

# DPRG NEWS

THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITY 🌿



## NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

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

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This Newsletter covers updates about new development applications, work on traffic improvements as well as ongoing efforts to make much needed improvements to our parks and ravines. As usual, we have another article about our Deer Park history.

We thank all of you who have volunteered to help in response to the latest Deer Park area survey. We will be following up with you shortly.

As always, contact us at [info@deerparkresidents.ca](mailto:info@deerparkresidents.ca) with your questions and suggestions.

**Cathie Macdonald, President**

### DEVELOPMENT

#### **Fitzrovia Project – Avenue and St Clair**

Fitzrovia, which owns and builds high-end rental properties has taken a 99-year lease at the property at the south-east corner of Avenue Road and St. Clair, currently the site of the Province's Ministry of the Environment.

The Development Committee has met with Fitzrovia on the proposal, which is to erect a 49-storey rental building with community amenities at the ground level, as well as to undertake sidewalk area improvements. As this site is not at Yonge and St. Clair, which is considered a Major Transit Station Area where height increases are encouraged, the Development Committee has raised our objections with Fitzrovia and is looking at ways to effectively object to this proposed height so far from Yonge during the application review process. As described by Councillor Matlow at our AGM, Provincial legislation greatly restricts the City's and our ability to object to an application.

## **11 Pleasant**

This site was originally approved for an 11-storey residential building, but is now subject of a proposal for an increase to 27 stories. There is to be a City consultation meeting in the near future. We speculate that the real objective could be to increase the site's value for sale to CreateTO, the City's development arm, which has announced its intention to build affordable housing on the adjacent land, currently occupied by the City's Green P lot. We, as well as the BIA, have major concerns about the loss of this well used parking garage.

## **Cineplex site – 1303 Yonge St between Jackes and Woodlawn**

Another new application is for the Cineplex site on east side of Yonge between Jackes and Woodlawn. It replaces the previous application by adding an additional property and it now includes a park on Yonge but also 2 towers ((47 and 43 storeys). This is a major increase in height, which was a major concern during the public consultations on the previous one tower application. We will be working with Summerhill Residents Association in the application review process and will shortly be meeting with the City Planner on the application.

## **1212-1220 Yonge St**

As the Cottingham area is now part of the Deer Park Residents Group, we have inherited an application for a 22-storey building with 185 units and retail at grade at 1212- 1220 Yonge between Birch and Alcorn. The application was made in 2022 but there has been no progress since then.

## **Yonge and St Clair intersection**

Development Committee members also attended a St Clair BIA gathering to report on the BIA's initiatives for our area. We, again, presented our concerns over the delayed reconstruction of the Yonge/St Clair pedestrian crossings for safety

purposes as well as our support for decorative paving to highlight the intersection area. In addition, we reiterated concerns about the excessive height of proposed developments, and the related need for an area macro wind study beyond the wind study requirements for individual proposals.

## **TRAFFIC AND SAFETY**

### **Avenue Road**

As many of you will be aware, installation of bike lanes on the section of Avenue Rd between Bloor and Davenport was completed earlier in the summer, with reconfiguration of the stretch of Avenue Rd between Davenport and Dupont proceeding this Fall. Regarding the section of Avenue Rd in the DPRG area, between Dupont and St Clair, recent conversations with Councillor Matlow's office have confirmed it remains his intention to conduct further consultations on proposed changes later this Fall. We will provide details of the proposed approach and timing once these are available.

### **Yonge / St Clair Traffic Study**

At a recent meeting that a number of DPRG Board members attended with the Yonge + St Clair Business Improvement Area (BIA), the BIA expressed an interest in pursuing a traffic study for the Yonge and St Clair area. This is something the DPRG has been advocating for with the City for some time, particularly in light of planned development in the area, however the City has clearly indicated that they have no plans to pursue this. As such, DPRG is supportive of the BIA moving this forward and we will look to be as actively engaged as possible as and when this takes shape.

### **Yonge / Heath Safety Improvements**

In ongoing efforts to improve safety at the problematic "offset" intersection at Yonge and Heath, Councillor Matlow has shared several planned changes to be implemented by the City, including installing traffic control personnel during peak hours and School Zone signage – both now in place, and improved road markings to better indicate the southbound left-turn onto Heath St E and additional signage on both Heath St East and West highlighting the conflicting turns. According to the Councillor's office, work orders to install the skip lines and educational signage at the intersection have been submitted. Timing on installation is pending.

While the long-term objective is a full redesign of the intersection in parallel with the Wittington development SE of Yonge and Heath, there is no definitive timeline for this, as such, interim improvements are to be welcomed. Continued observation and

input from the community will be important in determining the effectiveness of the implement and pending changes.

DPRG is aware that there are other intersections in the area that are concerning from a safety point of view. The DPRG plans to compile a comprehensive list to support ongoing advocacy with the Councillor and City staff.

## **RAVINES AND PARKS**

### **TRCA Local Projects**

#### **Yellow Creek Channel Repairs below Summerhill Gardens**

By Tom Connell, Ravine Committee, North Rosedale Residents' Association (NRRRA)  
With input by John Bossons, Co-Chair MRG and Mary Renaud, DPRG Ravine Committee

As reported last month, construction crews mobilized the site in August and the project is scheduled to be completed on or around April 2025. The focus of this project is to stabilize a section of the Yellow Creek channel that has been the location of serious stream bank and ravine slope erosion, particularly due to episodes of elevated stream flow arising from extreme weather.

We understand the scope of the project has also been extended to address an adjacent area that experienced additional erosion as a result of a severe storm in September, although for the most part this project does not address the condition of trails in the area.

Currently the trail is fully closed in the area of work, preventing pedestrian movement between the north and south sections of the ravine. However, it is still possible to cross the ravine, both downstream from the project and upstream. That said, pedestrians should abide by the trail closure signs in light of the condition of the area, and the equipment and materials on site. Particular caution should be taken on the ravine slopes in cold and/or snowy conditions, given the poor state of many of the open pathways.

The TRCA is planning a community planting event in 2025 following completion of the channel work. In addition, the TRCA is also on-track to begin the channel/slope stabilization and stairway reconstruction farther north in the ravine (below Heath Crescent) starting in 2025.

The Midtown Ravines Group (MRG), comprising local Residents' Associations (including the DPRG), view this project as an important step towards remediating a set of interconnected problems within the Vale of Avoca. We will continue to press the city to develop an over-arching plan for needed work in the zone. Although this ravine was included as a top ten priority investment area among the 86 environmentally significant areas (ESAs) designated by the City of Toronto, to our knowledge there has been no ESA management plan issued for this area under the City's Ravine Strategy since it was adopted in October 2017.

For more information, including project updates:

<https://trca.ca/conservation/erosion-risk-management/restore/yellow-creek/>

You can see below a couple of photos courtesy of MRG co-chair, John Bossons, showing the work progress. The first one was taken before excavation began, the second after excavation in the northern part of the project. See sloping tree on right side of photos for orientation.

As you can see, a substantial widening of the stream -- recognition of the much bigger storm surges we are seeing in the stream.



***BEFORE***



***CURRENTLY***

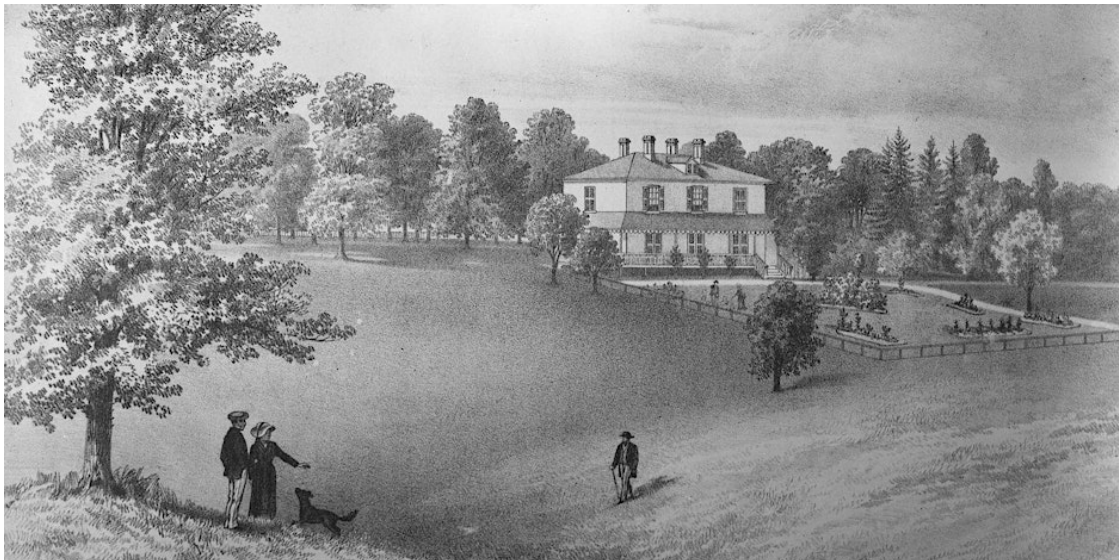
We understand the project does not address fixing the dramatic erosion on the southwest side of the pedestrian bridge (image below). It has been fenced off as part of the Creek project but was not originally in scope. It seems to us a lost opportunity if it is not addressed now. The preliminary indication is that this will not be remediated as part of this project. The MRG will continue to pursue this topic.



***SOUTHWEST AND ADJACENT TO PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE***

## **HERITAGE**

### **Heaps Estrin Storied Homes Walking Tour: Deer Park**



From its early days as a stop for weary travellers heading to town for market, to its later history as a streetcar suburb, the Deer Park neighbourhood has been a place of refuge for those seeking a break from the hustle and bustle of city life. Our tour

through the neighbourhood will look at some of the area's earliest homes, as well as cutting edge architecture and urban planning that sought to redefine urban living through the 20th century.

Note: All proceeds from our Storied Homes Walking Tours are directed to charitable organizations within the neighborhoods where the walks take place. For this event, donations will support Mothercraft, a local organization dedicated to "shaping children's lives through learning."

More information and ticket purchase [HERE](#).

### **The Toronto Public Library, Deer Park branch – A Gem**

by Lynne Kurylo, DPRG Member



You might not think it as you pass the non-descript aging office building on St. Clair East at Alvin Avenue, but it houses one of Deer Park's cultural assets, the Deer Park branch of the Toronto Public Library.

Library services began in Deer Park in 1906, first as a paid subscription library of 500 volumes located in the local public school. Over the next hundred and eighteen years, it evolved into an open access public library with a collection of 74,000 items and a range of library and community services.

The Toronto Public Library (TPL) was formed in 1884 and is situated in a fine building at Church and Adelaide Street, formerly the Mechanic's Institute. In 1908, with the annexation of Deer Park into the City of Toronto, residents asked the TPL Board to open a Deer Park branch. With a collection of 1200 volumes the branch service was opened in 1911. For the next forty years, the service operated out of rented premises on Yonge Street and on St. Clair Avenue East and West, moving premises as demand for the service grew.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s when TPL revenues fell drastically, the Board decided to close the Deer Park branch. But they were not prepared for the unprecedented number of protests, deputations and petitions that ensued. "When this decision was announced, however, there arose such a storm of protest that the Board was eventually prevailed upon to keep Deer Park open." (TPL, Annual Report, 1933) Other economies were found.

Over the following decades, the community continued to petition the TPL for a permanent home for the branch. Eventually a site was acquired at the corner of St. Clair Avenue West and Alvin Avenue for an architect-designed three-storey building incorporating an adult library, a then-called Boys and Girls library, staff offices and three rental spaces at street level. <https://digitalarchive.tpl.ca/objects/339950/toronto-public-library-deer-park-branch-st-clair-ave>

This concept of using rental revenue to cover capital costs was ground-breaking in North America as it meant the cost would not be borne by the taxpayer. Mayor Allan Lamport, a Deer Park resident, officially opened the site on June 2, 1952.

Today, the renovated branch is open over 60 hours a week as it welcomes thousands of users annually. The main floor seats 65 and offers information technology services such as computer workstations, printers and WIFI, along with accommodation for persons with disabilities, book clubs for all ages, audio books, DVDs, a local history collection and special programs.

The Deer Park branch continues to be a model of effective and efficient library operation. Its services are well used and well loved by a grateful community.

#### Sources:

Toronto Public Library website

Historical Walking Tour of Deer Park, Joan C. Kinsella, Toronto Public Library (1996)

Toronto Past and Present, A Handbook of The City, C. Pelham Mulvany (1884)



The voice  
of our  
community