



DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Your source for the latest news and updates about our neighbourhood.

President's Message

How time flies! Your active Board has been working on several initiatives described in this Newsletter, including comments on the City's Avenue Road safety proposals, making improvements to our Yellow Creek Ravine, and the start of consultations about what kind of city park you would like to see on the south side of Delisle. We are now meeting twice a year with Councillor Matlow to help with Deer Park matters.

As well keeping you up to date on what is happening in our City and Deer Park, and organizing more events, we will continue to ask for your advice and suggestions on various initiatives and how we can work together to help make our Deer Park community thrive.

Thanks to all our great Board members for your many contributions. Tenants, a reminder that your Board needs you as members! There are many more of you than homeowners in Deer Park.

Your Board sends its best wishes for the season,
Cathie Macdonald, President

EVENTS

To help us enter the spirit of the season, our friends at the Yonge + St. Clair BIA have organised their second annual, Gingerbread Festival from Dec 7 - 16th. Stop by the many happenings and enjoy the fun. The schedule can be found in this [LINK](#).



TRAFFIC SAFETY

Making Avenue Road safer.

Members of your Board participated in the Avenue Road Coalition meeting and asked the City to make Avenue Road from Bloor to St. Clair safer for all – vehicles, pedestrians, and bikers. Hopefully many of you commented in the City’s survey and in person at the Timothy Eaton consultation.

The DPRG perspective is that Avenue Road between Davenport and St. Clair has always been heavily used, and the traffic on local streets is increased by school drops offs and pick-ups. In addition, traffic has increased on the side streets (in particular Woodlawn, Farnham and Balmoral) escaping Yonge Street’s limited lanes in the last few years, and many of these side streets are common routes on GPS apps like Waze. We note that any assumption that local residents affected by the traffic could choose to take the subway is unrealistic as the subway is already overloaded by the time it gets to our area in typical rush hours.

While we agree with the goal of making Avenue Road more pedestrian friendly, pedestrian safety on Farnham, Balmoral and other side streets is just as important as on Avenue Road – currently these side streets have a heavy volume of pedestrians.

Our more detailed comments for on the Avenue Road Study options are:

- While we agree that many sidewalks on Avenue Road are narrow, it is important to balance the impacts of vehicle lane restrictions, which will significantly affect those side and nearby streets which are used by drivers, cyclists, and many pedestrians. The more extreme restrictions proposed (i.e., medians) would shift traffic between side streets more extremely and as a result we do not support those options. We believe left turn restrictions during certain hours are more easily adjusted for impacts over time. We would support such restrictions if there is more detailed community input on the restrictions initially and then a consultation after those initial restrictions are in place for a reasonable period to discuss adjustments.
- The design of certain elements needs to be carefully considered in close consultation with the community – for example, the initial current curb extension at Avenue Rd and St. Clair pushed traffic into the far lane (and we appreciate the recent adjustment to this). If such curb extensions were in place on side streets, cars turning would be pushed into oncoming traffic and/or create bottlenecks on Avenue Rd waiting for an intersection to clear before attempting a turn.
- While we can see the benefits for pedestrians of reducing Avenue Rd from 6 lanes to 4 in this stretch to be more consistent with the lanes south and north, we believe strongly in the need for left turn lanes to allow for a reasonable flow of traffic and avoid any need for unsafe, sudden lane changes. In particular, left turns southbound to Balmoral and Farnham and northbound to St. Clair should be long enough to avoid bottlenecks at rush hour. There should be two lanes of through traffic in each direction.
- We believe that a speed camera should have a permanent spot on Avenue Road near the hill as it is a common speeding area. Even if the impact of a speed camera is limited to a short stretch, this short stretch needs monitoring.
- More generally, the Avenue Road study data indicates the vast amount of traffic in the area is not generated by residents, yet residents are stuck with it, and the number of residents in the area is growing rapidly with development. We urge the city to find a way to put in place some kind of congestion charge for drivers coming into the central city from outside the city. Slowing down traffic and limiting lanes discourages traffic to a certain degree, but penalizes residents who have less choice in being in the area.

We would like to thank the transportation and consultation staff for the time they took to talk us through some of their work and the background. We can see they have looked at this issue from many perspectives and hope our residents' perspectives and concerns will improve the options under consideration. We would be more than happy to discuss this submission further.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

We know development is of keen interest to all of you as our Deer Park is changing. Here is our latest update:

Help plan the new Delisle Park!

The development approval of the One Delisle project also included the provision of a larger new park, doubling the size of the original park that was demolished for the construction of the new tower. DPRG representatives Joe Bogdan and Greg Nevison helped advise on the consultation process.

The first public meeting will be held January 10th. You can [register by clicking the direct link here.](#)

Updates - Construction in Deer Park

With a slowdown of new development applications across the City, we now seeing more approved projects in construction stages.

One Delisle

This Slate project agreed on a construction management plan with the City that included residents' input. That plan included, among other things, a requirement that construction vehicles access and leave the site from Yonge Street, obviously acknowledging congestion and requiring addressing safety issues that the project would cause. Increasingly, however, this protocol has been eroded to the point that as of December 1, all concrete trucks are exiting the site west along Delisle Avenue and then proceeding to Heath Street. DPRG efforts to stop construction trucks using Heath have sometimes been successful, but problems continue.

At the same time, standing construction vehicles were to be accommodated on the construction site west of the foundation pit. Instead, including long flatbed trucks, they are parked in front of townhome units at 33 Delisle, of course with their engines running. When questioned about the lapse of not using Yonge to exit vehicles, the reply was that it reduced congestion and served a safety benefit to exit along

Delisle. But this ignores the congestion and safety issues now affecting Delisle Avenue, Deer Park Crescent and Heath Street, not to mention the destruction of road surfaces. The One Delisle team issues weekly updates to adjacent residents advising of the next work item, but while they invite comments, when acted upon with our objections, they are saying our way is the best way. Councillor Matlow has agreed to look into the overall matter further.

A special exemption will have been given to allow for a continuous line of concrete trucks for the many hours needed for the continuous pour of concrete. Again, to avoid congestion at Yonge and Delisle these trucks will use the local streets to reach Yonge and Heath.

Amica

The concrete barrier to block off a lane of Avenue at Balmoral for construction access intrudes into part of the next lane, which creates a dangerous traffic situation. Councillor Matlow is aware of this and is working on getting this fixed.

29 Pleasant Boulevard

Neighbours were consulted in the development of the construction management plan where the main issue was the management of truck traffic on this busy street. Now the developer is reaching out to neighbours re construction so maybe it will start soon.

Home Hardware Site

Planning for construction is now underway and an application for use of a lane of Yonge Street, which would involve the loss of the cycle lane. Cyclists have raised their concerns. Councillor Matlow will be making a motion at the December 20 to 22 City Council meeting to require a better solution.

Residents' Reduced Role in Planning Our City

The December 2 Forum with the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) and City Planning, met to discuss many complex issues facing the City due to Provincial changes and the pressures of growing with inadequate funding. One concern that affects residents is the very short time frame for decision-making on applications, particularly the big and complex ones. We used to have residents working groups that helped make the developments work better for our community. The City is working on a permitted pre-application process that will include public consultation. Chief Planner Gregg Lintern is retiring at the end of December so we will be watching what happens next.

Another topic of interest was analysis by FoNTRA of the effectiveness of Committee of Adjustment that showed that many improvements were needed to ensure fairness in decision-making, and a real consideration of any issue raised by residents. The City, as a result of FoNTRA raising such issues, is now undertaking a major review of Committee operations.

Night Economy Initiative

In the last week of November, the Economic and Community Development Committee approved new licensing and enforcement improvements and the Planning and Housing Committee approved new and expanded permissions for night economy uses across the City in commercial zones. For Deer Park, this means Yonge and St. Clair. Night economy uses include businesses that can operate all night to help people working at night and to provide more opportunities across the City for access to these uses.

The big issues are about the uses that create loud noise that disturb the sleep of others, such as places of entertainment and night clubs, as people living areas where these are permitted in a smaller scale object to the noise and disruption. The new licensing and enforcement initiatives can help to some extent.

FoNTRA asked for a deferral to better ensure that people across the City know about the changes and could add their comments. The Noise Bylaw Review report is coming in January so we will look to see how those proposed changes will help as well.

RAVINES AND PARKS

We continue to work with both the Midtown Ravines Group and adjacent Residents Associations for the amelioration of the parks of the area and the Yellow Creek Ravine. In the past month we had meetings or presentations involving both David Balfour Park and the Yellow Creek ravine. Here is a brief summary of those interactions:

David Balfour Park

On November 8th, we met with members of various City staff teams to address some of the issues we have been experiencing with the restoration of the Park. The meeting was constructive, and we have some key commitments and follow-ups.

Reservoir Surface/Sod:

- This has been the biggest area of concern for all of us.
- The first re-seeding has been done and appears to have taken and another will take place in the spring. There is a commitment to continue a regular maintenance program to bring the surface to a better condition.

Trees and Plantings throughout the overall Park and Little Park:

- It is recognized that while numerous trees and plants were replanted in October, some are not thriving, but they will be given another spring to see if they bounce back. All new plantings will be re-evaluated in Spring/Summer 2024 to determine if they should be replaced before the current warranty expires.
- In Little Park, 2 junipers are to be replaced near the ramp at Summerhill Gardens. Also, the 13 trees that Parks had planted in the Little Park before the Reservoir rehabilitation began will be replaced.

Miscellaneous:

- The Feature Fountain safety issues are to be rectified and the fountain will be commissioned in Spring 2024. There will be a formal Park opening scheduled in the spring. We'll keep you posted.
- Importantly, there are ponding concerns on various path surfaces. Anyone who can provide pictures of the ponding before/during and after rains - particularly on the North/South pathway on top of the reservoir - should send them to jbossons@gmail.com as the City needs to review the issue with the contractor.
- Fencing will be completed where required along the ravine frontage on the east side of the Park.

Overall, there was an acknowledgment of the various issues confronting the rehabilitation and we now have good contact with those City Departments involved to continue to resolve future problems.

Geomorphic Survey (GMS) / Toronto Water (TW)

Many of us have noted the deteriorating conditions in Yellow Creek and are looking for coordinated and systematic action by the various City departments responsible to prevent further deterioration and to remediate the damage, which is plainly visible.

One department which is involved is Toronto Water (TW) and it has now completed its GMS of the Yellow Creek area and its presentation can be viewed at [Toronto.ca/YellowCreek](https://toronto.ca/YellowCreek). The GMS had the specific goal of assessing the TW assets in the ravine rather than the entire ravine and they have been clear that the highest priority for TW is to address issues with sanitary lines across Toronto and, as Yellow

Creek is a storm sewer, it is outside that category. In the study TW has, broadly, identified four project areas for Yellow Creek. Only one of these will be tackled in the next 5-10 year period, which is the storm outlet just south of St. Clair with all the other projects identified being projected for action in a 10 year+ timeframe.

Any problem which is not in a TW area, such as the dramatic erosion (one foot a year) in the area below Inglewood just south of where they are proposing to work, the deterioration of trails and access points and the proliferation of invasive species is not within scope. It was indicated that the TW/GMS report and findings will be shared with other departments involved in ravine management and there is a multi-department Ravine Capital Coordinating committee which meets twice a year.

We are now in a public consultation period which closes on **December 17th**. We would encourage you to make your voice heard by completing the [survey via the link here](#). Writing to your councillor and or the Mayor to share your views would be a good added step. Both Councillors Dianne Saxe (Ward 11) and Josh Matlow (Ward 12) share the Yellow Creek ravine area.

Our perspective is that, while the approach is thorough and systematic, it's too incremental and does not bring the urgency and coordination required to prevent further deterioration of either Yellow Creek or, indeed, the entire ravine system in a time when our population is expanding and the need for urban green space is becoming more pronounced.

HERITAGE

With each issue of the newsletter, we will seek to highlight a person and/or feature of the neighbourhood which may be of interest. In this issue we reflect on the life of one of our neighbours and some of the history of Deer Park.

Our People

Mitsuyoshi Ito, one of the longest residing persons in our Deer Park neighbourhood, passed away in September at the age of 99. He and his family have lived in the same house on Heath St. for 56 years.

Born in Mission, BC, Mist grew up working on the family strawberry farm, but the outbreak of war with Japan in 1942 led to the Canadian government seizing their

farm. Eighteen-year-old Mitsu, along with 370 other Japanese families, was evacuated to work on beet farms in areas around Picture Butte in southern Alberta.

Determined to serve Canada, he attempted to join the Canadian Army but was denied. When his family moved to Japan, Mitsu worked as an interpreter for the British SAS in Hiroshima.

Returning to Canada, he dedicated himself to charitable work and various foundations, including the Nelson Arthur Hyland Foundation and the Saiden Foundation, where he served as chair and remained associated for more than 40 years.

This quietly spoken, courteous gentleman will be remembered for the kindness and helping hand he offered to anyone who crossed his path in the community.

For five decades, Mitsuyoshi Ito was the epitome of a good neighbour and will be missed by all who knew him.

Our Places



Three Churches and a Schoolhouse

Today's well known three churches around Yonge and Heath signify the population who moved into Deer Park as early as the 1830's when several prominent families established country estates on the escarpment overlooking Toronto and the Lake.

Follow [this link](#) to read local historian Lynne Kurylo's story of these early churches and one of the earliest schools in the area.

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY, HELP YOURSELF

Calling all volunteers!

Volunteer your time and expertise with DPRG! Some of the areas where you could share your skills, such as in website design and maintenance, graphic design and event planning.

If you are interested in helping out your community, please send an email to: info@deerparkresidents.ca

MEMBERSHIP

Help grow the DPRG

DPRG is a volunteer-based group but we do have operating expenses. You are receiving this newsletter as you are a paid member of the DPRG. We hope you will continue to support our work through an annual membership of \$20 per household. Our next membership drive will be in the spring.

Please pass this Newsletter on to neighbours and friends who may be interested in joining. See our website <https://deerparkresidents.ca> for membership information and forms.



The voice
of our
community