



## MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

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

### **President's Message**

Your Board continues to work on many initiatives to support our community, from improvements to the Yonge / St. Clair intersection to development applications which would better fit our neighbourhood, to addressing issues in the Vale of Avoca, and to street safety through our submission to the Avenue Road Study. This Newsletter contains updates on these initiatives.

What is next? We are planning more heritage walks and opportunities to learn more about our ravine. In early June we will be holding AGM, again at the Calvin Baptist Church on Delisle. Our councillor, Josh Matlow will be the guest speaker and, given his ongoing support and strenuous efforts on behalf of our community, we were pleased to learn that Josh will not be leaving us to run to replace our, now resigned, federal MP, Carolyn Bennett.

Your thoughts and opinions about our community are important to us, as well as how your Board can operate to serve you better. Watch for a new survey and be sure to send your comments.

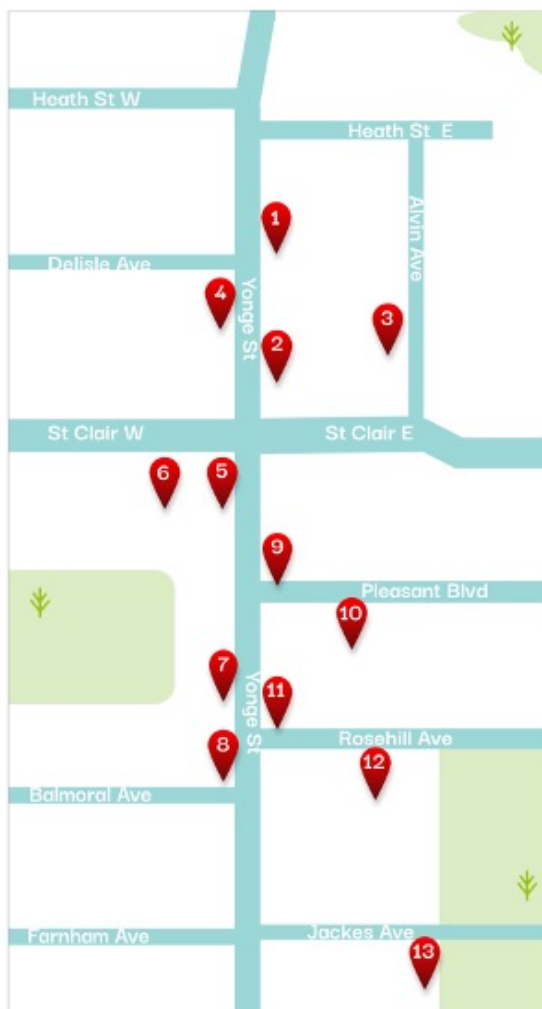
We, of course, continue to seek more members, tenants, and homeowners. And potential new Board members, especially tenants. We also continue to need volunteers to help serve you better. Volunteer to learn more about your community and contribute your knowledge and skills! Contact us at [info@deerparkresidents.com](mailto:info@deerparkresidents.com).

Cathie Macdonald, President

# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

## The Yonge/St. Clair neighbourhood and its changing face

The latest development proposals, 29 Pleasant Boulevard and 1365/75 Yonge Street, both for 50 storeys, point to Yonge and St. Clair as a high-rise high-density neighbourhood rather than the mid-rise district that was only a few years ago being proposed through the “Avenues” concept to emulate the best urban forms of Paris and Barcelona. A total of 11 towers are proposed in addition to the two now under construction – One Delisle and the new tower at Bretton Place.



CURRENT TOWER APPLICATIONS  
YONGE ST CLAIR AREA

| Map | Address                      | Storeys | Status                                                |
|-----|------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | 1481-1535 Yonge (Wittington) | 27      | approved no action                                    |
| 2   | "                            | 44      | "                                                     |
| 3   | "                            | 39      | "                                                     |
| 4   | I Delisle                    | 44      | under construction                                    |
| 5   | 1-13 St. Clair W             | 49      | no action                                             |
| 6   | 45 St. Clair W               | 51      | no action                                             |
| 7   | 1406-28 Yonge                | 50      | planning construction                                 |
| 8   | I Balmoral                   | 51      | City refusal appealed                                 |
| 9   | 1429 Yonge                   | 32      | approved no action                                    |
| 10  | 29-39 Pleasant               | 50      | under review                                          |
| 11  | 1365-75 Yonge                | 50      | deferred at Committee for consultation with residents |
| 12  | 31 Rosehill                  | 31      | under construction                                    |
| 13  | 49 Jackes                    | 31      | City refusal appealed                                 |

With this seemingly unstoppable high density urban configuration, the need for greater pedestrian comfort and safety must be paramount. Wider sidewalks,

benches, signage, art, materials, lighting, and wind controls should be addressed on a master plan level and not just at the individual development proposal level.

The unique situation of a single developer owning all four corners of Yonge and St. Clair must be an opportunity for excellence. And the DPRG is currently working with the BIA to develop a safe and distinctive plan for the Yonge and St. Clair intersection area.

The opportunity for attractive, distinctive, and safe pedestrian solutions is best served now - before the detailed review of new applications as well as ensuring appropriate solutions for the applications not yet fully approved by the City. We are pleased that community consultations for our important new Delisle Park are underway.

The 2019 Yonge St. Clair Framework Plan, developed with input from representatives of the DPRG and other residents, developers, and City Planning, provided a plan for the future of the intersection area. But that Plan must be now updated and expanded in scope to include more detailed considerations of wind impacts and the need for more open space at street level. And the long-promised traffic study must be undertaken.

See the March Application Update of DPRG [HERE](#).

## RAVINES AND PARKS

This month we're bringing you an article from Tom Connell of the North Rosedale Residents Association (NRRA) and Midtown Ravines Group on the state of the Vale of Avoca which we share as a resource. The somewhat longer version can be found on our website by following [LINK](#).

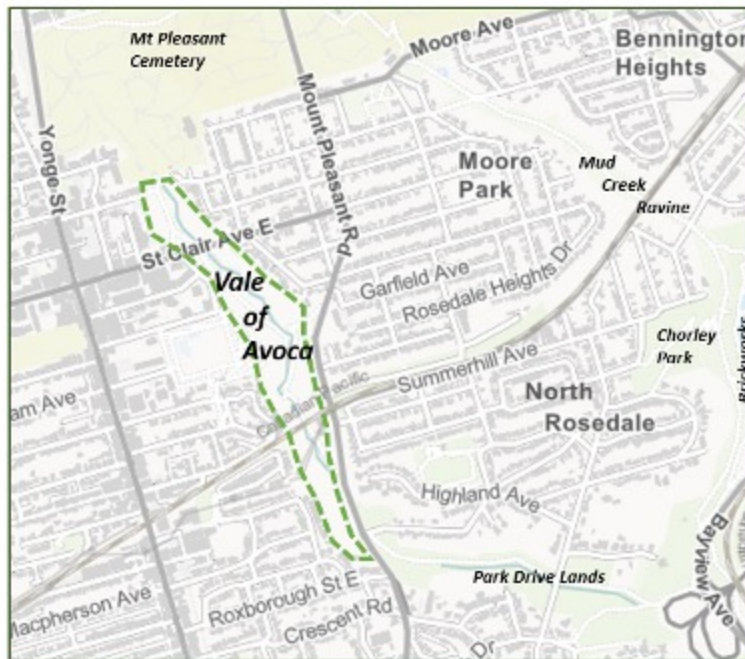
### **Spare a Thought for the Vale of Avoca**

By Tom Connell, NRRA Parks & Ravines Committee

It's widely recognized the Toronto's ravine system is one of our city's great blessings. So, it is particularly regrettable that a spectacular ravine in our area – the Vale of Avoca – shows the effects of years of cumulative neglect.

The Vale of Avoca is a section of ravine running south from Mt Pleasant Cemetery (just east of Yonge Street), down to where Roxborough Drive meets Mount Pleasant Road. The area stretches for almost 1.5km and covers over 15 hectares (well over 30

acres). Yellow Creek flows through the Vale of Avoca on its way to meeting the Don River via a channel under the Bayview Ave cloverleaf. (See map.)



Base map source: <https://map.toronto.ca/torontomaps/>

The interconnected problems in the ravine are obvious to anyone walking there. There is extensive erosion affecting the banks of Yellow Creek and the ravine slopes; this undermines habitats and infrastructure in the ravine and degrades its capacity to deal with storm-water run-off. Pathways, stairs, and wayfinding in the ravine are in very bad shape, greatly impeding pedestrian access and recreational use; for example, the access stairway and path closest to the Yonge/St Clair intersection is “closed for maintenance”, but with no signs of actual maintenance being undertaken.

Additionally, there is a proliferation of invasive species in the ravine, including Norway Maples, Japanese Knotweed, and Common Buckthorn leading to an important impact on biodiversity. The City has designated the Vale of Avoca as an Environmentally Significant Area or ESA. According to the City, ESAs “are particularly sensitive and require additional protection to maintain their unique environmental qualities.” Unfortunately, this designation has not meant that a coordinated and urgent plan has been developed to deter the relentless march of invasives, nor has it served to halt the area’s ongoing degradation. So, yes, significant, but, no, no plan.

There has been a long wait for concerted efforts to remediate conditions in the Vale of Avoca. However, responsibility for different elements of the Vale is held by various city departments, including Toronto Water Services, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), and Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PFR). The lack of a master plan for this ravine has hampered a coordinated and timely response to its continuing deterioration.

While Toronto Water recently conducted a geomorphic survey and public consultation on priorities for the restoration of sections of Yellow Creek where City storm sewer and water main infrastructure are threatened and identified required works, none of it will be conducted within the next 5 years, and some of it well beyond that.

Happily, though, the TRCA is planning slope stabilisation work below Summerhill Gardens and Heath Crescent, with the first being planned for this year and the latter for 2025, having moved up from 2031 and now including the Heath St E staircase. Vivid thanks to Councillor Saxe for her intervention on that piece of infrastructure.

The importance of our ravine systems is well understood. These green spaces safeguard biodiversity, mitigate the impact of extreme weather (flooding and heat), and provide opportunities for recreation that are essential to both physical and mental health. The expected addition of tens of thousands of new residents to the midtown area adds urgency to the need for improved access to our neighbouring green spaces. Improvements to the Vale of Avoca would represent a major upgrade to trail system connectivity, providing improved links to the Beltline Trail, to the Brickworks and Don Valley, and to the Yonge Street corridor.

## NOISE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



As our minds turn to spring (!) and gardening, they may also turn to the idea of new equipment. In 2023, City Council supported imposing a ban on ALL small two-stroke engine garden equipment, like leaf blowers and lawnmowers. City staff is to report back to Council in 2024 on the implementation of the ban and we hope it will be a bold, if overdue, plan. We will be watching! If you ARE planning to replace or upgrade

anything, check out some of the cleaner, quieter, electric or battery-operated varieties on the market.

Our friends at Gasbusters (see their informative new website at [www.gasbusters.ca](http://www.gasbusters.ca)) remind us of just one of the many dangers of presented by these tools and why action is so urgent:

‘Greg J. Evans, Ph.D., P.Eng. a Canadian expert in the study of pollution, writes about the exhaust fumes lawn crews breathe while wearing backpack leaf blowers. “Gas powered leaf blowers are high emitters of air pollutants. One pollutant is ultrafine particles that exceed a million particles per cubic centimetre. The concentration measured on one leaf blower was 50 times higher than the World Health Organisation criterion. Someone breathing this very polluted air inhale over a billion of these particles with every breath.”’

## HERITAGE

In her continuing series, Lynne Kurylo, of the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation, draws our attention to points of interest in our neighbourhood.

### **Take a Good Look**

Yonge and St. Clair’s eight storey mural

By Lynne Kurylo

Some 5 years ago, a massive mural appeared on the office tower at 1 St. Clair Avenue West. Surprised residents, workers and visitors to Yonge-St. Clair looked up to discover a human body, eight storeys high, made from Toronto landmarks such as ROM, CN Tower, Old City Hall, St. Lawrence Market, the Distillery District along with dozens more architectural gems and ravine systems.

The young artist who conceived this unique view of the city in 2017 was Phlegm, a British cartoonist and illustrator who had recently expanded his work to street art festivals across the UK, Europe, and the United States. Working on large walls, old industrial buildings and other structures, Phlegm saw his art as melding into urban architecture.

With recognition of his work across the world, he attracted the attention of STEPS Initiative, an award-winning company hired by Slate Asset Management to spruce up their aging office tower and bring new life to the Yonge-St. Clair intersection. The

artist used countless cans of spray paint to create the seated figure over many months while Toronto muralist Stephanie Bellefleur provided logistical support, worked the swing stage, and offered artistic input.

Although Phlegm is an international artist, the mural is locally relevant, reflecting Toronto in a fascinating metaphor for the living city. Each time you view the work, you notice another detail. Take a good look at this unique masterpiece the next time you are on St. Clair West.

#### Sources:

MURALFORM <https://muralform.com/art/a-young-artist-makes-yonge-and-st-clair-a-place-to-visit/>

## AND IN OTHER NEWS

- Watch out for an e-mail flare coming your way to help with the annual Vale of Avoca clean-up in advance of Earth Day. Date TBD.
- Also, be on the look-out for our DPRG survey which will come to you in the coming week. This is separate from the survey which you will find below which is being conducted by the Yonge + St. Clair BIA.
- Make sure you stop by the Yonge + St. Clair BIA Glisten Festival (and experience the Tunnel of Glam!), now through March 18.

### Calling all Volunteers!

- If you would like to help spruce up our newsletter – graphics, layout, style guide, let us know! If you would like to submit an article for consideration, we'd be happy to review it for potential inclusion. Articles would be subject to editing.
- We're in the early planning stages for the design of a walking tour of the Vale of Avoca – both live and via QR code. If you any familiarity with the area, skills as relates to event staging, tour design or mapping, we'd be happy to hear from you.
- We're always looking for more neighbours to join our efforts. If you have a particular interest relating to the community, please let us know.
- Some of our long serving board members will be stepping down from their roles in the coming months. If you have some time to dedicate, we are looking to

welcome candidates.

## AND FINALLY

The Yonge and St. Clair BIA is conducting a public survey, and this is an opportunity to register your thoughts relative to the community and its evolution. Take advantage! Public Consultations for the Yonge + St. Clair BIA's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan have begun



In 2019, the BIA created a Strategic Plan with the ultimate purpose of establishing a framework of goals and strategies to aid them as they strive to make Yonge + St. Clair a community of growth and success. This year, they are updating their Strategic Plan to better suit both present and future residents, businesses, and visitors of Yonge + St. Clair.

**Review the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan [here](#)**

While their key goals remain the same, their updated Strategic Plan will identify and adapt to the shifting contexts, community needs and available resources in Yonge + St. Clair. These considerations will be considered as we develop a formalized economic development process to expand upon their work and make Yonge + St. Clair a community that works for everyone.

As they set forth to create this updated Strategic Plan, they **are seeking our input** on how to best approach these questions and create a plan that incorporates your feedback on our vision for the future of Yonge + St. Clair. By **completing their public**

**survey**, you will be able to help shape the Yonge + St. Clair of our future.

The survey does not require a name, phone number or email address.

Anyone can complete the survey, even if they are not subscribed to the Yonge + St. Clair BIA newsletter (e.g. friends and family).



The voice  
of our  
community