

DOWNTOWN YONGE YOUR WAY



Our Essential Guidebook to the most
exciting neighbourhood in Toronto

DOWNTOWN



Contents

For decades, the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood has been the heart of Toronto, with a mix of history, culture, fashion, and music all rolled into one beautiful community. We are excited to share with you this guidebook to help you create the best possible experience in Downtown Yonge. Welcome!

● History	
Blast to the Past	04
● Reconnect with Downtown	
Explore the Outdoors	10
Discover the beauty in street art	12
Expand your knowledge of Toronto's music history	14
Arts & Culture Map	16
● Getting Here	
Toronto Transit (TTC)	20
Take the Gym to Downtown Yonge	22
Stop, Park and Roll	24
● Virtual Experiences	
Bring the Downtown Yonge experience home	28





HISTORY

Blast to the Past



The Downtown Yonge area has gone through many rebirths over the centuries. Originally built as military supply routes, Yonge Street and Dundas Street quickly became the epicenter of Toronto. Keep reading to discover the rich history of this vibrant neighbourhood.

The Shopping Mecca

🚶 See it for yourself in-person

In the late 1800s Downtown Yonge quickly became a shoppers' haven with the opening of the Eaton's Queen Street, Eaton's College Street and the Simpson's department store. Through the following decades, the neighbourhood filled with local shopping destinations and staple small businesses that all Torontonians frequented.

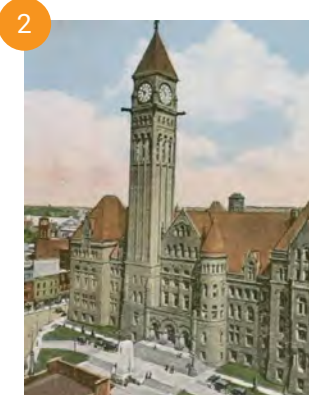


Looking east along Queen Street West, the Eaton's store is on the left, the Simpson's store is on the right. Image courtesy of City of Toronto Archives, S0071, Item 7175

Architectural Gems

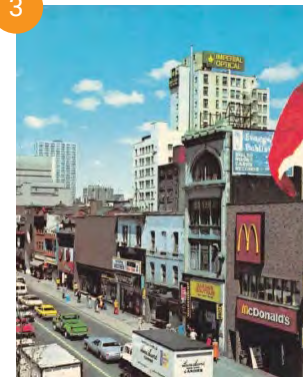
🚶 See it for yourself in-person

The 19th century gave rise to many architectural marvels that still stand today. From the Romanesque Revival buildings on Elm Street to the Richardsonian Romanesque style of Old City Hall, to the Carlu at College Park in the Art Moderne style, Downtown Yonge's architectural history spans centuries.



Postcard of Old City Hall. Image courtesy of the Toronto Public Library

3



Yonge Street looking North from the CF Toronto Eaton Centre. Image courtesy of Chuckman

Retail for All

🚶 See it for yourself in-person

By the 1970's when the Eaton's store was demolished to make way for the CF Toronto Eaton Centre, the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood had become a thriving shopping district, a tradition continued to this day, with over 130 clothing stores, all within a 15-minute walk from each other.

4



Church of the Holy Trinity today

Time Travelling in the Present

🚶 See it for yourself in-person

On your travels through the neighbourhood you may also stumble upon other architectural marvels such as the Toronto Hydro's headquarters, opened in 1933; the Maple Leaf Gardens, home to the Toronto Maple Leafs until 1999; College Park, which was the home of the Eaton's College Street store; and the Church of the Holy Trinity, which is the oldest building in the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood, dating back to 1847.

Bright Lights, Big City

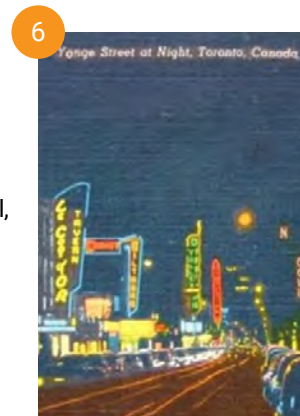
The 1960's and 1970's are characterized in Downtown Yonge by one word: neon. Whether you've lived in Toronto for decades or are new to the city, signage plays a significant role in both the history and vitality of the neighbourhood, and neon signs were a huge part of that.



Yonge Street looking south at Gerrard Street.

Neon Love

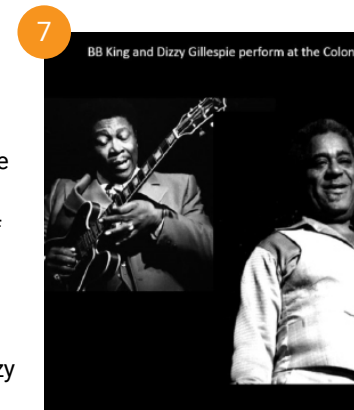
From music fans checking out the latest sounds at Sam the Record Man and A&A Books & Records or watching a live show at Massey Hall, to foodies grabbing a bite to eat at iconic mainstay Fran's Restaurant, neon was a part of everyday life for every Torontonian who wandered down Yonge Street. To learn more about how we plan on preserving the neon history of Downtown Yonge, check out the Neon Sign Museum Toronto initiative.



Yonge Street looking south at Gerrard Street.

Long Live Live Music

Live music has been part of the heart and soul of Downtown Yonge for decades. Dozens of bars and taverns lined Yonge Street in the 1950's through to the 1970's, where notable jazz musicians thrived such as Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, and Muddy Waters.



BB King and Dizzy Gillespie performing at the Colonial Tavern

Music History of Yonge Street

Rock and folk music also flourished in these spaces, bringing Levon and the Hawks (The Band) together with Bob Dylan to create the hard-hitting sound of Dylan's 1974 North American tour, as well as giving the legendary Gordon Lightfoot his start in the music industry. Keep flipping through our guidebook to learn more about the music history of Yonge Street, including the locations of our two 22-storey music murals.



Gordon Lightfoot performs at Steele's Tavern, ca. 1960s. Image courtesy of City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Item 3405

RECONNECT WITH DOWNTOWN

TORONTO



Explore the Outdoors



College Park Barbara Ann Scott Ice Trail

If you're a nature lover, this page is for you, covering all the public parks and squares in the neighbourhood for when you need a break from the bustling cityscape.



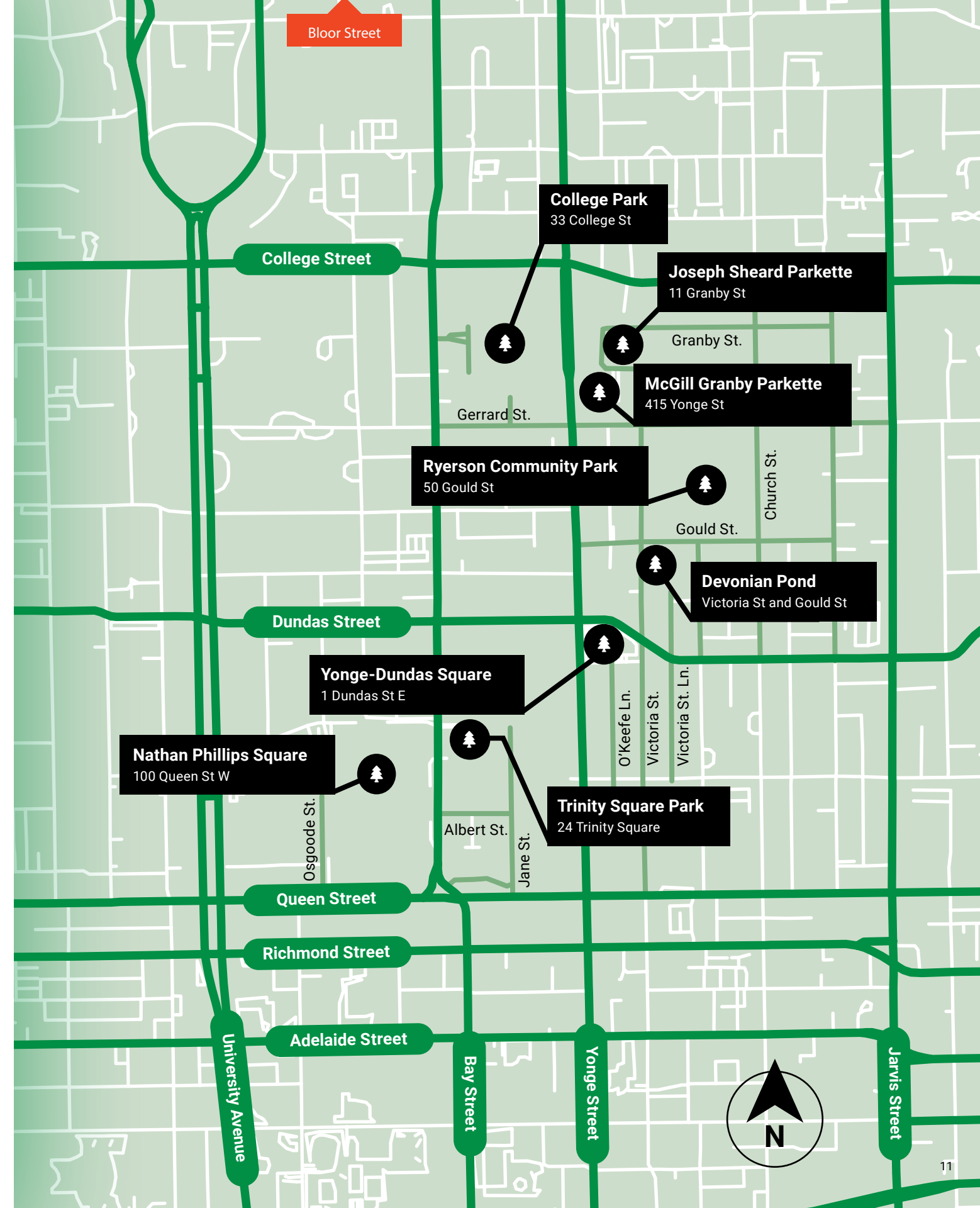
Trinity Square Park



Nathan Phillips Square



McGill Granby Park



Discover the beauty in street art

Art can be found in the most unlikely places, and Downtown Yonge is no exception. Explore the many public murals and paintings on our streets for some added colour and interest to your trip.

*See them for yourself with our helpful map on page 16



Alley Jams

O'Keefe Lane Mural 1

See it for yourself in-person

O'Keefe Lane South, south of Dundas Square Street

The excitement of waiting for the theatre doors to open before a live performance, the hustle and bustle of people rushing in as the show is about to start... this mural is an ode to the rush before the curtains are lifted and you're transported to another world.



Music Murals 2

See it for yourself in-person

423 Yonge Street, North and South wall

Our two 22-storey music murals pay homage to Yonge Street's past music scene. Illustrated by Toronto mural artist Adrian Hayles, these music murals are a stunning visual reminder of the long, vibrant history of music in Downtown Yonge, which continues today. The north facing mural honours the greats of the 50's and 60's like Glenn Gould and Gordon Lightfoot, while the south facing mural pays homage to the stars of the late 60's, 70's and 80's like The Band and David Clayton Thomas.



Painting in Progress

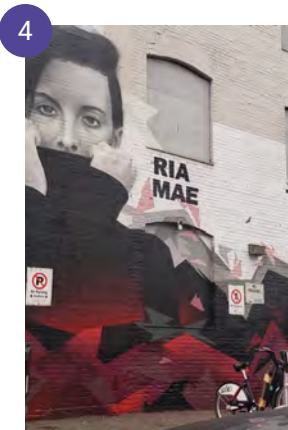


Ode to Live Theatre 3

See it for yourself in-person

33 Gerrard Street West

The performing arts are an integral part of the community, and this mural is dedicated to celebrating the rich past, present and future of this sector in Downtown Yonge.



Alley Jams 4

See it for yourself in-person

38 Dundas St E

Stemming from a pop-up event done in 2019, these murals celebrate the rising Toronto talent in the music industry. If you love to explore new music, make sure to keep visiting every so often, as you may see different artists highlighted that will expand your musical tastes. Don't forget to also explore the other public art pieces around the corner behind the First Evangelical Lutheran Church for even more inspiration.



Polaris Music Prize Mural 5

See it for yourself in-person

21 Granby St- TTC McGill Granby Station

With every new Polaris Music Prize winner comes a fresh mural honouring the achievement. You'll have to wander over to see who is the latest winner, though.


You'll need to visit to see this one.

Expand your knowledge of Toronto's music history

The “Toronto Sound” can still be experienced today, even though many of the legendary venues are no longer present. Immerse yourself in the past with Music Memories of Yonge, accompanied by the many Heritage Toronto plaques honouring some of the most influential locales of our time. If you want to involve all five senses, don't miss our music playlist at the end of this guidebook.



Friars Tavern

 If you prefer an in-person experience, check out the Friar's Music Museum, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 279 Yonge Street .



1

Town Tavern

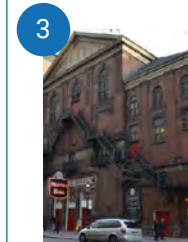
Toronto's top jazz club during the '50s and '60s featured the music's biggest stars and was where now legendary Canadian jazz pianist Oscar Peterson recorded his acclaimed On the Town album.



2

Colonial Tavern

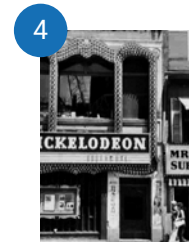
It began as a jazz rival to nearby Town Tavern before evolving into a popular venue for blues and, briefly, as a home for punk and new wave music.



3

Massey Hall

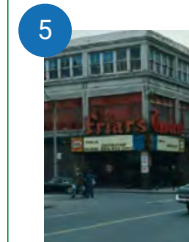
“Canada's Carnegie Hall” is the country's oldest and most acoustically revered venue and over its 126-year-history has featured concerts of every genre imaginable.



4

Nickelodeon

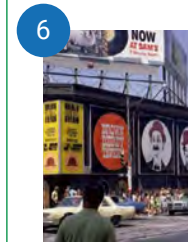
A legendary watering hole throughout the '70s that featured popular local bands and surprise out-of-town guests like Bob Dylan and Frank Zappa.



5

Friar's Tavern

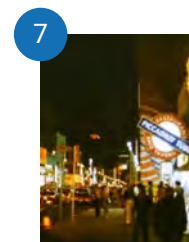
Offering everything from jazz and rock to rhythm & blues, this club was the epicentre of the Yonge Street scene and the place where Bob Dylan found his backing band. Location of the current Friar's Music Museum, a free interactive exhibit detailing the sights and sounds of Toronto's music scene.



6

Brown Derby

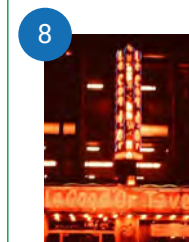
From the late '40s to the mid-'70s, the Derby offered music-comedy acts and an eye-catching exterior that helped to make the Yonge & Dundas intersection a famous city landmark.



7

Piccadilly Tube

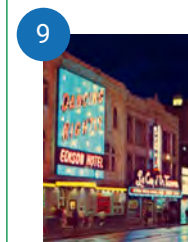
Designed to look like an English tube station, this Union Jack-waving underground pub kept aloft the torch for hard rock on Yonge—even during the disco era.



8

Le Coq d'Or (and the Hawk's Nest)

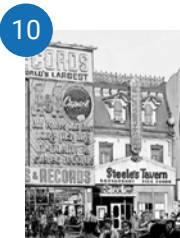
A massive club on two levels presented the biggest names in rock, pop and soul and served as the main stompin' ground of Rompin' Ronnie Hawkins.



9

Edison Hotel

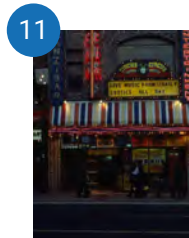
The popular hotel featured the top names in jazz, blues, rockabilly and country music until the mid-'70s—then in 2011 arson destroyed the heritage building.



10

Steele's Tavern

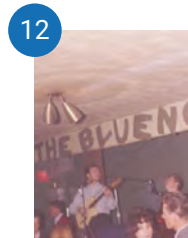
Sandwiched between two giant record stores, this restaurant-bar would have been overshadowed by its neighbours if it hadn't played its own pivotal role in music.



11

Zanzibar Tavern

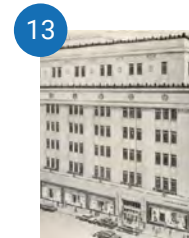
Before it became a famous adult entertainment nightclub, this club was a home to some of the hottest jazz and blues on the Yonge Street Strip.



12

Bluenote

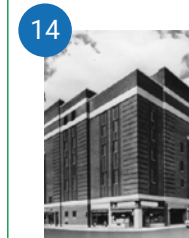
Toronto was a rhythm & blues town in the 1960s and this tiny after-hours club was ground zero—with Motown stars often dropping in to perform impromptu sets.



13

Eaton Auditorium

The acoustics of this fabled performance hall, on the top floor of a department store, made it Glenn Gould's favourite performance and recording space.



14

Maple Leaf Gardens

A sports shrine and longtime home of the Toronto Maple Leafs, this iconic building was also the city's largest music venue, featuring the world's biggest superstars.



15

Club Jamaica

The earliest sounds of ska, rocksteady and reggae in Toronto could be heard in this West Indian nightclub where the legendary Jackie Mittoo once appeared.

Arts & Culture Map

Music Memories of Yonge Locations


- 1 Town Tavern
16 QUEEN ST EAST
- 2 Colonial Tavern
201 YONGE ST
- 3 Massey Hall
178 VICTORIA ST
- 4 Nickelodeon
279 YONGE ST
- 5 Friar's Tavern
238 YONGE ST
- 6 Brown Derby
311 YONGE ST
- 7 Piccadilly Tube
316 YONGE ST
- 8 Le Coq d'Or (and the Hawk's Nest)
333 YONGE ST
- 9 Edison Hotel
1 GOULD ST
- 10 Steele's Tavern
349 YONGE ST
- 11 Zanzibar Tavern
359 YONGE ST
- 12 Bluenote
372 YONGE ST
- 13 Eaton Auditorium
444 YONGE ST
- 14 Maple Leaf Gardens
60 CARLTON ST
- 15 Club Jamaica
248 YONGE ST

Murals and Public Art

- 1 O'Keefe Lane Mural
O'KEEFE LANE SOUTH
- 2 Music Murals
423 YONGE STREET, NORTH AND SOUTH FACING
- 3 Ode to Live Theatre
33 GERRARD ST WEST
- 4 Alley Jams
38 DUNDAS ST EAST
- 5 Polaris Music Prize Mural
21 GRANBY ST-TTC MCGILL GRANBY STATION

Heritage Toronto Plaques

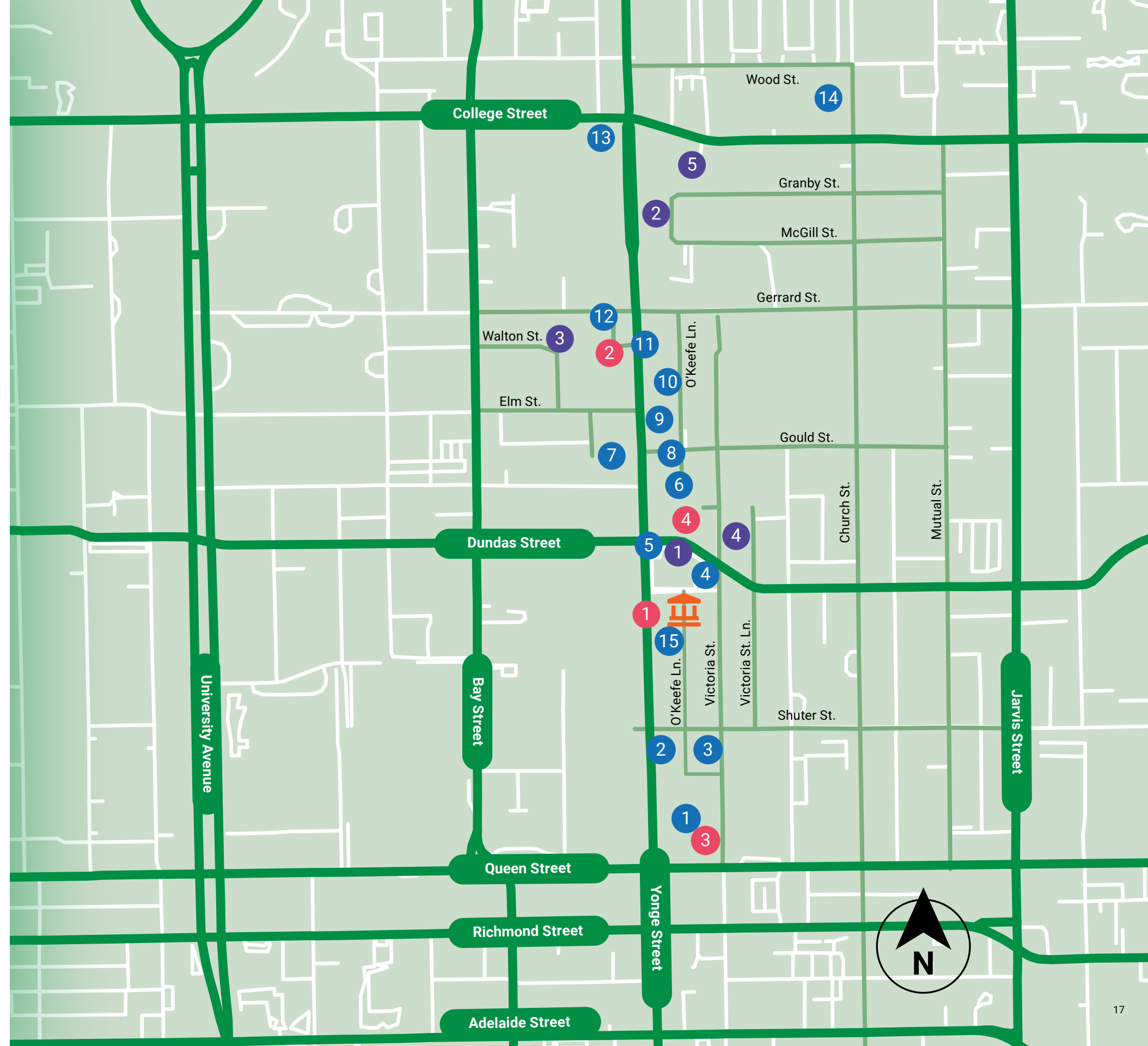
- 1 279 Yonge St
- 2 372 Yonge St
- 3 16 Queen St E
- 4 333 Yonge St

 Friars Music Museum
279 YONGE ST



Music Memories of Yonge

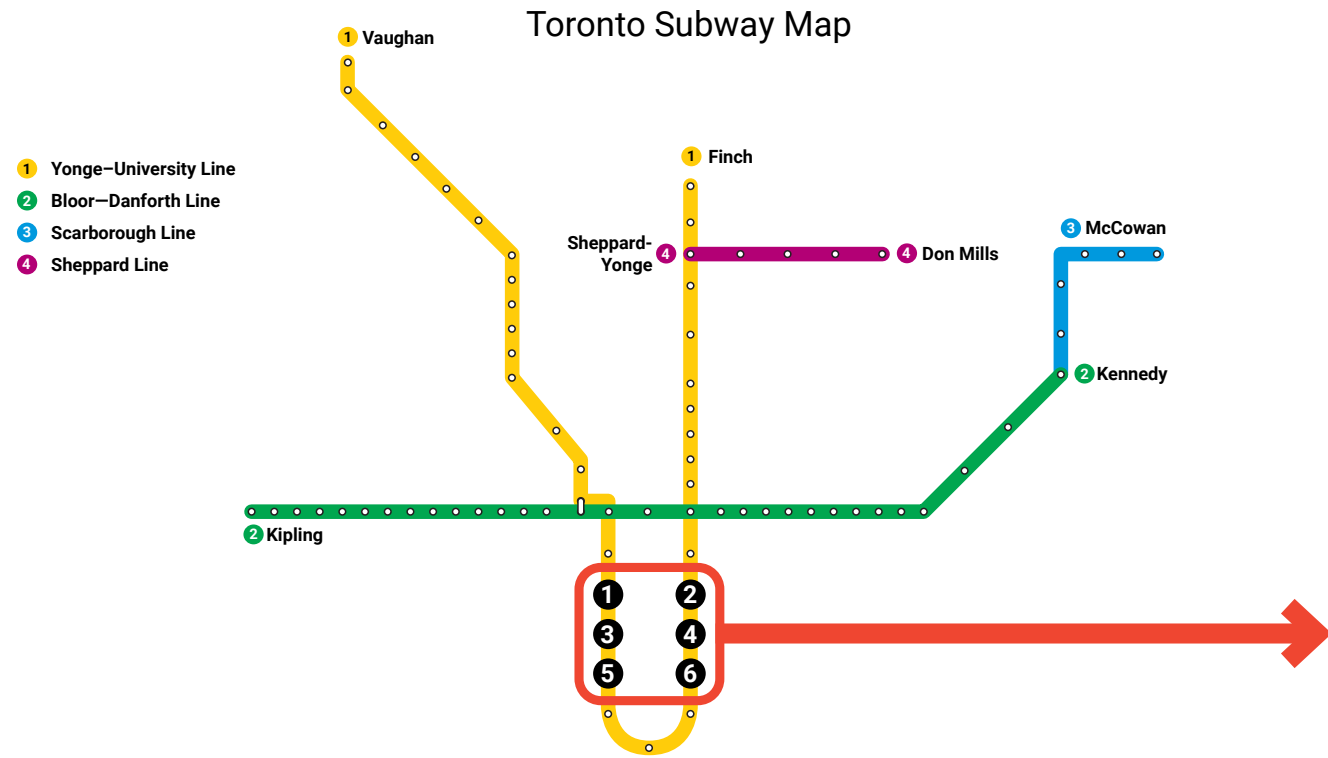
Learn more information about each of the 15 locations, including additional photos, facts and more by visiting Music Memories of Yonge online!



GETTING HERE



Taking transit is a quick and inexpensive way to get into the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood, whether you prefer taking the bus, streetcar or subway! For more information, please visit www.ttc.ca



170,000+

Passengers on a typical weekday

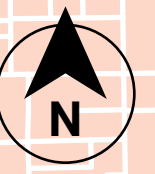
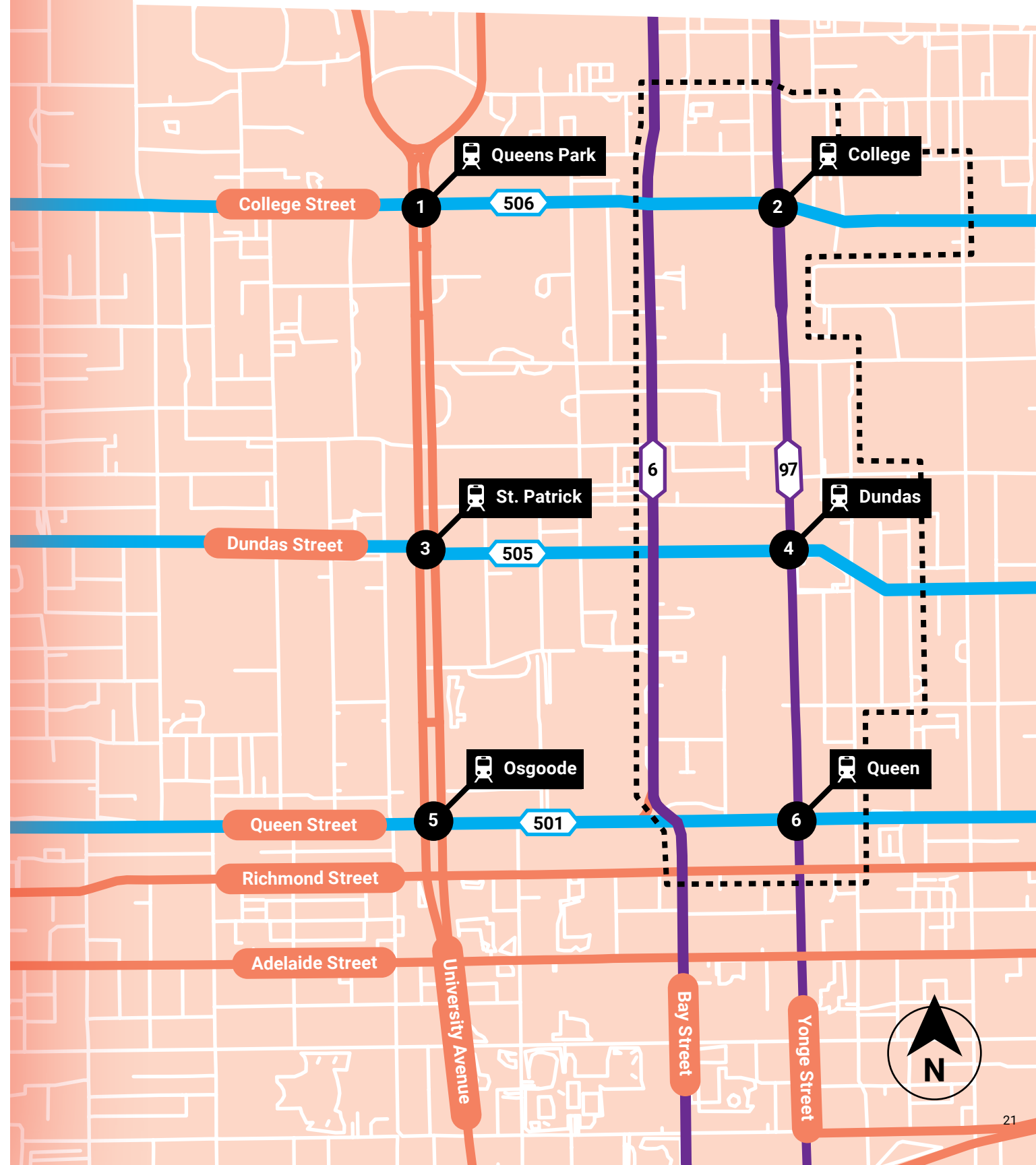
● Did you know College, Dundas and Queen subway stations see over 170,000 passengers on a typical weekday? That's over 60 million people per year!

Source: TTC, 2016.



LEGEND

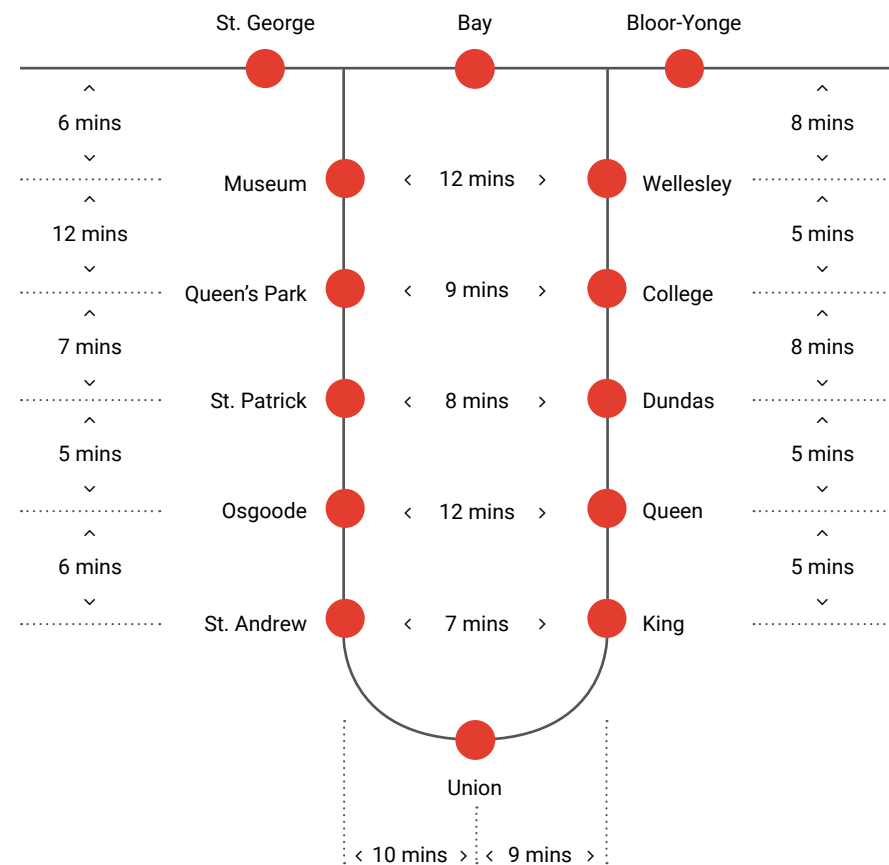
- Downtown Yonge neighbourhood
- Subway Stations
- Streetcar
- Bus
- Route Number



Take the Gym to Downtown Yonge

Staying active while running errands or shopping around is easy in Downtown Yonge, as the neighbourhood is easily accessible via bicycle or on foot.

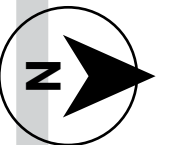
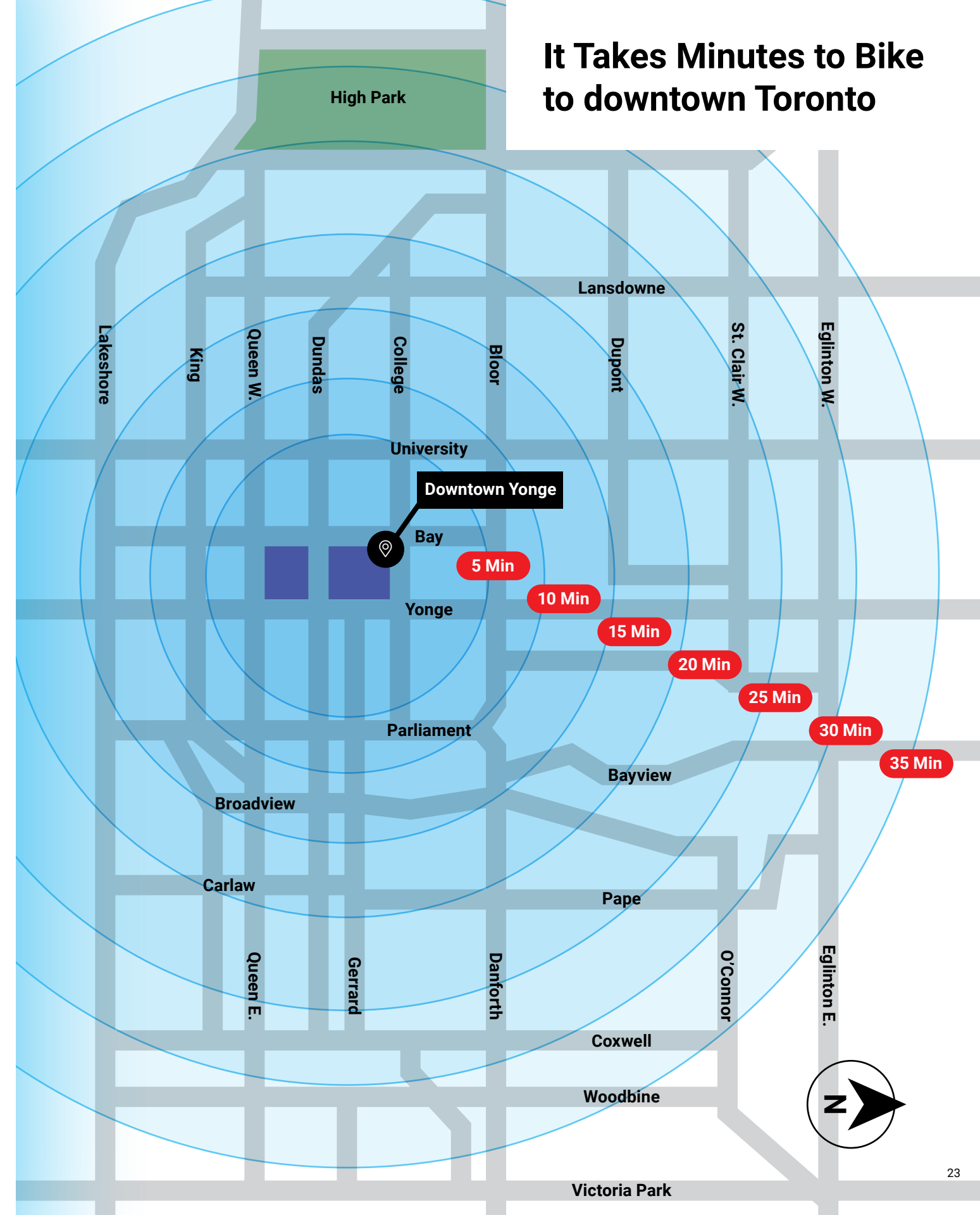
Walk Times Between Subway Stations



• Get further by combining cycling or walking with other modes of transportation.

• Grab a bike 24/7 from one of the many Bike Share Toronto stations to cycle anytime.

It Takes Minutes to Bike to downtown Toronto



Stop, Park and Roll



Bike Parking

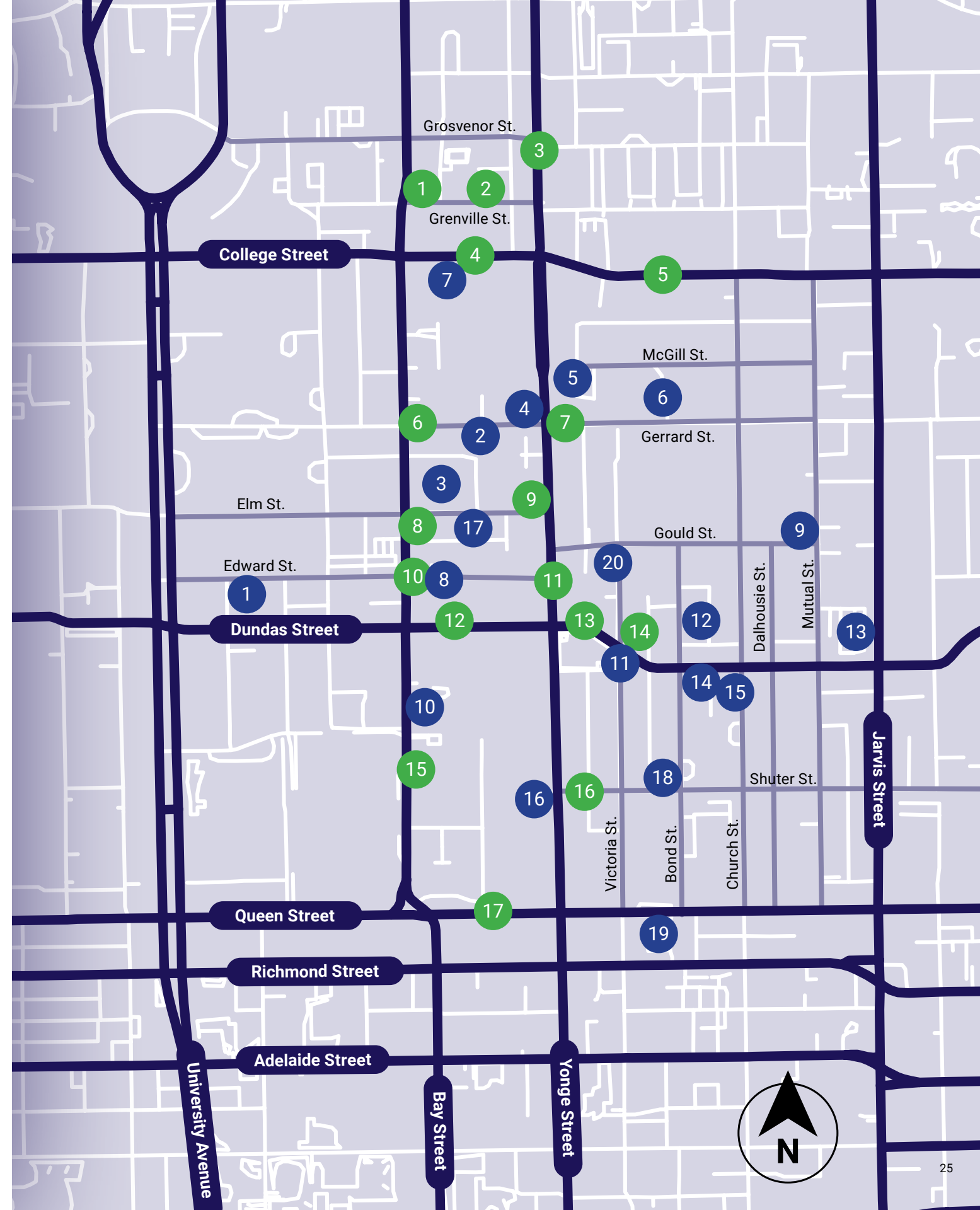
With over 500 bicycle parking locations across the neighbourhood, it's never been easier to visit on two wheels!

- 1 Bay St and Grenville St
831 BAY ST
32 GRENVILLE ST
- 2 Yonge St and Grenville St
18 GRENVILLE ST
- 3 Yonge St and Grosvenor St
475 YONGE ST
- 4 Yonge St and College St
40 COLLEGE ST 2 COLLEGE ST
30 COLLEGE ST 21 COLLEGE ST
20 COLLEGE ST 465 YONGE ST
12 COLLEGE ST 21 CARLTON ST
6 COLLEGE ST
- 5 Carlton St
25 CARLTON ST 60 CARLTON ST
45 CARLTON ST 55 WOOD ST
20 CARLTON ST 50 CARLTON ST
14 CARLTON ST
- 6 Bay St and Gerrard St W
657 BAY ST 711 BAY ST
717 BAY ST 655 BAY ST
- 7 Yonge St and Gerrard St E
382 YONGE ST 3 GERRARD ST E
415 YONGE ST 21 GERRARD ST E
399 YONGE ST 372 YONGE ST
20 GERRARD ST E
- 8 Bay St and Elm St
38 ELM ST
51 ELM ST
49 ELM ST
- 9 Yonge St and Elm St
18 ELM ST 8 ELM ST
14 ELM ST 2 ELM ST
10 ELM ST 348 YONGE ST
- 10 Bay St and Edward St
637 BAY ST 633 BAY ST
64 EDWARD ST 71 EDWARD ST
635 BAY ST
- 11 Yonge St and Edward St
20 EDWARD ST 2 EDWARD ST
10 EDWARD ST 71 EDWARD ST
312 YONGE ST
- 12 Bay St and Dundas St
595 BAY ST 55 DUNDAS ST W
575 BAY ST 71 EDWARD ST
65 DUNDAS ST W 40 DUNDAS ST W
- 13 Yonge St and Dundas St
20 DUNDAS ST W 312 YONGE ST
1 DUNDAS ST W 10 DUNDAS ST E
- 14 Victoria St and Dundas St
40 DUNDAS ST E 60 DUNDAS ST E
277 VICTORIA ST 68 DUNDAS ST E
33 DUNDAS ST E 70 DUNDAS ST E
251 VICTORIA ST
19 DUNDAS SQUARE
- 15 Bay St
525 BAY ST
483 BAY ST
- 16 Yonge St and Shuter St
220 YONGE ST 220 VICTORIA ST
229 YONGE ST 200 VICTORIA ST
6 SHUTER ST 178 VICTORIA ST
221 YONGE ST 209 VICTORIA ST
38 SHUTER ST
- 17 Queen St
60 QUEEN ST W 159 YONGE ST
401 BAY ST 1 QUEEN ST E
20 QUEEN ST W
176 YONGE ST

Parking Lots

Whether you're looking for on-street parking or garage parking, we've got you covered for those trips where you just need the convenience of the car.

- 1 180 Dundas St West
- 2 33 Gerrard St West
- 3 655 Bay St
- 4 2-52 Gerrard St West
- 5 415 Yonge St
- 6 40 Gerrard St East
- 7 777 Bay St
- 8 39 Edward St
- 9 108 Mutual St
- 10 525 Bay St- Eaton Centre
- 11 20 Dundas Sq
- 12 51-89 Bond St
- 13 160 Dundas St East
- 14 81 Bond St
- 15 250 Church St
- 16 CF Toronto Eaton Centre
- 17 31 Elm St
- 18 53-57 Shuter St
- 19 37 Queen St East
- 20 304 Victoria St





VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES



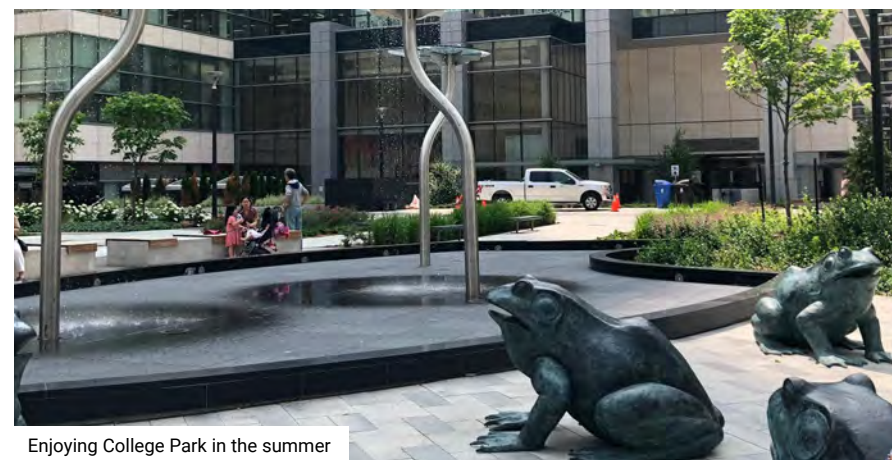
Bring the Downtown Yonge experience home

There are many different ways to feel the energy of Downtown Yonge right from your home. Here you'll find some helpful resources to help you on your journey.



Play the Parks Concert Series

Play the Parks goes On Location and takes you inside some of the landmark venues and business staples in the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood, while watching some incredible Toronto artists. You'll get up close and personal, and get a glimpse into their lives as musicians in the Music City.



Enjoying College Park in the summer



Elm Street eats



Business Map

Whether you're wandering the neighbourhood in person or virtually, our business map should be your first step! Explore over 200 restaurants, 120 service providers and over 130 clothing retailers at your fingertips.



Music Memories of Yonge Playlist

Hear the Toronto Sound for yourself using our playlist that includes hits from the '50s through to the '80s.



Downtown Yonge at Home Guides

We've created themed guides that you can use from the comfort of your home, whatever your interests are. Check out our website for guides related to nature, learning, music, history, and more.



Heritage Toronto Virtual Walks

We've partnered with Heritage Toronto to offer 2 virtual walks of Downtown Yonge that you can do from anywhere! If you're a music geek, check out The Heart of Music City tour, while planning and design fans should peruse through the Architecture of a Neighbourhood: Downtown Yonge tour.

Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area

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📘 🐦 📷 @DowntownYonge

AVAILABLE AT
SEPHORA

John Eaton Centre

H&M

Yonge
DOWNTOWN



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DOWNTOWN



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