



RETAIL STRATEGY

Toronto Downtown West BIA
May 2021



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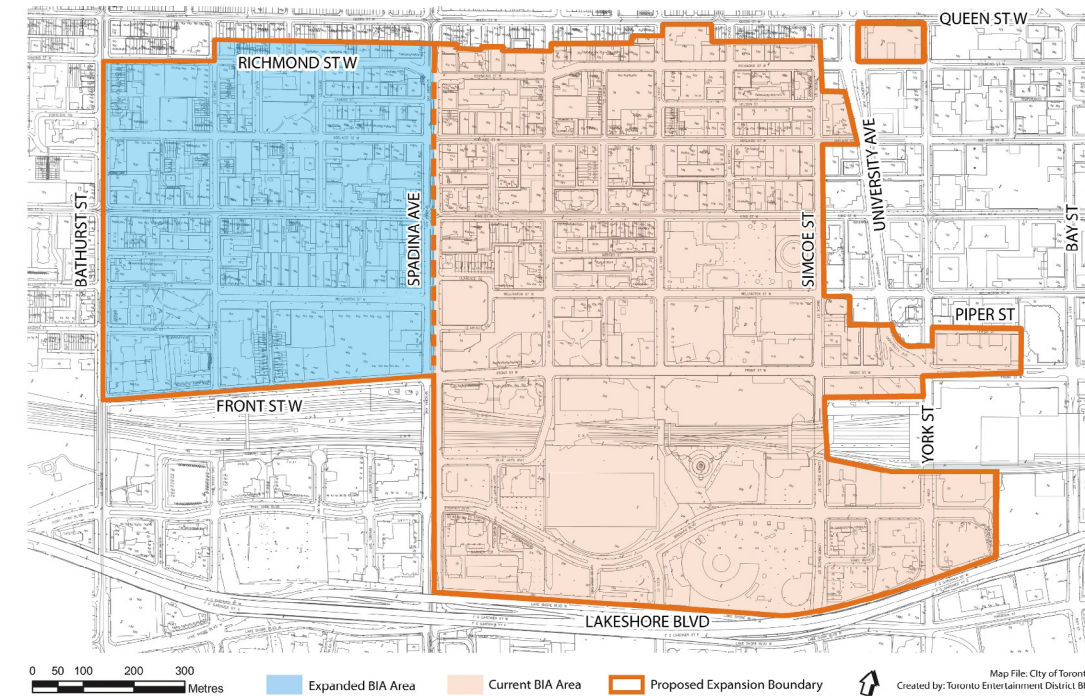
ABOUT THE BIA

A Destination Neighbourhood

With distinct architecture both old and new, Toronto Downtown West BIA is a thriving commercial hub of creative houses, hospitality and retail. There are various business and cultural activities happening in this premier destination neighbourhood, including conferences and conventions, hotels, theatres, performing arts, festivals and events, sports, arts and culture, dining, cafés, bars, nightlife and shopping.

From the Scotiabank Arena to The Well, from the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts to the Factory Theatre, Downtown West BIA includes many of Toronto's most iconic cultural landmarks including the CN Tower, EdgeWalk, FlyOver Canada, Steam Whistle Brewing, Toronto Railway Museum, Ripley's Aquarium of Canada, Canada's Walk of Fame, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Metro Hall, Rogers Centre, Roy Thomson Hall, Princess of Wales Theatre, Royal Alexandra Theatre, TIFF Bell Lightbox, 401 Richmond, Theatre Museum Canada, Canadian Broadcast Corporation, and Bell Media. The District is home to an array of talent that is comprised of the Canadian Opera Company, the National Ballet of Canada, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors.

Toronto Downtown West BIA Geographic Boundary



Neighbourhood Statistics

Development Summary

- From Pre-Application to Under Construction, there are **67** active developments
- Total new residential units in process: **24,010**
- Total new non-residential GFA in process: **1,111,348 sq m (11,962,446 sq ft)**
- Total new hotels in process: **6**, number of rooms: **1,274**

Population

- Current residential population: **35,000+**
- Current working population: **115,000+**
- Current dog population: **20,000+**
- Current annual visitors to the area: **20,000,000+**
- Current number of hotels: **18**, number of rooms: **6,962**



Waterworks Rendering - Rendering by Mod Developments

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Document

The Retail Strategy includes changing trends and best practices of the store-front retail market, provides guidance on retail planning, public realm interface and considerations for different stakeholder groups:

- Developers/Project Managers
- Architects/Landscape Architects/Designers/Planners
- Property Owners/Managers
- City of Toronto: Planning and Urban Design
- Resident Associations
- The Business Improvement Area (BIA)

The Strategy is designed to inspire high quality, unique retail in the neighbourhood, creating destination streets for tourists, residents, and the local employment base. It is essential to maintain vibrant streets in a downtown mixed-use area, supporting its social and economic vitality. In order to achieve this long-term, this Strategy serves as an important resource for property owners, developers, City planners and resident associations to view store front tenancy as an integral part of what shapes the look and the feel of the neighbourhood.

Target Market

This Retail Strategy supports our destination neighbourhood catering to:

- Local Residents
- Working Population
- Visitors from
 - Immediate surrounding neighbourhoods
 - Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
 - Ontario
 - Canada
 - International

Desirable Neighbourhood: Mobility and Accessibility

Toronto Downtown West BIA is a highly accessible, walkable and inclusive neighbourhood, with direct access to various transportation modes, including Canada's major transit hubs:

- Public Transit Services – UP Express, VIA Rail, Go Transit (GTA), and TTC
- Major Transit Hubs – Union Station, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, and Toronto Pearson International Airport
- PATH Network and Wayfinding
- Street-Level Wayfinding
- Local Bike Lane Network

Established Amenity, Retail and Hospitality

Toronto Downtown West contains a strong presence of established amenity, personal service businesses, cafés, restaurants, nightlife spots, and alternative food and retail shops

Amenities:

- Pharmacies, grocery, fitness, physio, wellness, optometrists, veterinary clinics, dental clinics, medical walk-in clinics, personal financial services, dry cleaners, tailors, hair & nail salons, spas, shoe repair, local print shop, Canada post & other parcel delivery services, hardware and home décor stores, LCBO, cannabis, mobile service

Dining & Nightlife:

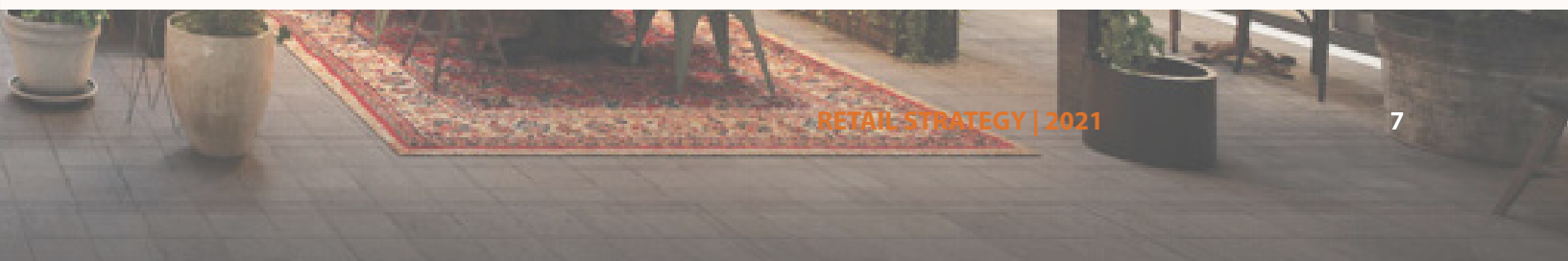
- Cafés, coffee shops, sit-down casual, formal dining, bistros, craft beer halls, pubs, PATH food courts, grab & go, bars, supper clubs, lounges and night clubs

Alternative Food Shops (unique, specialty):

- Chefs halls, dessert shops, bakeries, market stalls, pop-ups, chocolate shops

Alternative Retail Shops (unique, specialty):

- Outerwear, Canadian designer shops, leather goods, pop-up, first-time storefront for online retailer



Marketing and Promotion of the Area

Toronto Downtown West BIA markets and promotes the area as an established destination neighbourhood through social media and other forms of online campaigns. Additionally, the BIA collaborates with area stakeholders and marketing and tourism associations:

- Developers
- BIA Members
- Destination Toronto
- Ontario Tourism
- City of Toronto Economic Development

Long-Term Sustainability

Investment in the neighbourhood:

- Developers and Property Owners
 - Investment in building heritage attributes
 - Investment in desirable commercial office spaces
 - Investment in retail space design
 - Investment in development of mixed-use commercial, residential, affordable housing, retail at-grade
- Cultural Attractions
 - Investment in major leagues sports arenas
 - Investment in arts & performing arts
 - Investment in destination attraction
- Public Realm Enhancements
 - Investment in King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan
 - Investment in John Street Corridor Improvements
 - Investment in POPS and Parks
 - Investment in subsidizing City services for cleanliness, safety and beautification
- Major Infrastructure Projects
 - Investment in public transit (e.g. TTC, Ontario Line, Go Transit)
 - Investment in expanded PATH network
 - Investment in cycling network
 - Investment in clean energy solutions (e.g. bike/e-scooter share programs, electric charge stations, electric buses, Enwave Deep Lake Water Cooling)

1.1 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

To create a strong retail presence along priority retail streets. Inspire new ways of thinking about sustainable retail and its connection to the surrounding neighbourhood through:

👍 Unique Retail Experience

Interesting concepts that support development of individual retail cultural identities (e.g. local and made in Canada products 🍁)

👍 Neighbourhood Identity

Strengthening the overarching identity of the neighbourhood through individual businesses

👍 A Destination

A destination hub for walking, dining, social get together and shopping for visitors, workers and local residents

👍 Local

Meeting the needs of area residents and businesses through grab and go lunch spots, dine-in cafés and restaurants, coffee shops, grocery, pharmacy, fashion and amenities

2. PRIORITY RETAIL STREETS

City Council adopted: The Priority Retail Streets Zoning By-law Amendments (November 2019). Policies within the TOcore Downtown Plan require that the ground floor of development projects contain quality space for non-residential uses that:

- Encourage specific design to protect the street character
- Animate the store frontage
- Ensure that stores with larger square footage be wrapped by smaller stores, or
- Locate on the second floor or underground of new development

The restaurants, cafés, bars and small retail located on streets with commercial buildings serve the needs of local residents and employment base, while destination shops attract visitors. These streets should contribute to the area’s vibrancy and walkability, improve streetscapes and support greater employment opportunities. The TOcore Downtown Plan has identified four streets as Priority Retail Streets within the BIA:

- King Street West
- John Street
- Spadina Avenue
- Front Street West



Cologne, Germany (Köln - Hohe Straße)
Photo by Codata retail



Montreal, Quebec, Photo by Fodors.com



Barcelona, Spain, Photo by Maysun for Vox

Photo by Willy Barton



Downtown San Jose, Photo by Sergio Ruiz



Live Music in Patio, Strangers Restaurant & Bar, Toronto, Photo by Barrio

Unique retail can be supported by City, property owners, tenants, developers and BIA working collaboratively on programs and solutions:

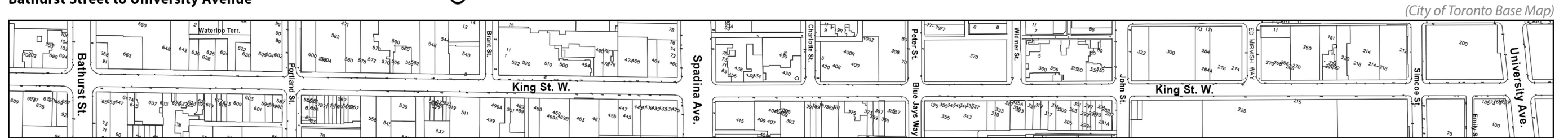
- 💡 Winter-friendly placemaking and rapid placemaking, such as live music
- 💡 Review street uses and identify opportunities to create greater vibrancy and animation (e.g. converting lay-bys into patios, programs such as CaféTO, CurbTO and ActiveTO)
- 💡 POPS, patios and public realm animated with art, performance art, entertainment and music
- 💡 Nighttime and weekend economy – changing streets and at-grade retail uses from day to night or from weekday to weekends. For example, transition streets to pedestrian, patio and event spaces on evenings or weekends (e.g. John Street Cultural Corridor, King Street)
- 💡 Developing a holistic long-term funding strategy for solutions on street-related social issues
- 💡 Planning and designing the public realm of a street in a coordinated manner to maximize patio and retail locations while working on development opportunities to support a completed street plan

2.1 KING STREET WEST

The King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan between Bathurst Street and Jarvis Street is about moving people and transit more efficiently through improved placemaking and advanced transit reliability.

The plan includes raised transit stop platforms that improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and streetcar users. A design for the transit stop platforms and public realm spaces can be achieved through coordination by City, TTC, developers and the BIA.

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan Bathurst Street to University Avenue

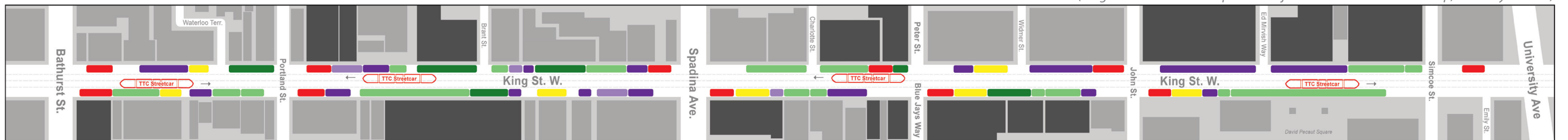


It has provided the opportunity to explore innovative ideas about how curb lane public space can be used to encourage people to gather, shop, dine, and enjoy the surroundings.

As a destination, King Street West has new opportunities for greater visual interest and active uses through POPS, street furniture and amenities in and around the new public realm spaces, creating a more desirable retail street.

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan

(King Street Active Development Projects and Curb Lane Uses Map, Made by TEDBIA)



Legend

- Block Land Area
- Existing Building
- Active Development Project

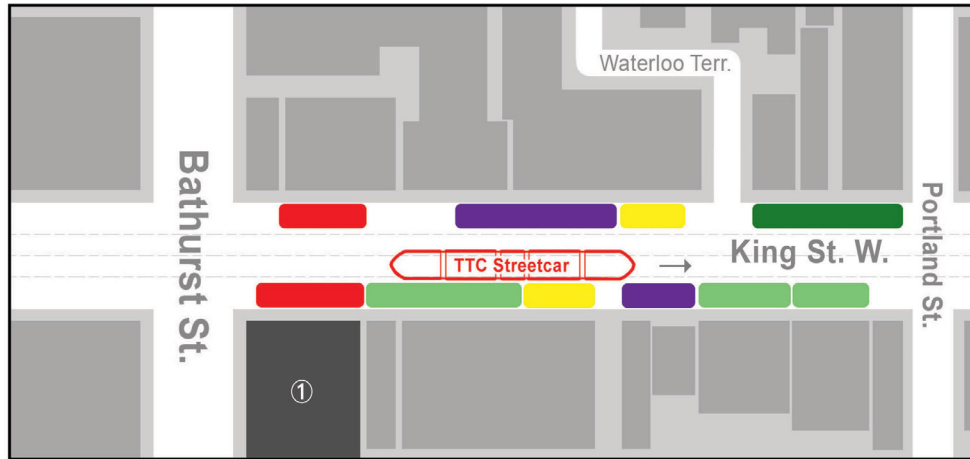
Curb Lane Uses

- Existing Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- Potential Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- Taxi Stand
- TTC Transit Stop
- Bike Share
- Accessible/Passenger/Commercial Loading



BATHURST TO PORTLAND

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan (Bathurst St. to Portland St.)



Legend

- Block Land Area
- Existing Building
- Active Development Project

Curb Lane Uses:

- Existing Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- TTC Transit Stop
- Bike Share
- Taxi Stand
- Potential Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- Accessible/Passenger/Commercial Loading

Adjacent Active Development Project: ① 647-663 King St. W.



(King Street Public Realm Rendering, Created by the BIA)

Map identifies locations of public realm, transit stop platforms, delivery/drop-off zones, and other elements along King Street. Adjacent renderings were designed to inspire and encourage creativity in the development of the street plans.

PORTLAND TO SPADINA

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan (Portland St. to Spadina Ave.)



Legend

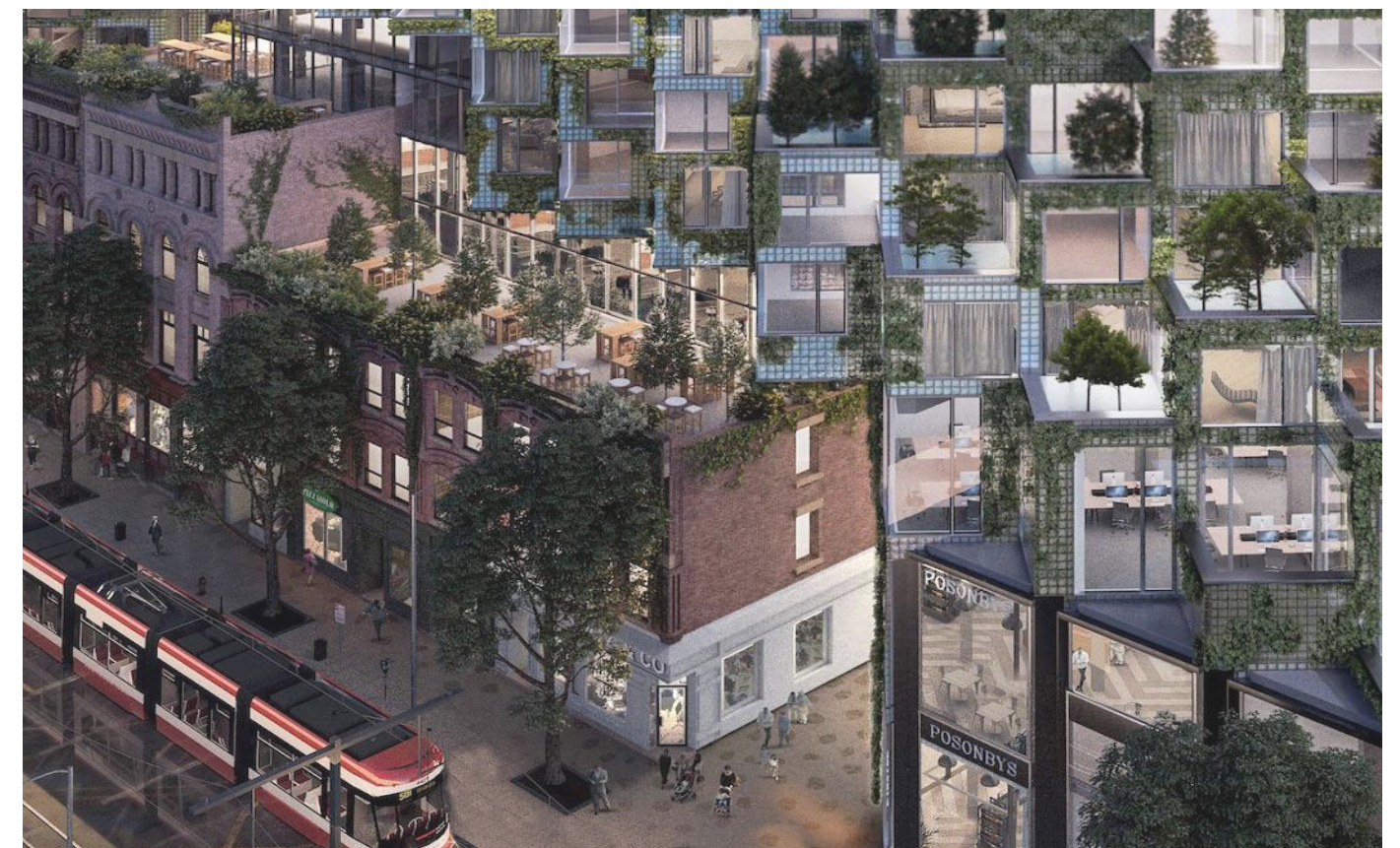
- Block Land Area
- Existing Building
- Active Development Project

Curb Lane Uses:

- Existing Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- TTC Transit Stop
- Bike Share
- Taxi Stand
- Potential Patio/Public Realm/POPS
- Accessible/Passenger/Commercial Loading

Adjacent Active Development Project:

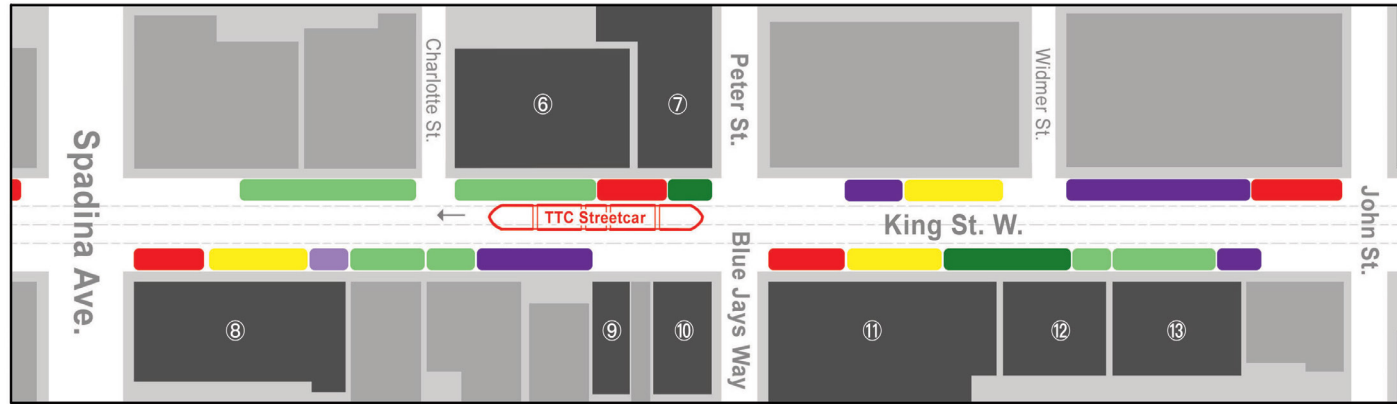
- ② 582 King St. W. (King Adelaide Centre)
- ③ 578-580 King St. W.
- ④ 540-544 King St. W.
- ⑤ 489-539 King St. W. (KING Toronto)



(KING Toronto Public Realm Rendering, Edited by the BIA)

SPADINA TO JOHN

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan (Spadina Ave. to John St.)



Legend

Block Land Area Existing Building Active Development Project

Curb Lane Uses:

Existing Patio/Public Realm/POPS Potential Patio/Public Realm/POPS Taxi Stand
 TTC Transit Stop Bike Share Accessible/Passenger/Commercial Loading

Adjacent Active Development Project:

⑥ 400-420 King St. W. ⑩ 357 King St. W.
 ⑦ 388 King St. W. ⑪ 355 King St. W. (King Blue)
 ⑧ 401-415 King St. W. ⑫ 321-333 King St. W. (Empire Maverick)
 ⑨ 367-369 King St. W. ⑬ 305-319 King St. W.



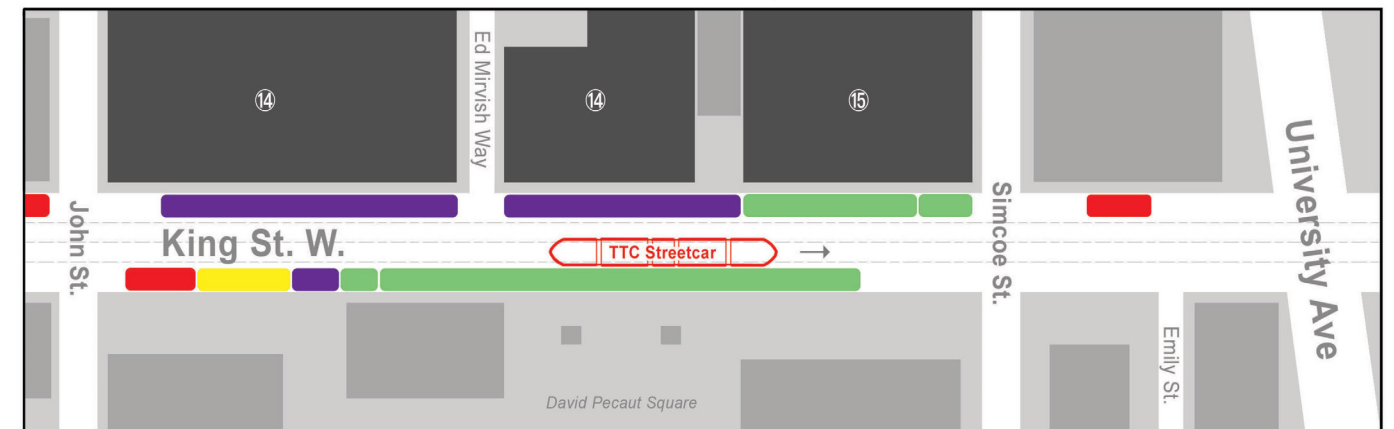
Advancing the King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan will encourage and support opportunity for existing and new storefront businesses, while attracting investment and creating long-term economic vitality in the area.

(King Street Public Realm Rendering, Created by TEDBIA)



(400-420 King Street West Public Realm Rendering)

King Street Transit and Public Realm Plan (John St. to University Ave.)



Legend

Block Land Area Existing Building Active Development Project

Curb Lane Uses:

Existing Patio/Public Realm/POPS Potential Patio/Public Realm/POPS Taxi Stand
 TTC Transit Stop Bike Share Accessible/Passenger/Commercial Loading

Adjacent Active Development Project:

⑭ 260-322 King St. W. (Mirvish+Gehry)
 ⑮ 212-220 King St. W.



JOHN TO UNIVERSITY

2.2 JOHN STREET

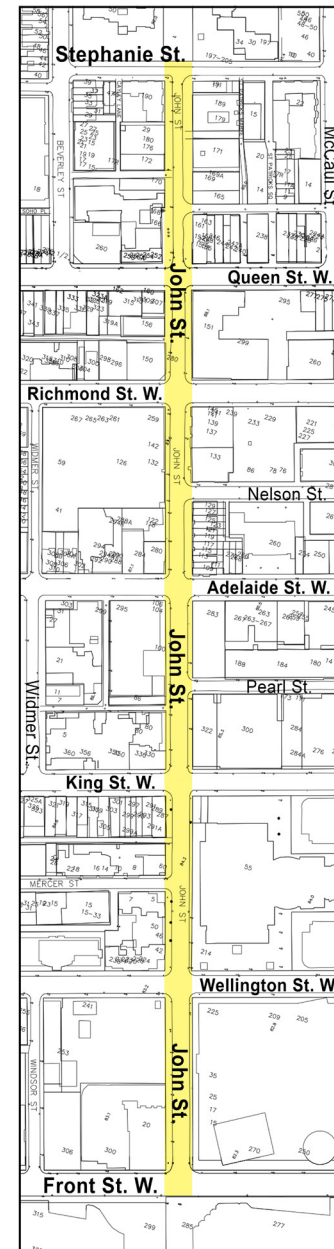
John Street plays an important role in the network of downtown streets, connecting many of Toronto's key cultural institutions along this pedestrian priority corridor.

John Street will be redesigned from Stephanie Street to Front Street West with the following features:

- Pedestrian priority street
- Wider sidewalks
- Flexible curbs
- Special lighting
- Special paving treatment
- Artistic furniture features
- Enhanced tree canopy
- Public Wi-Fi
- Underground utility improvements
- Stormwater tree system
- Event and festival-friendly elements for large scale and pop-up activities

Underground utility work to be completed Spring 2022, followed by road reconstruction.

John Street Corridor Improvements Stephanie Street to Front Street West

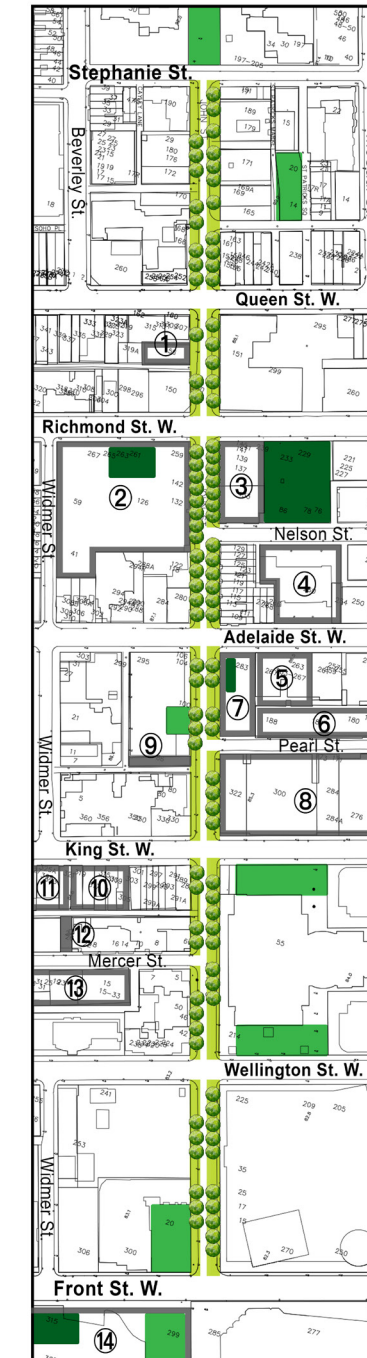


City of Toronto Base Map
Legend
 John Street Corridor Improvements Area

(John Street Corridor Rendering, Created by DTAH)



John Street Corridor Improvements Stephanie Street to Front Street West



City of Toronto Base Map

Legend

- █ Wider Sidewalks
 Stephanie St. to Queen St. W.:
 5.9m (west side) 8.8m (east side)
 Queen St. W. to Richmond St. W.:
 5.8m (west side) 7.9m (east side)
 Richmond St. W. to King St. W.:
 4.3m (west side) 9.4m (east side)
 King St. W. to Front St. W.:
 4.5m (west side) 5.1m (east side)
- Street Trees
- █ Existing POPS/Parks
- █ Future POPS/Parks

Active Development Projects along the Corridor

- 160 John St. W.
- 126 John St. W. (RioCan Hall)
- 241 Richmond St. W. & 137 John St.
- 260 Adelaide St. W.
- 263 Adelaide St. W.
- 14 Duncan St.
- 283 Adelaide St. W. (PJ Condos)
- 260-322 King St. W. (Mirvish+Gehry)
- 86 John St.
- 305-319 King St. W.
- 321-333 King St. W. (Empire Maverick)
- 24 Mercer St. (Bungalow on Mercer)
- 15 Mercer St. (Nobu Residences Toronto)
- 315-325 Front St. W. (Union Park)

2.3 SPADINA AVENUE

Spadina Avenue is a main street that has a rich history of commercial, residential, and industrial buildings, located along the western edge of the District. Originally home to a large Jewish community, many members worked in the garment and fur industry as the street is situated along nearby warehouse factories. Increasing demand for garments and fur led to a thriving fashion and textile industry, establishing the Fashion District.

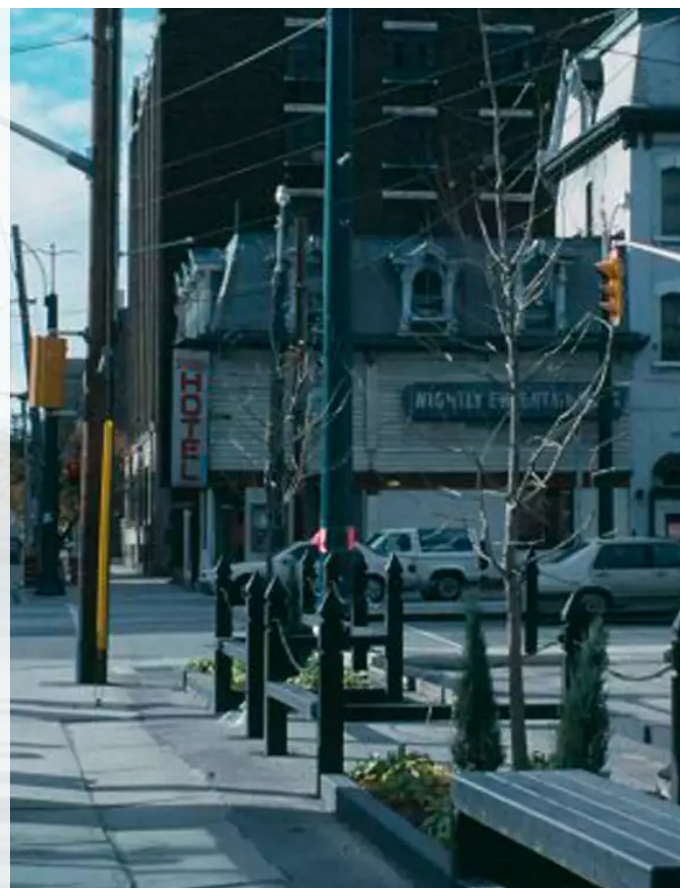
The Balfour building at Adelaide Street and Spadina Avenue in 1972, Photo by City of Toronto Archives



Spadina Avenue and Adelaide Street in the 1921, Photo by City of Toronto Archives

Post Second World War led to a number of changes in the area. In 1950s, the Greeks started to take over the fur industry. Jewish families began to move to the suburbs and Chinese residents had moved in – The Chinatown neighbourhood moved west to Dundas and Spadina as the residents were displaced during the construction of Toronto’s new City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square.

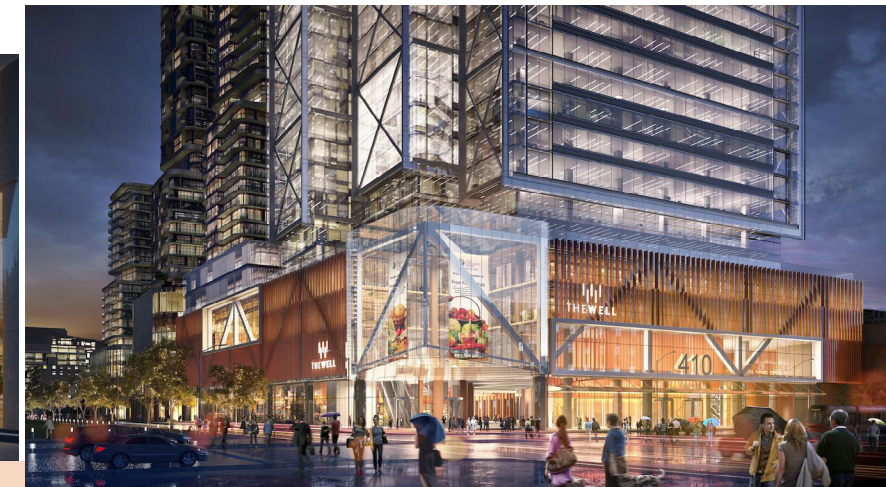
This demographic change resulted in a transformation from textile factories to smaller businesses and companies, including restaurants, groceries, gift shops, real estate and insurance brokers, travel bureaus, bakeries, banks, hotels, pharmacies, physicians, lawyers, architects, book shops, and more.



The intersection of King Street and Spadina Avenue in the 1990s, Photo by City of Toronto Archives

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Spadina Avenue is identified as a Priority Retail Street in the City’s TOcore Downtown Plan, encouraging the intensification of creative retail on both sides along the Avenue. It is now known for its live/work buildings, retail stores and bustling nightlife. While many former warehouse buildings continue to operate as office spaces, preserved and maintained by the property owners, a number of development projects have been proposed along Spadina Avenue. The new developments will continue to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of the street with high quality retail and well-designed public realm at grade.

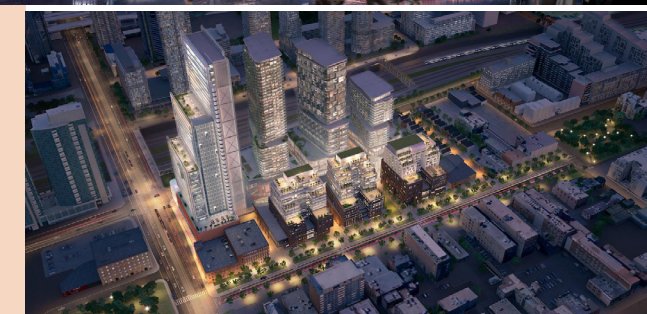


The Well – Allied Properties and RioCan

‘The Well’ is a development project by Allied Properties and RioCan, located west of Spadina Avenue, between Wellington and Front Street West. Situated along Spadina Avenue, The Well will be in close proximity to the City’s future Rail Deck Park, providing access points at Front Street West. With over 7.7 acres of land, The Well will introduce three million sf of retail, office, and residential space. This mixed-use development will bring over 420,000 sf of indoor and outdoor retail and food services, including a food hall, retail favourites, flagship stores, pop-ups, and experiential concepts.

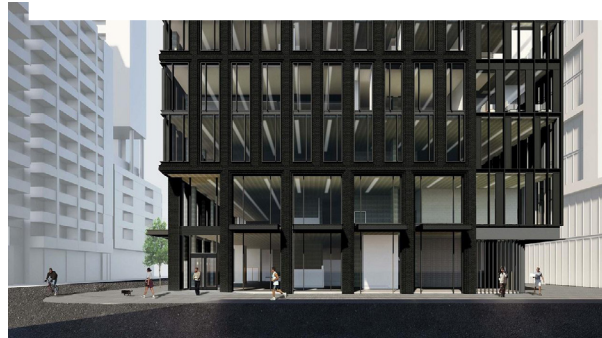
On-site Food Hall: Wellington Market

Wellington Market is a 70,000 sf market that will provide fresh, local produce and a variety of dining options. A 22,000 sf purpose-built entertainment venue will be within the market, liquor licensed for a 3,400-person capacity. Activation spaces within the market will accommodate events, concerts, comedy shows, and more.



Four Eleven King – Great Gulf and Terracap

Great Gulf and Terracap are approved to develop a 45-storey mixed-use building at the southeast corner of King Street West and Spadina Avenue. Within the 12-storey podium, the project will bring over 188,000 sf of hotel space and an additional 1,000 sf of retail space.



Spadina Avenue also operates as a major arterial transit corridor. The 510 Streetcar provides easy access to retail and amenities, cultural attractions and landmarks, waterfront, parks, educational institutions, a number of neighbourhoods, and major transit connections:

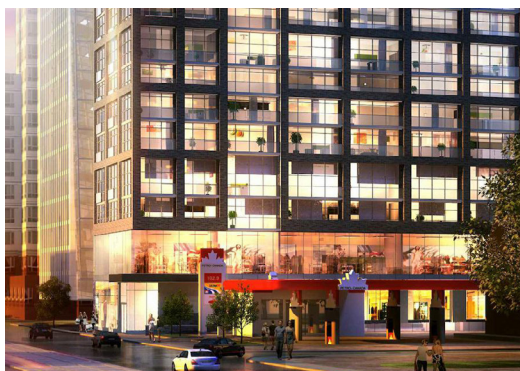
- Spadina Station
- The 506 Streetcar along College Street
- The 505 Streetcar along Dundas Street
- The 501 Streetcar along Queen Street
- The 504 Streetcar along King Street
- Jack Layton Ferry Terminal
- Union Station
- Queen/Spadina Station on the Ontario Line (Upcoming)
- Spadina-Front Go Station (Upcoming)

Streetcar is pictured riding along Spadina Avenue, Photo by Stephen C. Host / File / The Canadian Press



The Taylor Tricon and MOD Developments

Currently under construction at 57 Spadina Avenue is a 36-storey mixed-use building developed by Tricon and MOD Developments. The 17,000 sf of retail space will include 'The Market by Longos', an urban concept grocery store.



Streetcar on Spadina Avenue, Photo by wyliepoop from BlogTO



MAJOR ARTERIAL TRANSIT CORRIDOR.....

2.4 FRONT STREET WEST

Front Street West is identified as a Priority Retail Street under the City's TOcore Downtown Plan. The street plays a vital role in the neighbourhood as it provides connections to a number of significant landmarks, including the CN Tower, Rogers Centre, FlyOver Canada, Ripley's Aquarium, Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Scotiabank Arena, Union Station, The Well, and a number of hotels, retail stores, and commercial offices.

In addition to the existing landmarks, many development projects are proposed, approved, and under construction along Front Street West. These new projects will further enhance the vibrancy of the street with increased retail, parkland space, and streetscape improvements, meeting the needs of local residents, employees, visitors and tourists.



Rail Deck Park – City of Toronto

Rail Deck Park is a major park project proposed by the City of Toronto. The Park will be 21 acres, decked over the rail corridor between Bathurst Street and Blue Jays Way. Rail Deck Park will provide a vibrant public gathering space for recreation, play spaces, trees, water features, public art, and more. Spadina Avenue will play a key role in providing access points, connecting to the park at Front Street West and Blue Jays Way.



The Park would make connections across the rail corridor between entertainment and cultural facilities, retail, neighbourhoods, The Bentway Underpass Improvements, and the proposed Spadina-Front GO Station. Union Park, a proposal by Oxford Properties Group, includes 3 acres of park and open space, including 2 acres to be built above the rail corridor. Oxford's proposal will align the City's Rail Deck Park design and will bring a combined total park space of up to 23 acres, above the rail corridor.



Union Park – Oxford Properties

Oxford Properties Group is proposing Union Park, a 4.3 million sf development project that includes:

- Three acres of green space, including two-acres to be built over the Union Rail Corridor connecting to the City's Rail Deck Park
- 3.3 million sf of office space
- A winter garden at the base of the commercial towers, designed for programming and installations during special events, such as TIFF and Nuit Blanche
- A new PATH connection extending to Peter Street
- Revitalization of Isabella Valancy Crawford Park
- 800 rental residential units with family-oriented housing
- 200,000 sf of retail, including food, beverage, health, and amenity services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and more





400 Front Street West
State Building Group and Standford Home

State Building Group and Standford Homes is proposing a three-tower mixed-use development at Spadina and Front Street West, including over 1.5 million sf of residential, over 29,000 sf of commercial, and on-site parkland. The proposal includes a nine-storey podium with retail components and a two-storey retail pavilion along the edge of the on-site parkland dedication.



160 Front Street West – Cadillac Fairview

Currently under construction at 160 Front Street West is a 46-storey commercial tower project by Cadillac Fairview. The development will bring 1,450,609 sf of commercial office, and at-grade retail along Simcoe Street. Additionally, the project will bring a new PATH connection to Union Station, providing access to the offices, retail above and below grade.








171 Front Street West
Westbank and Allied

Westbank and Allied will be developing a 52-storey office tower at 171 Front Street West. The project includes 1,132,848 sf of commercial space and 29,299 sf of retail space. The project maintains the PATH connection through the site, relocating the office entrance to provide access to the network from Lower Simcoe Street. Additionally, a bridge connection to the InterContinental Hotel and Metro Toronto Convention Centre will be constructed on the second level, creating a connection to and from the UP Express and Union Station.

2.5 CONSIDERATIONS

City of Toronto, The BIA, Developers and Property Owners

-  Coordination of services: City Transportation Services, City Planning, Urban Design, TTC, BIA
-  Coordination of street improvements with developers during the site plan process
-  Coordinate park and public realm plans along retail streets and surrounding area
-  Reinforce, where possible, the importance of public realm improvements
-  Property owners should consider retail as an opportunity to add amenities for their building tenants and surrounding residents

Sources for Spadina Avenue Section:

1. Donegan, Rosemary (1984) *Spadina Avenue: Historical development [Exhibition Pamphlet]*. Spadina Avenue Documentary Exhibition Committee. Available at <http://openresearch.oca.du.ca/id/eprint/1856/>
2. Donegan, Rosemary (1985) *Spadina Avenue*. Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, Canada. Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/2121/>
3. *Spadina (1984) Documentary* – Archives of Ontario. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcikwFQ_drM

3. RETAIL DIVERSITY

Create Retail Experiences

Many existing businesses are developing new strategies to remain competitive. Streets should have a blend of amenity-based retail and alternative specialty concepts. For example, a retailer with an established online presence can provide a look and feel of a unique concept on the street.



3.1 POP-UP

Pop-up shops can be a form of alternative retail that act as temporary solutions along streets while introducing start-up concepts. They also help create buzz in the community, driving pedestrian traffic to the surrounding area, stimulating the local economy.

Stackt Market, Toronto

Stackt Market is a shipping container marketplace that is “temporarily” located at 28 Bathurst Street in Toronto, ON. It is composed of a variety of pop-up shops, creative spaces, hospitality vendors, and more. The Market is a great example of utilizing vacant space before a development is to occur, as the City of Toronto currently owns this property and has future plans to develop a public park. This concept has been so popular, exceeding the definition of “temporary”.



STACKT
Courtesy Astound



Lessa Dream Gallery, New York City

The Lessa Dream Gallery is a creative pop-up shop collaboration between online mattress retailer, Lessa, and ArtLifting, an online marketplace that offers creations by artists who were homeless or disabled. The temporary shop allowed customers to visit a gallery of art, while testing out the Lessa mattresses as well.



Photo by Lessa

3.2 SHARED SPACE / MARKET STALL / MULTIPLE USES

Shared spaces and market stalls are a more affordable way for individual businesses to occupy a smaller footprint than a typical retail lease space. Multiple hospitality operators can share a commissary kitchen on-site while offering a diverse mix of food items through a market stall concept; or having a small downtown footprint with the commissary kitchen off-site. Shared spaces also allow for businesses to test the market in an area before expanding to a larger or permanent footprint. Additionally, a single operator or more than one operator can occupy a space generating revenue for multiple uses, such as a café that rents out space for virtual meetings, events, small conference space, and can change from a day-time café to night-time gallery or other activity.

Assembly Chef's Hall, Toronto

Assembly Chef's hall is a 18,000 square-foot food hall located in Toronto's Financial District. Comprised of 18 vendors and featuring some of the top restaurants in the City, the Chef's Hall is a great example of a successful shared space providing opportunity for smaller businesses to operate.



Photo by The Well



Photo by Alicia Esposito

J.Hilburn, New York City

J.Hilburn is an e-commerce business that provides custom menswear clothing for consumers. The company opened a pop-up shop at the Refinery Hotel (6th Ave & W 38th St.) in New York City. The pop-up store allowed customers to visit a physical location to experience the various selections of clothing and materials being offered. This form of marketing allows the business to test the market of operating a physical location.



Photo by Torontolife.com

Wellington Market, Toronto

Wellington Market, at The Well, features restaurant fare from local and international chefs, go-to location for market fresh and artisan food.

French Market, Chicago

Chicago, Illinois is home to a number of food halls; the Chicago French Market is a great example of a shared space that contains a variety of small business vendors, local grocery, kiosks and market stalls, housed within one location.



Photo by Lessa



Photo by Alicia Esposito

Timeout Market, Chicago

Time Out Market Chicago is a 50,000 square foot communal style shared space, comprised of various bars, eateries, and a roof top terrace.

3.3 ONLINE SHOPPING WITH STOREFRONT PRESENCE

Over the last decade the online market has grown immensely, disrupting traditional main street retailers. Buying behaviour has changed as more consumers shop online. In response to the growing online market, established online retailers may consider small square footage of storefront retail to test the bricks and mortar market. For example, an online clothing retailer may not have a full inventory at the physical location but allows consumers to have a shopping experience, though ultimately placing their order online.

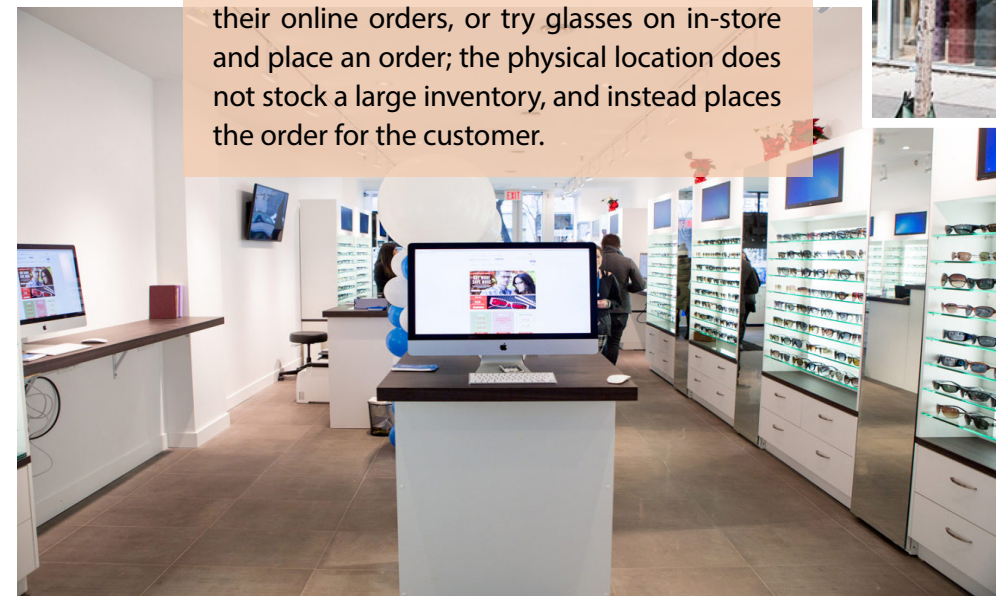
The buy online pickup in store (BOPIS) model provides an option for consumers to simply purchase products online and pick them up at stores. This allows the consumer to have the convenience of online shopping while still participating in an in-store experience.

Clearly, Toronto

Clearly is an eyewear company that has a strong e-commerce presence, allowing customers to purchase prescription glasses online and either ship to their home or pick-up in store. Clearly has a physical location on Queen Street West, where customers can either pick-up their online orders, or try glasses on in-store and place an order; the physical location does not stock a large inventory, and instead places the order for the customer.



Photo by Clearly



Nordstrom Local, New York City & Los Angeles

Nordstrom Local is an example of a retail location that has no inventory in-store, where instead the customer can try items on, pick-up orders placed online, and return items. The smaller square footage is around the size of a coffee shop.









Photo by Nordstrom



3.4 CONSIDERATIONS

Developers and Property Owners

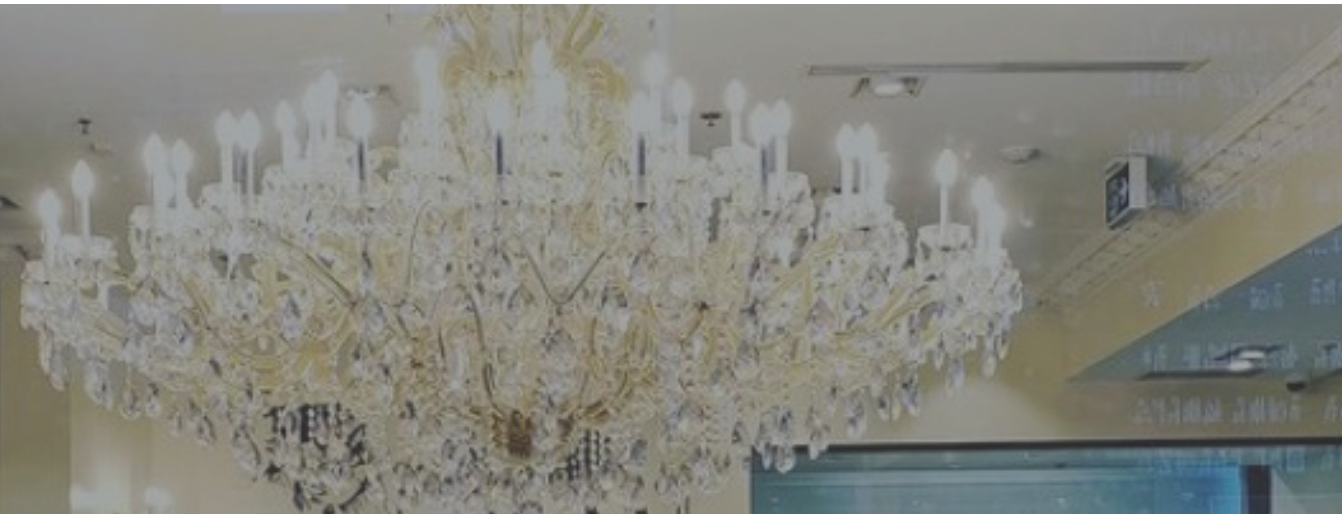
-  Review neighbourhood inventory to support a diverse mix of retail
-  Create modular style layouts for easy conversion of retail spaces to allow for flexible options such as shared spaces/market stalls and pop-up shops
-  Consider use of temporary pop-up shops for short-term lease gaps
-  Seek out alternative retail with a strong online presence that will bring a unique offering to the area
-  Retail at-grade creates opportunity to be an added-value amenity and enhancement to the building and surrounding area, therefore the type of retail should be taken under consideration in the context of building tenancy and neighbourhood
-  Create at-grade spaces in the form of artisan studios/maker spaces: uses include promoting arts such as painting, sculpture and photography where spaces are used to study the art and/or producing and selling artisan goods. These spaces could be pop-ups or permanent in nature

4. RETAIL SPACE DESIGN

Retail at-grade, second, and even the third floor can play a key role in defining the character and identity of the area. Where possible, retail spaces should be designed to have exposure to the street-level, bringing attention to the retailer while adding vibrancy to the public realm and enhancing the pedestrian experience.

The nighttime economy plays an important role in the vibrancy of a retail street. Live music venues and outdoor music in the public realm and on patios can be strong contributors to a destination neighbourhood. Good planning and design for nighttime uses is key to creating a successful, inclusive and sustainable retail street in a mixed-use area.

Marvelous by Fred, Photo by Markoxto on Instagram



4.1 FAÇADE, SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

+ Façade

The design of the podium or façade is an important component of how a building meets a street. Façade materials and design should support and enhance retail spaces. When new development occurs on a site with an existing heritage building, setbacks and development features should enhance and showcase the heritage attributes of the existing building making for a highly desirable retail space. Building and retail signage and lighting should be designed to complement the heritage elements.

Photo by Markoxto on Instagram



Marvelous by Fred, Toronto

Marvelous by Fred is an elegant pastry shop. It has various locations including Toronto, ON and London, UK. The storefront is a great example of contrasting materials that help the business stand out at-grade. Use of large, clear transparent glass allows the interior light to glow the sidewalks at night. It allows pedestrians walking by to observe the bakers at work, bringing the experience to the street.

Diesel Store, Toronto

The façade of 100 Yorkville Avenue showcases the Diesel store with large transparent glass and contrasting building materials.



Photo by lennard.com

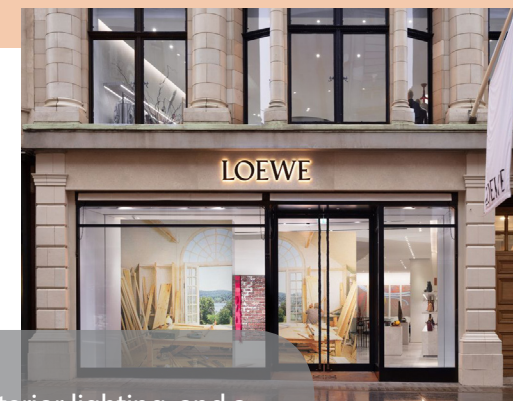


Photo by Loewe

Loewe Store, London, UK

The Loewe store in London, UK utilizes large transparent glazing, interior lighting, and a banner signage that showcases the store, allowing it to stand out amongst the other retailers.

+
Signage

Signage is a vital part in retail design as it not only provides marketing to the business but contributes to the overall character of the area. Unique signage should be promoted where possible, such as in designated Special Sign Districts. Signage should be designed in a manner that complements the building, promotes the business, while avoiding visual clutter along the street.

Tutti Matti, Toronto

Tutti Matti utilizes signage at their restaurant by orienting it in way that pedestrians walking by will notice it, adding character to the storefront without cluttering the building or public realm.



Photo by Tutti Matti



+
Lighting & Display Windows

Distinguished as a 24hr neighbourhood with major attractions, theatres and hospitality, the use of lighting is essential in the design of retail as it not only promotes the retailer, it can showcase the building, add to walkability, visibility, and overall safety. Lighting elements should be considered beyond the hours of operation. For example, leaving the theatre marquee lights on.

While keeping the integrity of existing heritage, new developments should provide opportunity for display windows to allow retailers to promote their goods and services to the public as a form of marketing and branding.

Marvelous by Fred, London, UK, Photo by makanlore.wordpress.com



Royal Alexandra Theatre - Exterior, Photo by Mirvish Productions

4.2 PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

Successful retail streets should have a vibrant public realm. Retail should interface and compliment the street through patios, ambient music, seating, programming, and other elements to enhance the retail and pedestrian experience. Locations should be identified for off-hour use as patios or public realm space, such as curb lanes, building fronts without retail, etc. CafeTO is a great example of use of curb lane space during a time of quiet downtown traffic.



Café TO The Fifth and The Ballroom, Photo by The Fifth



CaféTO The Fifth and The Ballroom, Photo by Rendezviews.ca

+ Sidewalk Space

Sidewalk space is the area in between building façade and the edge of the sidewalk, including pedestrian clearway, retail frontage (marketing zone) and curbside (furnishing zone). It may consist of building setback (private property as well as public right of way).

A Sidewalk in NYC, New York

This example in NYC demonstrates the use of a wide sidewalk, allowing the operations of patios, public seating for pedestrians, bike parking and trees.



A Sidewalk in NYC, Photo by Department of City Planning, NYC

A generous sidewalk width for high quality streetscaping and active uses is fundamental. Building setbacks to provide open spaces, patios, market stalls, and other uses should be encouraged.

Curbside (furnishing zone) is the area close to the edge of the sidewalk. It provides space for trees, benches, and other enhancement features. This area can be distinguished by decorative paving treatments, planters, patios or seating, and provide a buffer between vehicular zone and pedestrian clearway.



Photo by Jesse Milns



Sustainability and environmental issues should be taken into consideration in the design of street furniture. The use of sustainable materials and energy saving/efficient design is highly recommended, for example, solar panels and energy efficient lighting should be used for elements that require electricity. New solar solutions should be explored for lighting up street trees and other elements.



Photo by Homedit.com



Oretta Curb Lane Patio, Photo by Hector Vasquez

+ Curb Lane, Laneway and Other Locations

CaféTO was introduced during COVID-19 to provide safe curb lane patios to support restaurants, while bringing life and vibrancy to the streets. All curb lane, laneway and other potential locations during off-peak times should be considered for new, flexible retail or patio use.



The Fifth Curb Lane Patio, Photo by The Fifth

+ Lead with Culture

Rich with creativity in architecture, industrial design, planning, film, theatre, arts, live music, sports, attractions, hospitality, media, technology, environmental sustainability, education, this area celebrates and showcases its attributes, while keeping our culture in the forefront of planning how we design and build our parks, public realm, POPS, and patio spaces.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO), Roy Thomson Hall, Photo by TSO



Roy Thomson Hall Reflecting Pool and Live Music, Photo by Roy Thomson Hall



Mark DiSvero, 'Flower Power', City Place, Toronto



Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier
'Dream House', 16 York Street, Toronto



Zhang Huan, 'Rising', Shangri-La Toronto

Art Walk

A curation of all the public art in the area will feature self-guided tours and will foster connections with public art through education about the art works and the artists. The tour will display fun facts while generating awareness of the area and help promote local business.



James Carl, 'Things End', 80 John Street



Anish Kapoor, 'Mountain', Simcoe Park



Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Photo by Tijana Martin and Tribute.ca



TIFF, Toronto

Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) is one of the largest publicly attended film festivals in the world, attracting over 480,000 people annually. Since its founding in 1976, TIFF has grown to become an internationally renowned destination for film culture.



Live Theatre Performance, "Come From Away"
Photo by Mirvish Productions



The National Ballet of Canada, "The Sleeping Beauty", Photo by Sian Richards
Four Seasons Centre for Performing Arts

+ Walkability

One of the key features of the district is the walkability - within a walking distance, residents, employees, visitors, and tourists are able to access everything they would need. This includes Canada's largest attractions, arts & culture, conferences and conventions, festivals and events, major sports venues, theatres, restaurants, hotels, nightlife and shopping, and many amenities.



CityMarket on Peter Street, Photo by Crown Realty Partners



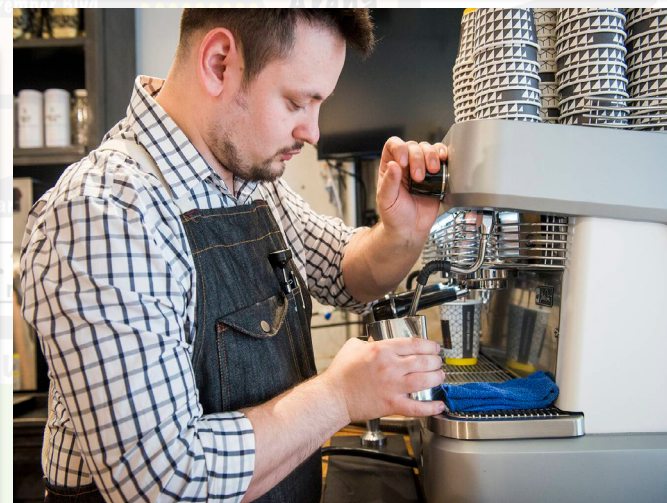
Toronto Maple Leafs, Photo by Toronto Maple Leafs Instagram



Metro Toronto Convention Centre



Fit Fitness Factory at 373 King Street West, Photo by BlogTO



Strange Love Coffee at 101 Spadina Avenue, Photo by BlogTO



People in the PATH, Photo by viajabi.com.br

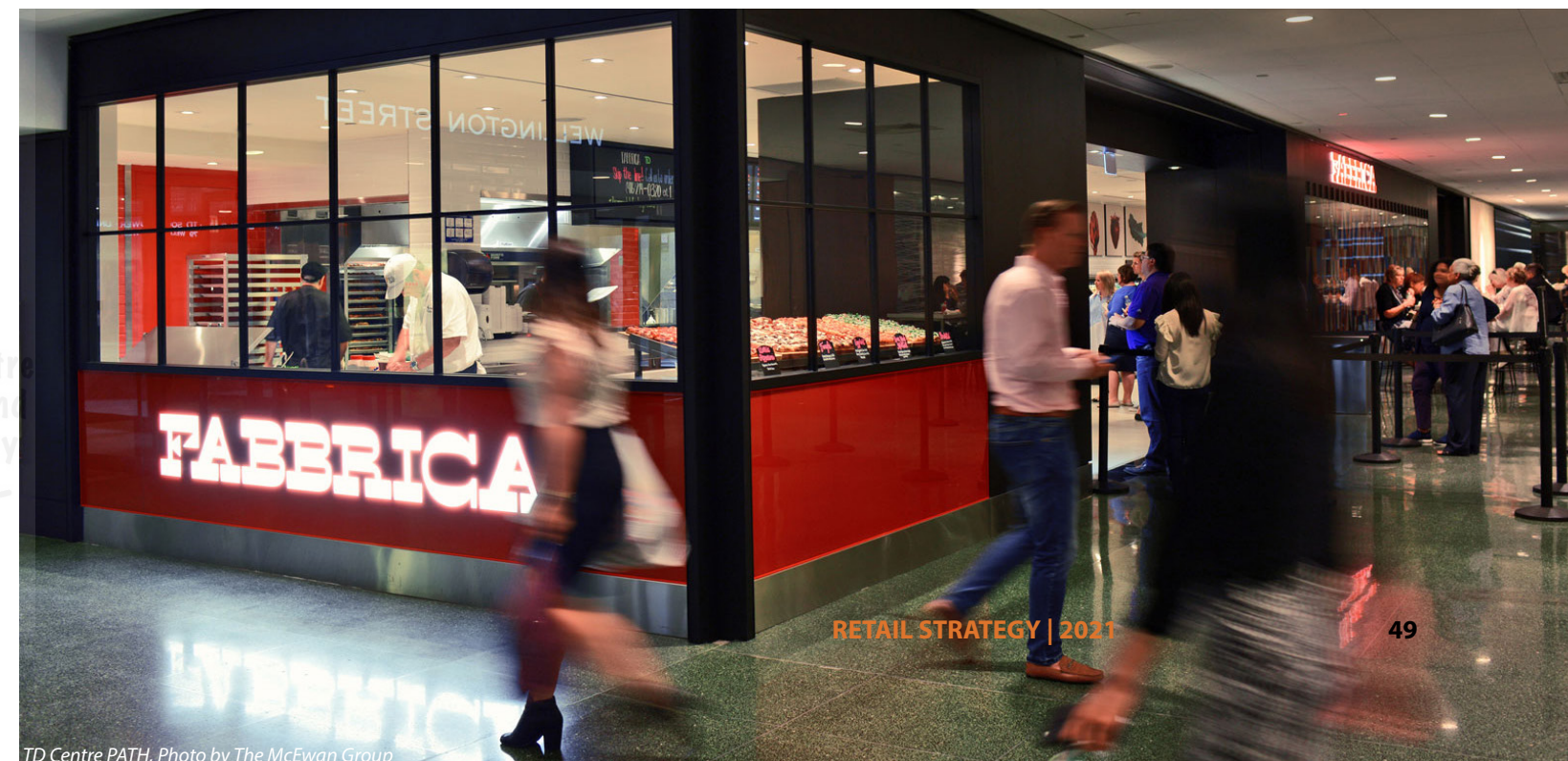


Bay-Adelaide Centre PATH, Photo by Tanja-Tiziana PATH Amenity Retail, Photo by Cadillac Fairview

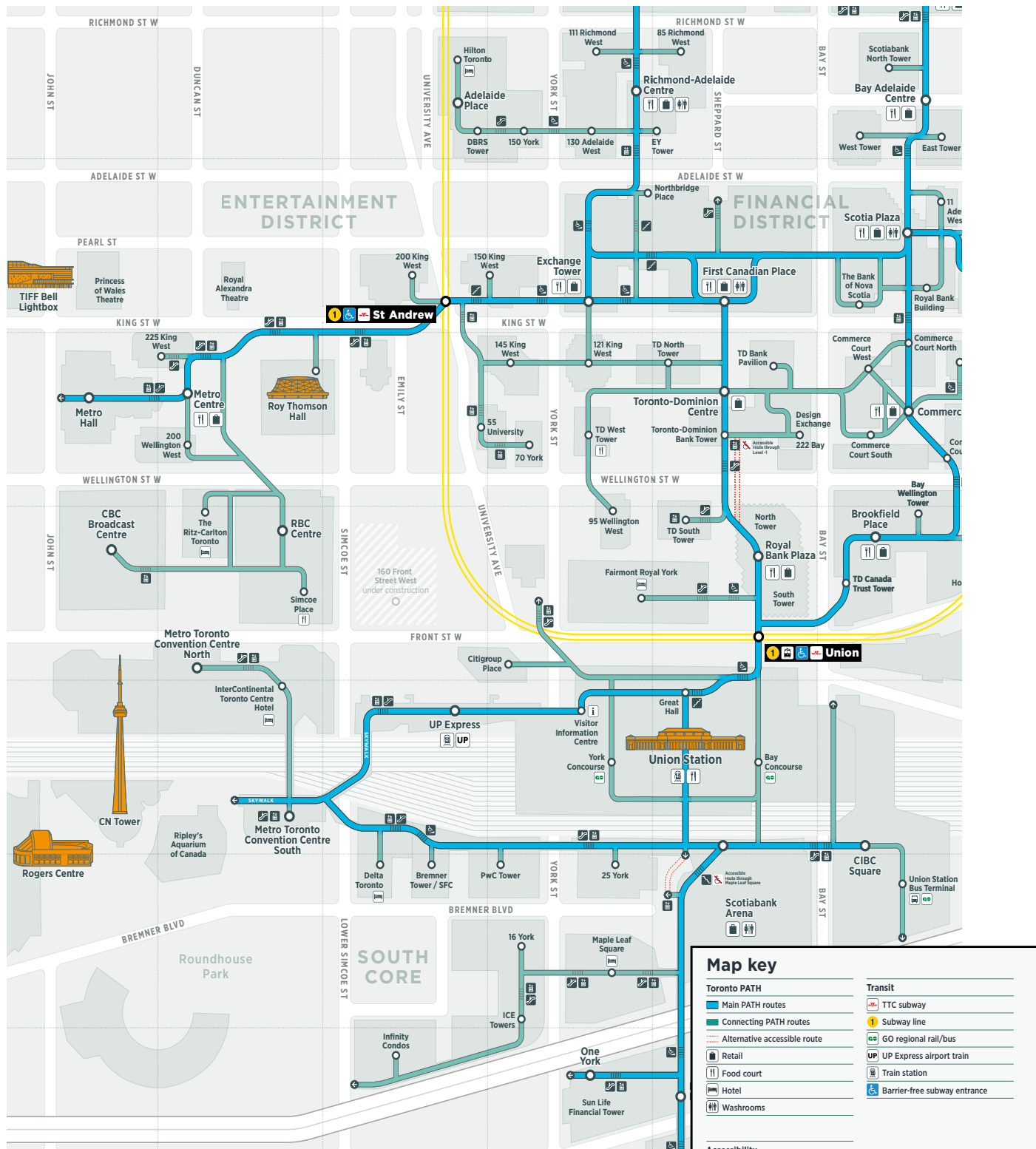


The PATH is an underground pedestrian network, connecting people to major transit hubs, places of work, local amenities, and pop-up exits and entrances to street-level access points. The PATH is filled with quick service, food outlets, and other amenities to cater to the working and local residential population.

PATH connections are vital routes for many employees, residents, and visitors entering and exiting the area.



TD Centre PATH, Photo by The McEwan Group



City of Toronto PATH Wayfinding Map (2020)

4.3 LOADING AND DELIVERY ZONE

Continued growth and density in the downtown core creates greater challenges for on-street deliveries and laneway access for deliveries, particularly when there are multiple buildings connected to one laneway. The number of deliveries into the core has accelerated due to increased online shopping and food delivery orders. Future planning should take into account that this trend of convenience will increase with the population growth. Well-designed loading and delivery zones should be included within the development site and should take into account surrounding projects, future projects, as well as current and future traffic and delivery flow.

Toronto City Council has approved the City's Freight and Goods Movement Strategy in October 2020. The Strategy will help make the transport of freight and goods more safe, reliable, and sustainable for the City. Improvements include reducing the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and impacts on neighbourhoods that are caused by shipments. One of the recommendations from the Strategy includes introducing regulatory changes to make off-peak delivery a permanent program. Off-peak deliveries are a viable solution that addresses issues such as traffic congestion, reducing travel times and greenhouse gas emissions. The Strategy recommends that the City make a request to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to introduce necessary legislative and regulatory changes in order to make off-peak delivery a permanent program.



Delivery Truck in Downtown Toronto, Photo by EYBusman from flickr.com



PenguinPickUp at 93 Peter Street, Toronto Photo by foxconltd.com

4.4 CONSIDERATIONS

Developers, Architects and Landscape Architects City of Toronto, Property Owners, The BIA

-  Design at-grade storefronts to accommodate flexible retail opportunities
-  In the case of heritage buildings, the integrity of heritage façades can be maintained while adding attractive lighting, signage, and window treatment that compliments the heritage while marketing the retail inside
-  For new developments, design high quality, unique façades that emphasize the connection to the public realm and the retail
-  Considerations for material types to maximize the look of display windows, showcase the retail space, while complementing the building style
-  Considerations for exterior building lighting and interior retail space lighting to enhance the building as well as the public realm
-  In areas where nightlife and music venues currently exist, new residential developments need to take noise mitigation designs and materials into consideration
-  Work with the City and BIA on opportunities for new curb-lane, bump outs to extend sidewalks for patio for transitional use to patios and public realm
-  Where possible, create setbacks for POPs and additional pedestrian, patio, public realm and plaza space
-  Where possible, design outdoor spaces including public realm with sufficient electrical conduits for tree lighting, patio heaters, and other uses
-  Revise zoning by-laws to make accommodations for flexible at-grade uses (e.g. creating a live-work experience through cafés with virtual meeting spaces)
-  Conduct quarterly meetings with the BIA to review all developments, along with circulation of development applications and site plans

-  Transit and traffic plans, along with taxi and ridesharing wait areas should be designed into a nighttime economy plan
-  City Report October 2020: Request Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to introduce the necessary legislative and regulatory changes to make off-peak delivery a permanent program
-  Music venues coming into a mixed-use area should design space with the expertise of an acoustic engineer to mitigate noise issues
-  Meet with developers, architects and landscape architects at the early stages of a development proposal, providing input on at-grade elements including façade design, lighting, materials, signage and public and private elements of site plan
-  Provide a development review report and checklist for circulation during the development process

Lead with Culture

Developers, Architects, Landscape Architects, The City, The BIA

-  BIA curating all art installations to create an Art Walk to showcase all of the development art contributions in the area
-  Promote arts and cultural partners by animating public spaces (e.g. OCAD-U, Mirvish Productions, 401 Richmond, Maple Leafs Sports & Entertainment, Rogers Centre, Ripley's Aquarium, CN Tower, FlyOver Canada, Steam Whistle Brewing, Toronto Railway Museum, TIFF Bell Lightbox, Canada's Walk of Fame, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Roy Thomson Hall, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, National Ballet of Canada, Factory Theatre, Theatre Museum Canada, Canadian Broadcast Corporation, Bell Media, etc.)
-  Engage with local industry partners for new concepts for public realm design and installations

TORONTO DOWNTOWN WEST BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (BIA)

RETAIL STRATEGY

In Consultation With:

BIA Board and Planning Advisory Committee

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