

READ
LOCAL

the bridge

Connecting people, places and ideas across our city from the downtown east

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Transparency wanted on First Parliament site

Emma Johnston-Wheeler

The provincial transit agency Metrolinx intends to begin excavation on First Parliament site to start construction of Ontario Line tunnels and the Corktown Station, according to a 255-page development draft report it published in May. And it's holding fast on expropriating the land from the City of Toronto to enable condominium development.

Planned work includes demolishing existing buildings, removing other structures and asphalt, decommissioning utilities, and removing and/or remediating soil.

The Ontario government's determination leaves the City's First Parliament site master plan – including a new library, food services, cultural hubs, affordable housing and other community uses – in limbo.

Metrolinx's Early Works Report acknowledges that the property is a known archaeological site requiring additional study ahead of any ground disturbance. Anticipated discoveries include artifacts from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, on whose treaty

territory the property sits, as well as remains of Upper Canada's first and second parliament buildings and remnants of early Toronto industry.

Metrolinx is now accepting public feedback on the Early Works draft report until June 11, but intends to acquire the properties on the site by August 30. Additionally, the province has published plans to build five high-rise towers – four residential and one commercial – covering the First Parliament site and the Staples property where the Corktown station will be.

Downtown east residents are frustrated with the agency's lack of transparency and the speed at which decisions are being made.

Diana Belshaw, vice-president of the Distillery District's Gooderham and Worts Neighbourhood Association, wants to know how the community will function amidst the construction. "Every single piece of the Ontario Line seems to be trampling on this community," she said. "We're not seeing any thoughtfulness about this."

Metrolinx continued p8

Suspect charged in serial break-ins at downtown stores

Kayla Higgins

Business owners around the Moss Park neighbourhood say they've had front windows smashed and money stolen in a string of commercial break & enters (CBEs) during May.

In the first six months of this year, 26 CBEs have been reported in the Moss Park district, 15 in May alone, according to the Toronto Police Service Safety Data Portal. While CBEs have decreased compared with the same time last year (33 in 2020), the recent spate of attacks on small businesses have owners reeling.

"They just threw the hammer and the till down outside after taking \$50 out of it, and ran off," said Adam Yudman, co-owner of Knick Knack Paddywhack's pet and grooming services, whose window was smashed before the store was

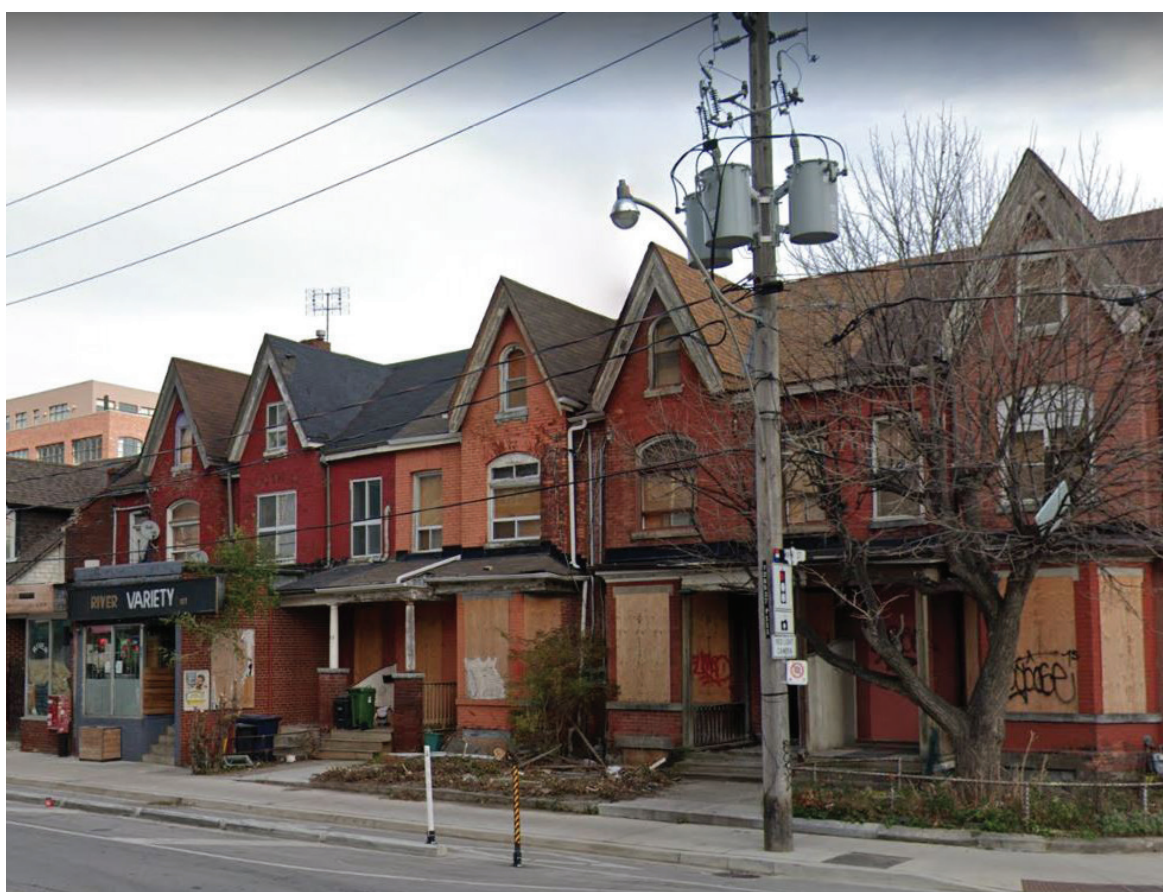
broken into in early May. "It was a really quick smash-and-grab."

Dudman and Kiernan Craig Burger opened the Corktown store last August, defying the frustrations faced by small business owners at the hands of the pandemic.

Although repairing the window could cost up to \$500, the owners are focused on a bigger picture.

Break-ins continued p7

Condo plan threatens historic River Street buildings



The Bay and Gable style homes at 111-119 River Street are slated to be demolished for high-rise condos.

Photo via Google Maps

Julia Simioni, Senior Reporter

Several blocks on the east side of River Street have been slated for demolition without the developers having done a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), a study used to evaluate the impact of a proposed development or site alteration on a cultural heritage resource(s). Included in this area is 111-125 River Street, where Lifetime Developments wants to build a 34-storey condominium.

"These are some of the last remaining 19th-century and early 20th-century houses" in the Regent Park area, said Adam Wynne, a local preservation advocate. He said several of the surviving buildings may warrant heritage status.

In a 55-page letter to Toronto and East York Community Council on May 17, Wynne advocated requiring an HIA for the site before a demolition permit is issued.

"It is alarming, concerning,

and disheartening that entire blocks of historic properties in an area with significant history can be proposed for demolition without any form of heritage-related studies being undertaken by the applicant, and/or steps taken by the City of Toronto to ensure this remaining early built history of the area is not lost."

The houses at 111-119 River Street, built around 1906, are a late adaptation of the Bay and Gable style of architecture and have retained much of their original design. 121-125 River Street buildings, constructed around 1926-1929, are in the Arts and Crafts style.

111 River Street is especially significant as it contains an old hand-painted advertising or 'ghost sign,' for the former Reinhardt-Salvador Brewery (also known as the East End Brewery). Local historian Jeremy Hopkin said the sign was likely for the brewery office. Restoring it would add signif-

icant historical interest to the area, says Wynne.

During a Toronto and East York Community Council meeting on May 19, Ward 13 Councilor Kristyn Wong-Tam asked if Heritage Planning staff had flagged the properties in 2015, when the area was being assessed for the Queen-River Secondary Plan. "I'm worried that we're letting something out the door if we did miss something over the years," she said.

The city's senior manager of Heritage Preservation Services, Mary MacDonald, said the area was not identified in the application or pre-application period as having heritage potential. (A HIA study is only required for some application types if the property is listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties, which the River Street properties are not.)

River Street continued p4



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CIBC Square project depicts future park space in the hands of developers

Andre Bermon, Publisher

The latest addition to the financial district, a sleek glass-panelled tower at 81 Bay Street across from Union Station, will feature a “mini” rail deck park, analogous on a smaller scale to the project west of Spadina that has now been put in limbo.

An elevated platform over the Go Train tracks will bridge the 49-storey building at 81 Bay to the future 54-storey office tower at 141 Bay. Together they will form the new CIBC Square.

A demonstration of private-sector city building, the one acre-park will join the growing list of Toronto’s privately owned/publicly accessible spaces (POPS). Over the years, the City of Toronto has legitimized POPS as a “key part of the city’s public realm network,” as solutions to much-needed open space in a time of rising property values.

Typically, POPS are established through the Ontario Planning Act’s Section 37 community benefits fund, by which developers finance “public space” such as parks within their project in exchange for increased height and/or density. POPS, often monitored by private security and having restricted hours, can also take the form of plazas, walkways and courtyards. According to



Latest rendering of the forthcoming CIBC Square Park.

Photo: 2020 DBOX: a branding & creative agency

the city’s interactive POPS map, Toronto’s downtown has approximately 50 such sites.

The CIBC Square’s developers, Hines and Ivanhoe Cambridge, voluntarily offered the park. It is to serve as a recreational space within the office complex, featuring landscaped slopes and hills, botanical gardens, shade groves, balconies and vista areas.

Corporate programming

is also being planned. Dan Biederman, the mastermind behind New York City’s privately managed Bryant Park, has been selected to curate “a seasonal selection of art and music exhibitions, games, literary events, and more.” These events are to “integrate with business meetings, lunch breaks, and impromptu gatherings in what will surely be a focal point of CIBC Square—and downtown

Toronto’s—culture,” according to an old post on the CIBC Square website.

But the park-starved public wanting to frolic in this new amenity may walk away disappointed, as architects expect the area will be reserved for events hosted by corporate tenants – “fully wired to act as an extension of the workplace.”

Creating green space in the city’s core has become a con-

siderable challenge. With only 1.8 square metres of park per downtown resident and employee compared with 18 square metres city-wide, municipal officials have become reliant on the private sector to provide open space.

However, such areas acquired through development applications offer few comforts to pedestrians. Largely concrete and thinly interspersed with greenery, they lack suitable seating and refuge from summer heat. Many go unvisited and unused.

While a few breakthrough public parks have been created in recent years, such as Corktown Common in the Canary District, existing spaces have proven inadequate to keep up with population demand. Emphasis on outdoor activity during the Covid-19 pandemic has made Torontonians want more.

CIBC Square Park, while tiny, will likely loom large as a tourist destination and urban oasis in the dense financial district. For their contribution, the private owners will expect a measure of control that could see product placement prioritized over pedestrian leisure.

But with no notable green space projects slated for the downtown area, the city will have little choice but continue to be at the mercy of developers to provide what was once a public sector good.

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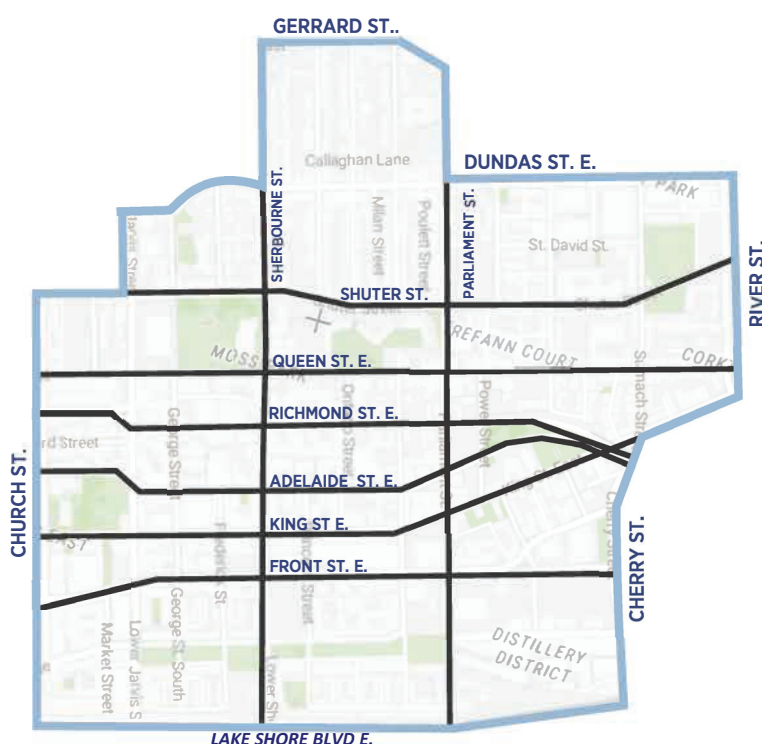
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the bridge strives to source up-to-date activity and diverse interests from heritage, planning, and development, to culture, arts and opinions.

Publisher/Editor: Andre Bermon
Copy Editor: Eric Mills

Senior Contributors: Bruce Bell,
Ben Bull, Carol Mark, Glenda
MacFarlane, Julia Simioni

Contributors: Emma Johnston-
Wheeler, Donald Higney, Kayla
Higgins, Megan Camlasaran
Chris Kerr, Heather Wilberforce
& Catherine Tammaro



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thebridgedowntown@gmail.com

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History of the TD Centre



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

When the Toronto-Dominion Centre opened 54 years ago, our city was a much different place than it is now.

Though it's considered the last word in modernity, the TD Centre was built in a time when men wore hats to the office, most women office workers were relegated to secretarial pools, and hiring a person of colour among predominately WASPs (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants) was seen as ground-breaking.

While the old hiring ways are thankfully no longer with us – and elevator etiquette no longer requires a man to remove his hat but not put out his cigarette – the TD Centre looks pretty much the same as when it opened in 1967.

The first of three structures completed was the largest (known then as the Toronto-Dominion Bank Tower), officially opened while the other two remained unfinished on July 1 to correspond with Canada's centennial celebrations.

What makes the TD Centre a modern masterpiece of art and design came from the genius who created it, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a German born-American architect (1886 – 1969) – Mies for short (pronounced Mees).

The project was the brainchild of Allen Lambert, CEO of the Toronto-Dominion Bank. Lambert's sister-in-law Phyllis – daughter of Seagram's chairman Samuel Bronfman – recommended Mies as design consultant to the architects, John B. Parkin

and Associates and Bregman & Hamann, with Fairview Corporation as the developer.

Though Canadian law required a Canadian firm as the lead architect, the TD Centre is all Mies. In 1958 Phyllis Lambert had hired Mies in collaboration with American architect Philip Johnson to build the Seagram Building on New York's Park Avenue. Just like the TD Centre would do for Toronto, the Seagram Building changed the skyline of Manhattan forever.

Before Mies's arrival, most Toronto skyscrapers were gigantic mountains of stone, detailed with granite gargoyles, marble finials amid massive entryways to make you feel you were entering a Greek temple or an art deco-styled Hollywood palace.

Some modernist architects appreciated early 20th-century architecture, but Mies believed that less was more, and that modern buildings constructed with the best materials but without exterior decoration and stripped down to their bare bones could hold their own as the next wave of architecture.

That's why I love the TD Centre. Its interior public spaces still have the all the original furniture and light switch covers that Mies designed. However, his elevator ashtrays have been removed.

Another lasting component of Mies's fearless vision is that fresh-cut yellow daisies in clear glass round vases are still placed throughout the main banking hall, with the same flowers up on the 54th floor in the CEO's office. He wanted his buildings to be organic, with a natural link between customers on the banking floor and the boss man upstairs. As Mies often stated, God is in the detail.

One of the legends about Mies is that just before the TD Centre's official opening,



he went around with a screwdriver lining up all the screws vertically in the 54th-floor boardroom. True or not, it shows how myth can shroud legendary architects as if they were rock stars.

The TD Centre enabled breathtaking vistas both from afar and up close. It became the symbol of the new Toronto: wealthy, powerful and full of promise. Toronto now had the largest, tallest and biggest corporate office space in all Canada, designed by the coolest architect in the world.

However, more than 100 buildings were demolished to create this urban paradise, including one of the most spectacular in the city's history, the Bank of Toronto building designed in 1912 by the illustrious New York architectural firm Carrère and Hastings – the Mies van der Rohe of its day.

The former King Street facade of the majestic Bank of Toronto can still be seen at Guildwood Park in Scarborough, as well as a scale model displayed in the present TD Centre banking hall.

Even through the TD Centre is colossal, it floats on a human scale with its black-steel-and-

glass grouping of five towers (two were added to the original three after Mies's death), all surrounding a plaza named Oscar Peterson Square in 2004. A grass pasture with seven full-sized bronze cows designed by Canadian sculptor Joe Fafard, purposefully or not, marks the location of Toronto's first theatre, the Royal Lyceum (1848–1883).

The Bank of Toronto was founded in 1855 by George Gooderham; the Dominion Bank was also founded in Toronto in 1869, by James Austin. These two merged in February 1955 to create the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

I love telling my American guests on my historical tours that the 'T' in TD Ameritrade stands for Toronto, for TD has 1200 branches in 16 American

states.

As massive as the TD Centre is, its footprint is more grass and open plaza than buildings, which makes it an anomaly in the Financial District – all that open space on the most expensive corner in Canada.

Sometimes when I wander through the cow pasture in the calm of an early evening, I can't help thinking of being out in rugged cattle country. There I am in an immense chasm created by the looming TD Centre, a superb substitute for a breathtaking valley like the final scene in the classic western Shane. With sun reflecting off the golden Royal Bank Plaza tower across the street, it becomes a perfect mix of old Hollywood meets modern Bay Street.

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Nowhere to run, the condos are here

Ben Bull, Columnist

They're coming. The hungry condos have gobbled up almost every inch of our city – and still they are craving more. The hungry condos' cranes are clunking, their backhoes are clanking, their caterpillars are crawling...

There's nowhere left to run.

As the earth moves all around us, we can at least, look up and see the sky, but hold on – what's this? The air is getting thinner.

The recent cancellation of Rail Deck Park showed us just how hungry these condos are.

"The 21-acre green space known as the Rail Deck Park would have blanketed the Union Station rail corridor between Bathurst Street and Blue Jays Way," BlogTO noted on May 12. The project "was touted as Toronto's Central Park."

Look out! Even our air isn't safe! Apparently, the railway air belongs to developers who are going to fill it with – you've guessed it – condos.

Ward 10 Councillor Joe Cressy lamented the loss of park space in a tweet: 'It's a hugely disappointing decision for the future of our city and the vibrancy and livability of downtown ... the experience of COVID has affirmed the critical importance of parks and public spaces. Our work to expand them must continue.'

Where will the hungry condos go next? The waterfront is nearly devoured. There's one last nugget in the east end: Par-

liament Slip. But Waterfront Toronto wants to get its teeth into that.

"Parliament Slip has the potential to become a world-class public destination for swimming, kayaking, boating, entertainment and dining," says a March 2021 Waterfront Toronto backgrounder. "Amenities could include new mooring stations, public event spaces, retail and expanded waterfront walkways."

This sounds like a laudable plan, but for some reason it includes – more condos.

There's good reason to be skeptical of any Waterfront Toronto plan. The corporation's mandate is to, "transform our city's waterfront by creating extraordinary new places to live, work, learn and play." New housing is an integral part of this. But there's no place for housing at the water's edge.

You don't have to read Waterfront Toronto's plans to see how well it's doing – you just have to take a walk.

Head along the lake east of Yonge Street for a couple of kilometres, and you'll find a few gaps between the towers. Sugar Beach and Sherbourne Common provide a welcome oasis from the concrete streetscape. But other than this and a bit of boardwalk, there's nowhere else to play.

The inland block bordered by Yonge, the Don Valley, Dundas and Front, features Moss Park, Corktown Common and a few parkettes. There's barely room to spread a picnic blanket.

Contrast this with the west end. Walk two clicks west of Yonge by the lake and you'll find Harbour Square Park, Harbourfront Centre, Ontario Square, Ann Tindale Park, Simcoe WaveDeck, HT0 Park, the Music Garden, Ireland Park, Little Norway Park, Stadium Road Park and Coronation Park. Even better – the Waterfront Trail actually runs along the water.

If you keep heading west and move inland, there's even more room to roam. High Park is 161 hectares; the Humber Trail is 5 miles long.

There is some pushback against unfettered development in the east end. A new bylaw amendment proposed by the Toronto and East York Community Council is recommending that developers limit new condos to 30 metres in height or 10 residential storeys. The motion, now pending City Council approval, has been criticized for conflicting with transit expansion plans. But - does more transit have to mean more condos?

We all understand the need for more housing, but that doesn't mean we have to keep reaching for the skies. Low-rise condos work well all over the world. And more housing should not come at the expense of much-needed parkland.

If the hungry condos are allowed to gobble up every inch of our city, one thing will be certain: There'll be nowhere left to run.

After 60 years the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair is still strong

Carol Mark, Columnist

Art and culture define a society, including Toronto's. The city is celebrating its 60th year as host to one of the longest-running and largest juried outdoor art fairs in North America.

The event's focus has always been to provide a meeting place to connect buyers and artists on common ground. Public art galleries are a barrier to the buying public, but the Outdoor Art Fair took the barriers away by providing an accepting and inclusive environment for art buyers to directly engage in the Toronto art scene.

In 1960, Torontonians Murray and Marvelle Koffler were inspired by a visit to an outdoor art fair in Washington Square, New York City. Back in Toronto, they read that two artists were removed from the Toronto City Hall area for selling art. The rest, as the old phrase says, is history.

In 1965, the Toronto Outdoor Art Show was officially launched as a recurring event on the Toronto art calendar.

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The sixty-year tradition continues in spite of Covid-19 and social restrictions. The fair has moved online, finding new art lovers and followers across the world. Last year saw 130,000 attendees.

The Amazing Moss Park Art Collective is proud to announce that we have been accepted into the online event and hope you

visit us there. Participating artists are Alan McKee, Giselle Silvestri, Colourblots by Angela, Melanie Billark, Willow + Wyr, Michael Jenkins and Michael Sillers.

Please support our participant members and other local artists, and visit www.Amazingmoss-park.com

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113 Jarvis Street

Few remnants of the area's 19th- and early 20th-century are left

River Street from p1

"I can't comment on whether or not there is any merit to the buildings because we haven't studied them. But they certainly are very similar to other buildings that we've taken an interest in," said MacDonald.

When asked by Wong-Tam if heritage staff would have at least flagged the properties, MacDonald said that there was no heritage review of the studied area and that no one in the community brought the properties to the attention of heritage staff.

Wong-Tam later said she will prepare a motion with staff to have the deputation and communications reviewed. When information of this kind is brought to council, it "requires a sober review," she added. Council "need[s] to ensure that due diligence is followed."

This would not be the first time that a condo has replaced

a historic building in the Queen-River area without an HIA. Within the last two years, the 19th-century Soap and Oil Works buildings at 5 Defries Street were demolished without a heritage staff assessment. A 36-storey condo is being built on the site.

7 Labatt Avenue, 77 and 83-97 River Streets are all scheduled for demolition. According to Wynne, these sites also lack a HIA.

"Few remnants of the area's 19th- and early 20th-century built environment [will soon be] left," said Wynne. "Just because something is old doesn't mean it needs to be saved, but it should at least be studied before that decision is made."

In consultation with Heritage Planning, Toronto's chief planner and the executive director of City Planning are to report on staff recommendations regarding the site to City Council at its June 8 and 9 meeting.

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It could happen to you

Chris Kerr, TWC

Living through a pandemic is like carrying soup cans in a backpack – all the time.

That weight of the unknown, can have tragic results, as the deaths of the elderly in long-term care and nursing homes show. These are the factory warehouses for the discarded, residents treated like books on shelves, never read and occasionally dusted. So many elderly people are now left to the mercy of strangers, in a philosophy of monetizing anything.

We have all experienced freedoms curtailed, been denied access to services, and lived with a general feeling of disconnection, loneliness and fear. This happens daily if you are differently abled.

Welcome to my world. I am 56, and was a social worker for 20 years. I have diminished sight and hearing, yet my words confirm that I am able.

A friend told me I could not enter the CBC Poetry Contest unless I used a go-between. I can't use a computer or cell-phone, and the application can



Chris during the recording of Where I'm From - Toronto International Festival of Authors

only be filled in online. How about a phone number? Not accessible. Have you noticed less and less opportunity for direct connection? Having to use an intermediary diminishes me.

I revered my grandparents; their age gave them wisdom and experience to pass along to me. I spent any time I could in

their presence.

Older people are more likely to vote, volunteer and be active in their community. I use lessons learned from my grandparents to constantly change and adapt and thrive.

Care for profit is not the issue to focus on. Politicians scream to end it when it's obvious, after decades of neglect, that we need private infrastructure to build new facilities that provide privacy, dignity and social stimulation, and have a strict code of ethics that all adhere to.

Through diet, yoga, walking and spiritual practice, I am healthier – physically, mentally and spiritually – than at any other point in my life. I will keep to my path. I need to.

Where you end up is a crap shoot. I was never good at dice games.

Chris Kerr has worn many hats: activist, teacher, health care worker, performing artist and psychic bartender. His grandfather spent many hours reading with him from his favourite book, the dictionary, daily discovering the power of words.

the bridge: Book Review

Glenda MacFarlane, Columnist

The Case for Basic Income By Jamie Swift and Elaine Power Between the Lines, 2021

This idea of providing a basic income has a history stretching back at least as far as Thomas More's 16th century Utopia, and the concept has been debated for decades in Canada. But this excellent new book by journalist Jamie Swift and academic Elaine Power has arrived at a crucial moment. As the pandemic resulted in lost work for millions, the government's response supplied us with a hasty (and incomplete) example of how a basic income might positively impact the lives of Canadians. The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) allowed us to deal with the loss of income and uncertainty created by COVID-19 and provided millions of us with necessary support quickly and relatively simply.

Basic income has opponents and proponents on both the right and the left, and the book sets forth the history of how the concept has developed in Canada. The authors convincingly detail the obvious advantages of the program: lifting people from dire need, increased food security, increased housing security, a reduced toll on the healthcare system, a reduction in the anxiety that accompanies poverty or precarious income, and crucially, the personal freedom that allows people to live with more dignity and to pursue more meaningful lives. Each of these aspects would help to transform our society in ways that will become increasingly necessary in the years to come,

as automation, the climate crisis, and the gig economy continue to exacerbate income inequality and erode the ability to earn a living wage.

Swift and Power illustrate the benefits of BI by connecting us with the stories of people who were part of the short-lived Ontario Basic Income Pilot program that began in 2017. (The proposed three-year project ended abruptly in 2018 after the Conservatives came to power.) Under OBIP, individuals who made under \$34,000 annually received up to \$17,000 per year, and couples earning under \$48,000 received up to \$24,000, minus 50% of any earned income. Even though the pilot project was cut short after only eight months, the stories of those who benefited are thrilling and ultimately heartbreaking. The modest income provided by the pilot project made an enormous difference in the lives of the recipients.

A single mother in Hamilton with a special-needs child says being included in the pilot program was "like winning the lottery." It allowed them "extras" that many of us take for granted: her daughter was able to have a smoothie after her medical treatment, for example. Other participants reported changes not only in the material aspects of their lives like housing and food, but also improvements in mental health and social relationships. Again and again, people reported that having the support from OBIP allowed them to make choices that they couldn't otherwise have made.

Combining history, facts, and personal narratives, The Case for Basic Income makes it clear that BI is an idea whose time has come.



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Mix-use rental proposed on Dundas East

Donald Higney

A ten-story mixed-use development has been proposed at 401 Dundas Street East, between Milan and Berkeley Streets in Cabbagetown, replacing surface parking and the current two-storey commercial building housing an auto service.

The property is zoned for mixed use between residential living and retail, but it's clear that residents are not expected to be families with children.

Of the 92 units Plaza Partners and Goldberg Group plans to build, 17 have two bedrooms while 30 are designated as one-bedroom dwellings, 18 are one bedroom with a den, and 16 are bachelor apartments. Suites are to range from 445 to 1,194 square feet, according to the developer's planning rationale.

The tower designates 403 square metres for amenities such as a parcel room and a dog wash. It is to have a two-level underground garage with 37 spots as well as 98 bicycle parking spaces, most on the ground floor.

The site is on the 505 Dundas streetcar route, just over a kilometre east of the Dundas subway station and 750 metres from the Ontario Line's planned Moss Park station (between George and Sherbourne Streets along Queen Street



Looking southwest to 401 Dundas East.

Photo designed by BDP Quadrangle for Plaza



East). It's also between the 65 Parliament and 75 Sherbourne north-south bus routes.

A local resident says the neighbourhood welcomes the tower. "There's a lack of rental apartments. This would allow more people to be part of our neighbourhood."

The community has been told residential units will be rented even though the application specifies a mixed-use condo building, they said. "The [Cabbagetown South] resi-

dents' association is working with the developer, city staff and Councillor Wong-Tam to have the best building for our neighbourhood." The resident requested not to be named.

Since 2016, Plaza Partners has built 14 projects around North York and Mississauga, as well as in Forest Hill and the Annex. According to its website the aggregate purchase price of the properties is \$400 million dollars.



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A special garden sign for all to see

Heather Wilberforce & Catherine Tammaro, GTGK

Have you ever wondered about the sign that stands inside the Winchester School Children's Garden? It was designed with Green Thumbs Growing Kids by the amazing Wyandot artist, Catherine Tammaro; Spotted Turtle Clan (catherinetammaro.com) and painted by the youth working with Green Thumbs!

Let your eyes wander across the images on the sign. What do you see?

Based on the world view of many Indigenous folk from different places on "Turtle Island" the Turtle at the centre here, symbolises Mother Earth and is a deeply regarded Indigenous symbol which can mean many things in Indigenous oral teachings.

In the centre of Turtle's back is one of the many medicine wheels representing the four sacred directions - or the "All-ness of Everything" as Catherine said when we spoke. Tobacco, Sage, Sweetgrass, and Cedar all have spiritual and medicinal properties. These are the 4 sacred medicines. In the upper left is Elder Brother Sun who provides life and heat for all growing things and in the lower right is Grandmother Moon watching over all wom-



Catherine and helpers painting sign in 2018.

Photo courtesy of Green Thumbs Growing Kids

en identified people and the movement of the world's waters and behind it all, clouds, symbolizing change.

And at the centre of the wheel is the feather representing Eagle's clear vision, prayer, Indigenous Sovereignty and much more. Here, it is representing the individual, where everything is unified; clans, communities and lifeways. This sign watches over and protects the Children's Garden and helps to guide our stewardship of this land.

Green Thumbs Growing

Kids (GTGK) is a local charity actively creating and managing school food gardens in order to connect children to food and their environment. Gardens at Sprucecourt Jr. PS, Winchester Jr. & Sr. PS and Rose Avenue PS are managed by Green Thumbs and we support gardening projects at Nelson Mandela Park PS. No funding is received from the Toronto District School Board so GTGK depends on support from members of the community and friends of the gardens.

Nine break & enters were attributed to one suspect

Break-ins from p1

"It's an unfortunate kind of irritant to us to have to go through this, but it speaks more to some of the issues that are happening in the city," Yudman said.

Police were unable to identify the suspect through the footage.

On the other hand, the security cameras that lined the outside of 1922 Cannabis, an independently owned recreational cannabis business, held information that police used to catch a different suspect.

"Having a security system, as well as having security at the store for 50 hours a week, was for the community," said co-owner Mike Dunn, whose store window was smashed on May 27. "If anything ever happened, we have the ability and the means through the footage to be able to [identify the suspect]."

A pinhole camera Dunn had embedded in the doorframe captured a clear view of the perpetrator's face. Overhead footage from a hidden camera showed the suspect repeatedly smashing the window with a brick before entering the store and remaining inside for 25 minutes before being caught by

police a short distance away.

The suspect didn't grab anything before leaving, but Dunn believes there's more to these break-ins than stealing. "To me, it's a systemic issue. We were able to get our man and hopefully the community and all the local businesses are a little safer for the short term because of it, but it's a difficult time for everyone," says Dunn.

The suspect caught outside 1922 was linked to several break & enters, according to a Toronto Police news release.

Between May 19 and 27, Mathieu Blaquiere allegedly broke into nine commercial establishments downtown, near Church and Wellesley Streets, and Queen East and Sherbourne Street. On May 27, Blaquiere was arrested and charged with nine counts of break and enter to commit an indictable offence, failure to comply with a probation order and failure to comply with a release order. He appeared in court on May 28.

The police statement thanked the public "for assisting police in locating the man, which resulted in [an] arrest, and helping to prevent further potential break and enters within the downtown core."



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Disappearing gas stations pave way for Toronto's greener future

Megan Camlasaran

Gas stations are gradually leaving downtown as their land value continues to rise, and as Toronto shifts towards more sustainable transportation.

Proposed condominium developments are replacing some of the last remaining places to fill up in the inner city: Esso stations at Sherborne and Front, and Church and Dundas. For downtown residents who rely on vehicular transportation, gas stations remain at Jarvis and Wellesley (Petro-Canada) and Parliament and Adelaide (Shell).

Most recently, Graywood Developments spent \$73 million to build a 53-storey building at 214 Church Street, replacing the Esso and Circle K that it purchased for \$4.6 million in 2016, according to Urban Toronto. The Esso is still functioning as the project remains in pre-construction, with no completion date set as of yet.

City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam (Toronto Centre) says the trend is to "leave cars parked," because more people live within walking distance of everything they need, are biking more and are gradually switching to electric vehicles. In 2020, as many workplaces urged employees to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, Canada's retail gasoline sales declined 18 per cent compared with 2019, according to Statistics Canada.

Gas stations like the Church and Dundas Esso no longer fit into Toronto's urban layout, ac-



cording to Wong-Tam, because their format is too suburban. The growing number of condo developments do fit in these urban spaces, which developers are eager to purchase.

In a more environmentally sustainable future, residents will likely see fewer gas stations and more cycling pathways and transit infrastructure. In early June, City Council will consider creating a bi-directional bicycle track on The Esplanade and Mill Street.

Transit projects currently underway are the Ontario Line, which will provide relief to the Line 1 subway (mainly Yonge Street), the Scarborough subway extension to Line 2, and the SmartTrack Stations program for travel into and out of the city, according to the City of Toronto. These projects are still under construction, need further planning or are seeking public consultation, according to status reports by Metrolinx, the provincial transit agency.

Elaine Lewis, a senior manager at Home Depot Canada, lives downtown and drives two to three times a week to her office, taking the Gardiner eastbound onto the Don Valley Parkway. She usually buys gas at Bathurst and Lakeshore once a week.

Lewis is often trying to get to meetings and would rather not "cut it close" by taking

transit, she said. As well, given the state of the Covid-19 pandemic, she is hesitant to be on crowded transit.

Toronto's climate action strategy, TransformTO, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, including having all transportation use carbonless energy sources. Vehicles produce more than a third of Toronto's greenhouse gas emissions, leading City Council to approve its first electric vehicle strategy to "prepare for the global shift towards electric mobility."

As of 2020, Toronto has more than 6,000 electric vehicles, less than one per cent of all registered vehicles in the city but six times the number in 2016. By 2025, the city wants five per cent of personal vehicles to be electric, and 20 per cent by 2030.

As electric vehicles increasingly appear and gas stations disappear, charging equipment and stations will be needed. Since 2018, Toronto's Green Standard requires electric vehicle equipment in all new residential buildings.

The Ontario Condominium Act of 1998 gives condominium boards the authority to regulate common use of property and choose whether to make modifications like electric outlets available in tenant parking garages. The act is currently under review by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to facilitate increasing vehicle charging infrastructure, according to the City of Toronto.

Lots of anxiety over Metrolinx's August 30 acquisition deadline

Metrolinx from p1

Metrolinx also wants to use a site on Mill Street that the Toronto District School Board designated for an elementary school, which Belshaw says the neighbourhood desperately needs. "What I really want to ask Metrolinx," says Belshaw, "is where's the respect for the community?"

Along with other neighbourhood association members, Belshaw participates in the First Parliament Working Group that Ward 13 Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam established to discuss Metrolinx's Early Works draft report.

Fellow working group member John Wilson, co-chair of the West Don Lands Committee, a coalition of several neighbourhood groups, says there are too many unanswered questions. His committee's first goal, Wilson says, is to identify the layers of planning concerning the Corktown Station construction.

The city's master plan, Metrolinx's report and Infrastructure Ontario are all working behind the scene concerning the site, he says. "Our goal is to understand who does what, what is already decided and where we can influence the outcome." He also asks how the community will function during construction.

Lester Brown, another working group member, has been on a Gooderham and Worts association committee dedicated to

the First Parliament Site since 2003. "Metrolinx is not very forthcoming," he says. Brown recalled that the agency told the Working Group it would present new information at the last meeting, but later said that information is still confidential.

With the August 30 acquisition deadline approaching, Brown can't imagine when the Working Group will receive details of how the subway construction will proceed. "For something I've been working on for 20 years," he says, "I just don't believe they're going to accommodate the community's needs."

At recent meetings, Brown says, Metrolinx has been told there's a lot of anxiety about the deadline. "One of the fears that hangs over all of this is that they can drop an MZO at any time" – referring to a Minister's Zoning Order under the Ontario Planning Act, which the Ford government has frequently used to fast track development by overriding municipal planning.

Metrolinx says it wants to promote transit-oriented communities, Brown says. "But I think it's transit-oriented development. The province knows that development near a subway station is going to [generate] lots of money." He speculates that the province will likely sell off the land rather than retaining partial ownership to manage community infrastructure.

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