

# DPRG NEWS

THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITY 🌿



## July 2025 Newsletter

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

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**Cathie Macdonald receiving a community service award from Councillor Matlow.**

## **President's Message**

We hope everyone is enjoying the summer and finding what our community has to offer in terms of shade - David Balfour Park and the Ravine to the east are great places to cool off. Our summer newsletter highlights a few key issues and happenings, including our recent AGM.

We had an amazing turnout at the AGM and the help of a few volunteers was much appreciated to get everyone into the room. Perhaps the most moving part of the evening was the celebration of our past President, Cathie Macdonald's service to Deer Park. She has

been on the board for 25 years and held the position of President for several periods. She has been incredibly dedicated to her community, spending hours upon hours in consultations, working groups with community members and developers, and city hall meetings, and writing submissions to the city and others, not to mention all the work she did keeping the Board running.

The DPRG presented her with a community service award, as did our Councillor Josh Matlow, who recounted stories from his long experience with Cathie. Even when the legislation provides little hope, Cathie has still tried to find a way to persuade developers to make improvements and keep our neighbourhood as liveable as possible. Thank you, Cathie!!!

While Cathie could not continue on the Board, we know she will be there to mentor us when we need it and look forward to the Board year ahead.

**Cynthia Crysler**  
**President, DPRG**



# Development

**TORONTO**

# Notice

**38 and 43 Storeys**  
130 and 143 Metres

**706 Residences**

**266 Cars**  
788 Bikes

**A change is proposed for this site.**  
The City has received an application to amend the Zoning By-law to permit the construction of two new residential buildings.

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
Public meeting information will be posted on this sign when available.  
File # 25 121716 STE 12 OZ

**Applicant:** Lawton Dev LP  
**Address:** 59-81 Lawton Boulevard

For more information about this application or to tell us what you think:

**COMMUNITY PLANNING**  
Cameron Williamson  
416-338-7241  
Cameron.Williamson@toronto.ca

**APPLICATION INFORMATION CENTRE**  
www.toronto.ca/59LawtonBlvd  
toronto at your service

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## 53-89 Lawton Blvd. update

The plan for two buildings at **38 and 43 storeys** at the southeastern foot of Lawton Blvd (at Lonsdale) has alarmed many in the neighbourhood for its scale and density on a narrow street with low rise buildings and single-family dwellings. The developer, Lawton Dev LP, citing a breach of the timelines allowed for the issuance of a Planning report by the City (and perhaps having developed a sense of the opposition forming in the neighbourhood), has now decided to go directly to the Ontario Land Tribunal to have their application approved.

Additionally, the City Planning Department also failed to update the neighbourhood Notice sign (below) to indicate when the statutory public meeting was to be held. This meeting happened via Webex on May 15 with approx. 150 people in attendance. As such, there will be no further formal intervention possible by residents of the area. That said, the City will still be issuing a Planning Report and will mount an

opposition to the application. Although residents' groups cannot participate in OLT appeals, we will do everything we can to keep the community updated and consider how we may assist community members in protesting this development.

It is important to underline that provincial legislation has effectively removed the city's jurisdiction over local planning for properties within a certain radius of what is designated as a PMTSA (Protected Major Transit Station Area), which is what has led to the approval of a range 35 to 50 storey buildings in this immediate area.

**We include here a July 2025 letter from Councillor Matlow to the residents of the area re: the development proposal for 53-89 Lawton Blvd.**

*Dear Residents,*

*I am writing to you with an update on the development application known as 59-81 Lawton Boulevard.*

*I believe the defining test of a good development proposal is whether it leaves our community better than when it was found. A key condition of meeting this test is whether a project improves our quality of life, by contributing social services such as schools and libraries, parks and greenspace, affordable housing, and infrastructure. We also want a "beautiful city," with great architecture and a high-quality public realm, while still respecting the existing context of a neighbourhood's design.*

*The development application for 59-81 Lawton has not met that test. In fact, many residents have expressed a wide range of concerns with the proposal, including that the height and density of the development is completely out of scale with the neighbourhood along Lawton Boulevard, and that traffic is already at a breaking point during rush hours. The proposed design of the building, especially at-grade, ignores Lawton's historic character.*

*My office and I strongly advocated on behalf of the community's concerns to the City Planning division and to the developer throughout this process. Unfortunately, due to the Ford government's legislation, the applicant has*

*the ability to bypass city council and appeal directly to the unelected, unaccountable and provincially-appointed Ontario Land Tribunal. Regrettably, they have now done so.*

*In terms of next steps, at city council, I will be requesting that our legal and planning staff attend the Tribunal in opposition to the application. The Tribunal will then organize a hearing date, which likely won't be for several months from now.*

*At the Tribunal, both the city and developer will make their arguments, and the final decision will be made by the Tribunal "member" (the equivalent of a judge) appointed to the case. Shamefully, Doug Ford recently removed appeal rights for community groups at the Tribunal.*

*At this stage, our strategy remains focused on advocating to City Planning and Legal to fight the application as strongly as possible. All parties are aware that the height remains the single most contentious issue, and that significant built form revisions need to be made.*

*I want you to know that I will continue fighting on your behalf, and I will be sure to keep our Deer Park neighbourhood updated.*

*Sincerely,*

*Councillor Josh Matlow  
Toronto – St. Paul's.*

## **Crime Prevention**



## Crime prevention talk

On a steamy June 23, some heat tolerant members of our community had the opportunity to be briefed on Crime Prevention and Safety by members of our local Division 53 and the head of Neighbourhood Watch.

Constable Timothy Somers and Staff Sargeant Alexander Wallace provided an overview of our neighbourhood statistics as well as some guidance as to how to report concerns.

### Some key takeaways:

- **Ensure you Report Incidents** – even if you think it's minor it may be part of a trend or be linked to another similar incident
- **Be Timely in your Reporting**

- **Make the Right Call** – the alarming misuse of 911 was highlighted to us (the McDonalds opened late, something about avocados being spoiled and, in our neighbourhood, people calling to complain that their neighbour's sprinkler is hitting their lawn) The correct contact points are:
  - **911** for emergencies
  - **Police non-emergency line - 416-808-2222** – This important number is to be used to report crimes that are not currently happening or for situations where there is no immediate threat to life or safety; Reporting suspicious activity; ongoing crime activity – graffiti, suspected drug activity, etc.; Online reporting at [tps.ca/report](https://tps.ca/report) is also available.
  - **311** to:
    - Report Issues (eg, bylaw violations – noise, property issues, waste and litter issues, potholes, sidewalk damage, issues in parks, etc.);
    - Request Services (eg – dead animal removal, picking up household hazard waste, tree pruning or plant, etc.);
    - Access information about City services
    - Track Service Requests

Note: 311 does not handle police matters. For traffic violations or other police-related issues, please contact the TPS directly.

## Neighbourhood Watch

We also had a presentation by Didi Cameron of Neighbourhood Watch, who introduced the group to the Lawrence Park Neighbourhood Watch. It is a program that aims to help neighbours be safe, be aware and communicate together. The groups discuss neighbourhood security, local criminal incidents, suspected criminal activity, and crime prevention measures. The groups are small (50 – 130), private, NOT social media and usually the administrator of the group has met all their members. For more background information, see [Neighbourhood Watch Online](#).

If you think this would be of interest to you and your neighbours, or [send us an email](#) and we will forward your contact details to Didi.

## Parks and ravines



**Strollers in the Avoca Ravine beneath the bridge from St. Clair Avenue East to Moore Park, 1911 (City of Toronto Archives)**

## Breaking news!

On July 24, 2025, City Council unanimously passed a motion to provide \$1.5M in funding for a new design and plan for the Vale of Avoca to address its accelerating erosion, its trail network and accesses and for ongoing maintenance. This is an important step in meeting the City's own vision outlined in its 2017 Toronto Ravine Strategy, which acknowledged them as a unique natural feature among global cities constituting 17% of the City's area.

Read more: [Century-old Toronto trail to get \\$35M rehab funded mostly by neighbourhood groups](#) - CBC, July 25, 2025.

## **Vale of Avoca: background on ravine rehabilitation effort**

The Midtown Ravines Group (MRG), a consortium of 10 residents' associations in the Midtown area (the DPRG is one), continues to work with the City and the Councillors whose wards span the area, to drive for a full restoration of the Vale of Avoca, a historically noteworthy and ecologically significant ecosystem in our area which is experiencing major erosion challenges, deteriorating trails and an onslaught of invasive species.

In March, in a meeting of the Vale of Avoca Working Group with the City, Councillors Matlow and Saxe and a representative of the Mayor's office, we found strong support for our Community Vision which you can find outlined in the [Issues and Solutions](#) tabs of the Vale of Avoca website. Since the March meeting, we have asked the City to accelerate its work towards a fully costed Master Plan – a holistic view of the for the necessary construction and erosion control in the ravine.

We expect that a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the design work will be issued by early fall and that the selected consultant would require something on the order of 18 months to complete the design, including the time required for public consultation.

Given the constrained situation of City finances, it seems clear that establishing a private/public partnership is the only way that we will see the work completed relatively expeditiously. The MRG, already registered as a not-for-profit organization working in compliance with ONCA requirements, is in the process of applying to the CRA for charitable status so that we may begin to raise funds for this highly worthwhile project, coming during a period when unprecedented development is foreseen for the area.

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## Young Ravine Leaders (YRL) free program

Do you know a young person who is passionate about nature, community engagement, and environmental stewardship? They may be a perfect fit for the FREE **Young Ravine Leaders (YRL) Program** provided by LEAF!

Applications for the 2025 Young Ravine Leaders (YRL) Program are OPEN NOW until August 11! To learn more, [register for a Virtual Information Session](#). You are welcome to tune in live on Thursday, July 24, at 6:30 p.m. or catch the recording afterward.

### Program Details

The YRL Program is a **free educational and training program** offered in partnership with the City of Toronto and funded through the Ravine Strategy. The program is designed to provide an **in-depth overview of Toronto's ravines, community stewardship and career development to 30 youth (ages 18 to 29) who are exploring**

**opportunities in the environmental field.** Through this program, participants gain an understanding of the importance of Toronto's ravines, explore volunteer opportunities and career paths, and network with industry leaders.

The program seeks to support Toronto youth from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and/or underrepresented groups within ravine ecology, urban forestry and environmental stewardship who demonstrate a need to participate in a fully-funded, educational program.

## Our neighbourhood



The deer mural by BirdO, a Saskatchewan born graffiti artist, by the St. Clair subway station.

## Heritage Toronto Walk

Our BIA recently sponsored a walk by Heritage Toronto, *Yonge and St. Clair: Reflections of Beauty*. It was well attended on a very hot day!

The long and interesting history of the green spaces of the area were recounted, including the 19th century pleasure ground and amusement park, established by Charles Thompson, where, among other activities, tourists were able to purchase feed sacks to feed the deer. The attendees also heard the reservoir's history, being Toronto's oldest and largest in-ground drinking water basin. It was constructed in the 1870s and stores 270M litres of water. We were reminded that the site was chosen as it sits on an elevated terrace adjacent to the escarpment that was the shoreline of Lake Iroquois that existed until 13,000 years ago. The reservoir itself remained open top (except for intervals during the World Wars when it was covered for fear of sabotage) until the 1960s.

We also stopped by two long-time local businesses, Balance Fitness and Salon Scavo, which fit the theme of the walk by, in their own way, making people feel welcome and comfortable as themselves. The walk also drew our attention to the deer mural by BirdO, a Saskatchewan born graffiti artist whose large-scale works can be seen throughout Toronto as well as the mural by Phlegm, the Welsh born graffiti artist whose mural can be seen on the west side of 1 St Clair West.

Watch for [further BIA sponsored walks](#) this fall on its website.

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**Stay up to date!**

**Visit the DRPG website**

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**Renew your DPRG membership today!**

Any questions? [Please contact us.](#)

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**The voice  
of our  
community**