

# THE CORKTOWN NEWS

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## StopGap

**HOW LUKE ANDERSON IS BRIDGING THE GAP, ONE STEP AT A TIME.**

By Larry Webb



**LUKE ANDERSON**

On what I recall was a lovely sunny day in April this year, I went to the "People's Queen Street Camp: Change the street. Change the City". It was held at the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) on Spadina Avenue and was run by the redoubtable Edward Nixon and his happy bunch of associates.

What a grand day it was of dreaming big about what could be on Queen Street and indeed the City as a whole. In the breakout group I chose to attend, "Walking Queen Street West", I found myself among a broad cross-section of people; somewhat typical I might say for Queen Street West. I chose this session because the previous October, just over a year ago, I participated in a walk

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Luke's presentation about his new life inspired the most profound discussion with my students about the great impact the decisions we make in life can have on our future and that our situation in life amounts only to what we make of it.

organized by the same Edward Nixon, he of the infectious laugh and complex lexicon, which started at the very east end of Queen Street by the magnificent Waterworks, more properly known as the R. C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, and ended some 6 hours later at the very west end of Queen Street at the Katyn Monument to thousands of Polish prisoners of war who vanished in 1940 in the former USSR. The monument is just south of the intersection where King and Queen and Roncesvalles meet. The walk itself was as varied as any you will take in Toronto, passing

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## Xmas Comes to Us

By Thomas Junek, CRBA Board Member

The holiday season is here and as you've probably seen, the streets of Corktown look a bit different than this time last year. The formally underutilized King Street East retail strip has, in these past 12 months, finally become a destination in its own right. 2015 welcomed over a dozen new cafes, restaurants and shops with the promise of many more to come in 2016.

The return of the 504 King Streetcar has also brought more life to the street and things are coming full circle with the promise of a bigger and better Corktown next year with the addition of the Canary District and eagerly anticipated YMCA. Frankly it's never been a better time to come to King East, before the crowds discover us and speaking to business owners, this holiday season promises to be the busiest yet! As a proud local business owner myself I share a love of this great neighborhood and an equal stake in its success - the holiday season is the perfect time for new businesses to welcome customers, local and not, as well as showcase some festive spirit with seasonal treats and events.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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through many different communities, all relatively identifiable by the names of the stores and the style of food offered in the restaurants along the way.

One community which was very real but not at all evident was that of the physically disabled; not evident except in one degree – the presence of some brightly coloured and simply made wooden ramps where store entrances were not flush with the sidewalk. These enabled not only people who use wheelchairs but also those with bundle-buggies, strollers, and temporary casts on legs and feet to access the stores that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

At the Peoples Queen Street Camp and in my breakout session, that community was very ably and strongly represented by a wonderful guy, Luke Anderson. His manner was quietly confident, and his style was friendly but firm and, dare I say, nicely opinionated. It almost masked the fact that Luke is in a wheelchair and quite severely physically disabled, at least from a fully able-bodied person's perspective. There was no room, nor was there any need, for pity. This was clearly someone who knew what he wanted and was going to get it, come what may.

.....

Whether it is through an accident like Luke's, or due to a health condition, or a temporary condition like being encumbered by a stroller, or shopping cart, or a cast on a damaged limb, there is simply no reason in 2015 that there should be a barrier that separates the ability of these folks to enter a store or restaurant from the rest of us.



So here I take the words right from Luke's website at stopgap.ca:

*Luke Anderson was a gifted athlete, he was passionate about seeking adventure in the great outdoors and loved working with his hands. He graduated from university with an engineering degree, was following his dream living in the mountains with like-minded outdoor enthusiasts and was working as a home builder. He had the world at his fingertips.*

*In the fall of 2002 Luke and his good friend Johnny were riding down a tricky trail they had heard other mountain bikers raving about. They came upon a 25ft gap which Johnny cleared without a problem. Luke was*



photo courtesy: Michele Cummings

*determined to give it a try as well. He made sure he was in the right gear, gripped the handlebars tightly, pushed down hard on the pedals, left the takeoff platform, and his life as he knew it.*

*In that moment Luke went from being a physically independent person to someone who must now depend on others for help. In that instant he entered a world that was no longer completely accessible to him. This frustration is what led to the StopGap Foundation. The main focus of the foundation is the Ramp Project, a volunteer-run campaign that creates awareness about barriers in the built environment.*

And here I was with Luke and other people talking about a great future for Queen Street and Toronto. In my opinion, the most vocal and persuasive person at the table was Luke. One thing led to another and this past September, the CRBA was fortunate enough to have Luke come and present to the monthly public meeting. In the few months since I first met him, Luke had quit his regular job as a structural engineer with a well-known consulting firm and had gone full-time into StopGap. It's a gutsy move but one that seems a natural for such a risk-taker.

Luke's hope and goal is that the retailers of Corktown, along Queen, King, and Parliament understand the message and retain him to provide them with the brightly coloured ramps and that was his purpose in addressing us. I hope that the message got through and that those who attended and met Luke and enjoyed his enthusiasm and energy will spread the word to the retailers, through their patronage or other personal connections. Or simply take the bull by the horns and go tell a retailer about it simply because it's the right thing to do.

Whether it is through an accident like Luke's, or due to a health condition, or a temporary condition like being encumbered by a stroller, or shopping

cart, or a cast on a damaged limb, there is simply no reason in 2015 that there should be a barrier that separates the ability of these folks to enter a store or restaurant from the rest of us. And any of "us" could at any time become one of "them". There shouldn't be any barriers or discrimination.

I close with a quote on the website from Megan McGee, a grade 5/6 English teacher at Allenby Public School:

*"Luke's presentation about his new life inspired the most profound discussion with my students about the great impact the decisions we make in life can have on our future and that our situation in life amounts only to what we make of it. Luke's openness to address student curiosity, his genuine positivity and obvious drive to help others, be it in the realm of physical ease of accessibility or understanding of different life situations, truly struck a chord. It is a gift to have a presenter who can elicit such authentic and honest questions and reflections from 10 and 11 year olds. Thank you for your candour and strength!"*

I couldn't say it better!

Please spread the word and work of StopGap. For more details about them, please go to <http://stopgap.ca> or e-mail Luke himself at [lukewanders@gmail.com](mailto:lukewanders@gmail.com). Thank you. ☺

## 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!

**website:** [www.corktown.ca](http://www.corktown.ca)  
**email:** [info@corktown.ca](mailto:info@corktown.ca)  
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### NEXT CRBA MEETINGS

**December 1st, January 5th**  
Join your neighbours at 7PM on the first Tuesday of most months to find out what's happening.

Check [www.corktown.ca](http://www.corktown.ca) for location, agendas and other details.

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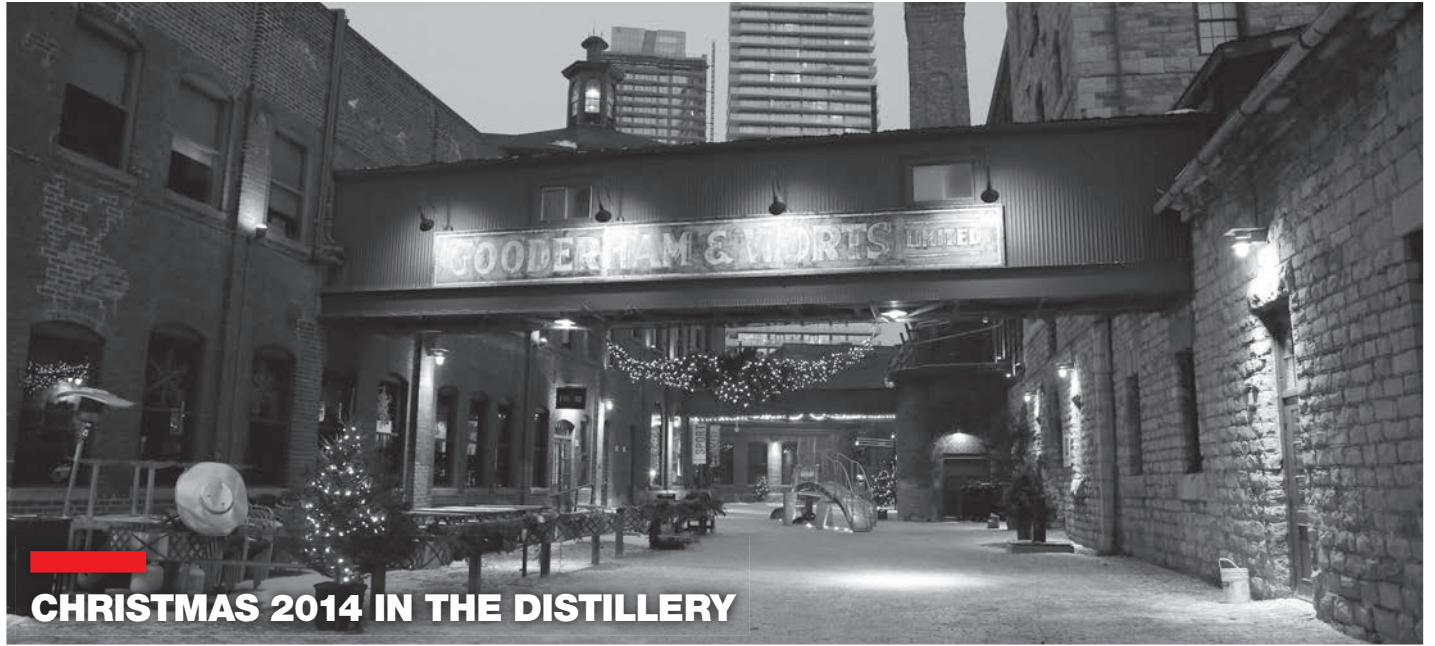
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**XMAS COMES TO US CONTINUED**

Speaking of events - the largest event to take place within our borders is the annual Toronto Christmas Market, hosted at the Distillery District. Kicking off on November 20th and running until December 20th, the market is open every day with the exception of Mondays from noon to 9pm (10pm on Friday and Saturday) and boasts over 100 street vendors, shops and restaurants. If a stroll through the Distillery District on a snowy December evening doesn't get you in the Christmas mood, nothing will. Entrance is free with the exception of Saturday and Sunday, when a ticketing system will be in effect (\$5).



**CHRISTMAS 2014 IN THE DISTILLERY**

A short 10 minute walk from the Distillery will bring you to the heart of a reinvigorated King Street East, where some new local favourites have set up shop. Try a tasty hot chocolate with homemade marshmallows at Odin, buying a Corktown shirt for your spouse on the way out, some organic, all natural toiletries at the Healthy Road for your kids, a locally made piece of furniture at Made for your in-laws who have everything, an amaryllis at Linden Grove to perk up your home and some retro inspired household decorations at Adornments on Queen, finishing with some handcrafted sweets at Roselle for

Corktown boasts a quirky selection of food establishments, everything from Italian and Thai to Mexican to organic pizza to juicy burgers. Yum.

yourself. Roselle's pastry chef owners are promising to offer all manner of Christmas sweets including cookies, cakes and their now famous caramels. They will also be extending their hours

to 11pm on December weekends to ensure maximum indulgence of your sweet tooth. Dinner? Corktown boasts a quirky selection of food establishments, everything from Italian and Thai to Mexican to organic pizza to juicy burgers. Yum. Hungry for History? Our very own Enoch Turner Schoolhouse is hosting its annual Founder's Dinner on Thursday December the 3rd. Tickets are \$110 and include a traditional Christmas dinner, seasonal reading and a live band as entertainment (bring your dancing shoes).

Finally, speaking of parties mark your calendars! The annual Christmas

Party thrown by your local Corktown Residents & Business Association is taking place at Odin Cafe + Bar, 514 King Street East (at River) on Sunday, December 13 from 5pm to 9pm. Co-hosted by Corktown booster Socrates Apallas and building on the great success of last year's Christmas Party at Fusilli, this year brings live music, free appetizers, full cash bar and a silent auction filled with lots of goodies. We also have something sweet in store so bring the kids! It's the most festive opportunity of the year to meet your neighbors and board members. We hope to see you there!

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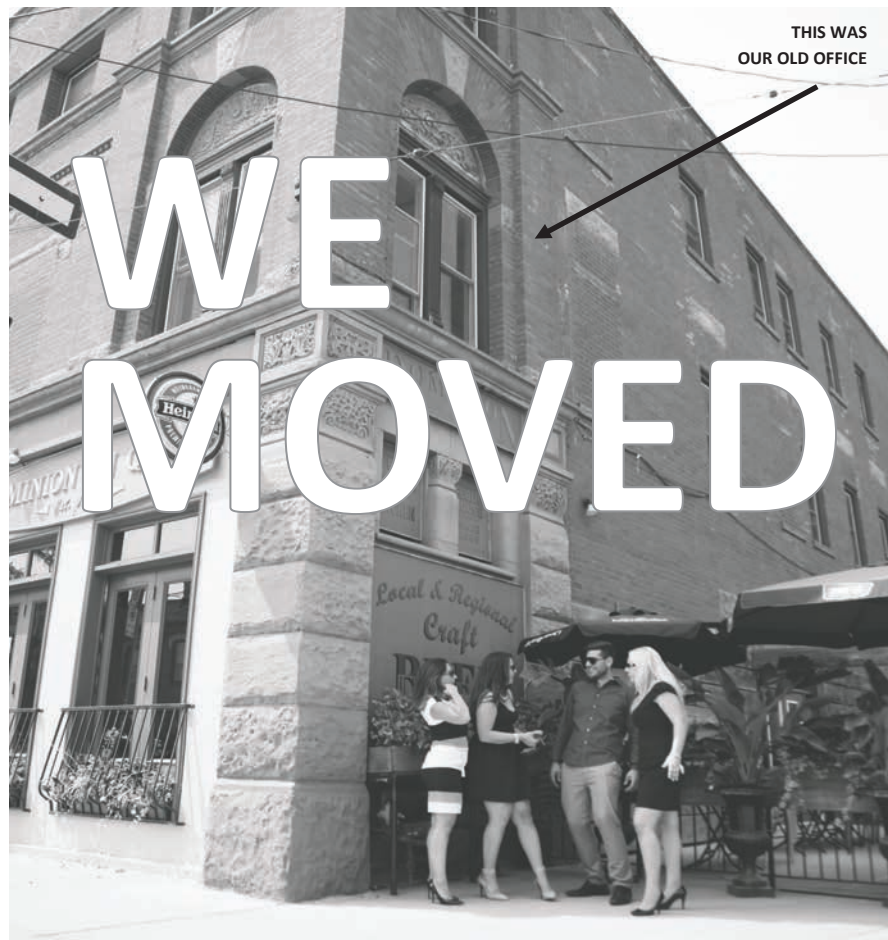


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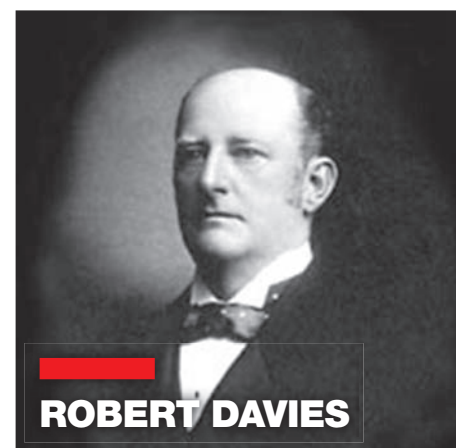
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# The Infamous Dominion Hotel

By Socrates Apallas, CRBA Board Member & LivingToronto Realtor

Many of us walk past this neighbourhood landmark every day. Its patched up windows and worn-out look may not impress you but if you knew what this historic spot meant to our local history, you might look twice.

It was two years ago when I took a leap of faith and decided to restore a dilapidated suite in the Dominion Hotel for my office. Unconventional, I know. It was rough, but rent was cheap and the story behind this hotel fascinated me. It had good energy. Unlike the rest of the bruised hotel, this particular space had potential. It had character - wood floors, high ceilings, large windows, original baseboards. I could see the opportunity to transform it into a creative space for my real estate practice - LivingToronto.ca.



I began to hear rumours about the hotel's historic past, ghost stories and some fun noteworthy facts about its influential roots in the community.

During prohibition days, the hotel provided endless tales of scandal, illegal backroom meetings and even suspicious deaths. More change came in the 1920's when the hotel was purchased by a respected business woman named Alberta Shore. It has been said that she ran an "eccentric hotel" (wink, wink, say no more).

Today, great changes are coming to the Dominion Hotel. The new owners of the building are renovating and investing in its future. The bar is set to reopen as a neighbourhood hub yet again.

Unfortunately, in the 1960's most of the building was stripped of its glamour. The fourth floor ballroom was torn down, its windows sealed up, and a rooming house occupied the second and third floors. In this era, Corktown was in decline and the Dominion's rundown bar was still open and rowdy as ever. In fact, there has always been a bar occupying the main floor. Many Torontonians can remember when the most recent incarnation, 'Dominion on Queen' opened in 1998. It was a local favourite until it closed last year, and then this grand hotel was sold yet again.

Influential Torontonian Robert Davies built the Dominion Hotel in 1889 as a playground for the rich and famous. You could say that Robert Davies was the king of Corktown. He founded the Dominion Brewing Company, located down the block at Dominion Square. His fortune was large enough to purchase the Gooderham House on Sherbourne Street, The Don Valley Brickworks and Todmorden Paper Mill. It is said that he owned more than 140 taverns in the city. He also owned all of Thorncliffe Park, formally Thorncliffe Stable and Estate, where he trained and raced horses. He was definitely one of Toronto's wealthiest people in his time.

Today, great changes are coming to the Dominion Hotel. The new owners of the building are renovating and investing in its future. The bar is set to reopen as a neighbourhood hub yet again.

While Corktown continues to evolve, the rich history of buildings like the Dominion Hotel should not be forgotten. With the ownership changes at the Dominion, LivingToronto Real Estate moved to a larger space on Berkeley Street. I was sad to check out of our Dominion on Queen office but I continue to be obsessed with the stories about Robert Davies and the infamous Dominion Hotel.

When Davies built the hotel it had four floors, a grand ballroom, mansard roof and tower. I love that Robert Davies entertained wealthy socialites in the very space in which we now entertained our clients.

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# The Guilt Free Zone

By Dominic Harriott, King Street Realty

Guilt free food, really? Really. Welcome to Impact Kitchen, the new real food restaurant that opened this past October at 573 King St. East in Corktown. You'll find no overly processed, useless foods here - only nourishing, satisfying fare, food like it was meant to be. Stephanie Tucci, Impact's no nonsense executive chef, won't have it any other way; "We're taking it back to basics, not trying to reinvent the wheel.

Food should be simple and shouldn't be messed with, that's when it's best for you." And she should know as a Culinary Nutritionist, fitness specialist and grad of New York's famed Natural Gourmet Institute, not to mention Toronto's Institute of Holistic Nutrition.

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"...If I have to be here 17 hours a day, I will... to make sure that it (the menu) is to the standard and health quality that it should be."

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Impact Kitchen is a new concept restaurant for Toronto, based on one-stop shop healthy food eateries in New York that cater to everyone. Whether you're a meat eater, vegan or require a gluten free or paleo based diet (food consisting of chiefly meat, fish, vegetables and fruit and excluding dairy, grain and processed products - like the diet of early man), you'll be pleasantly surprised here.

The food is delicious, but not just tasty - it's seriously nutritious. In a world where the food system has evolved so negatively with additives and commercially based manipulation, this is a place where you can trust the food, the quality and how it's prepared.

All of the meats and dairy are locally sourced, antibiotic and hormone free. The animals the meats come from are all traceable and high welfare. Virtually everything on the menu is made in-house. Take the almond milk lattes at their coffee bar for example. You can get an almond milk latte almost anywhere in the city, but most are made with boxed almond milk and the laundry list of extra ingredients and additives that come with it. Here, the almond milk in your latte is made of simply almonds and water and is prepared fresh on site as is the cashew milk or the myriad of other ingredients and fresh juices that are made daily.



**CHEF TUCCI**

By now you may have heard the rumor about the beehives on the rooftop of the building. It's true; they're really there. Why? You guessed it - they make their own honey and even have plans for a full roof top garden next summer. As you can imagine, all of this requires an extraordinary amount of labor-intensive prep work, likely well beyond that found in a traditional restaurant's kitchen. For Stephanie, it's a labor of love and something in which she takes tremendous pride. She feels incredibly lucky to be able to realize her dream and combine her backgrounds in food and nutrition.

The menu at Impact Kitchen is a passionate expression of that dream, "...If I have to be here 17 hours a day, I will... to make sure that it (the menu) is to the standard and health quality that it should be." Stephanie's work ethic in the kitchen is not surprising. She's only 28 and is a Holistic Nutritionist, a Certified Nutritional Practitioner, and a personal trainer and was, at one time, a competitive fitness athlete. Her motivation stems not just from ambition but also from years of serious digestive health issues that she was able to overcome primarily through learning how to eat properly. In fact, Stephanie feels that diet is the single most important component for one's overall health. Naturally you need

to sleep and stay active, but what you consume on a daily basis is the difference between thriving and languishing. It is on this philosophy that the Impact Kitchen menu is based.

Typically restaurants want you to enjoy your meal with the hopes you'll come back, maybe even tell a friend. Impact Kitchen wants you to enjoy your meal but also understand what you're eating. The staff is trained to answer questions about ingredients, preparation, process and origin. You can ask your server where your meat was butchered or how the muffins are prepared to make them healthier; you can even have the chef come to your table for a more in depth explanation. The restaurant is looking to further reach out to the community, to spread their healthy eating gospel, with plans for nutritional seminars and cooking classes.

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By now you may have heard the rumor about the beehives on the rooftop of the building. It's true; they're really there.

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They must be doing something right, people are responding. The restaurant is almost always full and often sells out before closing time. It might be that when you enter Impact Kitchen, you're entering a kind of culinary time machine that can take you back to the way food used to taste when you were a child, maybe even to the tastes of early man and then, just as easily, forward to innovative new dishes and flavors you've never experienced. Or, and this is the more likely option, it might be that Impact Kitchen is a guilt free zone.

A transparent place with no mysteries, where the food is real, delicious and good for you. A place, where even the desserts are made with healthier coconut sugar (low in fructose). A place, where you and your conscience can enjoy a meal.

# POPPED

THE GOOD AND THE BAD



Have you seen the renewed little park on Bright Street? Whoa! So cool! Just a small little spot, yet is an awesome

new playground for the wee ones of Corktown. Kudos to Alex & the rest of the CRBA's Public Realm Committee for getting the park upgrades underway. And to Councillor Pam & her team for following through and making this happen. Can't wait to see the rest of the Corktown parks brought up to the same standards. Which one's next?!



It is pretty tough to avoid the issues of homelessness and poverty in our city when we come across shanties

emerging under the Queen St. bridge and in the bushes near the Richmond / Eastern overpasses. It makes our hearts ache with sadness. It's great to learn that the city has a "Parks Ambassador" to address issues related to homelessness and public spaces. He is working to help the more visible campers to find better, safer accommodations. But what about all the other people seeking refuge in more hidden spots?



Have you heard the rumours? Seen some signs? King St. is getting some Green P parking spots! We don't think

it'll be done by the time you read this but very soon there will be some metered parking under the underpasses around King and Sumach. With the new parking will come some new landscaping and lighting, which means these spaces will look much better than they do presently. And will be less scary and safer for pedestrians. What do you think - can we start planning for a farmer's market next year in the King & Sumach Green P lot?



Is crime getting worse or is it just more visible in contrast to the shiny nice new bits of Corktown? We're sure

there aren't more hookers along Shuter St. than a few years ago but we do notice them more. And you know how much we love Underpass Park. But we've been feeling a bit creeped out lately by the drug deals going down and the peeps hanging out sharing a toke. Even on the west side near the kiddie play areas! Come on, people! At least try to be discreet about your drugs and keep them away from the little kids.

# Policing Our Neighbourhood

By Joe Harmatiuk, 51 Division Community Police Liaison Committee representative

Located in Corktown, Toronto Police Services (TPS) 51 Division, polices the area from Bloor Street to the shoreline and from the Don River to Yonge Street. It's located at the northeast corner of Parliament and Front Street East in a very cool heritage building. The 51 Division HQ is in the converted Consumers Gas Station A, which was originally completed in 1898. Its neighbours include the heritage buildings Little Trinity Anglican Church and the Enoch Turner School House.



Visit 51 Division to see the small museum in the lobby, especially of interest to fans of the TV show Murdoch Mysteries, or to use the BikeShare station out front.

Each division of the TPS, including Traffic Services, has a community representative committee. Their mandate is to bring together different members of the community to help identify, prioritize, and problem solve local policing issues. These committees also provide advice and assistance to the local Unit Commander to build a safe and secure community in the short and long term.

The 51 Division Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) is made up of community volunteers and police service representatives from every area of the division. Some of the community groups that send representatives to the CPLC are the Garden District, Church Wellesley, St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, Regent Park, and Corktown. Plus there are reps from Toronto Parks and Toronto Public Housing. The CPLC meets monthly for updates, to give feedback to and ask questions of the Division commanders.

You probably won't think of contacting the police until you need them, but

should remember they are a part of your community. In addition to major crimes, where we hope you would definitely let the police know, you can file reports for things like property or vehicle damage under \$5,000, lost property or theft from a vehicle.

Here are some ways to contact your local police:

- » If there is an emergency situation, call 911.
- » The Non-Emergency number is 416-808-2222. Why not put that in your phone right now? There's probably

been a few times you think you should contact the Police and know it's not an emergency call, so you don't call.

- » Contact Toronto Police Service online at [www.torontopolice.on.ca](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca). The website has blogs, info on how to file a report and even maps of the latest major crimes. Happily, Corktown has fairly low incidents of major crime compared to other parts of downtown Toronto.
- » The Toronto Police Service has free apps in the Apple App store and in Google Play. Look for the Police Service Mobile app. The apps and website allow you to report general non-emergency issues and to receive the latest updates from the Toronto Police Service.
- » An important issue in Corktown is traffic and you can file an Online Driving complaint. This can be either for a specific incident or a neighbourhood issue and concern.
- » Of course you can also go to 51 Division and fill the information in there, but doing it online can be faster and more accurate.

It's important to get this information to the police if you need a concern addressed. I hope this intro into ways to contact the Police Service and ways 51 Division is looking out for Corktown is useful to you.



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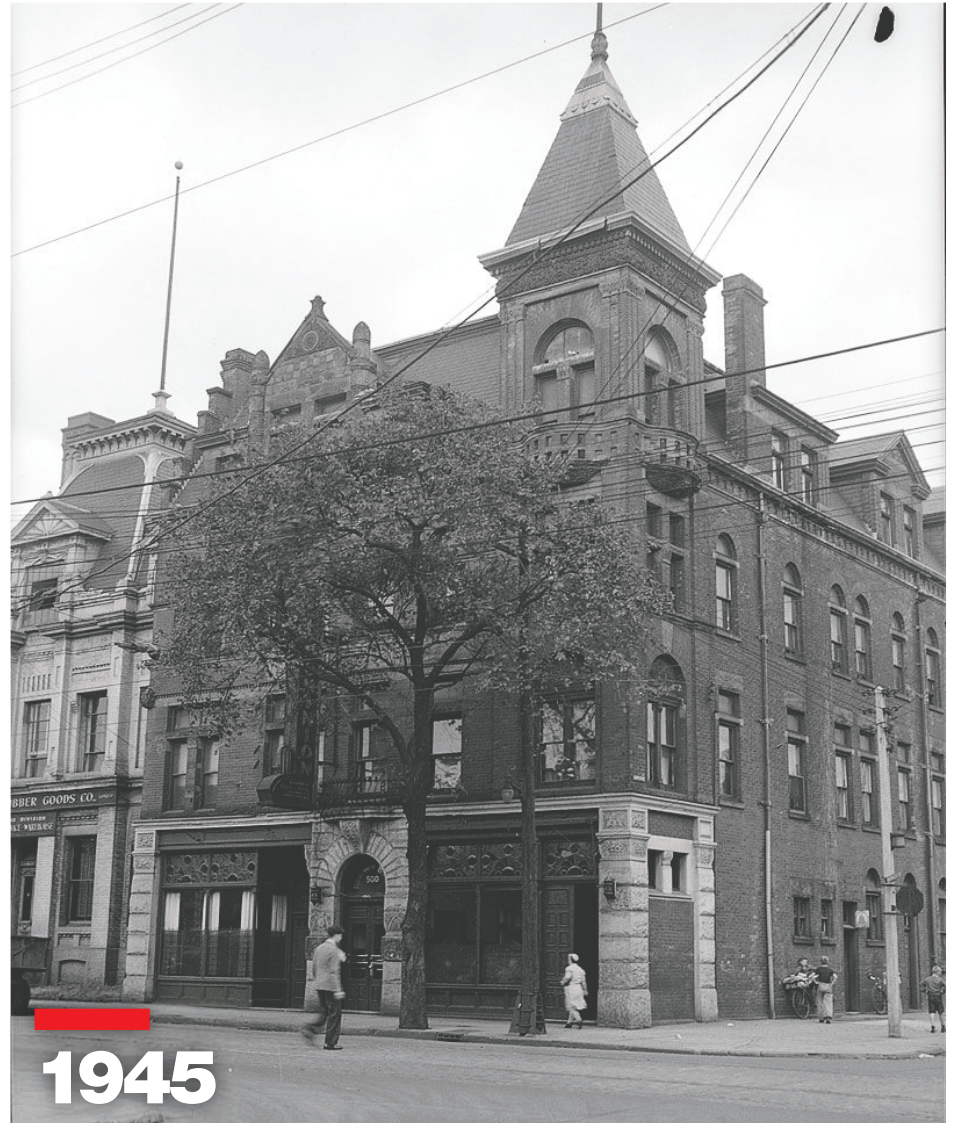
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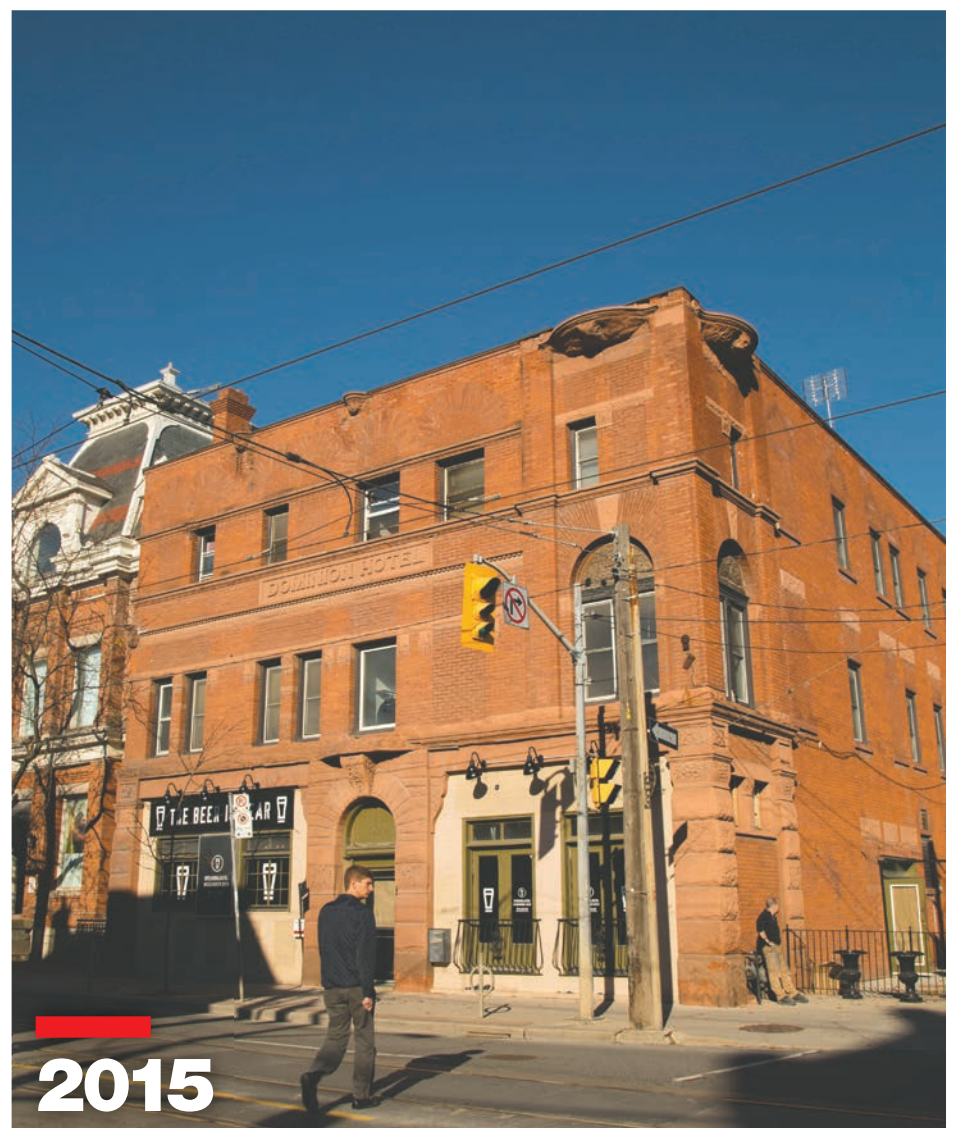
# Then & Now

**DOMINION HOTEL - QUEEN ST. AND SUMACH ST.**

by Michele Cummings



1945



2015

# Community Report Card

By James Caldwell

Welcome to the inaugural Corktown 'Community Report Card', an attempt to honourably score Corktown's qualities for 2015. There is a long list of amenities and services that contribute to the flavour of Corktown. Think about health, childcare, employment, safety, housing and education. Or how about friendliness, fitness and parks. Where does our community excel? Where are there deficiencies? Let's see how our community scores.

While we have a plethora of organizations addressing the needs of Corktowners we have not yet had one source of information that looks at all our needs in one place. With so many sources and voices it is sometimes difficult to visualize a complete picture.

Adding to this challenge of accurately assessing the state of our neighbourhood is the reality that Corktown will experience tremendous change and growth in the next few years with many new services to come, greenspaces and parks to be opened which will lead to the addition of many new residents and businesses.

Nevertheless with development at a furious pace (the Distillery District and now the West Don Lands), in

many ways Corktown feels like a community divided into thirds. The result is a sometimes fractured base of community perspectives, needs and wants. This assessment will attempt to benchmark the state of our community so that we can focus plans to address issues based on a more comprehensive outlook.

Of course any sort of grade will undoubtedly be contentious due to individual needs or personal community issues. And with everything happening right now in Corktown, we know we will see a great improvement come next year. But for this year, 2015, this is how I grade the amenities and services that currently exist and are running, not those that are coming soon or are due to open in the future.

## TRANSPORTATION

Cycling	D	With few dedicated bike lanes in our community except for on Shuter, River and Cherry traveling by bike is worrisome. Maybe that is why we only have 2 Bike Share stations in our community. Admittedly with the addition of the Richmond and Adelaide separated bike lanes (which stop at Parliament), Corktowners can now more easily get into the city. However all of the streetcar tracks also make cycling a challenge. Best to stick to the trails and avoid the roads.
Driving	B	Queen, King, Eastern and Parliament are all very busy roads. Come rush hour they are packed but at least keep moving slowly.
Public Transportation	B-	Lots of streetcars but you're lucky to squeeze on when the King car gets to Corktown. There's a new line along Cherry St. but it won't open until 2016 or '17. Also, why does the TTC use Parliament as a parking lot for its streetcars? We don't see the TTC using the road as a parking lot anywhere else.
Walking	B	Overall OK, though there are some problematic areas like crossing Richmond at Power as you take your dog to the park. How fast can you run? And it doesn't feel safe as you walk by Annie's, The Good Sheppard, or the methadone clinic.

## SAFETY

Personal Crime	C	Depending on your area of Corktown this grade is vastly different. For instance murders have occurred yearly in the northwest part of Corktown (Trefann area). We also still have a problem with prostitution on Shuter.
Property Crime	B	There are lots of petty thefts in Corktown south (Distillery area). At least auto theft and B&Es are way down from previous years.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Housing / Social Services	A	For an area the size of Corktown we have ample social housing and services, certainly more than compared to the vast majority of other communities in the city.
Parks	C	Aside from Corktown Common – which is an absolute gem and one of the finest parks in the City and Underpass Park – our parks are in a state of need and require much work and reintegration into the community. The good news is that this process is well under way (the Bright St. parkette is already done) and by this time next year we are sure the grade will be much higher.
Schools	B-	The whole of Corktown contains only one elementary school, St. Paul Catholic School, (which many residents' children would not attend) and Inglenook Community High School, which is one of the TDSB's alternative schools and housed in the oldest continually operating school building in Toronto. But there are 2 other schools within walking distance outside our community, the fully renovated Nelson Mandela Park Public School is just across Shuter Street in Regent Park and to the south there is Market Lane Junior and Senior Public School on the Esplanade
Sidewalks and Roads	B	Except for Shuter at our very north end, most Corktown roads are well paved and the sidewalks clear of obstacles. Problems do however occur on Shuter; with all of the Regent Park construction the roadway is almost never swept properly and is muddy for most of the year. Maybe that doesn't matter though as the road has needed to be repaved for a few years now.
Streetscaping	F	Many communities depend on a BIA for visually defining their neighbourhood and bettering its appearance. Corktown is shamefully the only downtown community in Toronto not to brand itself cohesively. Corktown lacks consistency. We need to replace bars on windows and garage doors on storefronts with the more pleasant planters, signposts and other prideful things to make us feel we exist as Corktowners. Our one exception to dismal streetscaping is the 'Street Art'.

## ENGAGEMENT

Business Engagement	F	The Historic Queen St. BIA was killed or left dormant years ago and now for all practicality doesn't exist. There is no BIA for Corktown and, with the exception of one or two business owners who are active in the CRBA, the local businesses are not engaged in the community.
Civic Engagement	D	There are more than a few people in our community that work overtime to try and make Corktown a better place. Unfortunately we don't have enough volunteers. Lots of ideas from residents and businesses but not enough elbow grease. (Anyone who would like to get involved... well you can, easily... please come to the next Corktown public meeting or email info@corktown.ca and volunteer for a committee.)

Political representation	C	When it comes to development of certain areas within Corktown the political means seem to be there but Corktown still requires much needed help in sorting out our many problems and concerns.
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**AMENITIES**

Business Services	C	If you need something catered, or printed, if you need a photographer, or if you need something for your home including artwork, you are in luck! Corktown does it well. But wouldn't it be nice to have fewer auto dealers and empty storefronts?
Grocery Stores & Markets	F	Not a single supermarket in our community nor a farmer's market. A farmers market on Queen Street would be well received either on the Catholic School grounds or the parking lot at the Dominion Building.
Pets & Pet Care	B	It seems as though Corktown is doing well when it comes to animal hospitals/care and dog parks.
Restaurants	B	Many independent coffee houses, a beautiful dessert place and a few really good restaurants in our community. Outside of the neighbourhood they may not be well known, but Corktowners like them just fine.

**HEALTH**

Fitness	D	There are a few fitness places in our community but surely not enough to interest the vast majority of residents. At least the ones we do have are very good. This situation will change dramatically when the YMCA opens its doors.
Health Services	C+	This has improved greatly in the last couple of years and now our community even has a family care clinic on King.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Employment	C	Not really a lot of places to gain employment in our community but there are a few employment agencies.
Events	B	There are but a few people that organize them, and when they happen the community events are fantastic. Our community volunteers do a superb job.
Friendliness	B	Depends on where you are walking and in what part of Corktown you are, but generally Corktowners are friendly and helpful. Even if there are some bad apples that wish to spoil your day they are not as active as they used to be.
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Room for improvement!</b>

So how did Corktown do? Not bad enough to leave, not good enough to crow? There is much room for improvement. But if you would like to see a better grade next year get involved with your neighbourhood, join the CRBA (www.corktown.ca), volunteer on a committee,

and get to know your neighbours. Together, we will make it better. Let me know your assessment, join the conversation by emailing info@corktown.ca or on the CorktownTO Facebook page.

# A sneak peak at our new YMCA

By: Sarah Beldick, General Manager, Cooper Koo Family Cherry Street YMCA

The end of one major Toronto event, the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, makes way for another – opening the doors to the Cooper Koo Family Cherry Street YMCA.



Set to open in spring 2016, the new 82,000 sq. ft. Centre of Community will offer an array of programs to the community including Health & Fitness, Day Camps and Community Programs.

Why the wait? Developers are converting the Pan Am Athletes' Village into the Canary District – an exciting new part of the dynamic West Don Land's community. The new YMCA will be in lock-step with the other buildings and legacy partners as adaptations made to the sites for the Games are removed, final designs and inspections are completed, and certificates are granted. This all takes time.

The main conversion steps for the YMCA will be to remove extra walls and offices which served administrative functions during the Games. Spaces need to be outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment, furniture, signage, and design elements will be installed as the Centre is tailored to meet the needs of the community.

Once t's have been crossed and i's dotted, the YMCA plans to open for tours and registration in mid-May, with opening festivities set for a few weeks after. The official launch of programming is scheduled for the end of May as well. Once the new Cooper Koo Family Cherry Street YMCA is ready, you can expect:

- » an indoor running track and functional training pieces.
- » The three program studios will be outfitted to accommodate adult fitness classes as well as children's programs like dance and martial arts.
- » Both the 25-meter four-lane pool and the training pool, with its moveable floor, will open for swimming lessons, aquafitness and family swim time.
- » The 2-quad gymnasium (can be split into two separate spaces) will be used for recreational sports programs for all ages, aerobic fitness classes, family gym time, and more.
- » The Child & Family Program wing will include the installation of a 2-storey climbing structure and family play space.
- » The teen zone will work with the local community to engage youth from the neighbourhood.
- » The 30,000-square-foot green roof will offer a variety of healthy activities for YMCA members and the community.

In the meantime while you're counting the days until spring 2016 (we are too!) be sure stay in touch and continue to provide feedback about centre developments. Consider getting involved as a volunteer and stay tuned for upcoming employment opportunities.

To stay on top of it all, sign up for updates at ymcagta.org/torontocherry



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# Fighting for Our NE Corner's Future

By Kara Isert

If you're like most of us, you hear about City planning initiatives and developmental applications and Ontario Municipal Board hearings and your eyes glaze over. We get notices in the mail and are yawning by the second paragraph because of the dull legalese.

Is this a tactic used by the City and developers to keep us unengaged?

Whether it is on purpose or not, behind recent dull Notices is info about changes that will affect what gets built here for the next 20 years at least.

Here is what you need to know about the City's Queen-River Secondary Plan, related development proposals and its Appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

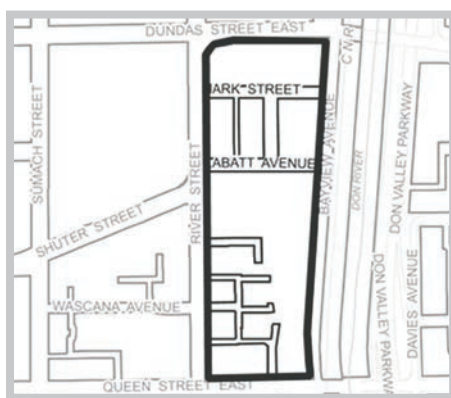
## Key Facts About the Queen River Secondary Plan

After a couple years of planning, including public consultations and input, the City passed the Queen-River Secondary Plan on April 2, 2015 covering the area south of Dundas St., north of Queen St. between River St. and Bayview Ave.

A Secondary Plan is a more detailed version of the Official Plan and it determines what developments can happen in the area. This has huge impacts for property values and livability of an area depending on what the Plan sets out.

## Current Situation

Here is a drawing of the Queen-River area and its immediate surroundings.



Despite being a small area, it is very diverse. The City's background report describes it: "The Queen-River area is comprised of privately owned properties containing a mix of commercial, light industrial, institutional and stable residential uses on both small and large lots. Much of the area is developed and contains a variety of building forms including semi-detached houses, townhouses, automobile dealerships and low-scale office buildings."

## Queen-River Secondary Plan

Essentially, the Queen-River Secondary Plan has subdivided the area into 5 areas, as shown in 'Diagram A'.

The goals of the plan are to allow for future development while ensuring it "respects and reinforces" the character of the area. Also, the existing residential areas should continue to have access to skyview, light and privacy.

This recent satellite picture 'Diagram B' from Google maps (looking south) shows the current buildings in the area and nearby as well as noting the potential development areas A, B, C and D.

## Neighbourhood Areas

Of the two neighbourhood zones, the southern area has little potential for change in the near term. The northern neighbourhood zone along River St. has some retail and office / light industrial use mixed in with older row houses. If areas A, B and D are developed to their full potential, along with the new Regent Park buildings planned for River St. between Shuter and Dundas, the northern neighbourhood area will be completed surrounded by towers.

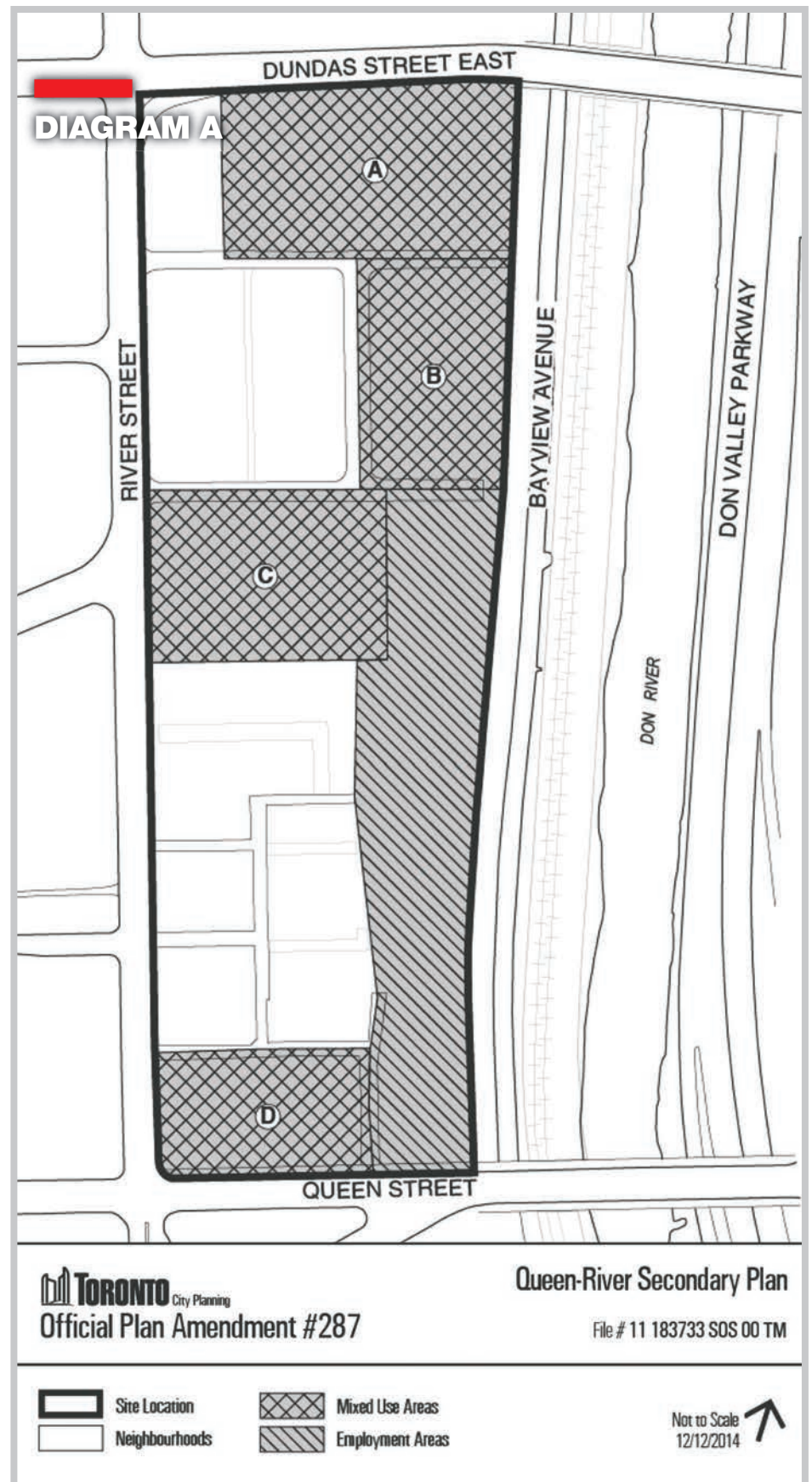
## Development Areas

The areas marked A through D are seen as ripe for development. For each, the Secondary Plan permits future development to have one tall building with a base building and tower. The towers for areas A, B and C would have maximum heights of 88 metres (a little under 30 storeys) and Area D (Toronto Humane Society site) would be permitted a tower of 47 meters (about 15 or 16 storeys).

The Secondary Plan also details setbacks from existing developments or from Bayview. It also mandates that pedestrian connections be improved by making a pedestrian connection from Dundas St. to Carfrae Lane and by adding viewpoints over the Don River at the eastern ends of Labatt and Mark Streets.

## Developments Already Proposed for the Queen-River Area

Developers have submitted proposals for Areas B and C of the Queen-River area and neither development complies with the Queen-River Secondary Plan.



## Area B proposal – 1-25 Defries St.

Instead of one tower up to 88-metres tall as set out in the Secondary Plan, a developer has proposed two residential towers with 5-storey tall townhouses facing Defries Street. The two towers would be placed behind the townhouses and would be linked by an auto showroom facing the Don Valley. The

towers would have heights of 100 m and 126 m (31 and 29 storeys).

## Area C proposal – 7 Labatt / 77 River St.

A similar scale proposal has been made for the site at the corner of Shuter and River Streets, where the Salvation Army is located. This site is on the north border of a new townhouse



development and the developer has proposed two point towers, a 26-storey tower along River Street and a 34-storey tower along Labatt Avenue. This includes a shared 7-storey base building that would include retail / commercial space as well as a new home for the Salvation Army.

This diagram, 'Diagram C' adapted from Urban Toronto shows all the planned, proposed and potential developments for the section from Dundas to Shuter Streets, including the buildings planned for the west side of Shuter as part of the Regent Park regeneration.

Not pictured is a 20-storey tower at Queen and River, which is the potential set out in the Secondary Plan for area D, the Toronto Humane Society site.

**The Appeal to the OMB**

The Queen-River Secondary Plan has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by several developers and property owners from the area. To make sure community interests are represented, some homeowners groups and the Corktown Residents & Business Association have entered the dispute.

In October, the OMB held a preliminary hearing about the Queen-River Secondary Plan and its appeals. Several parties have been identified as having issues that should be addressed. Another pre-hearing has been scheduled for March 2016. In the meantime, the OMB will be facilitating mediation between the City and each of the other parties to try to settle some of the issues.

Here is a summary of the various parties and their issues with the Queen-River Secondary Plan, segmented by plan area:

**Area A – appealed by Mercedes-Benz**

Appeal issues: No immediate plans for development so the appeal by Mercedes, who owns this property, is based on the potential for future developments. Mercedes wants fewer restrictions on tower height, setbacks, placement and number of towers. Also, it wants to be able to continue with existing use (parking for their cars) AND provide for development in the future.

**Area B – appealed by the developer for 1-25 DeFries**

Appeal issues: The Secondary Plan limits area B to one tall building, 88m height, setbacks from other developments and from the top of the bank above Bayview. The developer would like 2 towers of room and 126 m and to build to the edge of the bank.

**Area C – appealed by the developer for 77 Labatt and the Salvation Army (77 River)**

Appeal issues: The Secondary Plan limits area C to one tall building, 88m height, setbacks from other developments and from the top of the bank above Bayview. The developer would like 2 towers and a larger base building and to build closer to the townhouses to the south than is permitted by the Plan.

**Area D – no appeals directly about this site (Humane Society)**

**Unlabelled Area along Bayview – appealed by Audi**

Audi is located at 300 Bayview and is concerned that the Secondary Plan's desire to add a pedestrian connection from Labatt St. to Bayview could result in some of the Audi property being expropriated. Also, similarly to Mercedes, Audi is appealing a policy that would not allow for additional surface parking lots.

**Neighbourhood area between Dundas and Shuter Streets – appealed by property owners**

Owners of smaller properties at 41-43 River St. and at 2-4 Labatt St. would like to redevelop properties in this "stable existing neighbourhood" area beyond what is permitted by the Secondary Plan.

**Entire Plan Area – appealed by a local resident**

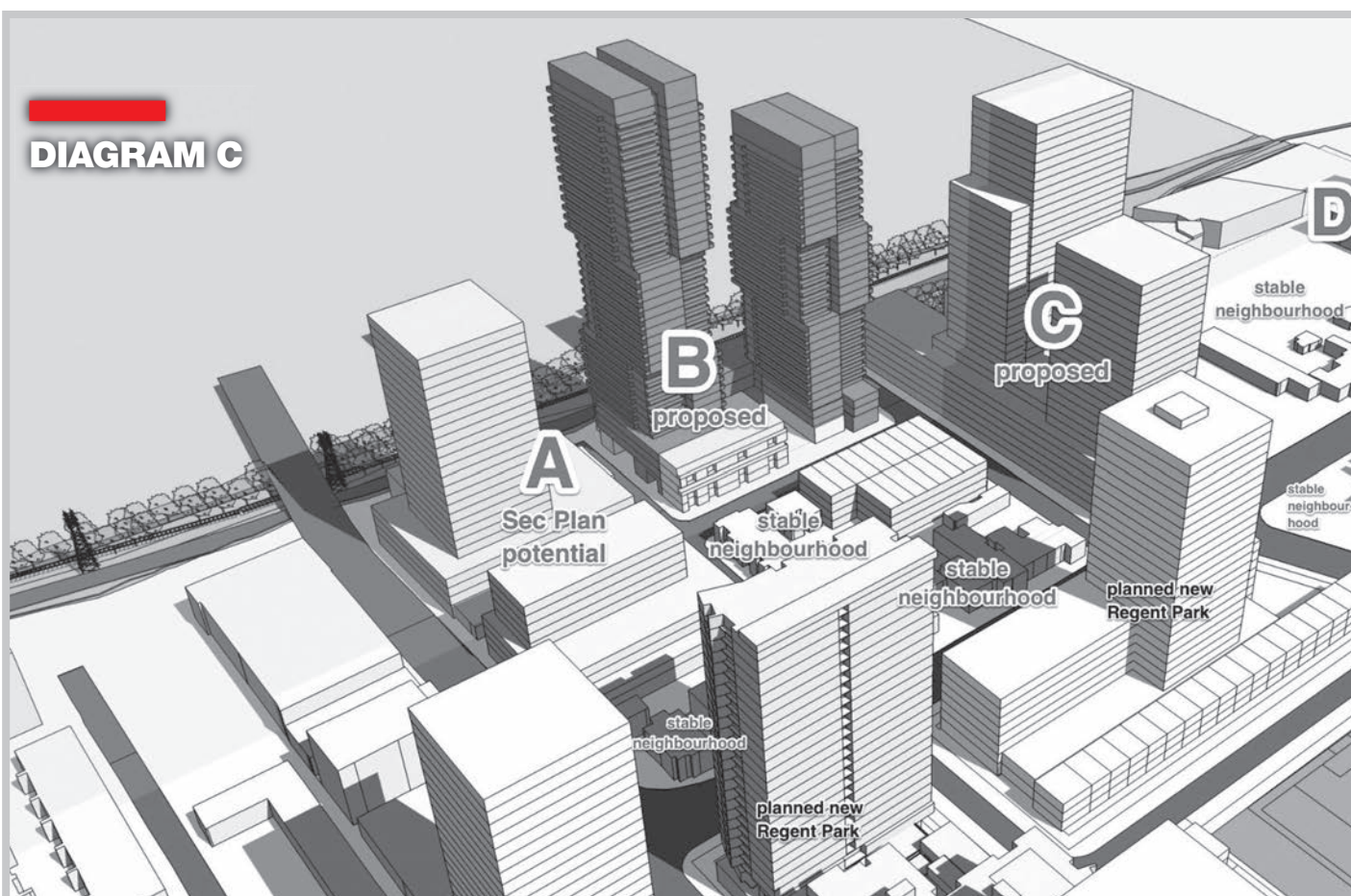
A resident of the Vinegar Lofts (19 River St.) appealed the Secondary Plan on the basis that the City has not done enough analysis on the impact of the development permitted by the Secondary Plan, the plan isn't compatible with the existing community, and it does not provide enough direction to ensure that what is proposed will be achieved.

In addition to the formal appeals filed to the OMB, several other groups have come forward to participate in mediation and the eventual hearing to finalize the Queen-River Secondary Plan including:

- » The Corktown Residents & Business Association, representing the community at large.
- » Representatives for homeowner groups within the Plan area including the Vinegar Lofts, Corktown Mews and Malthouse Towns.
- » The Toronto Region Conservation Authority due to the area's proximity to the Don River.

The community groups are involved to make sure that the Secondary Plan's goals of development while protecting and enhancing the current community are achieved. Also, that streetscaping, walkability, community amenities, traffic and other issues are addressed. Finally, these groups want the Secondary Plan to be enforceable so that future developments comply with it.

Stay tuned. Look for updates on the Queen-River Secondary Plan on www.Corktown.ca, in the weekly email newsletters and at the monthly community meetings (first Tuesday of each month – see Corktown.ca for details).



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