

RAISING THE STANDARD



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As Canada's premier economic centre, and a growing global financial presence, the Financial District is Toronto's public face to the world. To build upon this shared asset for the City, *Raising the Standard: A Public Realm Strategy for Toronto's Financial District* put forth the area's first comprehensive plan to improve the public experience in the district with a consistent and coordinated approach.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The strategy, which is based on the City's 5-year Capital Plan, undergoes an annual review to ensure that it captures the most current information on project scope and delivery timelines outlined by the City. This 2015 update to the original strategy will be circulated to City staff, officials and agencies to incorporate project scope and intent into the major capital and infrastructure planning process.

PUBLIC REALM

All physical space from building-face to building-face, including sidewalks, roads, laneways, parks, and open spaces. This includes the primarily privately owned and maintained PATH underground walkway.

A TOOL TO RAISE STANDARDS

In 2012, the Toronto Financial District BIA began a thorough analysis of the state of its public realm. An asset inventory was created to track the state of all public elements on the street, from poles and trees to sidewalk conditions and newspaper boxes. The asset inventory demonstrated that publicly owned and managed streets and spaces are generally inconsistent and in poor condition. In contrast, adjacent private property owners have heavily invested in high-quality standards and finishes, further highlighting the poor condition of the public infrastructure.

After more than a year of planning and public consultation, the Toronto Financial District BIA released *Raising the Standard: A Public Realm Strategy for Toronto's Financial District* in early 2014. The strategy summarizes the functional and aesthetic state of the public realm in the Financial District and highlights best practices and areas for improvement. The strategy has allowed the Toronto Financial District BIA to lead a more collaborative effort to improve the standards of the public realm.

The full strategy is available on the Toronto Financial District BIA's website at <http://torontofinancialdistrict.com/raising-standard-public-realm-strategy-torontos-financial-district/>

KEY RECOMMENDATION 1

The City of Toronto must allocate capital budgets to support bringing the Financial District's public realm to the highest City standard as outlined in this strategy.

KEY RECOMMENDATION 2

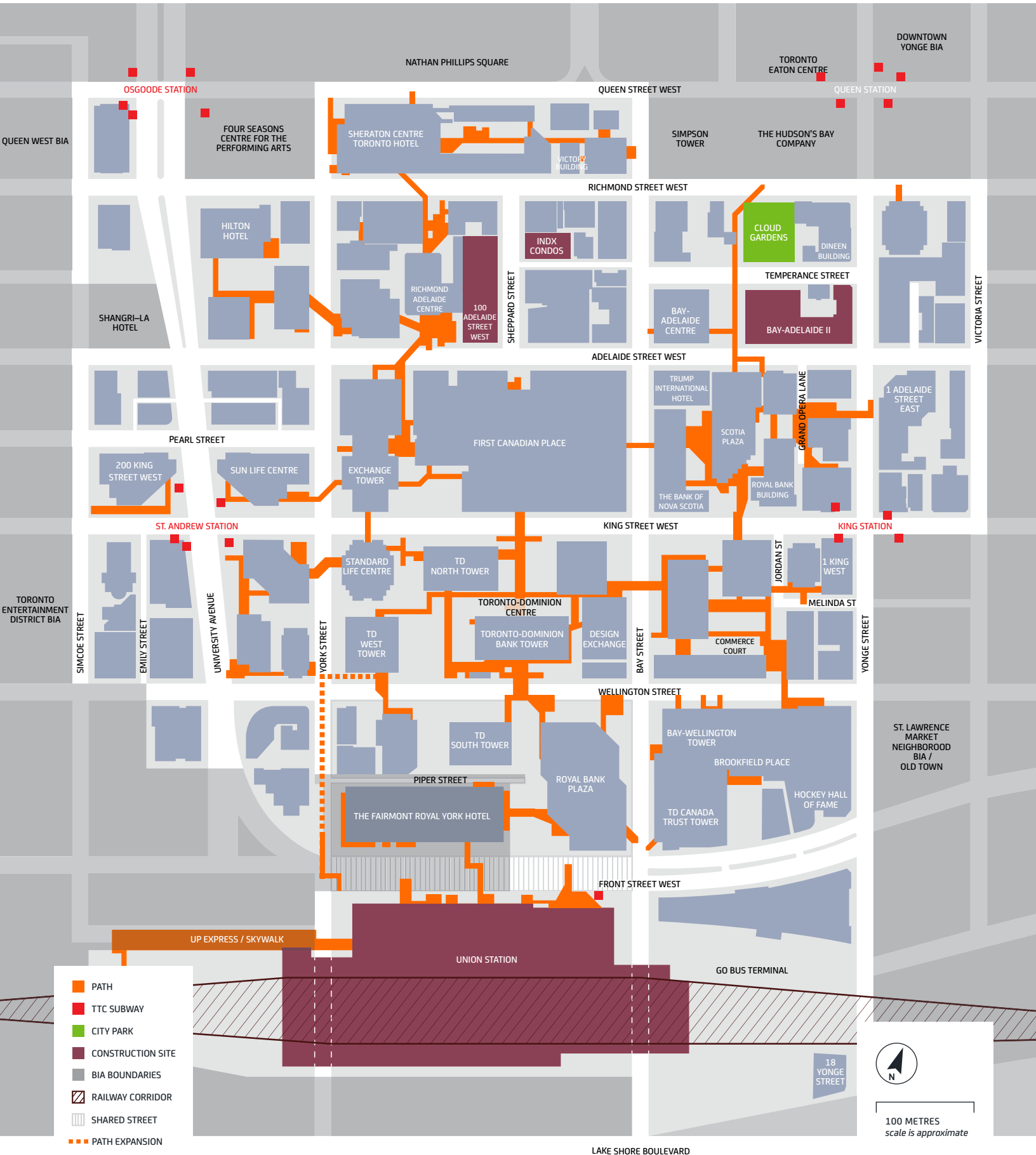
Capital improvements must also address the unique operational requirements of the Financial District in an effort to support future employment growth and private investments.

A COLLABORATIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For a maximum return on public realm investments, it will be critical that a collaborative, long-term planning approach be utilized by the City, property owners and other area stakeholders. Capital works projects must be leveraged to improve the operations and aesthetics of the area simultaneously, and a disciplined application of the City's highest standards must be applied to complement the years of investment made by the private sector.

With the Toronto Financial District BIA as a coordinator for the area, the approach outlined in *Raising the Standard* will produce a public realm that addresses operational and environmental concerns, supports employment growth and increases Toronto's pride of place as a world-class financial centre.

FIGURE 1
TORONTO FINANCIAL DISTRICT BIA BOUNDARIES



SUMMARY OF STREETScape RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATIONS

The following provides an update to the information provided in Appendix C in *Raising the Standard: A Public Realm Strategy for Toronto's Financial District*.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Projects included coordinate information obtained from extensive public consultations, meetings with property managers and City staff and agencies, review of the City's 5-year Capital Plan and best practices.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets are designed to accommodate various user groups and modes of travel, ensuring transit, automobiles, commercial vehicles, pedestrians, and cycling are forefront in the planning process.

PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

A key strategic directive of *Raising the Standard* is to leverage the City's 5-year Capital Plan and identify proposed, scheduled, and planned public and private capital infrastructure activities and planning studies in the Financial District with the intent of leveraging and maximizing coordination and investments to improve the public realm. This strategy proposes a framework to ensure that all capital and repair work leads to functional and aesthetic improvements.

In developing project scopes, each street in the Financial District was analyzed to review its character, operational constraints and considerations, scheduled work, and opportunities for improvement. Projects take a "complete streets" approach, developing a hierarchy of streets to ensure the district can support various user groups, operations, and activities. These project descriptions are a working framework that are to be used in discussions with City officials, staff, utility companies, and the private sector.

By leveraging the City's 5-year Capital Plan, *Raising the Standard* will bring about positive change within the Financial District by ensuring improvement projects are incorporated early in the planning stages. Further collaboration and/or studies will be required to shape specific project details when timelines, funding, stakeholder engagement, and operational requirements are identified and confirmed.