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LOCAL

the bridge

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

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Waterfront Toronto shortlists Quayside developer choices

Sophia de Guzman

Waterfront Toronto has released its shortlist of potential partners to build the Quayside neighbourhood. This marks the tri-governmental agency's second attempt to develop the 12-acre site after a failed partnership in early 2020 with Sidewalk Labs, Google's Alphabet Inc. subsidiary.

Waterfront Toronto envisions the area's five development blocks as a net-zero carbon construction of both a commercial and residential community, to "serve people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and incomes." The site, east of Parliament Street south of the Gardiner Expressway, includes Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common and the Water's Edge Promenade.

Julie Beddoes, the Gooder-

ham and Worts Neighbourhood Association representative on the Quayside Special Advisory Committee initiated by Waterfront Toronto, says, "This is a very special site. The Toronto Central Waterfront is probably the most valuable real estate in the country. Very few cities have that kind of site on their doorstep, to do with what they want to do."

The shortlist of development firms and architects all have established portfolios in Toronto:

- Toronto-based Daniels Corporation and Hullmark Developments Ltd., with Toronto-based Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc.

- Hines Canada Management II ULC with major Canadian developer Tridel Builders Inc. and British architect Foster + Partners

- Quayside Impact LP, uniting Canadian real estate company Dream Unlimited Corp. and Toronto-based builder and developer Great Gulf, with Ghanaian-British architects Adjaye Associates working with British Alison Brooks Architects and Danish Henning Larsen

- KMT Quayside Developments Inc., a collaboration of Canadian companies Kilmer Group, Mattamy Homes and Tricon Residential, working with Netherlands-based MVRDV and Copenhagen-based Cobe architects

Waterfront Toronto's request for Qualifications, the first step in narrowing down a pool of eligible partners, stated that the new development should have

Quayside continued p4

City Council approves amended Inclusionary Zoning Plan

Elsbeth Chalmers

In early November, City Council approved an amended Inclusionary Zoning Official Plan, zoning By-law and Implementation guidelines to mandate affordable housing in new developments. Beginning next year, developments near transit hubs with more than 100 units must have 5 to 10 per cent of them as ownership units (condominiums) or below market rental units.

The amended plan mandates ongoing affordability for 99 years and calls for additional market analysis in areas such as Little Jamaica (Eglinton Avenue West near Oakwood) to identify more opportunities for inclusionary zoning.

Although the plan has no specific targets, the city still supports the HousingTO Action Plan goals of creating

40,000 affordable rental units and 4,000 affordable ownership units by 2030. The city will report annually on the actual number of affordable units approved and secured.

The zoning regulations will apply only to areas zoned as Protected Major Transit Station Areas, within 800 metres of major transit. The amount of affordable housing required would vary by area, with the highest requirements in the downtown core.

In Corktown and other downtown neighbourhoods, developers must either provide affordable rental opportunities at a rate of 7 per cent (increasing to 16 per cent by 2030), or affordable ownership opportunities at a rate of 10 per cent (increasing to 22 per cent). But the By-law doesn't apply to developments submitted to the city before September 18,

2022.

"The By-law also doesn't apply to provincially designated Transit Oriented Communities," noted Ward 13 Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, which means the provincially planned developments at Corktown Station and on the First Parliament site may not include affordable housing.

"If the city had been allowed to develop it, we would have expected 30 [per cent] affordable," says Cynthia Wilkey, co-chair of the West Don Lands Committee. But so far, Infrastructure Ontario "has only said it would meet the private-sector IZ requirement."

Toronto's plan falls short of expectations by many community groups that support inclusionary zoning.

IZ continued p7



30 years and counting!

Jeff "the tree guy", operating near the St. Lawrence Market, says he loves helping people get the things they need to make the holidays special.

Pedestrians and cyclists welcome roadway changes to Esplanade and Mill Street

Megan Camlasaran

New bike lanes from Lower Sherbourne Street to Bayview Avenue, part of road safety upgrades, are helping local people feel safer and more inclined to walk or cycle. The city has proposed protected bike lanes, designated TTC lanes, and reducing speed limits from 40 to 30 kilometres per hour.

Movement patterns will change on The Esplanade between Jarvis and Berkeley Streets, and on Mill Street between Parliament and Cherry Streets. These are important connections to St. Lawrence Market, the Distillery District and parks like Corktown Com-

mon and David Crombie Park.

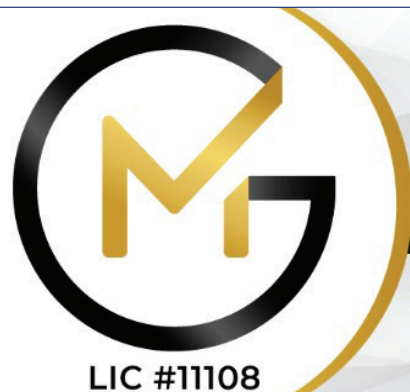
Pedestrians can now walk freely along sidewalks without fear of being clipped by cyclists trying to avoid vehicular traffic.

"Cyclists used to come down the sidewalks thinking 'well I belong here too,'" said Alan Barthel, president of Longboat Area Residents Association, who himself bikes throughout the community.

"The traffic fatality last year at the corner of Mill and Cherry, and the many near-misses at Parliament and Cherry, have shown us how dangerous the streets in our area have become," said Diana Belshaw, chair of Gooderham and Worts Neighbourhood Association. "Traffic has been reduced and slowed considerably since the changes."

The city reported 342 collisions on The Esplanade and Mill Street from 2015 to 2019, with 10 per cent involving pedestrians and cyclists.

Bike lanes continued p8



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Developer appeals hamstringing city's King-Parliament plan

Andre Bermon, Publisher

Here we go again. Another attempt to enact some direction in downtown planning and it gets charley-horsed right out of the gate.

The King-Parliament Secondary Plan, a set of guidelines approved by City Council in July, will be challenged by developers at the Ontario Land Tribunal on December 7. As did the St. Lawrence Historical Conservation District before it, the King-Parliament Secondary Plan has aroused developer ire because it attempts to direct growth in an era of unbridled development.

Among the 43 appellants listed, many are subsidiaries of major investment firms, developers or non-profit enterprises, such as the Kielburgers' WE to ME foundation, which recently sold buildings near Queen East and Parliament streets. Notable developers on the list include First Gulf, Brad J. Lamb, Alterra, Lanterra, Dream, Tricon, One Properties, Markee and Allied Properties.

Each time the city approves a set of planning guidelines to manage developer expectations and protect heritage, it gets shot down by a litany of appeals. With every verdict, the provincial land tribunal waters down local planning tools, exempting

developers from the will of the people. It's a wonder that communities bother participating in city-led consultations when ultimately, a consortium of developers with a phalanx of lawyers has the final say.

The problem lies in the province's controlling relationship with its municipalities. In adopting zoning bylaws governing land use, cities must take their cues from Queen's Park. Layers of planning framework exist starting from the Provincial Policy Statement to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and all the way down to minute Policy Areas, such as for a portion of Queen Street East, for example, compiled in district Secondary Plans.

Each plan must conform to the higher-level policies. This inevitably leads to conflict when provincial goals directly contradict local needs and wants. The Ford government is dead set on densifying our downtown, explicitly so in its Provincial Policy Statement. This gives developers the upper hand when appealing municipal bylaws at the Ontario Land Tribunal, formerly the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

Toronto's King-Parliament Secondary Plan was a mid-1990s response to former industrial zones of the downtown east emerging as potential investment opportunities. Historic neighbourhoods like Corktown and future communities such as the Distillery District were targeted for commercial and residential growth.

Since then, a lot has changed. In 2018, City Planning undertook extensive consultation to update the plan and reflect the

area's new realities. Planners promoted key characteristics of the downtown east, such as heritage, parks and public realm, as well as an array of bylaw amendments dictating built form. Rules on building height and mass vary depending on the policy area. In Corktown, new structures are to be low- to mid-rise, whereas the Old Town area, encompassing streets such as Richmond, Adelaide and King East, have a wider range of allowable heights, up to 90 metres (27 storeys).

The city's tools for shaping the King-Parliament planning area are far from novel, but its emphasis on preserving neighbourhood character while anticipating future density, makes the document all encompassing. When council approved the plan, residents and community groups that had participated in nearly four years of city-led consultations considered it a major victory.

Alas, the developers cried havoc, and let slip their dogs of appeal.

Each appellant will attempt to convince the tribunal adjudicator that their proposal should be exempt from the plan's "overly proscriptive" policies. Many will argue that local bylaws don't conform to the relevant planning framework. This is a process that may take a year to conclude.

The developers' strategy has worked repeatedly in the past. In the meantime, the appeals are keeping the King-Parliament Secondary Plan in limbo, weakening its ability to protect unique neighbourhood assets from impending uniformity.

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Shea's Victoria



Bruce Bell, History Columnist

A few years back, my good friend and neighbour the late great actress Billie Mae Richard and I were strolling around and found ourselves walking through a non-descript parking lot on the southeast corner of Victoria and Richmond Streets.

Billie – best known as the voice of “Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer” in the annual Christmas classic – said that as a young girl in the 1920s she often performed there, as the parking lot was the site of impres-

with a rousing chorus of “Rule Britannia” as music hall was deeply ingrained with British colonial roots. There were as many music halls then as there are movie houses today.

However on October 24, 1881 all this changed. Theatre historians regard this date, the opening of Tony Pastor’s 14th Street Theater in New York, as the birth of vaudeville.

The main difference between music hall and vaudeville was that one was very British and the latter very American. Being physically close to the United States, Toronto became a lucrative stop on the vaudeville circuit and enthusiastically embraced this form of American entertainment.

Vaudeville, French for ‘voice of the city’, was what television is today, something for everybody with mass appeal and influence.



Shea's Victoria circa 1955.

Photo: Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library

sive Shea's Victoria Theatre.

As we meandered through parked cars she pointed out where the entrance once was, the auditorium, the dressing rooms, where the doorman sat and where the large stage once stood.

Opened in 1910, this once magnificent theatre built at the height of vaudeville was one of many lost theatres that dotted Toronto's downtown core. The Richmond/Queen/Adelaide corridor had so many theatres, large and small, that Billie and her friends nicknamed the area “Toronto's Broadway.”

Billie was one of the last true vaudevillians. That art form dominated the public entertainment industry during the latter part of the 19th century and first part of the 20th.

Before vaudeville came on the scene, the most popular form of entertainment in Toronto was ‘music hall,’ an evening that included comics singing popular songs of the day, opera interludes, poetry readings and novelty acts.

It all mixed in together for an enjoyable show ending

Even though billed as fun for the whole family vaudeville was a grind industry. Billie Mae told me that by the time she was 6 years old, she and her sister were performing five full-length shows a day starting at 11 a.m.

A typical show was similar to music hall but with one big difference: the headlining act appeared just before intermission. This much-coveted spot determined who the star of the evening was and who therefore received top billing and a big payday.

The second act was much like the first, but the closing performer had faced an audience restless and ready to leave, having seen who they came to



see.

Headlining in Toronto was considered the big time on the travelling vaudeville circuit and this city had the theatres to prove it.

One of the first vaudeville houses built in Toronto was the Shea's Theatre with 1,700 seats, opened in 1899 on the southeast corner of Adelaide and Yonge Streets.

However in December of 1905, fire destroyed the theatre and the owners, the Shea Amusement Company of Buffalo (founded by Michael Shea, a Canadian born in St. Catharines), decided against rebuilding. Instead they constructed the fabulous Shea's Victoria at Victoria and Richmond.

Shea's Victoria opened in 1910 with two balconies and approximately 1,800 seats. It was home to some of the biggest vaudeville acts, but also ran full-length plays and musi-

cals.

Shea's opened an even larger vaudeville theatre in 1916: Shea's Hippodrome, where our new City Hall stands today. The ‘Hipp’ was the biggest theatre in Canada and one of the largest vaudeville theatres in North America.

When vaudeville died with the coming of talking motion pictures in the early 1930s, Shea's Victoria closed. It sat empty for years, though occasionally opened for charity fundraisers.

During World War II, big shows starring Billie Mae Richards as a young woman were rehearsed at the Victoria before shipping overseas to entertain the troops. Billie performed for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, later known as the Queen Mother, as well as for U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower and Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

As the war came to an end, Famous Players took over Shea's Victoria, turned it into a full-time movie house with a 1,896-seat capacity and renamed it the Victoria.

In 1947 the upper balcony was closed due to fire codes, bringing the seating capacity down to 1,260. In 1949 the theatre closed for a major renovation. When it reopened in 1950 it was still one of Toronto's largest movie houses, but its size was its downfall as it was hard to fill.

In April of 1956 the vast theatre was demolished and remained a parking lot for 60 years. Today the famous location is now a massive condo development.

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Benjamin Moore

‘We are pleased to note that it’s not just a standard condo development’

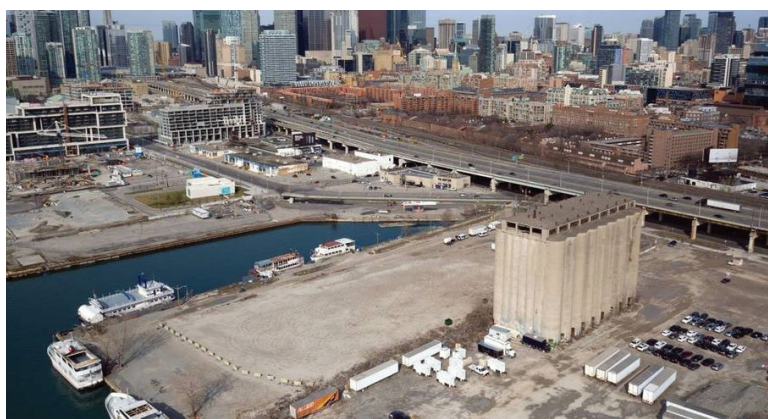
Quayside from p1

a minimum of 20 per cent affordable housing. The city’s new Inclusionary Zoning policy adopted in early November, requires as little as 5 per cent affordable housing units in applicable residential developments.

The document specified that the affordable housing be owned and operated both privately and publicly, to “strive for perpetual affordability.” Housing options will include various kinds of home ownership; rental units will range from studios to three or more bedrooms.

Waterfront Toronto consulted with the Quayside Special Advisory Committee (SAC), which includes neighbourhood associations and non-profit organizations such as 880 Cities which are dedicated to “enhanc[ing] mobility and public spaces” in order to “make cities suitable for people aged 8 to 80”, according to their website. These groups will continue to be consulted as the development proceeds.

One group consulted within SAC was the East Waterfront Community Association, established in 2020. President David Chan expressed excitement



12-acre Quayside site located at the foot of Parliament Street

Image: City of Toronto

about the development and the process so far.

“Waterfront Toronto is actually championing community consultation to give voice to all the various stakeholders involved in this area,” Chan said. “We are pleased to note that it’s not just a standard condo development.”

Secretary Kay Dermatis says the association is particularly looking for Quayside to accommodate families. “[Quayside needs to] repair the biggest pain points at the moment. The lack of schools and somewhere kids can play. When we look at developments like this, we would be pushing for these.”

Included in the Quayside parties’ roles and responsibilities is Indigenous participation. The document specifies

that each team identify plans to fulfill Waterfront Toronto’s “commitment to the participation of Indigenous Peoples in Quayside.”

Within the advisory committee, only member-at-large representative Jane Pyper has a listed affiliation with an Indigenous organization. The former chief strategy officer for the Greater Toronto YMCA and a Wellesley Institute board member, Pyper is also an advisor to Our Children’s Medicine, a charity devoted to improving Indigenous representation in the Canadian workforce.

The next stage in the development process will be a request for proposals based on Waterfront Toronto’s requirements. One team will be chosen by early 2022.

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Where I live



Ben Bull, Columnist

There's rioting on the streets of Rotterdam. Russia's Covid-19 case count is rising. Bavaria has cancelled its Christkindlmarkt. And in South Korea, the one-time model for pandemic preparedness, they're making all the wrong moves.

While cities all over the world beckon everybody back inside, Toronto's streets are teaming. It's good to be back.

People are the lifeblood of a city. You can tell a lot about a place by watching the world go by. A few days ago I sat on a bench at Jarvis Street and The Esplanade, waiting for my wife. I saw a harried mum dragging her kid across the intersection. Cars inched towards her as she weaved between the bumpers.

Why is she in a rush? I wondered. It's late afternoon – way past going home time. Maybe she has a doctor's appointment?

I thought back to the school runs I used to do with my four kids in tow. Did I look harried too?

A well-dressed gent sweeps by. That's a nice suit. Where is he going? Where's he coming from? There are no posh offices around here. Maybe he's lost?

The crossing guard waves his wand at a testy driver. The car honks off up the road like a sulky child wanting the last word. The guard shrugs his shoulders and ushers a young couple to safety.

This crossing guard has a friendly word for everyone. How does he do it? Most people are ignoring him, or giving him a lazy smile. The bloke reminds me of those charity hawks who flag down huffy passers-by with their Cheshire cat grins and their clipboards.

Would you care to make a donation?

People-watching is fun. As a youngster, growing up in the dreary suburbs of Leeds, England, I spent hours staring through the plate glass window

above my parent's shop, watching the neighbours scurry by:

There's Mr. Binner from the bike shop wheeling out a brand-new Kawasaki ... Irene the hair dresser rocking a bright blue rinse ... Old Joe from the back lane ... They say he lives in a caravan, but I've never seen it.

I have people-watched all over the world. I remember wasting a perfectly good afternoon on a park bench in Padua, Italy. Every uomo (man) puffed out his chest as he swaggered by. Every donna had a strut. But nobody smiled.

When I watch a city out and about, I like to ask myself a few questions:

- How busy are the streets?

Packed pavements usually mean the city is a safe place to be, and there are places worth going.

- What is everybody doing?

If we're all up to the same thing, this is a problem.

I remember eating my lunch on Wall Street. The place was heaving. Every sandwich shop spilled out onto the sidewalk. But when I trudged back to my hotel later on that evening, the streets were empty.

Evidently this part of New York City is all business. All work and no play does not make for a fun place to be. And it means you have to hike for bloody miles to grab a late-night snack.

- What kind of crowd is milling about?

Is it blue collar, white collar, young or old? How do they look?

I remember stopping for gas on my way to the Brickyard in Indianapolis. Across the street was a shop front with "Booze N Guns" stencilled across the façade. I watched the clientele tumble out of their SUVs and shuffle in, grimacing, coughing and limping. We didn't stick around to take any photos.

I asked my neighbour the other day if she'd ever considered moving away from Toronto.

"No," she replied.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because I live here."

I am lucky to live in a safe, vibrant city. I love that we're so diverse. Sure, Toronto has its problems, but it's where I belong.

It's where I live.

A true portrait of Santa Claus

Carol Mark, Columnist

Once upon a time, at Christmastime, growing up in Toronto in a multicultural family was a mixed bag.

On one hand, we were surrounded by Christmas lights decorating shop windows. We pressed our faces for a closer glimpse of the drummer at Simpson's downtown department store.

As the window dressers had intended, people from nine to ninety were mesmerized by the shapes of cakes twirling around plates. We thought, "that is heaven," to be surrounded by amazing cakes and sweets dancing in a child's imagination. We asked ourselves, "what would that taste like" and, "which would be the most delicious?"

The image of Santa Claus was always nearby, huge in his abundant red coat and jolly smile, overseeing the festivities.

Reality on the other hand, can be cruel. How did and how does Santa Claus fit into Toronto society, a multicultural society where it might not matter whether you are "naughty or nice" when there simply is no money in a slender budget for Christmas goodies?

Is Santa a brainchild of "Madison Avenue" advertising executives who reinvented Christmas as a way to drum up business profits at year end? This thought was explored in the ever-popular classic film *Miracle on 34th Street*, which questions the authenticity of



Victorian scrap, Santa Claus with tree and sack of presents.

Santa, yet paints "hope" that Santa is a spirit that lives in each of us.

How did religious images of St Nicholas, one of the most popular saints painted as Russian ikons, turn into Santa, the icon of Western Christmas?

Over the course of centuries, St. Nicholas's popularity spread, and he became known as the protector of children and sailors. Legend has it that he was also a great gift giver. His feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of his death, December 6.

But in December 1773, and again in 1774, a New York newspaper reported that groups of Dutch families had gathered to honour the anniversary of his death – and Christmas gath-

erings began. The name Santa Claus evolved from St. Nick's Dutch nickname, Sinter Klaas, a shortened form of "Sint Nikolaas" (Dutch for Saint Nicholas). And thus Santa Claus was born.

So now you know. But I think the important thing about all portraits of Santa, no matter where they originate, is that they represent aspects of us that we'd like to encourage throughout the world: generosity, kindness, hope and abundance.

That's what's behind a true portrait of Santa. That's who he really is: a generous, kind, hopeful and abundant version of ourselves — a positive and hopeful self-portrait of what we each hope to be.

Benjamin Moore

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Ontario Place redevelopment criticized at public meeting

Kayla Higgins

The province's revitalization plan for Ontario Place was publicly elaborated at a community-hosted panel discussion on October 19. Waterfront for All, a coalition of 15 groups focusing on the future of Lake Ontario, held its fourth speaker series in light of the government's redevelopment plans. More than 150 Toronto-area residents attended the panel, with main inquiries centering around environmental sustainability and green space.

Opened on the waterfront south of the Canadian National Exhibition site by then premier Bill Davis in 1971, Ontario Place was closed to the public in 2012 after years of financial losses.

Following its call for a development process that began in 2019, the province announced that concert promoter Live Nation, Therme Group of Austria, and Ecocreco Group of Montreal were selected to play key roles in the waterfront project. Concept viability and delivery certainty were among the deciding factors, the government says, as well as costs, benefits and alignment with its vision.

"By taking this first step with our world-class development partners, as well as the City of Toronto and Indigenous communities, we will deliver a renewed Ontario Place that provides year-round entertainment for all ages and interests," Premier Doug Ford said in a news release. The redevelopment will not include casinos or condos, and the land won't be sold, he stressed.

Key recreational and heritage features – including Ontario Place's Cinesphere, pod complex, marina, Trillium Park and the William G. Davis Trail – are to be retained. The site, including Trillium Park and the Davis Trail, is to remain open to the public as work gets under way.

Live Nation is set to redevelop the amphitheatre into a year-round venue, expanding its capacity up to 20,000 people outdoors and 9,000 indoors. Therme Group will build an all-season park including waterslides, pools, sports services, botanical spaces and over eight acres of parks and beaches. Ecocreco Group will build an adventure park with obstacle courses, ziplines and climbing walls, and will rent canoes, kayaks and other equipment.

The concessions awarded to these corporations will see two-thirds of the provincially owned park privatized with entry fees. In a Now magazine online op-ed in September, Spadina-Fort York MPP Chris Glover said this privatization encourages division between urban and rural, rich and poor.

"The sale of public assets and cuts to services have replaced

the commitment to the Ontario community," he wrote. "Chopping up and leasing out Ontario Place to corporations from outside the province means that we lose the opportunity to begin rebuilding a united Ontario with Ontario innovators."

Attendees expressed concerns about removal of trees after Therme Group announced its intention to introduce tropical plants and palm trees. "One can find palm trees in many poolside hotel conservation areas anywhere," said Toronto resident David Hanna. "Ontario Place deserves a unique architectural and landscape design that respects Ontario native species and diverse landscape."

Ken Greenberg, principal of Greenberg Consultants and former director of the city's urban design and architecture, said he would like to see the park as more of a unified lakefront. Improved green spaces and new housing linked to the new Ontario Line station "could see a combined Lakefront Park [that] serve[s] the needs of an expanding population for vibrant cultural, commercial and tourism activities," he said.

Ford's government has promised "to engage and consult with the community" on its modernization project. Former Toronto police chief Mark Saunders, the province's special advisor to the redevelopment, is to engage with the City of Toronto, Indigenous communities, project stakeholders and interested community groups regarding the environment, heritage and other aspects of the development.

However, the government has not yet committed to making public the results of a survey, closed on October 28, that asked how Ontarians see themselves using the revitalized Ontario Place, and what features of the park they value most.

"A redeveloped Ontario Place presents a unique opportunity to provide activities that can inspire and host experiences that bring people together to celebrate and create memories," said panel speaker Michael Robertson, an assistant deputy minister at Ontario's Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Costs for the project are still being finalized, but officials expect new amenities to be completed by 2030.

Developers concerned about lack of incentives to implement plan

IZ from p1

The amended plan has no requirements that purpose-built rental buildings offer affordable units. These buildings target residents with an annual income of \$32,486 to \$91,611, leaving out low-income residents who need deeply affordable housing.

"It is way too timid, but I suppose it is a significant start," says Wilkey. Her West Donlands group "has been advocating for years for the city to require a much higher per cent of [affordable residential housing]. On publicly owned land we have called for at least 30 per cent."

ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) and other advocacy groups have called for 20 to 30 per cent of housing in new developments to be affordable, in line with cities such as Vancouver and New York, which adopted inclusionary zoning in the late 1980s.

Although the Province of Ontario amended the Planning Act to enable municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning in 2018, the City of Toronto has taken over two years to develop supporting regulations, garnering criticism from community groups and others. Several letters to council, including from Ward 11 Councillor Mike Layton, called for full implementation to move ahead to 2025 or 2026.

Developers and housing advocates are concerned about the lack of incentives for develop-

ers, who will bear financial responsibility for implementing the plan in their respective developments. Several developers, such as Graywood Developments and Tridel, expressed support for inclusionary zoning in principle, but concerns over execution. Condominium developers speculated that it would discourage new developments and lead to increased rents on market-value units.

The city's amendments also mandate a communications and public education plan to combat "misinformation about

Inclusionary Zoning," including "misconceptions that Inclusionary Zoning will make housing more expensive."

After two years of financial analysis and public consultations, the plan is a step in the right direction, Councillor Wong-Tam says. "While much more is needed if we are to really address housing affordability, then this is a necessary first step."

The city will review the market impacts of inclusionary zoning a year after the program launches.

Ian McPhail Q.C.

Barrister & Solicitor

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City working to improve signage and lane markings

Bike lanes from p1

Barthel said he's almost been clipped as a pedestrian because motorists are speeding through red lights. "A few entitled drivers think these streets belong to them. We have to get them used to the fact they have to share the road, and they can't park wherever they want."

Robert Jordan, an employee at Ginkgo Floral Design on the Esplanade, said pedestrians had to be "very cautious" about speeding drivers, but now the road has less traffic. He sees seniors on motorized scooters taking advantage of the bike lanes, instead of having to share the sidewalk with walking pedestrians.

A city cycling study reported that most cyclists feel safer when dedicated bike infrastructure protects them from cars and trucks.

Also, "it's better for drivers when traffic is much less," Barthel said. "Especially if you live in the neighbourhood and use the Esplanade, not as a raceway to get home much faster."

But Belshaw says some drivers aren't happy about "having to go around the block" when arriving at or exiting parking garages.

"Toronto and other cities seem to want to continue a war on cars and push people to ride bikes," said Brenda MacDougall, an Esplanade resident who drives. "That's great in some climates, but did we ask for this? Bike lanes are great in



Road way changes seen on The Esplanade.

Photo: Megan Camlasaran

some areas, but not when they impede traffic and make people's lives hard or negatively impact businesses."

West of Jarvis, pubs, condos and stores have loading docks on the Esplanade. With the street now one way, MacDougall worries that businesses will face loading challenges.

"Taking away access to places to stop on both sides is impossible in our minds. People have lives to lead, jobs to get to and from, errands to run. They need cars. They aren't going to switch. They can't," she said.

Drivers from outside the area may become confused over which lanes can or cannot be used, and which roads are now a dead end.

The city says it is working with Toronto Police and the TTC to improve signage and lane markings to safely direct

people. Traffic agents on the streets are helping direct drivers. The project team is also working with Waze, Google and Apple to update their mapping software.

These roadway changes offer more space to walk and cycle on, which is expected to help the city reduce its carbon footprint as automobile dependency decreases. In the decade up to 2019, Toronto residents who cycle to work, school or for social gatherings increased from 29 per cent to 44 per cent, according to a city cycling study.

"Developing an integrated cycling network is one way to do this, and we're pleased our community is part of this positive change," said Belshaw.

Phase two will begin next spring, and is projected to finish in 2024.

Book Review

Glenda MacFarlane, Columnist

Peace by Chocolate:

The Hadhad Family's Remarkable Journey from Syria to Canada

John Tattrie

Goose Lane Editions, 2020

Many of us know the basic story of the Hadhad family, who came to Canada in 2015 as Syrian refugees and founded a successful company named "Peace by Chocolate." In this book of the same name by Nova Scotia journalist John Tattrie, we learn more about the family's incredible odyssey.

Isam, the Hadhad patriarch, trained to be a civil engineer. But when he first tasted chocolate at a cousin's wedding, he decided to become a chocolate-maker. Soon his shop, Hadhad Chocolate, was a successful Damascus business.

Isam met his wife Shahnaz when she came into the shop to buy a box of chocolates. He slipped a note into the box that said, "I do not make chocolates. I make happiness." They married and had seven children. As their family grew, so did their business, and Isam built a state-of-the-art factory in Damascus.

By 2010, Hadhad's factory employed dozens of people, and he had expanded across the Middle East. But conflict was raging in Syria. In 2012 the family home was shelled by a tank. Shortly after, an airstrike levelled the factory. Then two sons, Tareq and Ahmad, were injured in a rocket attack. The family decided to cross the border into Lebanon: Isam, Shahnaz and their five youngest children became

refugees, joining millions of other Syrians.

Fortunately, the Hadhad family found a safe haven in the small Nova Scotia town of Antigonish (population 4,364) as part of the cohort of 26,000 Syrian refugees brought to Canada shortly after the 2015 federal election. Tareq Hadhad arrived first. Greeted enthusiastically at the airport by the community members sponsoring the family, the Syrian was soon introduced to snow shovelling, Christmas and Antigonish hospitality.

Before long, Isam, Shahnaz and the three youngest children joined Tareq in a yellow house that their sponsors had fully equipped. With loans from Antigonish friends, the reunited Hadhad family began making chocolate again. Townspeople helped them to build a small factory, and Peace by Chocolate was truly launched.

Five months after they arrived in Canada, the family donated one month's profit from the fledgling business to the Red Cross for families made homeless by fires in Fort McMurray, Alberta, a gesture reported widely in the media. Prime Minister Trudeau mentioned the family in a speech to the UN, and soon there was a bigger factory, a deal with Sobeys grocery, and astronauts eating Peace by Chocolate candy on the International Space Station.

Tattrie's book is a bit of a confection itself, a narrative of triumph over tragedy, of the spirit of community, and of dreams of peace. But, like chocolate, the story is irresistible.

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