

THE CORKTOWN NEWS

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Corktown's Passionate Eye

By Dominic Harriott, King Street Realty



photo courtesy: Dan Philips

What does Jane Fonda protesting at Queen's Park, an aerial view of the Pan Am Athlete's village, an UnderPass Park game of wheelchair basketball or even colourful reflections of light in a rainy day puddle have in common? They've all faced the quiet and unassuming lens of Corktown resident Dan Philips.

Dan first popped on my radar through an email. I was dismissive at first, thinking more junk, but with curious subject lines like "walked across the street for...some 5 ALARM FUNK!" I opened it. What I found was a collection of colourful and beautiful photographs of various happenings, art, activities, people and things about the neighbourhood and the city. The images were really interesting and offered a glimpse of all the fascinating and beautiful things one misses in the hustle and bustle of a regular day. Things as seemingly mundane as paint peeling on a park bench or a hole in a chain link fence are captured in such a way as to not feel out of place beside the more dynamic and charged images of movie star Jane Fonda demonstrating at the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate demonstration this past summer or the events at Panamania in the Distillery. One thing's for sure; Dan's photographs command your attention.

Though I enjoy Dan's efforts, I couldn't help but wonder why he does it. Why does he take these pictures and broadcast them, what's in it for him? I inquired a little further and immediately knew I had to interview this guy for the newspaper. Dan's photos are interesting but they pale in comparison to the man himself.

Originally trained as an illustrator and painter in Detroit, Dan came to Canada and became a set and graphic designer for television. He then 'stumbled' into

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Extend or Not to Extend

By Tadeo Sanchez, King Street Realty

To extend or not to extend? That was the question but now that the reaction to the bike lane pilot project has been so positive, the city is planning to extend the Adelaide and Richmond bike lanes east to Parliament bringing the excitement closer to our neighborhood with rumors of possibly dedicating bike lanes in and around Corktown.

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"The cycle tracks are highly supported by cyclists, but also appreciated by the majority of the drivers (52% of the 1424 interviewed), including local businesses and property owners."

If you were to ask this cyclist, the answer was obvious...extend! And I'm not alone in saying this; just ask the 2144 cyclists that use the Adelaide bike lanes or the 2301 that ride down Simcoe

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Ana Harriott & Tadeo Sanchez
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PUDDLE

photo courtesy: Dan Philips

the digital world when he joined the Toronto firm Omnibus Computer Graphics, the very first computer graphics company in Canada. Omnibus needed an art director to lead a group of young artists in this new environment but nobody wanted the job. Computer graphics was still in its infancy so few knew anything about it, including Dan. He took the job anyway and spent the early 80's learning how to operate in the 2D and 3D digital environment overlapping his traditional art and illustration skills.

.....

Dan retired but found himself craving tangibility. In fact he is a bit dismayed about the extent to which the digital world has proliferated itself into virtually every facet of modern society and feels there is a growing detachment from the physicality of life.

One of Dan's earliest digital successes was working on the first 3D, thirty-second, opening title sequence for Hockey Night In Canada. Later on, in the early 90's, Dan found himself leading an experimental R&D computer graphics department at Disney Studios in Los Angeles. He transformed it into the first computer graphics production unit for digital animated film work, Disney's famed CGI department. Here, he worked on computer-generated imagery for some of Disney's most successful feature animation films like 'Rescuers Down Under', 'Beauty and

The Beast', 'Aladdin', 'Pocahontas' and 'the Lion King'. After Disney, as if his resume was not impressive enough, Dan went on to work at Dreamworks-SKG, the CBC and at one point was leading over 500 people on multiple parallel projects.

After a long and successful career as a pioneer in the digital world, Dan retired but found himself craving tangibility. In fact he is a bit dismayed about the extent to which the digital world has proliferated itself into virtually every facet of modern society and feels there is a growing detachment from the physicality of life. A detachment that he feels a partial responsibility for, having been part of its origin so many years ago. Today, Dan focuses on his painting and photography as catharsis and penance.

An accomplished painter, he's had showings at Runnymede Branch Library and the Little Annex Art Gallery, and he's currently working on a painting called "[Dis]LikeItIs". This painting is a little different from his last project, the well received, fun and colourful visual exploration of Bajan (Barbadian english) sayings like "Skin you teet". "[Dis]LikeItIs" is about all the ills of the world as he sees them, the things he complains about all exorcised onto a 4'x5' canvas. It graphically depicts everything from "the One Percent" to child abuse and slavery. Dan hopes that the grim and serious nature of this painting will serve as a counterpoint for his painting in general as well as his life and expects to return to his more light hearted Bajan series once "[Dis]LikeItIs" is finished.

This brings me back to my original question. Why does Dan wander around the city like a modern day Vivian Maier taking pictures? Why does he feel the need to publish them via email? I asked

him. He said he sees beautiful and interesting things constantly and he can't help seeing them. He has to leave his camera at home when he goes out with his wife because she complains that he just leaves her standing there when he sees something and starts shooting it. It's true, when I first met Dan for our interview I had to pause my introduction because he was taking a picture of a design painted on a large metal container. He really can't turn it off and just like his paintings and their exhibits, his photographs are his self-expression, his truth and he wants to share.

I think Dan's penance is using technology to push beauty and truth back into a world he thinks technology has diminished. In a way he's succeeding. I'm a typical urban workaholic, glued to my phone and laptop with no time to smell the roses and yet he's managed to get me to marvel at colourful reflections of light in rainy day puddles. And, now that you've taken the time to finish reading this story you'll probably look into Dan Philips yourself and join me. ☺

To take a look at Dan's work visit:

- » <http://www.danphilips-art.com>
- » <https://www.flickr.com/photos/danphilips/sets>

The Corktown News

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WHAT'S UP IN CORKTOWN?

The Corktown Residents & Business Association is a not-for-profit and non-commercial volunteer neighbourhood organization.

We follow the latest developments in Corktown on a wide range of topics and serve as a liaison between Corktown, the City and other key organizations.

The CRBA is an inclusive organization open to all local residents and businesses. Join us and add your voice to the community discussion!

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NEXT CRBA MEETINGS

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Check www.corktown.ca for location, agendas and other details.

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EXTEND OR NOT TO EXTEND CONTINUED

St. every day. These numbers represent a 300% increase in cyclist activity from last year alone!

I cycle in to work during the temperate months and before the bike lanes, I found myself riding along Queens Quay through construction, debris, double parked cars, and periodically having to dismount and walk through 'No Biking' zones. If you ride, maybe you've fought your way along streets like King avoiding delivery trucks to the right while praying your wheel doesn't get caught in the dreaded and sudden grasp of the street car track to your left.

Now, the convenience of riding from the entertainment district all the way to Corktown in one direct path has changed the city... and for the good.

It's safer for cyclists and drivers alike and encourages more and more people to become more active. Daily riders move about more efficiently while the more timid weekend riders have the opportunity to safely get in more saddle time. Also, think about the savings in commute. Combined with transit and a little planning, you're looking at no more parallel parking, pesky one way streets, or rushing back to a meter that expired 10 minutes ago. One can save

themselves that defeated walk back to the car after seeing the yellow shame of a \$30 ticket flapping on the windshield... if you haven't already been towed.

According to our city's manager of Cycling Infrastructure, Jacquelyn Hayward Gulati, 'the cycle tracks are highly supported by cyclists, but also appreciated by the majority of the drivers (52% of the 1424 interviewed), including local businesses and property owners.'

.....
According to a new study by McGill University, it's been determined that property values rise near bike stations by as much as 2.7 percent. A bike share station near your front door might be more than a convenient way to ride to work — it might also boost the value of your home.

Overall, the impact on regular traffic has been minimal. In fact 64% of drivers have agreed that the traffic flow is better and that the lanes should become a permanent fixture in our city, including

filling the current gaps on Adelaide next to First Canadian place and Scotia Plaza. Speaking from personal experience, commuting into Corktown every day, my ride has become faster, safer and much more enjoyable.

There will always be those that just don't get it and think that it just adds to the city's congestion and understandably so, narrowing city streets for bike lanes is a bit counterintuitive. But the results of the bike lane pilot project speak for themselves. To me, this is just another step towards Toronto becoming even more of a world class city and we can all get behind it with just a little tweaking of our attitudes.

Hey, I wasn't always a cyclist and never really looked at cycling as an alternate form of transportation. For most, cycling was about exercise, for kids or transportation for the less fortunate. But over the last few years, it's become so much more than all of the above. Now it's not uncommon to see men in suits or women in dresses cycling to work; think NYC. People are opting for improved health, lowered daily travel expense, and even a little environmental pride for not contributing as much to pollution. To be honest, I personally get a little chuckle from zipping by cars parked in traffic from time to time.

For those thinking about the cost of purchasing and maintaining a bike, bike share programs are an inexpensive option. For a minimal \$90 annual membership fee (plus additional charges) you can have access to a bike without having to worry about storage. Bike Share Toronto currently offers 80 bike share stations around the city with plans to add an additional 20 by 2016.

Already in Corktown we've seen one station installed in front of 51 Division at Front and Parliament and another proposed for King and Queen, just off River St.

And if that's not exciting enough, according to a new study by McGill University, it's been determined that property values rise near bike stations by as much as 2.7 percent. A bike share station near your front door might be more than a convenient way to ride to work — it might also boost the value of your home.

So lets see - reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality through reduced emissions, the promotion of improved health and wellness through activity, affordability and accessibility not to mention moving Toronto forward on the world stage. Sounds like a no brainer to me; I say extend!

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Volunteering at the Village

By Michele Cummings, Corktown Volunteer & CRBA Treasurer

Last year as I watched the Pan Am Village sprouting out of the ground, I decided to apply to become a volunteer. After filling out the long application and doing an online interview, I received an email offering me the position of Press Operations Supervisor for the PanAm and Parapan Am Games at the Athletes' Village. Of course I was elated! My walk to work would be 10 minutes and I would get to explore this new part of our neighbourhood. Now if only I knew something about the press besides reading the newspaper!



VILLAGE WATER GUARDIANS

After several hours of training, my day-to-day tasks were still a bit of a mystery. The Athletes' Village Media Centre was different from the competition venues. There would definitely be some learning on the fly. An excursion up to North York to get my uniform completed my preparations; I was all set to go!

July 1st was my first day and the first day that the athletes started arriving. We finished preparing the Media Centre. All we had to do was wait for the press to arrive! Our job consisted of:

- » welcoming the press
- » ensuring that they and their equipment were properly decked out
- » accompanying them to interview the athletes at the boxing training venue (our new YMCA!)
- » and assisting with whatever else they needed.

Well they did arrive, slowly but surely.

We were not terribly busy which enabled our team to really get to know each other. My team members came from different cities – and different countries! They spoke different languages, were different ages and we

really would never have met had it not been for these Games. It was a great group and I already miss them as we all return to our regular lives.

I'm sharing my most favourites list with you. Only most favourites because I don't do least favourites.

My Favourite Speech: The inspirational address given by Michael (Pinball) Clemons, the Ambassador for the Volunteers, at the dress rehearsal for the Opening Ceremonies.

My Favourite Walk: I loved walking down the new part of Front Street in the Athletes' Village. The street was full of life. Athletes wandering along with suit cases, golf clubs, baseball bats, fencing swords, bags and coffees. Volunteers rushing off to their shifts. Police patrolling on bikes. People chatting on the beautiful wide sidewalks. People sitting in giant Adirondack chairs enjoying the setting sun. It was a Village in the true sense of the word and gave me a glimpse into the future of this awesome new neighbourhood.

My Favourite Sport: I went to see several events but my favourite was a road

hockey game that was played in front of our new YMCA!

My Favourite Pin: Pins were quite the rage amongst volunteers and athletes alike. Although I was not a collector myself, I received one that I will cherish. It is a maple leaf and poppy pin given to me by an amazing volunteer, Mort. He had been in the Canadian Armed Forces before retiring and at the Games he was in charge of the flags for the various ceremonies.

My Favourite Journalist: Alexandra Azzi, a researcher at NBC Universal. She spent many a day working in our media centre. At the end, she wrote us a very nice thank you card for making her games experience awesome. It makes it all worthwhile!

My Favourite Lunch: One I don't have to make myself! One of the perks of volunteering is that we were given a meal for each shift worked. We ate separately from the athletes and unfortunately had a different menu. They had a much larger selection I was told. One day we spotted TV celebrity Chef Michael Smith eating in our midst. Did he prepare our lunch? I think not!

My Favourite Day: The first day of Welcoming Ceremonies. Everything was new and exciting. Even the rain couldn't dampen anyone's mood.

Now as the Village empties of its athletes and volunteers and fills up once again with construction workers, I am anxiously awaiting the area re-opening in 2016! I am looking forward to sitting on those Adirondack chairs now that my orange shirt has retired.



PANAM PRESS OPERATIONS TEAM

A Community of Compassion

By Sunil Issac, Good Shepherd - Community Engagement Manager

Corktown has gone through a lot of physical changes over the last two hundred years. Once characterized by distilleries, factories and low-income housing, it has now become a place popular for art, commercial vibrancy and younger and more affluent residents. In spite of all these changes, the one thing that has continued to live on in Corktown is its culture of compassion towards those precariously placed and less fortunate.

We don't have to look too far into the history to recognize the compassion of Corktowners. Being an enclave for Irish migrants in the 1800s, Corktown became a place of refuge, care and hope for the Irish. The Great Irish Hunger (1845-1849), had a large impact on the city of Toronto when boatloads of sick Irish migrants, in desperate circumstances, landed on the shores of Lake Ontario in the summer of 1847. A good majority of them made Corktown their first home and they were looked after by nurses, doctors, priests, nuns, compatriots, politicians and other citizens. In fact, Reverend Michael Power, first Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto, died from typhus while caring for the Irish migrants escaping the Great Irish Famine. In 2009, Bishop Power was featured prominently in the docudrama *Death or Canada*, which tells the story of the Irish Famine and its impact on Toronto. Power is portrayed as the hero of Toronto and is described as a "martyr of charity."

Many Irish migrants who did survive the epidemic continued to live in Corktown. They would work in local distilleries, factories and brickworks and lived in narrow row houses with their big families. Poor working conditions and low wages limited their ability to maintain a reasonable

standard of living. Life was definitely difficult at that time.

Enoch Turner, a wealthy brewer and philanthropist, saw the plight of the poor and wanted to provide basic education to their children. In 1848, he funded the construction of a schoolhouse on Trinity Street, which became the first free school in Toronto and the oldest schoolhouse still standing in the city. Turner supplied the funds to construct the Schoolhouse and the land was donated by the adjacent Little Trinity Church.

In 1857, the Sisters of St. Joseph opened the doors to the House of Providence, the city's largest centre of charity, on Power Street. Located between what is now Adelaide and Richmond Streets, House of Providence was one of the busiest places in Corktown during that time, providing care and support to the many downtrodden residents of the area. It was Bishop Armand-Francois Marie de Charbonnel who enlisted both the help of Sisters and generosity of surrounding community to initiate this work. Nearly always filled to capacity, the House of Providence eventually quadrupled in size to provide for about 700 residents including the elderly, widows, orphans, the unemployed and the homeless. Every day, at its doors, people were fed during the 1930s Great Depression. After more than 100 years of compassionate service, the house was eventually demolished in 1962 to make way for the Richmond off-ramp of the Don Valley Parkway.

Unfortunately, at that time, the number of homeless and transient poor was only increasing and thus losing House of Providence was a huge blow to the people of Corktown. The situation was nothing less than a crisis and the questions were being asked about who could fill this huge void. Through the efforts of Corktown residents, the Archdiocese of Toronto and Brother Mathias Barrett, the founder of the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd, the work of the Good Shepherd Ministries started in 1963.

Good Shepherd Ministries continues Corktown's tradition for the less fortunate. It provides food, shelter, and clothing for those most in need. When the AIDS crisis struck in the 1980s, it

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Then & Now

CANARY RESTAURANT - CHERRY ST. AND FRONT ST.

by Michele Cummings



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Documentary “The Story of 90 Sumach” Recaptures Forgotten CBC History

By Pilar Segura and Jeremy Benning

About five years ago, the residents of 90 Sumach Street decided to make changes to the design of the building’s lobby so it would reflect the history of the building. The committee painted the walls (including one which was purple) a neutral colour and enhanced the lighting. They removed several modern Pollock style art canvases and replaced them with large black and white photographs showing CBC craftspeople at work. A vintage TV studio light was carefully restored and displayed.

With its new look and feel, the lobby is now a tribute to the dozens of men and women who worked at 90 Sumach for decades starting in 1958. They were the scenic artists, costume designers and props makers employed by the CBC. According to Jeremy Benning, a cinematographer and longtime resident of the building, “nearly everything the CBC made...their sets and wardrobe and props...was made in this building. So there’s a real chunk of Canadian heritage and culture that was produced in this building.” Notable Canadians such as Glenn Gould, Lorne Michaels and Wayne & Shuster spent time there as well.

“Nearly everything the CBC made...their sets and wardrobe and props... was made in this building. So there’s a real chunk of Canadian heritage and culture that was produced in this building.”

This might be the end of the story, but for the party the residents threw to celebrate the completion of the lobby project. One of the guests was Janet Muise, a CBC archivist who had worked in the building and had helped Jeremy find the photos that now hung in the lobby and building hallways.

She attended with some of her former coworkers, craftspeople who had spent time at 90 Sumach when it was a bustling production facility. “They told the residents great stories about working at 90 Sumach,” says filmmaker



**FILMMAKERS
FRANCIS LUTA AND
JEREMY BENNING
IN FRONT OF 90
SUMACH STREET**

photo courtesy: Hill Peppard

and resident Francis Luta. This gave Francis an idea – why not make a documentary about the history of the building?

Francis discussed it with his partner Jeremy, and he agreed. The documentary film, “The Story of 90 Sumach”, took about a year and a half to complete and was released earlier this year. Francis and Jeremy financed the project themselves.

Beautifully shot, “The Story of 90 Sumach” uses interviews with former CBC employees as well as the building’s designers and current residents to tell the rich history of the building. CBC interviews include former Design Director Peter Garstang talking about the acquisition and use of the building and the late Paul Almond of Seven Up! fame, who directed several dramas during his time with the broadcaster. Designers Dan and Keith of IIBYIV

Designs (also building residents), discuss being approached in late 1996 by the developer who had purchased the building to turn it into live/work condos. Current residents, including several who work in the arts, talk about the warmth and feeling of community they’ve found at 90 Sumach, a feeling Jeremy describes as “small town camaraderie”.

According to Francis, reaction to the film has been “overwhelmingly positive” from residents and those who have taken part. Some have also said that they appreciate the building more since becoming aware of its history.

“People in Toronto complain that there is no history here, that buildings are torn down,” Jeremy says. “But here’s a building that was preserved – that has a new life.”

In addition to celebrating life today and commemorating the stories of the CBCers, Jeremy and Francis feel strongly about the film’s other message: preservation. “People in Toronto complain that there is no history here, that buildings are torn down,” Jeremy says. “But here’s a building that was preserved – that has a new life.”

In addition to this new life, the film and redesign of the lobby provide a connection to the CBC and Canadian broadcasting history may have been otherwise forgotten.

Another thing that came about with the lobby redesign and film was a new name for the building. For many years, 90 Sumach was known as “The Brewery Lofts” – a name used by the original condo developers to market the units. But the building was never a brewery, only located near the Dominion Brewery which shut down in 1936. “It always baffled me” says Jeremy. When the residents found out that the CBC employees referred to the building simply as “90 Sumach”, they decided to revert to the original name. Jeremy admits this caused a minor controversy because some feared the units would be devalued or that it would confuse realtors who had come to know the building as “The Brewery Lofts”. He feels, however, that the building has become more appealing with the CBC history acknowledged.

You can view “The Story of 90 Sumach” at <http://www.picturehausfilms.com/>. Or copies are also available for purchase.

A COMMUNITY OF COMPASSION CONTINUED

opened Barrett House, Toronto's first supportive residence for individuals living with HIV and AIDS. In 1991, it opened St. Joseph's Residence for seniors with a history of homelessness.

Today, supported by thousands of volunteers and donors, Good Shepherd operates Toronto's largest free meal program, provides 91 shelter beds for homeless men, special services for homeless Veterans and much more. Good Shepherd helps people to move from instability to stability and helps the many poorer members of our community to make ends meet and live with dignity.

These are just a few of the historical examples of compassion-being-lived-out in our community. There are many who can add to this conversation by sharing their stories of compassion and care. Corktown is a changing community but in the midst of all these positive changes happening around us it is indeed a good time to reflect on our history of compassion and ask ourselves the following question:

Tell us how can we ensure that our rich tradition of compassion continues to positively affect the lives of those that need us?

Corktown's Quick Evolution

By Sandra Iskandar, CRBA President

It goes without saying that the last few years have been very transformative for the neighbourhood of Corktown which has seen the addition of several excellent parks, a series of thoughtful condos, community development, progressive public art and more and more animated street life.

So Corktown now has the unofficial distinction of being both Toronto's oldest neighbourhood and its newest one. Much of this recent growth in part has to do with Toronto's construction boom, hot real estate market and 2015 Pan Am / ParaPan Am games setting up home base in our backyard have breathed new life

into the neighbourhood. To think much of the new public park space and condo developments were Industrial wastelands and empty spaces; now those spaces are some of the most innovative and spectacular urban outdoor spaces in the world (Corktown Common and Underpass Park). As a result of this, the Corktown population is exploding.

.....
The Corktown Newspaper will be evolving to keep pace with Corktown.

New people and businesses are choosing Corktown. This positive growth is getting us noticed as both a distinct part of the city and a destination for those who wish to experience our eclectic culture, art and award winning architecture. All this solidifies our position as a big part of the city's fast rising downtown east end, we are very much on the map and thriving as we are actively celebrating our rich history and looking forward to an even brighter future.

With all this positive change in mind, we are pleased to announce that the Corktown quarterly Newspaper has evolved to keep pace with Corktown as it shifts. The dedicated Corktown team has transformed the format to serve as a better reflection of our evolving neighbourhood. As the Corktown Neighbourhood's population increases; we have witnessed an increase in the Corktown's readership. With this issue we are rolling a larger more appealing format and a new, beautiful design with more colour, new features, local stories and profiles.

I personally feel lucky to receive the free neighbourhood newspaper in the mail every season and look forward to seeing its new and improved version very soon.

I'd like to give a special thanks to the small but mighty group of volunteers who were instrumental in the metamorphosis of the Corktown; James Caldwell, Dominic Harriott, Kara Isert and Michele Cummings. In particular, James and Dominic have been pivotal through this process and have offered countless of hours reworking the original format. Corktown should feel lucky to have generous neighbours like these!

POPPED THE GOOD AND THE BAD



By the time you read this, the news is months old but we're still in disbelief... King Street is open east of River! The

King car runs all the way along King Street. No diversions, so exciting! This is great news for the merchants along King Street. Finally, more foot traffic for our King Street merchants. Hoping it's helping out our art stores new & old - Made, Libby Fine Art, Joanne at Gallery 402 and the cafes - Tandem, Roselle, Morning Glory, Odin and the rest.



Is the Cherry streetcar just to short turn King cars or to take tourists into the Distillery District? What's the

point if it doesn't connect to Queen's Quay? We'll have to endure two years of annoying traffic signals at Sumach / Cherry and King in the meantime. Because there are no streetcars running, having no right turn on the red and the phased signals with a very short light for northbound traffic is a PITA for now. Why is it so hard to change the signals and signage when the streetcar goes into service? The city managed to change traffic patterns temporarily for the PanAm Games easily enough.



As the PanAm Games wrap and our neighbourhood gets back to its new normal, we're taking stock of

what the Games are leaving behind in Corktown. New transit lines and upgraded roads. Not just a fabulous new YMCA, but one that is outfitted with the coolest workout gear of any Y in Canada. New public art from the sculptures in the West Don Lands to the graffiti murals in Underpass Park. A residence for George Brown students. More social housing mixed in with the stylish condos going up. Good stuff!



Although the PanAm legacy is great, it's going to be a long time before we see the benefit of it.

The Cooper Koo YMCA won't open until 2016, most of the condos haven't finished sales let alone broken ground and the shops and restaurants announced for the "Canary District" have no opening date. I bet it'll be at least 2017 before we can book a table at Tabule. At least Corktown Common should be handed over from Waterfront Toronto to the City this year. We may even be able to use the fire pit when we go tobogganing in the Common this winter!

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