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Deer Park Residents Group October 2022 Newsletter

President's message

Thanks to all of you who attended our June AGM where we shared our many activities to represent your interests in our Deer Park community.

Congratulate our hard working Councillor, Josh Matlow, who by far had the strongest win in the October 24 City Council election! We look forward to continuing to work together with Councillor Matlow over the next four years to meet our Deer Park goals.

The Deer Park Residents Group (DRPG) is recognized by the City of Toronto as representing residents in the area bounded by Avenue Road on the west, the Beltline/Mt. Pleasant Cemetery/Vale of Avoca Ravine on the east and the escarpment to the south. We work to build our community by promoting the interests of its residents be they owners or renters, to maintain the environment and quality of life in Deer Park and providing a forum to share both ideas and concerns about the area. Residents groups play an important role residents groups in the City's democracy as described by Adam Vaughan, a former City Councillor, at <https://youtu.be/4ntK3SfNbg4> at the recent Harbord Village Residents Association AGM.

The Board's current activities include actively strengthening the important role of tenants in the DPRG; working with developers to help ensure new projects fit into our community; actively supporting initiatives to improve street safety, address noise and environment issues, as well seeking more park space and improvements to the Vale of Avoca Ravine.

We keep the local community informed through newsletters as well as our website, www.deerparkresidents.ca, and recently added a Facebook page, [@DeerParkResidentsGroup](https://www.facebook.com/DeerParkResidentsGroup) · Community. We work with closely our local Councillor and make representations to City Council on matter of interest.

How can we better meet your needs? Contact us at info@deerparkresidents.ca.

Cathie Macdonald, President

Join DPRG Board!

Get involved in keeping our Deer Park a truly exceptional neighbourhood. Please email the Board at info@deerparkresidents.ca about your interests and what you can contribute.



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Tenant Advisory Committee

Given that the majority of residents in Deer Park are tenants, we especially encourage tenants to join so your voices will be heard.

Tenants Meet and Greet

Our Committee is organizing a tenant meet and greet event for tenant members past and present. Refreshments will be served. Location to be determined. Keep an eye open for an email from the TAC for a November date!

The intent is to meet others and network within our tenant ranks, and identify tenant issues for the DPRG Board to consider in working with larger community and the decision makers at the municipal and provincial levels.

John Plumadore, Chair

Street Safety Committee

ActiveTO Midtown Site Walk

On Thursday September 22, three DPRG Board members joined City of Toronto and Transportation Services representatives for ActiveTo Midtown Yonge site walk. The walk started at Farnham Ave and ended past Glen Elm Ave. We were advised that a new left turn lights were added at various streets south of St. Clair to help with congestion and access to residential streets. DPRG shared community comments about the project and thanked staff for all the work and positive change that ActiveTo Midtown is bringing to our community.

Successes ActiveTo Midtown Complete Street Pilot

New data from the City shows:

- Bike riding is up: In May 2021, before the ActiveTo pilot on Yonge started, there were 290 people riding bikes in Midtown. In May 2022, this number has increased to 720 people. That is 150% growth!
- Walking is up: In May 2021, there were 13,000 people walking, by May 2022, the number is 21,800. That is 59% growth!
- Vehicle travel time is up: Between May 2019, that is before the pandemic, and May 2022, vehicular travel time is up about two minutes on the entire Yonge Midtown Complete Street Pilot area – Bloor to Davisville. This increase is consistent with other areas of Toronto during the same period.



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Changes to ActiveTo Midtown Complete Street pilot between Merton Street and Glen Elm

At the request of TTC, in the original project design, a southbound queue jump lane was provided between Merton Street to north of Glen Elm Avenue for TTC shuttle buses. The TTC ended up not using the lane. It has been transformed to provide parking for businesses on the west side of Yonge, north of Lawton Blvd. Similar to the east side, planters will be added to provide "green" curb extension, creating a feeling of a narrower street which often results in reducing vehicular operating speeds. The southbound cycle track will remain the same, with better bicycle connections to and from the Cemetery.

Results of the first phase of Avenue Road Safety study community consultation

On August 18, the City finished the first phase of the community consultation about possible safety improvements to Avenue Rd between Bloor Street West and St. Clair Avenue West. There were 1,307 responses to the city survey. The most common concerns are about the high speed of traffic, insufficient space on sidewalks, lack of bikeways, and insufficient buffer space between pedestrians and vehicles. The most frequently identified changes that survey respondents would like to see are increased sidewalk widths, reduced vehicle speed limits, and the introduction of cycling facilities. The next phase of consultations will take place in winter of 2023 and will involve a review of potential design options for Avenue Road.

Piotrek Sepski, Chair

Noise and Pollution Action Committee

DPRG Gasbusters making headway

Gasbusters was established by Board members Chris Keating and John Watt as well as member Dundee Staunton, to promote the banning of noisy and polluting gas-powered leaf blowers, a demonstrated health hazard. (DPRG President. Cathie Macdonald was part of the Toronto Noise Coalition team that pushed for banning gas powered leaf blowers in the development of the 2019 Noise Bylaw.) Gasbusters now has some 500 members across the City! See further information on our website deerparkresidents.ca.

To join, email gasbusterstoronto@gmail.com.

To see the recent CBC interview segment with Gasbusters John Watt and Dundee Staunton, scroll to 20 minutes. <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2087495235974>



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Despite the Gasbusters strong results in gaining support for the ban, last July City Council adopted the City's Municipal Licensing and Standards Division (MLS) recommendation for only a minor change - that gas powered leaf blowers be permitted only from 8 am rather than 7 am.

We recently learned that the MLS Division reported few noise complaints because the 311 only considers complaints where the noise is specifically **not** permitted by the Noise Bylaw. So, complaints during the day, when there are many real complaints, cannot be registered. This problem is now clear to all. The MLS Division is also to work with landscape businesses so they operate more quietly.

Watch for the 2023 Noise Bylaw review

Next year, the City's Municipal Licensing and Standards Division will undertake a major review of the 2019 Noise Bylaw. Their 2022 report suggested that they will be looking at a new approach to regulating leaf blowers – to limit noise levels to the decibel limits of electric machines. Watch opportunities for public consultation in the review process. Gasbusters will keep you updated.

Chris Keating, Chair

Development Committee

Current development applications

Deer Park has now 14 development applications in various stages of approval, including 2 under appeal and only one project, One Delisle, is under construction. See the October Deer Park development chart on our website, deerparkresidents.ca. But we are entering a time of great economic uncertainty. What will happen in the development of our City and our Deer Park? What will get built and when?

TTC Davisville Yards

The TTC is undertaking an exciting major redevelopment project to cover the Davisville tracks and yards with parkland, new housing and nonresidential development. A public consultation process took place last year on ideas for the site.

Concerns about the amount of proposed development

A number of Deer Park residents have raised concerns about the impacts of the many applications in our area and related traffic impacts. The Chief Planner, Gregg Lintern, has agreed to review their concerns with the planners involved. A traffic study was approved several years ago in anticipation of increased development in our Yonge St. Clair area but was delayed by covid initiatives. We hope to see the results soon.



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Provincial housing priorities

The Provincial Government has just set a goal for Toronto to provide 285,000 new housing units in the next 10 years, well above the recent numbers built. As well, it continues to make changes to “expedite” more development approvals by restricting the appeal process, reducing the role of Conservation Authorities and reducing the ability to protect trees, reducing timeframes for City approval of large and complex projects, as well cutting development fees needed to fund City Planning staff. Residents now have fewer opportunities to be heard. No additional funding is being provided for the must needed housing, affordable housing.

But getting more housing built is not so much about shorter approval times and cheaper costs for approvals, but about when development actually happens, when the industry can make a profit. Toronto already has a huge number of approved, but not built, residential projects, including 7 in the Deer Park area. And while the City has permitted new laneway and garden suites in neighbourhood areas and is in the process of permitting multiplexes in the now suburban single family zoned areas, it is not clear how many new units will be created and whether they will be affordable.

Cathie Macdonald, Chair