



CITY

Sherbourne Common grounds

Touring the new park on Toronto's waterfront
|By Paul Terefenko

On the lonely ride south along the Sherbourne bike lane, I couldn't help but get excited about the addition of a new chunk of reborn Toronto Waterfront. Yes, just meters from the desolation and looming grayness of the overhead Gardiner lay the promise of greatness.

And that promise has largely been delivered. The wide open 1.5 hectare (think two city blocks) space dubbed [Sherbourne Common in an online contest](#), is at the heart of a new East Bayfront community was officially unveiled today by a triumvirate of governments.

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was on hand, and displayed a little more tact in his speech than was [shown at the Canadian Club](#) of Ottawa earlier this week.

Not that Flaherty was against patting himself on the back over the feds' cash-ponying.

"More than \$27 million [of \$30.6 mil] is of your federal tax money. Nothing speaks like money, of course. It is a great cooperative venture," announced Flaherty with a concrete splash pool as a backdrop.

Said splash pool was later used as a photo op for all levels of government, represented by Flaherty, Ontario's Minister of Research and Innovation Glen Murray and local councillor Pam McConnell, to turn on the inaugural gush of fountain water.

It wasn't that easy, though. The water didn't feel like flowing at first, with Glen Murray joking, "oh well, the life of a politician" before spurts activated behind him.

Those trickles could also be read as a metaphor for the difficulty of getting the big money to flow for city-building projects like this one, contrary to the gleeful ease of it all portrayed by the finance minister.

As for the park's actual features, water plays a crucial role. There's a nice winding 240-metre winding concrete channel cutting through the East Bayfront's largest waterfront park project. But more significant that the aesthetics of the space is the ongoing construction of an ultraviolet stormwater treatment plant underneath a pavilion that houses restrooms and a café.

In a nutshell, stormwater travels along, solids are separated, everything enters a tank and an artificial wetland with UV ray holes, gets treated further under the pavilion and flows back to Lake Ontario it goes via the winding channel.

The vision is pleasant. Of course, the area is far from completed. George Brown's building slated for the west end of the park is still pre-reality and the area north of Queens Quay is a construction pit.

Come next year, however, it's not going to be hard seeing life return to this section of formerly industrial Sherbourne, especially if you can ignore the highway cutting through it all.

