

SUMMER
20
22



SOUTH ROSEDALE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Yonge St Bike Lanes

In April 2021 The City of Toronto extended its Active TO Pilot Project to Midtown adding Bike Lanes on Yonge St. from Bloor to St. Clair. The SRRA has heard concerns from many of our residents regarding these Bike Lanes including, but not limited to: unprecedented congestion especially during peak hours, emission idling and its environmental impacts, accessibility for those with special mobility requirements, longer Emergency Vehicle response times, TTC concerns, incidences of road rage and increased traffic through residential streets as vehicles rat-run to avoid Yonge street hold-ups.

On April 5th the mayor held a review meeting for the project where local residents' groups were asked to share experiences and give feedback. Much of the discussion focussed on concerns about increased emergency response times. Toronto Fire and EMS Chiefs indicated that average emergency response times in South Rosedale and neighbouring residential areas are still below the City-wide response times. However they did not speak specifically to whether the bike lanes have negatively impacted these response times. The



(continued on page 2)

Metrolinx's facility to be built in local parkland

Metrolinx's decision to build a train layover and service facility in the Don Valley Park has united local councilors, residents' associations and environmentalists in opposition against a plan that is wildly at odds with the City's stated goal of the last 40 years to develop this valley as central Toronto's signature parkland.

Scheduled to start at the end of this year, the Metrolinx facility will be constructed on a mile long section of the valley's green corridor at one of its narrowest sections. Running under the Bloor viaduct, abutting the Don Trail, it will cause major impact to this part of the valley including a designated environmentally significant area.

Trees and meadowland will be removed to make way for elevated track and buildings to store and service 3 diesel trains during off-peak hours. The track and service buildings will sit on top of a newly constructed 10m high retaining wall to remove them from the Don Valley flood plain. The service site includes: staff office, sanitary waste dispos-



Metrolinx's renderings

(continued on page 2)

SAVE THE DATE!

South Rosedale Residents' Association
Annual General Meeting
The Toronto Lawn Tennis Club
11 Price Street
Wednesday 14th September 6.30pm
All Residents Welcome

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pg 3 - Rosedale loses 2 police units

Pg 3 - Leaf Blower noise

Pg 4 - Garden suite zoning changes



Join SRRA/Renew your membership
at: www.southrosedale.org.

Yonge St Bike Lanes *(continued from page 2)*

City of Toronto presented the Traffic Study data it relied on to extend the Bike Lane Pilot Project, but many who reviewed the study expressed shock at a real absence of data and other pertinent information that has been collected. There was also discussion on the possibility of moving the bike lanes to an alternate north/south road that might be more suitable.

The SRRA is very concerned at how these bike lanes have impacted our residents, not just in terms of traffic but also for our residents with disabilities, who have expressed great hardship from the barriers created by them. We believe that any impact on the quality of life and added barriers that affect those with disabilities must be considered with the implementation of any Infrastructure. We are working with other Residents' Associations in the area and with Yonge St. BIA on how to best address these concerns, including the possibility of a privately funded traffic survey. Meanwhile the pilot project will continue until its next review in January 2023, with Transportation Services collecting additional data and feedback before making its recommendation to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee Council ahead of the January meeting.

Rosedale's Gateway Pillars

We've always had some terrific home owners in our South Rosedale Neighborhood including colourful characters, historic ladies and gentlemen, creative artists and writers and some of the top entrepreneurs and academics the city has known. Many of these families have helped to build the infrastructure of Toronto over the last 160 years and one of their common traits has been their generosity.

In 2012 Mr Ray Cowling made Rosedale a gift of two limestone pillars. The City of Toronto graciously allowed us to have these 12 foot pillars installed on the grass verge on Crescent Road half a block east of its Yonge St junction.

Unfortunately one was damaged by a hit and run driver a few years ago so responsibility for their repair or removal fell to us. Having contacted 17 masonry contractors in the GTA and beyond, we've found someone who can repair the damaged pillar and will build a

camouflaged bollard in front of the pillars to avoid future problems.

However we're still responsible for ongoing costs and so are looking into insurance coverage. Maybe we can find a generous benefactor to cover the cost of these necessary repairs? If you'd like to volunteer please contact Doc Von Lichtenburg at doc@docsmotorcyclegear.com



Metrolinx's facility to be built in local parkland

(continued from page 2)

al building, electrical storage facility, natural gas storage, staff carpark, 2 access roads and security lighting and fencing.

The best solution for our city?

Metrolinx's rationale for locating its layover in parkland was not open for any public scrutiny or debate leaving many frustrated that a decision that is so detrimental to Toronto's parklands was made in a vacuum. If Metrolinx was obliged to take any criteria other than its own need for overflow train storage from Union station into consideration, it is hard to believe that the proposed site would have been selected.

Local activist Cathy Bertha expressed the growing public concern: "In 2019 the City commissioned a report identifying that Toronto lags far behind where it should be with greenspace per capita, particularly in our rapidly densifying downtown core. So why is Metrolinx allowed to eliminate a large swathe of downtown parkland? Imagine the outcry if this was built in Central Park!"

Opposition groups are united in supporting better transit, but question why this must come at a cost that all Toronto's citizens have to pay in lost parkland. Covid reminded us just how important green-space is to our mental and physical health.

The SRRA is working closely with opposition groups and local councilors to lobby Metrolinx to reconsider its decision but it is difficult to know what, if any effect this will have on the provincial behemoth that is Metrolinx.

For more information and to stay informed visit buildthepark.ca

Glen Road Pedestrian Bridge and Tunnel Replacement

The Glen Road Pedestrian Bridge which has spanned Rosedale Valley in various forms for over 130 years is being reconstructed along with the tunnel under Bloor Street East which connects Rosedale to the Sherbourne subway station and St James Town.

Officially known as the Morley Callaghan Footbridge, it was named after a famous and prolific local novelist ("Canada's Chekov") who lived on Dale Avenue from 1951 until his death in 1990. He used the bridge daily for walks with his wife and dog.

Some of the features of the new bridge and tunnel will include:

- Enhanced safety and lighting features on the bridge including suicide prevention barriers.
- The tunnel will be widened to 4.8 m and include enhanced lighting, and expanded landing area and staircase.
- An expanded public space on Glen Road south of the tunnel which

- will include a new planting area with a retaining wall on the east side.
- Provisions for CCTV security cameras and an emergency intercom system.
- Public art, bollards, and a bike share station.

Construction is expected to be completed in November 2023. Until then, the impacts of the project will affect both car and bike lanes as well as parking on this stretch of Bloor Street East. Pedestrians are encouraged to use the Sherbourne bridge as an alternative route for north-south travel.

A total of 127 City trees will need to be removed from the Rosedale Valley ravine and the City's boulevard in order to carry out the work. Over 400 new trees and 1000 new shrubs will be planted.

Additional information can be obtained from the city webpage and residents can subscribe for email updates: www.toronto.ca/glen-rd-ped-bridge



Artist rendering of the proposed bridge design, wide pedestrian bridge with high railing and fence.

ROSEDALE LOSES 2 POLICE UNITS

A major reallocation of Police resources will affect policing in our neighbourhood. The Toronto Police Service's 2022 Budget commits to increasing police officers in priority areas. To achieve this without increasing staffing capacity requires redeploying officers from other divisions, including our local Division 53 (which spans from Bloor north to Lawrence and from Bathurst east to the Don River).

As of June 6th, our local Crime Response Unit and Traffic Specific Enforcement Limit have been disbanded, leaving concerns and issues usually dealt with by these units to be handled by front-line, primary response officers.

Residents' associations and business owners are very concerned about how this will affect our communities. SRRAs crimewatch board member, Janice Lo explains these concerns: "Even before these changes, division 53 had limited street resources to respond to calls for petty crime, but now there won't be anyone dedicated to our area, they're just not available anymore. There's also implications for events, our area has now been de-prioritized, so event organizers will find it difficult to secure a police presence. This is very disappointing and its impacts will be felt in crime response, prevention and follow-up in our neighbourhood."

Leaf Blowers: Putting the wind up our residents!

It used to be that the penetrating sound of leaf-blowers was limited to the Fall, but usage has steadily increased and now they're routinely used for weekly yard clean-ups, replacing brooms and rakes.

Judging by our mailbox and neighbourhood social media, it would seem patience with these noisy, polluting machines is wearing thin! Thanks to Covid and its aftermath, we're all spending more time at home, so both work and leisure time is being disrupted by them.

Arguments against gas-powered garden equipment is backed by sound scientific evidence. The 2 stroke engines powering them are the dirtiest small engines. Lacking the advanced technology to keep emissions low, one hour's use of a gas fired leaf blower is equivalent to driving a car 480 Kilometres. The fine particulate air pollutants they emit are hazardous to lung functioning and respiratory health.



However it's their noise pollution that garners most attention as their 2 stroke engine is such a pervasive irritant to urban peace. The excessive noise it produces travels long distances, penetrates walls and windows and is at levels that can be harmful to operators' hearing and well-being.

These factors have led many to call for a ban or restrictions on their usage to bring our City into line with many other jurisdictions around the world. The City is listening, and its Environment and Community Development Committee was scheduled to have made its recommendation to City Council by mid June. However the ECDC meeting was mysteriously cancelled by the committee chair and the review has now been pushed back to the provisional date of July 6th.

Luckily you don't have to wait for the City to take action, you can make changes now! Leaves can be raked, and left in planting beds to feed the garden naturally. This provides habitats for insects, winter insulation for plants, enriches your soil and increases your yard's biodiversity. If you still want to use a leaf blower, consider using it less frequently and switching to an electric one (which is less noisy and polluting).

If you'd like to stay informed about the progress of legislation or lobby on these issues, you can connect with local "Gas Buster" lobbyists by contacting gasbusterstoronto@gmail.com.

GARDEN SUITES : THE RIGHT ANSWER TO A HOUSING CRISIS?

The traditional neighbourhoods that Toronto residents are used to seeing could alter if new housing by-laws being proposed come to fruition.

The City of Toronto passed legislation on February 2, 2022 which allows Garden Suites on almost all residential lots in the city. A “Garden Suite” is a second house built in the backyard of a detached, semi-detached or townhouse property. In 2019, Laneway Suites of up to two storeys became permitted in the backyards of homes. “Laneway Suites” are similar to Garden Suites but on lots that are next to a public laneway.

Most residents would agree that Toronto has a housing crisis which needs to be addressed. A number of Resident Associations are concerned, however, with the proposed solution. The by-law effectively re-zones approximately 500,000 properties and many feel that the residents who will be impacted should be given a louder voice.

What are some of the concerns?

- Garden Suites would be “as-of-right” housing meaning they could be built without notifying neighbours and having to rezone the land.
- The City is extending Garden Suite zoning to duplex, triplex, fourplex and low-rise apartment buildings.
- Regulations may favour developers, investors and speculators increasing competition with home buyers.
- Trees, tree canopies and green spaces may not be protected. Backyards will be replaced with bricks and cement.
- The heritage aspects of a neighbourhood may not be preserved.
- Where will residents of Garden Suites park?
- Will Garden Suites be rented out as Air BNBs?
- Inadequate communication with homeowners has prevented them from assessing what these changes mean to their quality of life, their neighbourhood and their properties.
- Other municipalities, such as Barrie, have had a negative experience with similar zoning changes.

If you wish to make your voice heard, contact the Mayor’s and City Councillor’s office.

YELLOW CREEK RAVINE: PAST AND PRESENT

Covid made us appreciate the importance of our local ravines. We’re so lucky to be able to escape the city and descend into a network of paths that immerse us in the natural world. “...**Through these great sunken gardens you can traverse the city beneath the streets, look up to the floating neighbourhoods, houses built in the treetops.**” (Anne Michael in Fugitive Pieces)

But sadly many of our ravines have suffered from years of neglect. Here’s a picture taken in 1870 of what was then considered Toronto’s northern destination park?



Known locally as Yellow Creek Ravine (or the Vale of Avoca) it connects Mount Pleasant cemetery at its north with Mount Pleasant Rd. at Roxborough St. East, running under St. Clair bridge and below Summerhill Gardens.

It’s hard to recognise this once beautiful park, as it’s long been left to grow wild. The banks of its stream, Yellow Creek, here graced by grassy banks and mature trees, are now scarred by erosion, fallen trees and invasive, non-indigenous species. The stone mounds of its historic Yellow Creek Bridge (pictured below in a postcard from the 1900s) are all that’s left to show of what our family calls “the



Photo acknowledgement: Lorraine Tinsley 2019 Gail Graham

bridge to nowhere” because one of its banks is now completely washed away, rendering it useless and dangerous.

Thankfully, this ravine has recently been receiving some much needed attention. Work has been focused on the area below Summerhill Gardens, where erosion by the creek was threatening homes, infrastructure and the pedestrian trails. The creek’s channel was widened and re-routed to reduce the risk of slope failures. The main path to the east of the creek and the west bank path in the affected area were reconstructed. The second phase of construction addressed emergency sewer repairs under St. Clair bridge and included shoring-up of the area close by.

However further capital investment is required to repair banks, pathways and access points. Deterioration is accelerated by flash flooding events, which have become more frequent due to climate change.

The SRRA is an active member of the Midtown Ravines Group, a group that was founded 6 years ago as a direct result of the deterioration of Yellow Creek Ravine. MRG is a consortium of 12 local residents’ associations working for better ecological balance and improved park use in ravines in Midtown Toronto. It works closely with local councilors, the City of Toronto and other environmental groups to help guide this and other ravine projects and policy and to provide input and feedback on ravine initiatives in our area. It consults regularly with its network of Residents Associations’ to seek their guidance and input on local environmental initiatives.

South Rosedale Through The Eyes of an 11 year old resident *By Isabelle Labrecque*

The neighbourhood I live in is truly wonderful. One of my first memories was riding around South Rosedale in a school bus, staring out the window, with amazement and dreamless wonder. As



I admired all the historical architecture, I would think to myself, this is more like a tour bus than a school bus. Then I would laugh with my friends as I realised that we all lived in those pretty houses.

South Rosedale is home to my school, Branksome Hall. A school that reflects the area just as the area reflects it. The halls of Branksome Hall are filled with smiling faces from both friends and future friends, just like the Streets and Sidewalks of South Rosedale.

My walks to school and all around are beautiful.

In the winter the air is cold but, the lining of the snow on the houses and trees sure offers a beautiful contrast like no other. It is during the winter that I find myself and my two younger brothers looking out our front window the most. It’s just my brothers, me, the warm fireplace and a warm cup of hot chocolate. Serene, picturesque beauty fills my eyes with a view that should be in a museum.

In spring, everywhere I look there are colorful flowers of all sorts blooming, like rainbows bursting out of the ground. I hear a symphony of birds singing and I feel like that song is only meant for me. While I walk, I can see sparkles from tiny drops of morning dew that shine like crystals on the soft bed of grass.

In the summer, the sun casts rays that allow gardens of plants to continue to grow. The sunlight shines on the old houses making it seem as though they are in the spotlight. And in many ways, they are. Tall towering leafy trees line the street and give a welcoming appearance. Even without words they speak with their stretched-out branches like arms, they say “come stand under me if you need a place of cool shade.”

Finally, it’s Fall and I am wondered by those same trees as their

colorful crown of leaves paint the sky. Nature is diverse and beautiful, there are so many colours and styles. Just like the faces I see walking all around me in South Rosedale, different colours and cultures wonderfully put together to form our diverse community like a comforting quilt.

I am an 11-year-old girl, part Algonquin, part Filipino/Chinese, and part French. I am an important part of this community and belong here just as much as everyone else. I am a girl who looks up to the sky, and all around. I admire the beauty of this neighbourhood and all else. A beauty that both radiates and reflects off of me. I walk under the same sky that my ancestors once did centuries ago and I believe that like the stars, they look down on me with shining pride, knowing a part of them still exists. I wonder to myself, just as my body breaks the light to form a shadow, maybe I am just the shadow of my ancestors shining down from above.

I know that my brothers and I will always cherish South Rosedale and what our eyes see. Because what I see, also gives me feeling and inspires me.

Hydro One Grant benefits local school

Just across Bloor Street nestled between the towers of St. Jamestown sits Rose Avenue Public School. Challenged by its urban setting, the school does all it can to connect its students with the natural world and this month the grade 3 classes have been doing just this, by growing seeds and planting three native pollinator beds in their school grounds.

The project originated thanks to a \$5,000 pollinator grant donated by Hydro One, following major clear-cutting in our Rosedale ravine system, which was necessary to clear power lines.

Midtown Ravines Group received the grant and selected Rose Avenue School as its worthy beneficiary. It worked with the school to find a suitable location on their property and to involve students and work it into their curriculum. Greenthumbs, a local charity that works with urban kids to educate and involve them in gardening projects, implemented the project.

The Rosedale Digital Neighbourhood Watch group has been up and running since 2019! Are you signed up?

It's the most efficient way to stay informed about crime and safety in Rosedale while working in partnership with many communities in Toronto and 53 Police Division to stay connected and vigilant.

To join the group, please send your email address and street address to: rosedaletorontowatch@gmail.com. Your email address will be kept private and once added, you'll receive timely news of suspicious activity and crime incidents in our neighbourhood.

If you become aware of any suspicious or criminal activity (no matter how small), please advise the group immediately. Pictures and videos are encouraged along with descriptions of any suspicious persons. Note down the make, model, colour, and license number of any strange vehicles.

Be safe, be aware and communicate!



Grade 3 kids plant at Rose Avenue Public School

South Rosedale Needs You!

Do you care about the beautiful neighbourhood we live in? Do you have time to help build and preserve our thriving downtown community? We are always looking for new Directors for our board and volunteers to help with the many and diverse projects we are involved with.

If you are interested in volunteering your time for our community, we'd love to hear from you.

Contact: southrosedaleresidents@gmail.com

Membership Matters!

The SRRA works hard to protect and enhance South Rosedale as a great place to live. Through actions large and small, we protect the heritage character of our neighbourhood, enhance our parks and ravines, manage traffic, parking and security issues, and do much more.

To do all this, we need your financial support. You can help us by ensuring you take out or renew your annual membership of \$100.

To join or pay your dues, please visit our website at www.southrosedale.org and click on "SRRA Annual Membership".