

THE CORKTOWN NEWS

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Short History of the West Don Lands

By: Cynthia Wilkey, Co-Chair, West Don Lands Committee, Past Director - CRBA

Just look at what has been created so far in the 80 acre West Don Lands site:

- » Corktown Common
- » Underpass Park
- » River City
- » the newly opened Canary District
- » George Brown College Student Residence
- » Cooper Koo YMCA
- » Affordable rental housing operated by Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Fred Victor and Wigwamen
- » the Front Street promenade
- » public art installations and
- » the new 514 streetcar line

It is astonishing to recall that, in 1997, the Province almost made the monumental mistake of selling half of the WDL to a harness racing consortium!

That move, justified by the short-term desire to raise money for provincial coffers during a time of economic downturn, would have deprived Toronto and Corktown of an internationally recognized example of master planning and brownfields revitalization.

The journey started in 1988, when Premier David Peterson and Mayor Art



A WHOLE NEW VIEW OF TORONTO

photos courtesy: Spencer Wynn

Eggleton announced the expropriation of 80 acres of mainly derelict land for the development of a new mixed-use neighbourhood. The project was given the name Ataratiri and planning began, only to be cancelled in 1993 because of environmental cleanup costs, the Don

River floodplain, and a steep recession-driven drop in real estate prices.

In 1995, the lands passed to the Province and in 1996 were declared surplus and put on the market. When news leaked out in 1997 about a potential sale for

a harness racing and video lottery facility, it galvanized Corktown and its neighbours. At the CRBA's initiative, a coalition of community-based resident, business, environmental, heritage and social service organizations

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HISTORY OF THE WEST DON LANDS CONTINUED

came together as the West Don Lands Committee (WDLC) to fight the development. Fortunately, the harness racing proposal fell off the table, but the lands stayed on the market.

While the WDLC was initially reactive, it quickly became proactive. The member organizations were united in wanting to see positive development in the WDL and took on the challenge of building consensus that it had more potential than a race track type use. In 1999, the WDLC hosted a 3-day community planning workshop that brought together community members, developers, design professionals, environmentalists, heritage experts,

agency representatives and political representatives. The workshop produced a strong endorsement for the creation of a sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income development that would knit the WDL back into the surrounding communities. Included in the vision was the creation of a regional park and better connections to the Don River. The consensus also identified the need for the public sector to take responsibility for initiating flood protection and environmental management strategies, which were seen as the biggest obstacles to revitalization.

The timing was auspicious, David Crombie's Waterfront Regeneration Trust had recently completed a report proposing new and less costly strategies

for dealing with flood protection and soil remediation. Toronto was bidding for the 2008 Olympics and identified the WDL as a potential site for a media village, prompting the Province to take the lands off the market. Most importantly, to support the Olympic Bid, the "three amigos" Jean Chretien, Mike Harris and Mel Lastman announced the creation of a Waterfront Task Force led by Robert Fung, which was asked to develop a business case for a waterfront development agency.

Although the Olympic bid was not successful, The Fung report led to the creation of Waterfront Toronto – the tripartite agency with a 20-year mandate to revitalize Toronto's waterfront. The West Don Lands Committee had been one of the first groups to present to the Fung Task Force and when Waterfront Toronto was created, development of the WDL and flood protection of the mouth of the Don River became priority projects.

This ended the uncertainty about the West Don Lands future. Waterfront Toronto launched into intensive consultations to develop the award winning precinct plan for the WDL. The Toronto & Region Conservation Authority was tasked with developing a flood protection strategy. Urban design



LOOKING UP

photos courtesy: Spencer Wynn

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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
email: info@corktown.ca
Facebook: CorktownTO
Twitter: @CorktownTO

NEXT CRBA MEETINGS

July & August no meetings
Join your neighbours at 7PM on the first Tuesday of most months to find out what's happening.

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

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guidelines, a public realm plan, a public art strategy and consultations for the design of Corktown Common and Underpass Park followed over the next few years. More information is available at www.waterfronttoronto.ca

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The Corktown community has every reason to be proud of what has been achieved in the West Don Lands. The reality has met and exceeded the vision identified by the community in 1999.

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Thanks to the funds committed by three orders of government, Waterfront Toronto was able to use a strategy of leading the revitalization process through investment in the public realm. This included building the flood protection landform that has taken the WDL (and Toronto's financial centre) out of the floodplain of the Don River. It also included designing and funding the parks, streets, public spaces and transit that have given the WDL its particular character.

The economic crisis of 2008 intervened just as Waterfront Toronto's strategy was shifting from the public realm to private sector investment. Aside from the first sale to Urban Capital, builder of the River City project along Lower River Street, the global crisis brought the private sector strategy to a halt.

When the possibility of hosting the 2015 Pan/Parapan Am Games emerged, it had strong support from the West Don Lands Committee. An Athletes' Village was a good fit with the WDL precinct plan and offered the opportunity to accelerate development while the market was stalled. Working within Waterfront Toronto's precinct plan and development guidelines, Infrastructure Ontario oversaw a procurement process, won by the DundeeKilmer partnership, that built the Village using some of Canada's top architects. The George Brown College residence, YMCA and the two affordable rental housing buildings are a direct legacy of the Games.

The Corktown community has every reason to be proud of what has been achieved in the West Don Lands. The reality has met and exceeded the vision identified by the community in 1999. The persistent and informed work of the community has helped to make that vision a reality. ©

Message to the residents of the West Don Lands

By Pam McConnell, Deputy Mayor and City Councillor, Ward 28

I am pleased to join with the rest of your Corktown neighbours to welcome you to Toronto's newest neighbourhood.

As I attended the planting of the 41 commemorative trees on the Front Street Promenade before the start of the Pan Am Games, I experienced a sense of wonder at how much this area had transformed. Even after working for years on the development of this neighbourhood, I still felt I had been transported to a completely new place.

The planning behind this community was visionary. Sustainable green buildings, excellence in architecture, a network of intimate streets with high quality finishes, dynamic public art,

community facilities, and the incredible centrepiece of Corktown Common are the framework for a vibrant neighbourhood.

The results were never preordained. It was the strong advocacy of the communities living around what were then orphaned lands that fended off uses such as a racetrack and supported the leadership of Waterfront Toronto to complete a plan that arose from the community.

Along with beautiful spaces, this neighbourhood was planned to be inclusive of the diversity of our city. I am proud that our communities have supported the affordable housing programs that are imbedded in this revitalization. In my role as the Mayor's lead for the City Poverty Reduction

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Coffee Shop Tour

By Secret Coffee Tasters

Corktown may be short on grocery stores but if you are a coffee lover, this is the neighbourhood for you! There are several independent coffee shops plus a number of places that sell coffee in addition to their other goods. We decided to do a little neighbourhood tour so we could give you the straight goods on five of the indies. We were happy to confirm that most are excellent; all have something redeeming. Here they are in alphabetical order. Grab a cup of java and enjoy...



Odin Hus Café & Bar – 514 King St E (near River)

First Impressions	This is a beautiful space. Very minimal, uncluttered and bright. Scandinavian style, as you might expect from the name. The coffee bar, furniture, murals on the walls, ceiling are all well done. They have actually appeared in interior design magazines and have won an international architecture award.
How's the coffee?	Brewed – very tasty, chocolate, strong, smooth Cappuccino – a work of art, beautiful looking, great flavour, could have been a bit hotter
Other drinks & snacks?	Odin has sandwiches, pastries and other little bites that are all made in house. Not cheap, but delicious. Also an assortment of beverages including juices, teas AND craft beer and wine!
Who comes here?	It's a sophisticated crowd; when we visited, there were a lot of people at the tables working.
Other notables	Free wifi, accessible, very supportive of the CRBA Open at 7am weekdays, 8am weekends. Closes 6pm Sun., Mon., Tues. Closes at 10pm Wed. through Sat.
TL;DR	Want to sit and relax with a delicious coffee or snack? This is the place for you. Can't drink coffee after 2pm? Stop in for Happy Hour!

Redline Coffee & Espresso Bar – 354 Queen St E (near Parliament)

First Impressions	Cluttered though welcoming. There are a few 'well loved' armchairs at the front and wooden chairs and tables at the back. Interesting local art is displayed and changes up frequently. Sit at the bar and watch the streetcars roll by.
How's the coffee?	Americano – nice and strong and fresh Cappuccino – nicely made, very good with lovely latte art.
Other drinks & snacks?	Sandwiches and baked goods are made in house and cold drinks are in the cooler.
Who comes here?	A mix of people – residents and workers from nearby businesses. Redline is welcoming to the whole neighbourhood, in all its diversity!
Other notables	Free wifi, patio out back that is for the adventurous (tiny, quirky), washrooms are in basement & not accessible. Low prices (but a bit higher than the menu board). Open 7:30am – 5:30pm weekdays, 8am – 5pm weekends
TL;DR	A friendly space on a rugged strip of Queen St. with very good coffee.

Savoury Grounds – 481 Queen St E (at Sumach)

First Impressions	Cozy, rustic, comfortable space. Local art is displayed
How's the coffee?	Brewed - acidic, not our fave, would go for Americano next time Cappuccino - not overly strong and very foamy (vs. creamy)
Other drinks & snacks?	Sandwiches and baked goods as well as a selection of teas and cold drinks. Sell a wide range of coffee beans to take home, roasted at another Savoury Grounds location.
Who comes here?	Seems to be people from the businesses close by and people catching the streetcar – the Queen car stop is right out front! Mostly take out when we were there.
Other notables	Free wifi, washrooms are accessible (although they had no sign on the door). There is a small step at the entrance. Open 7am – 5pm weekdays, 8am – 4pm Sat. & 9am-3pm Sun.
TL;DR	Hopping on to the streetcar and need a coffee to go? This is the place for you.

Sumach Espresso – 118 Sumach Street (at Shuter)

First Impressions	Wood and metal fixtures give a rustic and cozy feel. Nice tile on the wall and murals of neighbourhood are lovely. Decorated for the season. A choice of low and high tables for seating.
How's the coffee?	Brewed – strong, hot, tasty Cappuccino – smooth, creamy and strong with lovely latte art
Other drinks & snacks?	Delicious looking cookies, cakes, croissants that are not made on site. Large selection of cold drinks.
Who comes here?	A bit out of the way so mostly filled with people from the immediate neighbourhood including workers from Regent Park.
Other notables	Free wifi, fully accessible, great patio Open 7am – 5pm weekdays, 8am – 5pm weekends
TL;DR	A much needed addition to this corner of Corktown. A great space and delicious coffee.

Tandem Coffee – 368 King St E (near Trinity St.)

First Impressions	An eclectic decor. Beautiful green wall at the back, woven rugs on the wall, wooden tables and chairs and an array of antiques for sale. Feels very old school.
How's the coffee?	Brewed – (1) – earthy, bitter, strong. (2) – smoother and sweet. Cappuccino – beautiful and smooth, perfect combination of milk and espresso
Other drinks & snacks?	Baked treats that are not made on site and little sandwiches. Small and interesting selection of non-coffee drinks that change with the season.
Who comes here?	Local businesses and neighbourhood folks. The owners are super friendly and know almost everyone by name!
Other notables	Features a roster of local roasters. No wifi, not accessible (step at door, washrooms downstairs), cash only. Open 7am-6pm weekdays, 8am-5pm weekends
TL;DR	In cappuccino and friendliness they win!

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Playing Tourist at Home

By Michele Cummings

I spent a few years living in Paris and New York City and many of our friends and family came to visit. I went to every famous tourist attraction going and many more hidden gems. We have moved back to Toronto, our home, and like many others who live in a city for a long time, I have stopped exploring.

This must now end! Time to embark on a summer of discovery. First stop, the Distillery District, the Segway tour will add a new dimension to the experience.

There were several Segway tours to choose from and we decided on the tour that included a stop at the chocolate store Soma and beer tasting at Mill Street Brewery. It turned out to be a freezing cold April afternoon so we bundled up and headed down. After signing a waiver, getting our helmets, and having a brief lesson on riding segways we were ready to go. Our first stop was in the corner just to the right of the Voice school entrance. Our history lesson began.

In 1831 James Worts emigrated to Canada with his eldest son, bought a piece of land, built a windmill and started his new milling business. The windmill was erected on the shores of Lake Ontario, which was the very spot that we were standing. The outline of the windmill could be seen by the pattern of the bricks underfoot. James was joined a year later by his brother-in-law William Gooderham and 54 of their family members and servants. Several of these "family members" were actually children who were orphaned on the boat whom William adopted. Children could work several hours a day so this increased his workforce, or maybe he was just being a nice guy? William invested in James' milling business, thus the Gooderham & Worts partnership was born. In 1834 James Worts wife died giving birth to their sixth child and James was so overcome by grief that he killed himself by drowning in the company well. James Worts Jr. joined the family business, which by 1837 had turned to distilling from milling.

At this point we were interrupted by a music video being shot. They approached us wondering if we would like to be in it. Well, why not! We just had to ride around him as he strode along singing away. It was hilarious and more than once he was almost hit. After all, we had only been given our "licenses" about 5 minutes earlier! His name was Vikas Bhalla and he was a singer in India so keep an eye out for our amazing music video debut. Off we go again, stopping at the south end of Cluny's patio.

There on the ground is a marking showing where the shores of Lake Ontario once were. In the early 1800's everything was thrown



ON TOUR

into the lake and it was horribly polluted. In 1832 there was a cholera outbreak, however those who drank alcohol did not seem to get sick! This was good for the Gooderham and Worts business! Drinking whisky was much better than death so everyone drank, clergyman, women, children and even babies.

Now it was off to Soma to fetch a piece of chocolate. Now this is not just any chocolate. They are a "bean to bar" business; they buy the cacao beans and do the entire process themselves, creating this awesome finished product. The place was packed on this cold day; everyone enjoying a cup of hot chocolate.

Having devoured the chocolate, we head across the road to Mill Street Brewery. Just in the door on the left is a little store with 4 beer taps. We sampled 3 of them, warming ourselves up for the remainder of the tour!

Back on our segways we head to the clock tower at the main square.

The white-ish building that now houses Tappo Restaurant and Wine Bar was originally the Distillery itself and it was finished in 1861. The building is made from Kingston



YE OLD WINDMILL

Limestone and the walls are several feet thick. In 1869 a fire destroyed the wooden interior of the building but "no deaths were reported". That was very fortuitous! The building was rebuilt and lives on.

In 1990 the distillery closed at which time it served as Hollywood North, hundreds of movies, television shows, commercials and videos were shot here. The best known was likely Chicago where the Distillery building was the "Cook County Prison". In 2003 The Distillery Historic District as we know it today was born. It has grown a lot since then but is now a thriving area full of history, events and lively street life.

There is so much more to the history in the Distillery District but the Segway tour was an entertaining way to get a brief glimpse back in time. Our tour guides were excellent, even emailing us after the tour to give us the name of our Indian singer whose video we may be in, or not.

That was a great start to my journey. What next? The possibilities are endless.

If you are staying home this summer, consider getting outside and discovering our City. This will help get you started:

- » Distillery District Segway, Walking or Ghost Tour: <http://www.gotourscanada.com>
- » Distillery District Self Guided tour: <http://www.distilleryheritage.com/>
- » Heritage Toronto Tours: <http://heritagetoronto.org/programs/tours/>
- » Cabbagetown, Corktown and Distillery Tour: <http://genovatours.com>
- » City of Toronto Self Guided Walking Tours
- » Walking Tour Books: Toronto Urban Strolls by Nathalie Prézeau, Stroll: Psychogeographic Walking Tours of Toronto by Shawn Micallef

POPPED THE GOOD AND THE BAD



Congratulations to two Corktown businesses for being awarded Architizer A+ awards in recognition of their great design. Architecture firm Agathom's Rainforest Retreat design won in the XS (under 1000 square feet) Private House category and Odin Hus won for the Bars & Nightclubs category and received Special Mention in the Restaurants category. Stylin'.



We're sad to see more businesses closing along Queen Street. Sorry to see you go, Adornments on Queen! Your owner, Barbara, was a great supporter of the CRBA and we loved the home décor items you stocked. Though, not enough to keep you in business, apparently. And Europe Bound's outlet store is also dead. Come on Corktowners - eat and shop local!



We're getting bike lanes on River Street! And without losing any parking spots. Maybe a BikeShare station, too! Not to be a Debbie Downer, but let's hope the new bike lanes actually connect to other bike trails and paths. (Really, what's with the bike lanes along Richmond and Adelaide abruptly ending on Parliament? And will there ever be a safe way to cycle along Bayview to the Brickworks?)



Roadwork is never ending and badly coordinated in Corktown. Bayview was closed for a couple weeks in May. But that was just to prep for the big closures and major watermain construction work that will last most of the summer. And River Street is going to be rebuilt at the same time. How very (in)convenient for users of the Bayview Extension.



A couple years ago, the only fitness facility within Corktown was the Extension Room and some basketball hoops in Underpass Park. Now we have a brand new YMCA on Cherry plus a cross-fit studio, Lift, at 508 King. Any day now, the Running Room, Think Fitness and Gears bike shop will open in Corktown South (as I like to think of it). Plus we have all the new recreational options in Regent Park with the community centre, amazing aquatic centre, new sports fields and a renewed ice rink.



SKYLINE OF TORONTO



OLD SAFE



LOOKING UP



WATER GUARDIANS



GETTING TO THE POINT

New in Corktown

Photos by Spencer Wynn

The south east corner of Corktown has emerged as an amazing new award winning neighbourhood. It is known to some as the West Don Lands or to others as the Canary District. Regardless of what you call it, it is an awesome new place that many will call home and a welcome addition to our Corktown neighbourhood.



CANARY RESTAURANT BUILDING



LATE AT NIGHT



OUTSIDE THE GEORGE BROWN BUILDING

All of these images were photographed over a two year period by Spencer Wynn, himself, a Corktown resident. He had exclusive access and permission to enter the construction site and all buildings any time day or night. Spencer took Ministry safety courses and was safety certified in order to be allowed the access he enjoyed.

Shooting at times around the clock allowed him to document the growth and evolution of this unique neighbourhood and to capture images in all weather conditions over several seasons both day and night.

To get all the amazing shots, Spencer employed several different methods. The aerial images were photographed from a remotely controlled camera rig, lofted by a huge seven-foot wide helium balloon and controlled by Spencer from the ground, including the 200lb test line that kept the balloon from floating away.



RED PIPE FITTINGS

Little Trinity Refugee Update

By Joanne Millard

If you have been following the news about Canada's program to welcome Syrian refugees, you will be aware that the processing of private sponsorships, such as by Little Trinity Church (described in the March edition of Corktown News) has been delayed.

Initially, this was due to the government's commitment to bring in 25,000 government-assisted refugees by the end of February, and then, once that objective had been met, to the scaling-down of staffing in the overseas visa processing offices. In the meantime, residents of Toronto have seen the media reports of government-assisted refugees languishing in hotels, while the overextended settlement agencies that have been contracted to assist them, scramble to find housing and other supports. Thankfully, a couple of organizations have stepped in to match private sponsorship groups like Little Trinity's, still waiting for our sponsorship to be processed, with government-assisted refugee families, to help them with the enormous challenge of settling into a new community and culture.

At the beginning of April, Little Trinity became involved in The Welcome Project (<http://www.welcomeproject.ca/>). The Welcome Project works in cooperation with COSTI Immigrant Services, the organization contracted by the federal government to manage the settlement of Syrian refugees in the Toronto area. COSTI looks after the families' initial arrival needs and paperwork, locates housing for many, and equipping them with furniture and start-up essentials. Welcome Project volunteers provide helping hands, information, and friendship over a two-to-three-month period. We help families find places to buy familiar food in their neighbourhoods, negotiate their way around town on the TTC, locate English classes for the adults, register children in school and recreation programs, and figure out which days recycling and garbage are picked up. We also listen, inform (through translators,

initially), advocate as necessary with landlords, and help the families to access the health care and other services that are provided for them. We show them where the local parks are. We take them to the beach.

Little Trinity has now been linked to two, very different families. Initially we were matched with a newly-single mother and her 6-year old son. A primary schoolteacher in Syria, she was very happy to have been matched with a group of Canadians ready to help her, and is determined to learn English and embrace a new life in Toronto. As it happened, a sponsorship group located in the Annex had accommodation that exactly suited her needs, so she is now being cared for primarily by that neighbourhood group, with assistance (and support) from Little Trinity as requested.

In mid-April, Little Trinity was asked to assist a family of Syrian Catholics: a mother, father and four children aged from 7 – 12. This family experienced brutal sectarian violence before they fled Syria. The father asked us to pray for "a home and healing for his children." With the help of a volunteer from Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church, they have located a newly-renovated three-bedroom apartment within their budget, near Finch and Victoria Park Avenues. We will continue to assist them to access care and services.

In late April, just as Corktown News went to print, we heard from AURA, the organization through whom we have applied to sponsor a family, that one had been found for us! We had discussed the possibility of accepting refugees from a country other than Syria, and received the call a couple of days later. Little Trinity's sponsored family will be a young professional couple from Iran: a journalist and a dental hygienist, currently living in Turkey, who have been accepted by Canada as political refugees. We were told, as of the end of April, that they would arrive in four to eight weeks.

Throughout this process, we have been very encouraged by the wonderful people we have met in other sponsorship groups and grassroots organizations.

For more information or to find out how you can help, please contact Little Trinity Church at: admin@littletrinity.org, or drop by our office at 403 King St. E., M - Th, 9:30 AM to 3PM.

A neighbourhood for the next generation

By Andrea Wightman

Finally! Spring is here and the neighbourhood is booming with activities for people of all ages. It is time to get out and explore some of the many attractions that Corktown has to offer.

During Corktown's 150-year history, our neighbourhood has come a long way from its roots as an employer of breweries and brickyards. Today, it's an ever-changing landscape of playgrounds and businesses that draws residents and tourists onto its streets. Whether you have young children or you're young at heart, Corktown has something for everyone.

Learn

Visit a nearby library to borrow a few children's books and take in one the Toronto Public Library's many family activities, including Saturday Family Time. Our nearest libraries are Queen/Saulter, and St. Lawrence.

Drop in to the Ontario Early Years Centre at St. Paul's Catholic School with your under-six child to meet other local families and learn some new games.

Take in a show with the family at the nearby Young People's Theatre or Canadian Stage Company. Both schedules are posted online and have productions to suit most age groups.

Eat

Beat the heat with an ice cream at the Distillery District, or at Savoury Grounds on Queen Street East, which now serves six flavours of Ed's Real Scoop.

Treat your family to a freshly made pastry at Roselle's on King Street East, or something natural and organic at Tori's Bakeshop, opening soon in the Canary District.

Or, simply put together a few of your own favourite creations and have a picnic on a sunny patch of green on the field at Corktown Common.

Whether you're planning a staycation, hosting friends from out of town or just looking to fill a few hours on the weekend, Corktown is this summer's place to be!

Play

We're experiencing a rejuvenation of the playgrounds around the neighbourhood. Though the Corktown Common playground was closed for most of the summer in 2015 for the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games, it is ready once again to accommodate large numbers of fun seekers.

The newly renovated Bright Street Park opened this past fall with a pirate boat and better seating. The Sackville Park will undergo construction later this year to have its play structures and landscaping updated. Stay tuned for more news on that soon.

If the sun isn't shining your family can head indoors and run around the new gymnasium and rock climbing wall (yet to open) at the Regent Park Community Centre. Otherwise, the much-anticipated three storey climbing structure at the Cooper Koo Family YMCA is a must for high-energy kids.

Swim

Cool off at the Regent Park Aquatic Centre's toddler pool, where kids have fun splashing around the giant waterfall mushroom and playing with the pool's water toys. Now that the new YMCA is open, drop in during their recreational swim times for a family swim.

Corktown Common is arguably the shining jewel of the neighbourhood, and its splash pad is a flurry of activity on summer days. Kids can run around the brightly coloured splash pad and activate the water sprayers themselves while parents relax in the amphitheatre-like structure or on one of the large boulders surrounding the area.

Get into Gear

By Andrea Wightman

For Micheal Cranwell, the lines between career, social life and personal hobby are not just blurred, they're non-existent. Having left the corporate world ten years ago to pursue his passion for cycling full-time, he is now the General Manager for the new Gears Bike Shop in the Canary District.

"Canada is becoming a cycling powerhouse," says Micheal, "and we're building Gears to be Toronto's next cycling destination." Indeed, Gears is opening its doors at an opportune time. With the Canary District now open, and the cycling season officially upon us, Corktowners can expect to see a rise in the number of cyclists commuting to work, getting in an early morning ride, or casually exploring the neighbourhood.

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In the near future, you can expect to see more community engagement from Gears.

Purposely curated as a neighbourhood geared towards health and wellness, the Canary District has created a compelling environment for those who appreciate shopping at small, independent shops rather than big box stores; precisely why Gears was selected as part of the new retail development in the West Don Lands.

Founded in 1988 by Kevin Wallace, Gears was first established as a bicycle repair shop, and has since grown into a multi-store full service operation with locations in Leaside, Mississauga, Oakville, and the Canary District location. Over the years it has continued to evolve to meet the needs of its client base. In 1997, Gears launched a popular in-house spinning program, which has seen its "Gears 24-Hour Spin" event raising \$4 million dollars for Trillium Health Partners and building "The Betty Wallace Women's Health Centre" to honour Kevin's mother.

Through these philanthropic successes, Gears is leading by example. They aim to empower their fellow cyclists to engage their communities to raise money through cycling races and events, develop as athletes, and bring more enjoyment to people's lives through cycling.

Gears does not limit itself to experienced cyclists. Understandably, they are

By the numbers

4	Number of locations
3,500 sq.ft.	Size of the new shop
10 – 12	Number of employees
28	Years in operations
\$4 million	Raised by Gears for local charities

tailoring their core inventory to the demographics of its surroundings, notably urban commuters who prefer high-performance bikes. But that's not to say casual or first-time cyclists won't find something that catches their eye. For example, Gears is also stocking its shelves with "Electric Assist" bikes, which it sees as a way to get novice cyclists hooked. Built with an electrical motor that makes it easier to pedal, Electric Assist bikes can help you climb a hill faster or cover long distances with less effort. In Micheal's words, "we don't see this as 'cheating' the sport. We see it as a great way for couples or families at different cycling levels to enjoy the sport together."

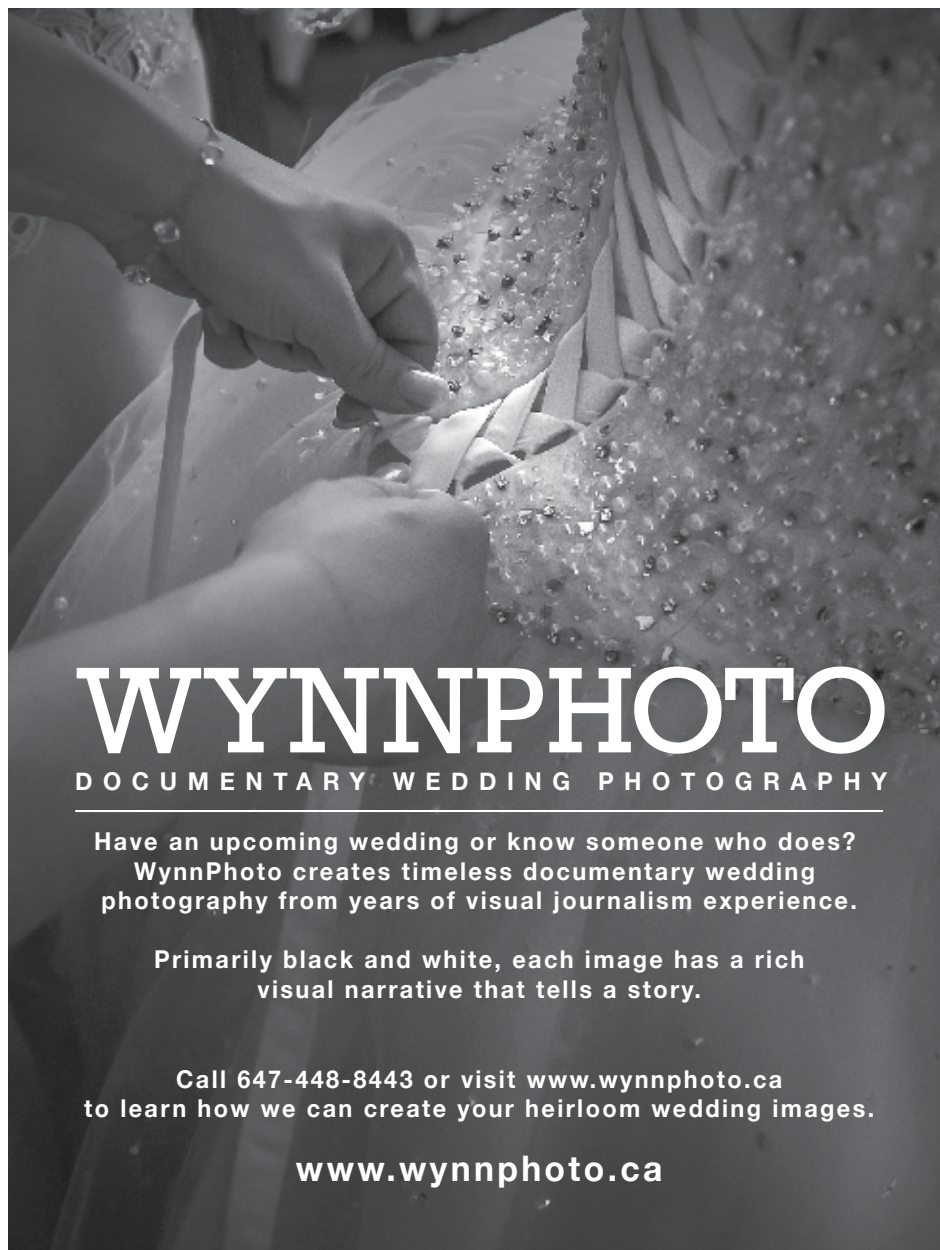
Gears cares for its customers and community in the same personal way it looks after its employees. As the Manager of the new location, Micheal prides himself on creating a healthy and happy work environment. Notably, Gears offers sustainable, year-round employment rather than just a spring to fall job. His team can also benefit from the shower and bike storage facilities in the Canary District buildings, which makes it more convenient for his team to cycle to work rather than drive.

What's next for Gears?

Micheal is already planning a few years down the road, and sees this new store as more than just a place to buy bike parts. In the near future, you can expect to see more community engagement from Gears, when they start offering a rental fleet for casual cyclists, a beverage and snack bar for those stopping in mid-ride, a clothing line, and in-store events with demonstrations and guest speakers.

Most excitedly, customers can look forward to an upcoming concierge service, where Canary District residents can leave their bike in the nearby storage areas, email Gears the locker number, and go on with their day while their bike gets a full-service tune-up.

Less time spent on repairs, more time spent outside on the paths. That's what Gears is all about.



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West Don Lands: What's in the Future?

By Larry Webb, CRBA Board Member, Corktown resident

So we know about the current state of Urban Capital's River City project, where Phases 1 and 2 are already occupied, Phase 3 is under construction, and Phase 4 is now entering the approvals process. And we know about the legacy of the Pan Am Block 8/20 and Parapan Am Games which sees two market condos, two affordable housing buildings, the George Brown residence and the new "Y" already starting to be

occupied along with a number of retail stores opening very soon and in the next few months. But what about the future?

Here's what we know and more importantly, what we don't know!

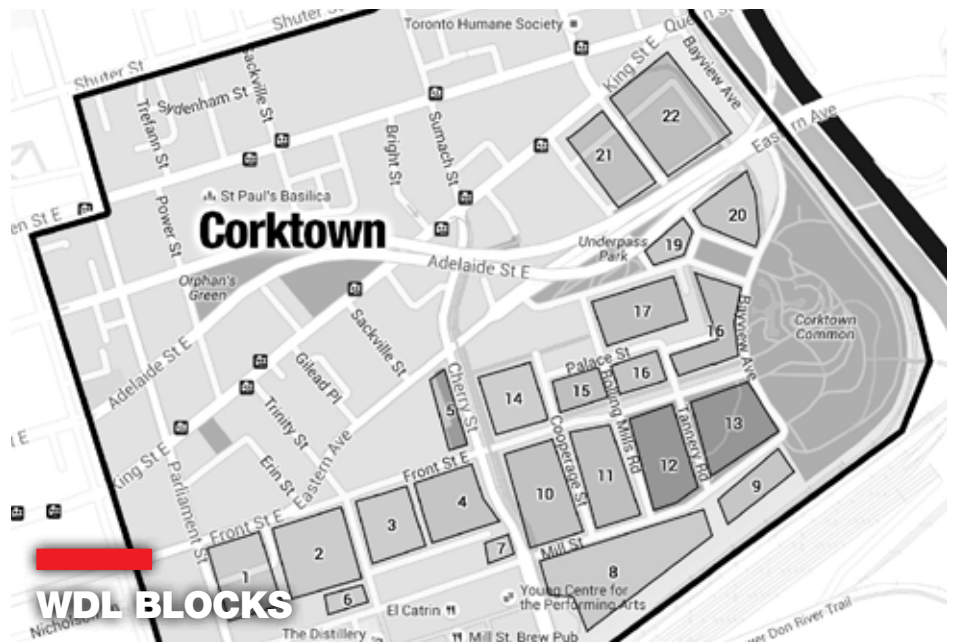
For the remainder of the lands to the east of Cherry Street, DundeeKilmer still have three blocks yet to develop, all of which will be determined by market needs. Their lands essentially are north of Mill Street and extend to the building built or to be built on the north side of Front Street. Block 16 on the north side of Front Street will be the first to develop followed by Blocks 12 and 13 on the south side of Front. Currently, Blocks 12 and 13 are temporarily configured as landscaped areas, completed for the Games, and DundeeKilmer have confirmed that they will remain in current condition until development starts.

Also in the same area is Block 10 which is immediately east of Cherry between Front and Mill Streets and includes the old Canary restaurant building in its north-west corner; the building is a protected Designated structure and will remain, although most likely not as a restaurant. While many of the details are yet to be announced, this land is in the process of being conveyed by

the Province to Anishnawbe Health Toronto with a program to create an Aboriginal Culture Hub. AHT will have its own facility within this hub but many other partners will be involved in creating a signature development which will serve both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples; it will be an important and much-needed link between the two communities.

There are a number of development sites in the West Don Lands for which there are no specific development plans at the moment. These include:

- » Block 8 – the parcel east of Cherry and South of Mill (excluding the lands in block 9 next to Corktown Common that are reserved for a school and community centre
- » Blocks 3 & 4 – The large paved area between Trinity and Cherry, south of Front that served as the Pan Am Welcome Centre
- » Block 17 – The Dominion Foundry building on Old Eastern (heritage buildings)
- » Block 7 – The Mill Paper Fibre Building on the north west corner of Trinity and Mill



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» Block 2 – The lands west of Trinity and South of Front currently leased by Chrysler

After the Pan Am Games, we had expected that Waterfront Toronto would be coming back to the community to consult on the development strategy for these lands. Given the high level of trust in Waterfront Toronto's engagement process and the quality of the implementation, we had been looking forward to working collaboratively through the West Don Lands Committee on outstanding issues, such as the location and format of the remaining affordable rental housing or the accommodation of community services such as childcare.

When that did not happen we became nervous about whether the province intended to continue its support for Waterfront Toronto's role as the development lead for the precinct. We were right to be worried. At the time of writing, we have just learned that Infrastructure Ontario has quietly declared the 5 parcels surplus, potentially clearing the way for them to be put on the market. The implications of this initiative and the provincial intention behind it are unclear but worrisome. Up until now, the West Don Lands Committee, of which the CRBA is a founding member, had the benefit of an open and information rich relationship with Waterfront Toronto in which we were consulted and advised of any initiatives involving the West Don Lands precinct. We have had no assurances from the province at the moment that the same process will be followed before any of these parcels have been put up for sale.

We are still gathering information about this from provincial and city sources and from Waterfront Toronto. If you are concerned about this, please stay in touch, if you wish by e-mailing info@corktown.ca. We will also provide more information through our website and CRBA meetings as it becomes available.

MESSAGE TO WEST DON LANDS CONTINUED

Strategy, I see access to stable housing as a pillar of a prosperous city, and a foundation of a healthy neighbourhood.

This is a neighbourhood that acknowledges the history that has come before us, from the original First Nations inhabitants to the extraordinary story of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn, who escaped from slavery to live here and created the first Toronto taxi.

This revitalization also gave impetus to breaking down barriers to our older neighbourhoods and making new connections. Underpass Park is a destination for play and a pleasant route to the rest of Corktown, where a Master Plan for improvements to the older parks is being implemented. The Front Street Promenade leads to the St. Lawrence Market, with a new North Market revitalization underway. Mill Street at the Distillery is being rebuilt to better manage the flow of visitors to this incredible historic resource. At Front and Parliament, Canada's First Parliament building site is occupied by car dealerships but will be rebuilt with a district Library, heritage interpretation, and public open space. Waterfront revitalization planning continues to the south for the Port Lands. The great engineering project of our times, the re naturalization of the Don, will bring back the river to flow through a new neighbourhood, while providing the flood protection that is needed to develop the area.

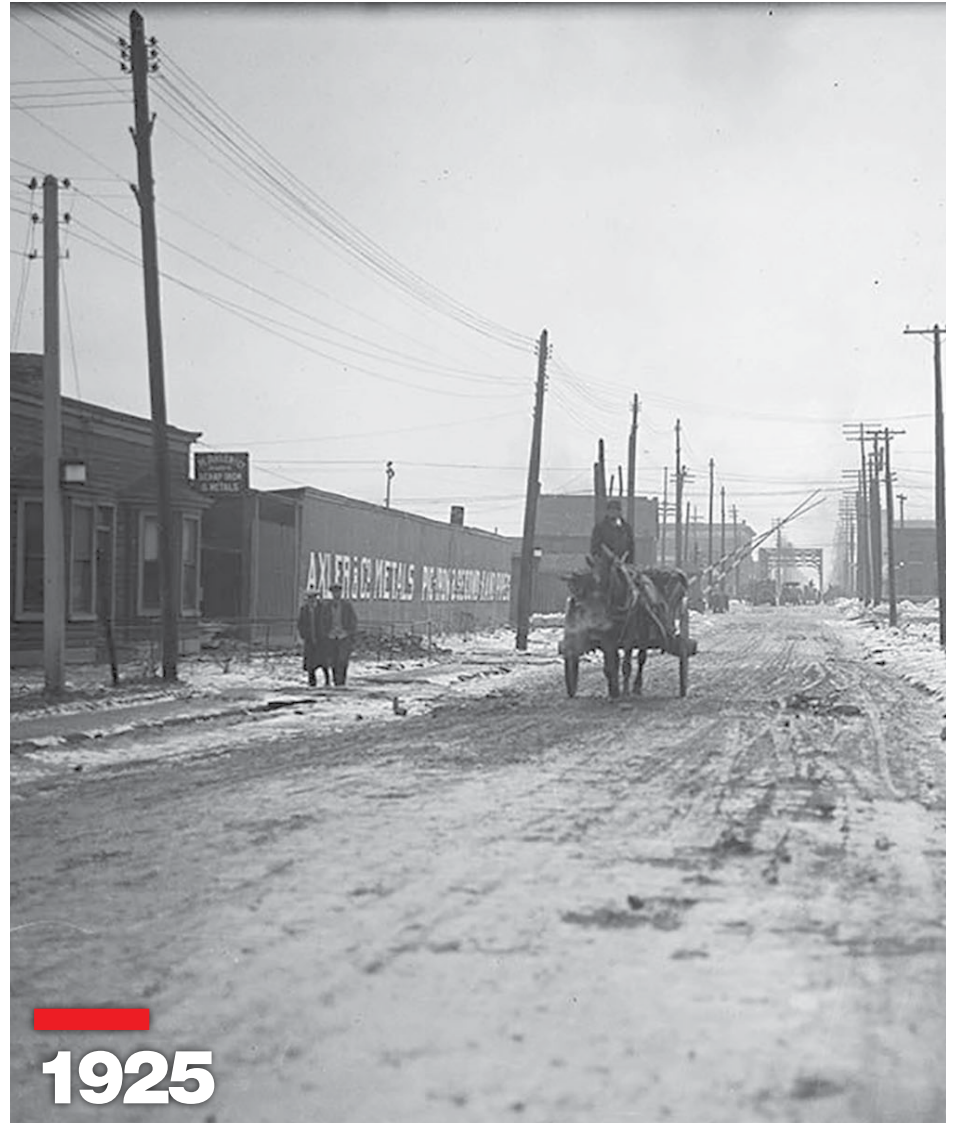
As the new buildings continue to occupy, we have achieved a pedestrian focused, transit accessible, cycling friendly precinct. Neighbourhoods that are designed for people foster community and engagement. I look forward to working with you and your Corktown neighbours to build upon the exciting development of this area.

If you have any issues that you wish to discuss, you may contact my office through councillor_mconnell@toronto.ca or 416 392-7916.

Then & Now

EASTERN AVENUE

by Michele Cummings



1925



2016

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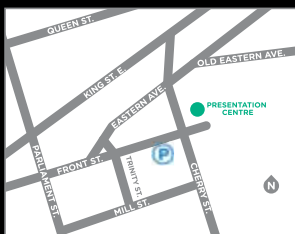
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