirable and sustainable parks and open space system, an essential component to making Downtown Toronto an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The Plan has been developed to support the implementation of Downtown Plan (Official Plan Amendment or OPA) which, as part of Toronto's Official Plan, provides a blueprint for growth and infrastructure over the next 25 years. The Downtown Plan (OPA) sets the direction for the city centre as the cultural, civic, retail and economic heart of Toronto, and as a great place to live."

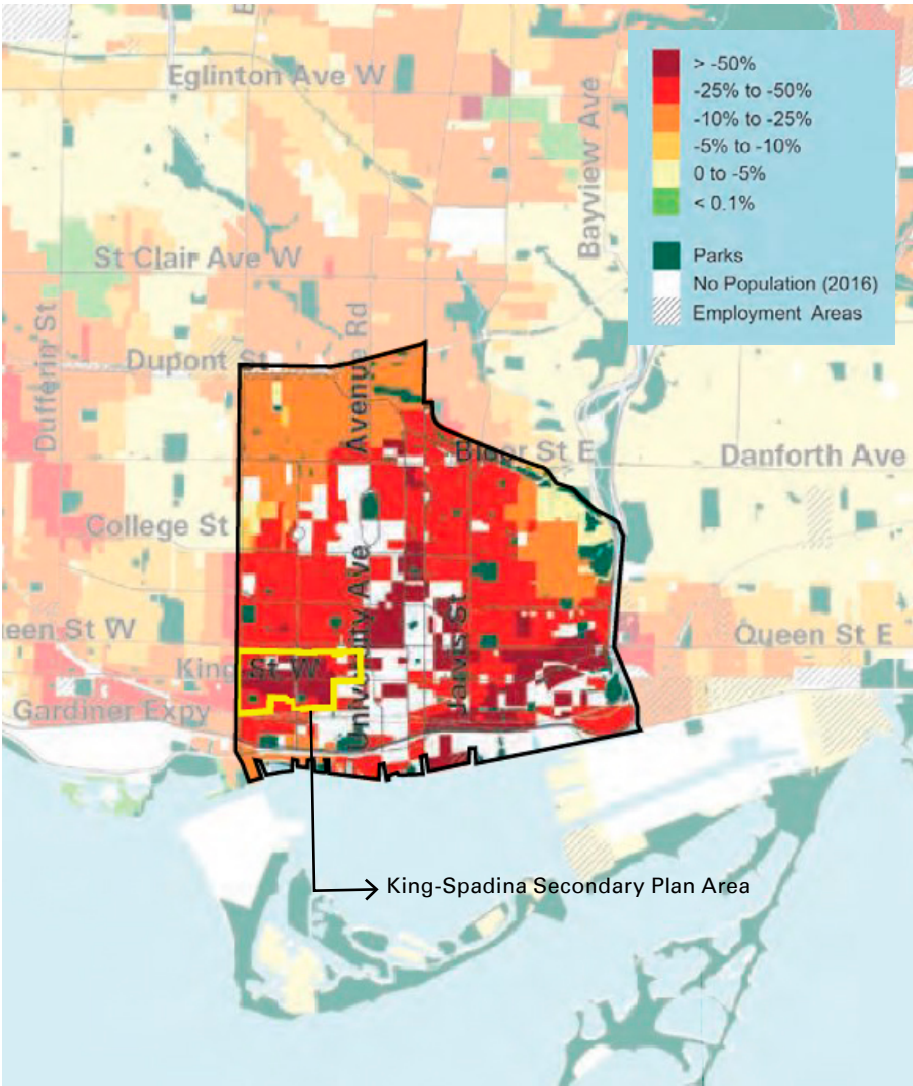
Downtown has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city at 5.5 sq.m per resident (utilizing the 2016 census) and 1.8 sq.m per resident and employee compared to a city-wide average of 28 sq.m per resident and 18 sq.m per resident and employee respectively. As the population continues to increase, and if no new parkland is added, the parkland provision rates will continue to fall even lower.

The Parkland Strategy, which was approved by Council in 2019 identifies almost all of Downtown as a Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Area. These were identified based on:

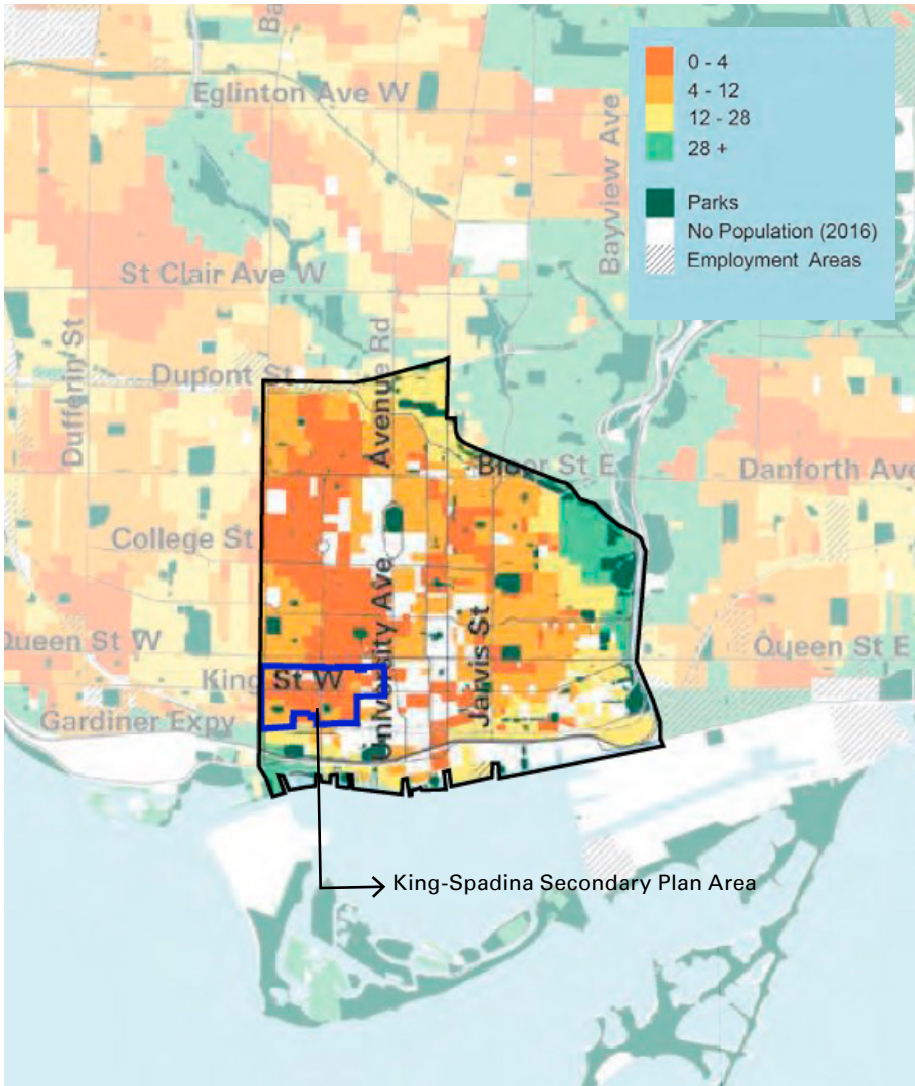
- Parkland provision (less than 12 sq.m of parkland per person) AND one or more of:
 - Parkland Supply (less than 1.5 Ha total parkland within 500m in 2016)
 - Impact of growth (areas projected to have over 5000 people/Ha in 2033)
 - Low income residents (25% or more of residents are low income in 2016)

These priority areas are where the city will focus and prioritize parks planning and acquisitions. Map 4 on page 11 shows that all of King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area is identified as a Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Area.

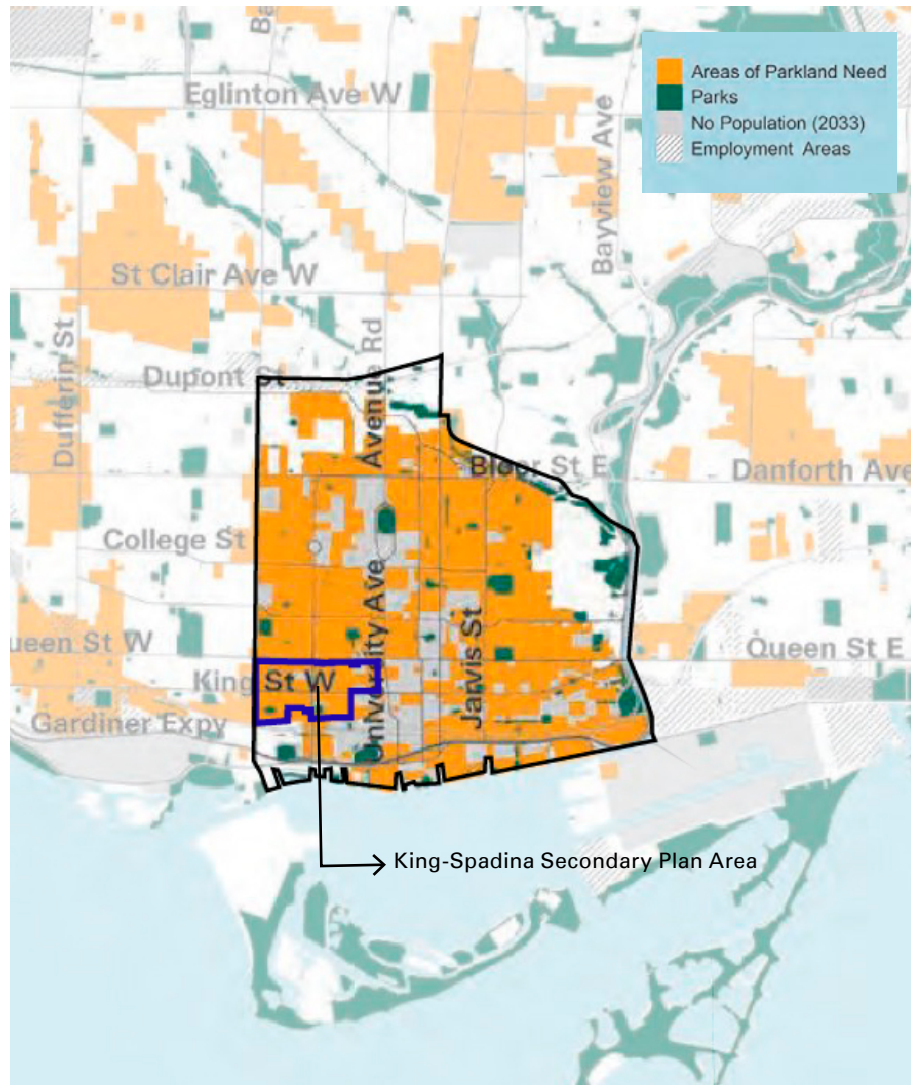
Additionally, Maps 2 and 3 on page 10 show Impact of growth on parkland provision (2016-2033) by percent change and Toronto Parkland Provision respectively. These findings emphasize the importance of public realm enhancement and expansion within areas like the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area. Given the context and constraints within this area, a variety of approaches should be considered to secure a high quality life for residents, workers and visitors alike.



Map 2. Impact of growth on parkland provision (2016-2033) by percent change, Extracted from the "Parkland Strategy" document, Nov. 2019



Map 3. Toronto Parkland Provision Extracted from the "Parkland Strategy" document, Nov. 2019



Map 4. Parkland study and acquisition priority map Extracted from the "Parkland Strategy" document, Nov. 2019

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 precincts of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area
- 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
- Consider and incorporate other studies in regards to different modes of transportation, specifically pedestrian and bicycle movements
- Ensure appropriate relationships between the public realm and built form
- Ensure that new developments provide high quality, co-ordinated 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/ The King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area

The King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area has been divided into three main precincts (Map 5 on page 13):

- East Precinct
- Spadina Precinct
- West Precinct

The boundary of the Secondary Plan Area, as well as the boundaries of all three precincts have been slightly changed since the adoption of the first phase of the Public Realm Strategy in 2014.

East Precinct: The East Precinct 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 fronting Spadina Avenue. On the north side, it generally aligns with the rear property lines of lands that front onto Queen Street West.

Spadina Precinct: Spadina Precinct is bound by the rear property lines of lands on both sides of Spadina Avenue. It is bound by Richmond Street West to the north and is extended to Clarence Square to the south.

West Precinct: The West precinct is bound by the rear property lines of lands on the west side of Spadina Avenue to the east and the rear property lines of lands that face on Queen Street West to the north. It is extended to Bathurst Street and Front Street West to the west and south respectively. The West Precinct does not include a portion that is located at the southwest corner of Front Street West and Spadina Avenue as shown in Map 5. This area is the development site for "The Well" and has its own Official Plan Amendment (OPA) in place.

In the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area, the land use designation in the City of Toronto Official Plan, as well as the Zoning By-law was changed from "Mixed Use Area" to "Regeneration Area" in the mid-1990's. This updated land use control had minimal restrictions on uses and did not limit permitted density. Rather, utilizing defined building envelopes, the intent of the zoning provisions was to achieve a new built form that was consistent with the area's historic industrial built form fabric.

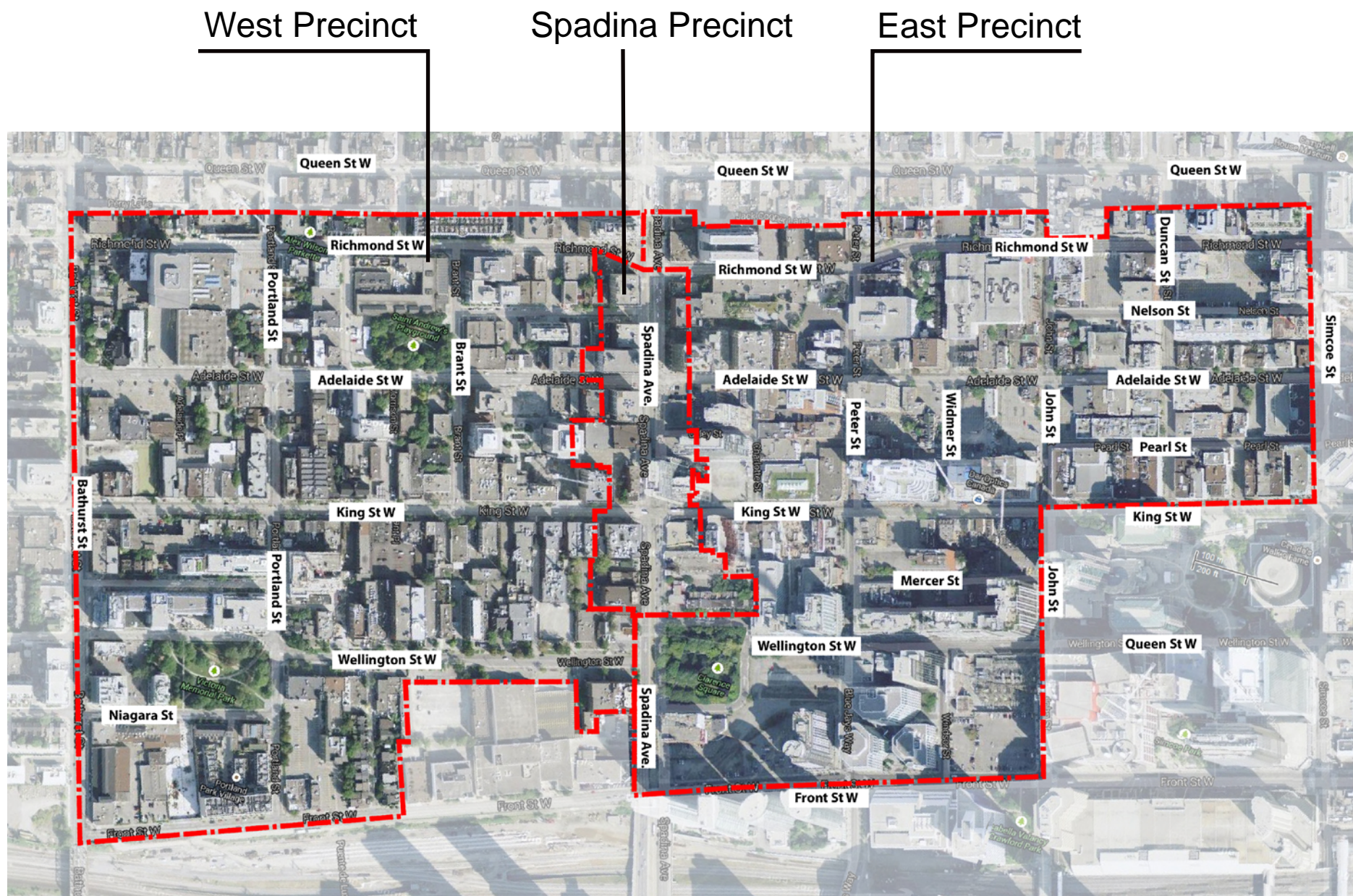
The fundamental objective of the 1996 King-Spadina Secondary Plan was to attract investment that results in a vibrant mixed-use urban neighbourhood with a unique physical character rooted in its history as a manufacturing and warehouse district.

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.

Section 2 of this document reviews the following:

- Existing open space and public realm elements
- Recent public realm initiatives
- Planned open spaces, mid-block connections and other public realm initiatives
- Constraints and weaknesses

Section 3 elaborates on potentials and opportunities for public realm enhancement that will be introduced as a public realm structure plan at the end of this document.



Map 5. King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area and its three precincts

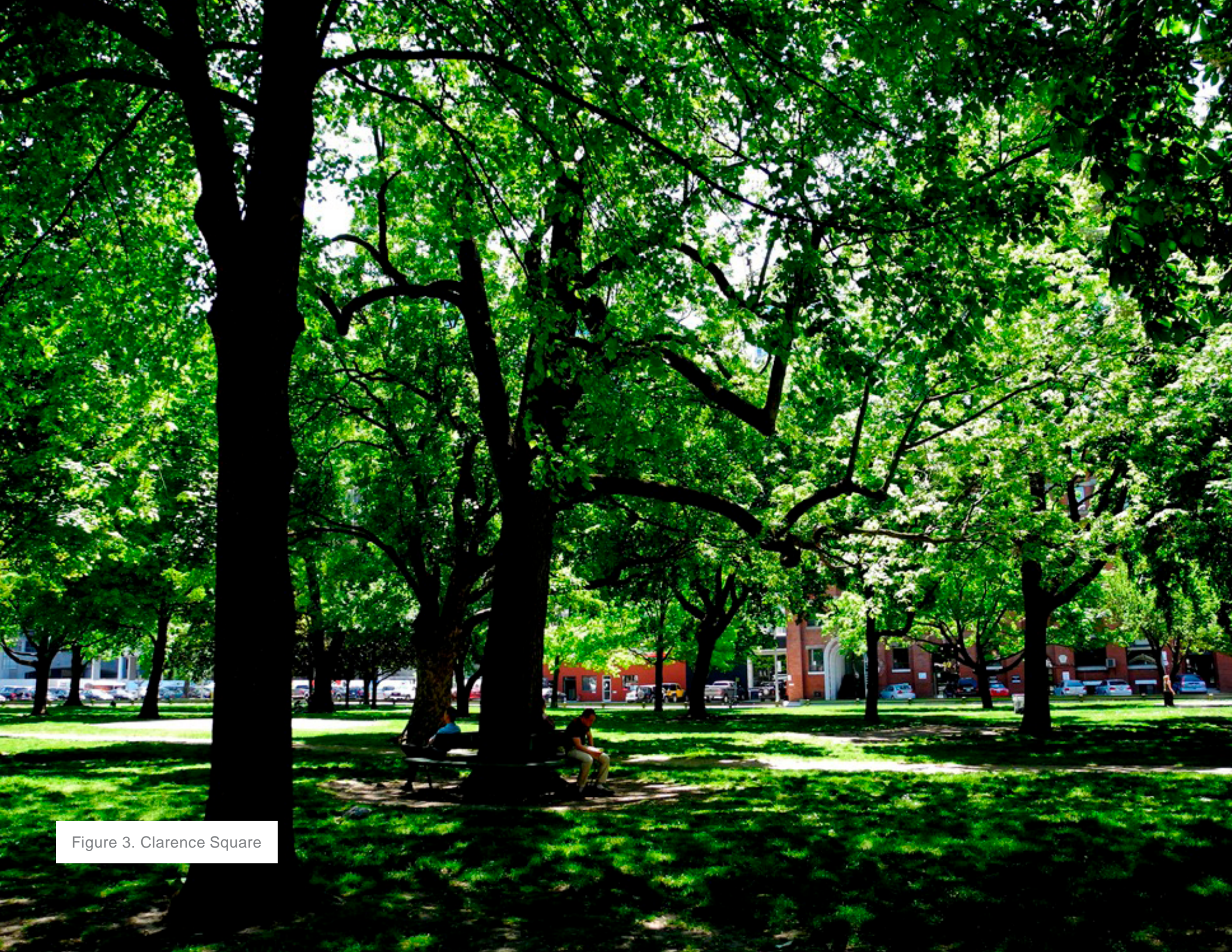


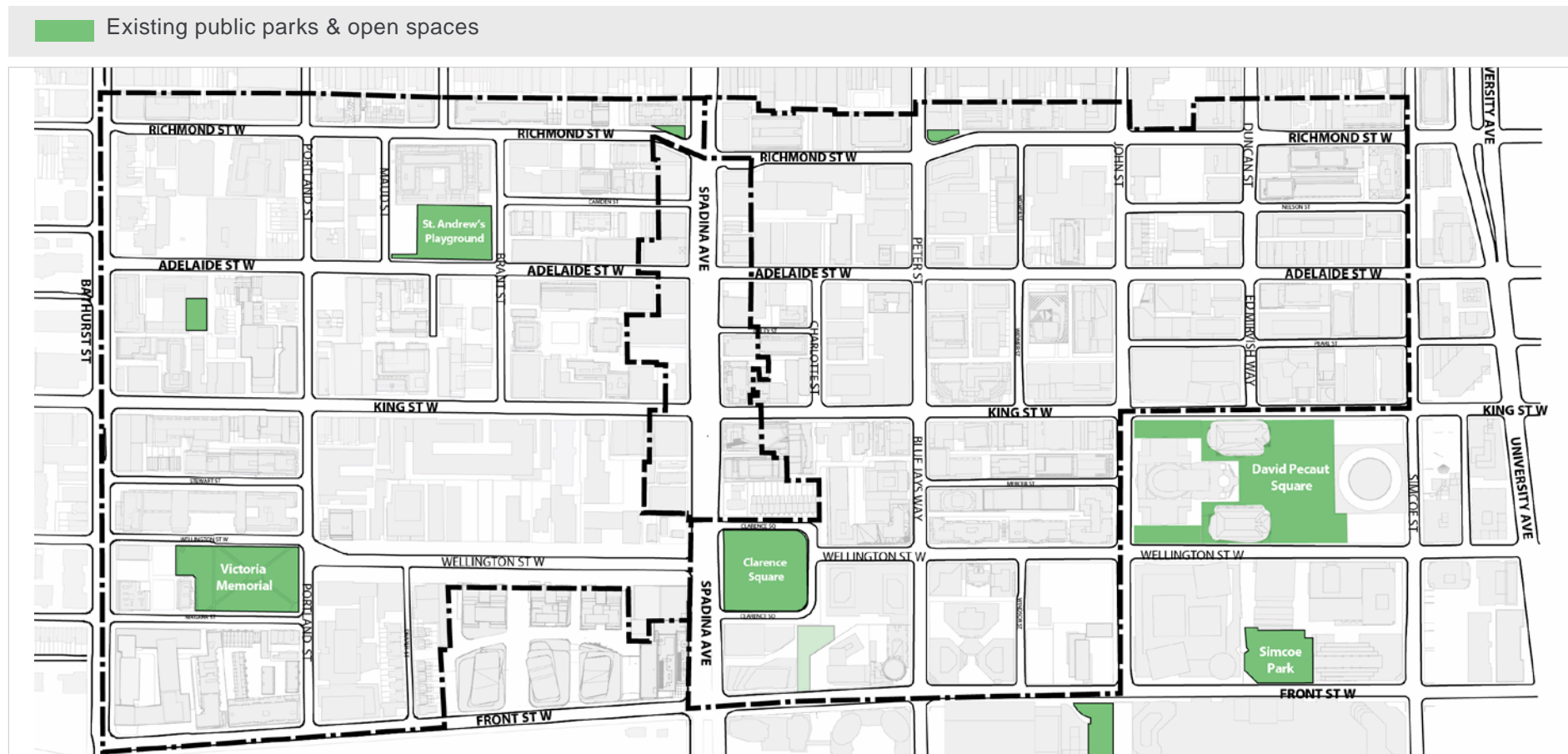
Figure 3. Clarence Square

2. Public Realm Analysis

A successful, high quality public realm is essential to be had 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 noted, the King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area 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 section, 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 strategy document, public realm elements have been divided into:

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



Map 6. Existing public parks and open spaces within and close to King-Spadina Secondary Plan Area