

# 2016 Annual General Meeting: Committee Reports

## MEMBERSHIP

2016 will be an important year for the ARA. We are assessing a spike in developments in our neighbourhood. As this pressure mounts, we will be relying more and more on our residents for their input and feedback. The ARA has always sought to represent the Annex in the most effective and meaningful way and with these developments, we will really need your support.

The ARA has represented the Annex at City Hall, the OMB, and at various neighbourhood functions and events. We aim to build even stronger relationships with both our internal and external stakeholders. Mostly, these include our neighbours, local businesses and schools, police, government, and other residents' associations. But we continue to need the support of our members and appreciate any input. We encourage you to communicate any interests or issues you may have to us.

As our website has become more automated, members are able to interact more effectively with the ARA and also have more flexibility in receiving communications. We welcome and encourage your involvement and communications. The doors are always open at our monthly meetings and events. We'd especially appreciate it if you could volunteer for one of our committees, events or worthy causes. Please tell your neighbours, we'd love to see them too.

The ARA will be hosting or will be attending various events in the Annex. We would like to see you! So please mark your calendars for the following:

- Sunday, May 29, 2016, 10 AM to noon at 250 Davenport Rd - Free Compost - Please bring your own shovels, bags, wheelbarrows, wagons, etc.!
- Sunday, June 26, 2015, 11 am to 6 pm – Family Festival on Bloor
- June to October every Wednesday Farmers' Market in the parking lot – Borden/south of Bloor

If you have any ideas for events or would like the ARA to have a presence at any events, please let us know.

Thanks for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you in the neighbourhood!

Rita Bilerman

Membership Secretary

## PARKS AND TREES

Chair: Polly Wells [parksandtrees@theara.org](mailto:parksandtrees@theara.org) Members: Jake Tobin Garrett, Michael Low

### **TreesPlease Tree Inventory**

Sub-committee Members: Michael Brothers, Terri Chu, Susan De Rosa, Michael Low, Ramona Rea, Sandy Smith, Polly Wells

The Annex trees — all 10,000 of them — are as vital to our neighbourhood as our historic houses, providing myriad ecological, health, and economic benefits. We know from our recent comprehensive tree inventory that most of the Annex trees are healthy — we rated 42 percent excellent and 23 percent good. But the resilience of our urban forest is not a foregone conclusion. The effects of development, climate change, invasive species, and disease epidemics (like the emerald ash borer) are real or potential threats to Annex trees.

Last year, TreesPlease (a Parks and Trees subcommittee) began working with the results of the data collected in our NeighbourWoods Tree Survey. The survey produced a cross-sectional data-set of Annex trees 2011-2014, providing a scientifically valid assessment of the Annex tree population as a whole. With the help of Dr. Andrew Kenney, TreesPlease generated a spreadsheet which allows us to analyze the data according to tree species, size, location, and condition factors. This creates a baseline for future assessments of Annex tree health, and enables us to develop an informed management plan that will be shared with residents and the city.

Our ultimate goal is to nurture and improve the Annex tree canopy. To achieve this, we will need the help of Annex residents. Three-quarters of Annex trees are on private property. As such we have a collective responsibility to maintain and protect this shared resource. A central part of our task is help people learn and appreciate the value of a robust and resilient urban forest.

To that end, we created a new **Interactive Tree Map**, accessible on the ARA website ([theara.org](http://theara.org)). The map provides detailed information on 10,000 individual trees, and can be filtered to explore features and facts about the trees as a whole. **Meet the Annex Trees** is another recent web feature, a guide to keeping trees healthy, identifying and treating an emerald ash borer infestation, and choosing the best tree species to plant in the Annex.

### **Vision of a Greener Bloor Street**

A commendable new plan to upgrade Bloor's streetscape, from Madison to Bathurst, would transform the street's tree canopy and create four new parkettes. The ARA and TreesPlease have long advocated for a greener commercial corridor, including a solution to the concrete tree boxes (a.k.a. 'trees coffins') that have contributed to the premature demise of many trees along Bloor. Thirty-five dead or ailing trees in planters will be replaced with durable, drought tolerant tree species, planted in groups at sidewalk level. Healthy trees will be preserved, and an additional 16 trees will be planted in the four parkettes. The 50 new trees will benefit from an underground system that allows for deeper rooting and irrigation. The parkettes will be designed using sustainably harvested materials, permeable surfaces to reduce run-off, and native plantings. New sidewalks and a 30 percent increase in the number of bike racks are also

included. Costs will be shared by the Bloor Annex BIA and the City, with contributions from utility companies. If approved, construction will begin in 2018.

### ***Huron Street Playground Revitalization***

We are excited about the upcoming renewal of another Annex park. Huron Street Playground, at the corner of Huron and Lowther streets, will undergo a \$350,000 revitalization, funded by the City's Playground Enhancement Program. The ARA's Parks and Trees Committee has been part of a team — including Councillor Cressy's office, the Department of Forestry Parks and Recreation, project architects, and Huron Street School — identifying the best uses for the park and involving the public in the decision making process.

A public meeting in March presented two preliminary site plan options, along with photographs of the wide array of state-of-the-art playground equipment under consideration. Project architects and Councillor Cressy fielded a Q&A with local residents. Because several nearby parks offer play equipment for younger children, the new playground is geared for older children, age 8 to 12. Three teachers at Huron School took up the design challenges in their classrooms, and students recently made recommendations to Councillor Cressy. Final plans will be available for community review in the coming months. Construction is set to begin in August and will take 6-8 months.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING**

**Co-chairs: Edward Leman and Ko Van Klaveren**

One of the functions of the Annex Residents Association is to monitor and, if necessary, intervene in proposals such as new construction or renovations that might affect the integrity and quality of life in the neighbourhood. The ARA's Planning and Zoning Committee works with the Councilor and other neighbourhood associations and citizen organizations to ensure that zoning and heritage regulations are not violated; to review requests for exemption from planning by-laws that go before the City's Committee of Adjustment; and to intervene in City planning deliberations that could affect the Annex. The committee also works with institutions such as the University of Toronto, when their development plans affect us.

Over the past year, P+Z has continued to successfully mediate disagreements between proponents to the Committee of Adjustment and affected neighbours. P+Z has been particularly active on larger planning issues.

### **Dupont Corridor**

During the past year, P+Z worked with the Councillor and City Planning to translate the Dupont Visioning Study (initiated by the ARA five years ago) into an Official Plan Amendment and new zoning bylaw. These were adopted by Council last summer but subsequently appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by several developers. Negotiations by the City and mediation at OMB led to the resolution of four appeals in early April of this year (9-storey height limit rather than 8 storeys called for in the Official Plan Amendment and zoning bylaw). One appeal was not

successfully mediated and will go for a full OMB hearing in May (29- and 15-storey residential at 328 Dupont). P+Z will be an active participant at this hearing.

### Dupont/Avenue/Davenport Triangle

ARA worked closely with the developer of the 250 Davenport site to develop a proposal that is acceptable to the Annex and to tenants of the TCHC housing structure. A site-specific bylaw was passed years ago by the City of Toronto Council allowing a second 25-storey block on the site; it was never built, but the bylaw is still in effect. The developer initially proposed two blocks that would cast shadows on residences on the north side of Pears Ave. After several iterations (including a 45-storey point block!), agreement was reached for a 28-storey block and townhomes. ARA was able to convince the developer and TCHC that a larger share of revenue be invested in upgrading the TCHC building which is in disrepair.

The Dupont/Bedford/Davenport triangle is a smaller area, served by a narrow laneway cutting through Designers' Walk, is under increasing pressure with six projects at varying stages of development. At ARA's request City Planning has undertaken a study to review current and future development pressures within the Davenport Triangle block, to work with Transportation Services to review the capacity of Designer's Walk Lane, and to work with Urban Design staff to consider urban design and built form guidelines on top of the existing Planning framework. P+Z is actively participating in the Davenport Triangle Review and is urging the City to expedite its completion this year.

### Bloor Corridor

A 42-storey condo on the northwest corner of Bloor and Madison is proposed by State Building Group. P+Z actively participated in a Working Group comprising the developer, Councillor Cressy, City staff, and other residents' associations that was formed by the Councillor to try to come up with a project more appropriate to the Annex. The developer eventually withdrew from the working group and has appealed to the OMB. Mediation has been requested, and ARA will likely become an official party at hearings in late June. As a result of this application, City Planning initiated a Bloor Corridor Planning Study of the north side of Bloor from St. George to Walmer Road. P+Z is working with staff to complete this study and resulting urban design guidelines (including building height) later this Spring.

### Mirvish Village

Redevelopment of the Honest Ed's site into extensive retail at grade and a series of residential rental blocks across the site will have major impacts on the surrounding community, including the Annex. ARA has had two representatives participating in the Working Group of four Residents' Associations (ARA, PARA, HVRA, SVRA), Westbank, and City Planning staff advocating a range of design improvements.

### TOcore

City Planning is undertaking a major three-year initiative to prepare a secondary plan for the Downtown area (Bathurst to Don Valley Parkway, CPR rail line to the waterfront). P+Z has met with staff and is developing, together with the Harbord Village Residents' Association, suggestions on how the two RAs can become active participants in this important study.

## Development Portal

Because of the many new development applications and planning initiatives in the Annex, P+Z has built a web-based mapping portal that provides detailed information on all major projects and changes to public spaces, heritage buildings, roads and parking, pedestrian and bicycle issues, and City studies within and around the Annex. This portal provides residents with the opportunity to provide online feedback on each of the projects and other initiatives. The portal is updated monthly, and is the only one of its kind in Canada. It can be accessed from the ARA website ([www.theara.org](http://www.theara.org)) and at <https://pandz.crowdmap.com/main>. Your feedback is welcome!

The screenshot displays the Pandz Crowdmap interface. At the top, there are navigation options: FILTERS (with a dropdown arrow and 'All' selected), NEWS, PICTURES, and VIDEO. Below these is a 'VIEW FULL MAP' button. On the right side, there is a 'CATEGORY FILTER [ HIDE ]' section with four color-coded options: ALL CATEGORIES (red square), MAJOR PROJECTS (purple square), COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT (COMING SOON) (yellow square), and OTHER DEVELOPMENTS (green square). Below this is an 'OTHER LAYERS [ HIDE ]' section with one option: ANNEX (red square). The main map area shows a street grid of the Annex neighborhood in Toronto, with a red outline highlighting the area. Numerous red dots are scattered across the map, representing various development projects. A purple vertical bar is visible on Spadina Ave. The map includes standard navigation controls like a zoom-in (+) and zoom-out (-) button, and a 'FULL SCREEN MAP' button. At the top of the map area, there is an HTML embed code: `<iframe src="https://pandz.crowdmap.com/iframemap" width="515px" height="430px"></iframe>`.

## TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Chair: Albert Koehl  
May 2015 – April 2016

### 1. Lower speed limits on residential roads

It has been the policy of the ARA since 2011 to advocate for lower speed limits. Why? Because research shows that a pedestrian hit by a motor vehicle at 30km/h will almost certainly survive but at higher speeds the chances of survival fall dramatically. At 50km/h a pedestrian will likely die when struck by an automobile. Both Ontario's Chief Coroner and Toronto's Medical Officer of Health have recommended lower speed limits on roads to save lives and to encourage more people to cycle and to walk.

In June 2015, the ARA deputed at City Hall in favour of lower speed limits on residential roads in Toronto and East York. **The motion passed** with the strong support of councillor Joe Cressy.

The next step is for signs to be posted on all such roads showing the lower speed limit. If no sign is posted the speed limit remains the default limit of 50km/h or as posted (ie 40km/h). Only the province can reduce the default speed limit – a matter which it continues to study.

### 2. Bike lanes on Bloor – pilot bike lane project

The ARA has advocated for bike lanes on Bloor since 2011, in order to better protect the safety of the many residents who cycle.

In October 2013, the ARA first appeared before the City's Public Works Committee to call for the implementation of a pilot bike lane on Bloor St. Subsequently all five of our neighbouring residents' associations formally called for a pilot bike lane. The ARA helped produce a video in support of such a bike lane; see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY\\_8Cixb\\_jY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY_8Cixb_jY) The ARA also worked with the other residents' associations to produce and distribute 10,000 postcards to local neighbourhoods over the past year.

The pilot bike lane has been endorsed by the Toronto Star and the Annex Gleaner. Local councillor Cressy has been an energetic advocate of the pilot project.

Bike lanes on Bloor were first studied by the City in 1977 in a comprehensive consultant's report and again in a detailed report in 1992. Bloor St has been identified as an ideal east-west cycling route that, in conjunction with Danforth Ave., could become the spine of Toronto's cycling network. Bloor remains a very popular cycling route for area residents despite the absence of a safe cycling lane and common collisions involving being "doored" by cars.

Over the last six months the City has developed a design for a pilot bike lane stretching for 2.4km from Avenue Rd to Shaw Street. On-street parking would be removed from one side of Bloor street, while the remaining parking lane would be used as a buffer to protect cyclists.

The Annex BIA and the Koreatown BIA are working with the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, among others, to study the before and after impacts on local business of the pilot bike lane. A 2009 study by TCAT showed that only 10% of patrons of local businesses arrive by car.

The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee is scheduled to vote on the pilot project at its meeting on April 25, 2016. If approved, the matter will go to the full city council for final approval. If passed, the pilot bike lane is slated for implementation in the late summer of this year.

### 3. Additional neighbourhood road safety initiatives

Residents are working on initiatives to make local roads safer for residents. A petition is circulating to add a pedestrian cross-walk on Dupont St. between Spadina Ave and Howland Ave. Dupont in this area is fast-moving and has poor sight-lines. A second initiative involves the exploration of ways to make Dalton Ave safer by reducing the amount of motor traffic that seeks to avoid bottlenecks on Bloor St. by accessing Lowther as an east-west route through the neighbourhood.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Annex Residents' Association - Annual General Meeting Report from the Communications Committee

2015-16 has been a busy and transformative year for the Communications efforts of the ARA. The ARA website ([www.theara.org](http://www.theara.org)) went through a major revision designed to make it easier for residents and the public to stay up to date with the activities of the Annex Residents' Association.

- The *News* section of the landing page was expanded in order to list more events at a glance
- Work was finally completed on an interactive tree map, that lists the species, size, health and other attributes of all the trees in the Annex. It can be found in the *TreesPlease* section of the website, and is the product of years of work by the *TreesPlease* members of the ARA.
- The Annex Planning Portal is also up and running on the ARA website. Developed by Ed Leman, co-chair of the ARA's planning and Zoning Committee, the interactive map lists all the development projects in the Annex, along with their status and size.

In addition, the Annex Residents' Association continue to sends out bulletins and newsletters to inform members of important events in the Annex. Over the past year, we have sent out nine bulletins to members, on topics such as the redevelopment of Honest Eds, the Annex Corn Roast, the future of the Brunswick House and the plans for 316 Bloor.

John McGrath



Chair

Communications Committee

## **POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

### **Police & Community Safety – 2016 AGM Report**

The ARA liaises with the Toronto Polices Services (TPS) and reports are given monthly to the Board on the Police activities in 14 & 53 Division which covers the Annex. We live in a safe neighbourhood. The bike officers patrol our streets and parks on a regular basis. Always remember to report anything suspicious to keep our home and streets safe.

Our CPLC Police meetings cover current crimes, arrests made, new safety measures for traffic fatalities, injection sites, fundraisers, and any problems that members bring to the table to try and solve, i.e. last year the auto theft ring of high end vehicles was broken up. It was a long running criminal organization for cars being shipped to Europe.

Both Divisions have a Community Scholarship Program which we have supported. They hold also many BBQ Fundraisers in May & June.

The TPS is very involved with youth movements.

We are in close contact with the two local BIAs. An important focus is to try and eradicate graffiti and to make our main streets safe addressing the issue of cyclists using Dupont Street sidewalks and people ignoring the new laws to stop at crosswalks until pedestrians have reached the other side of the street.

## **HERITAGE**

### **Annex Residents' Association Report on Heritage 2015**

Sandra Shaul – [heritage@theara.org](mailto:heritage@theara.org)

After a decade of work and some extremely frustrating delays caused by changes in Provincial legislation and corresponding City policy, the Annex Residents Association and City of Toronto Heritage Preservation Services presented the May 2015 final report recommending the designation of Madison Avenue as Phase One of the West Annex Heritage Conservation District to the Heritage Preservation Board and City Council. Over the decade there were three public meetings, and owners of property were notified. The report was posted on the City's website and City staff were available to respond to questions about renovations, building additions etc. No objections were raised.

City Council approved the report on December 10, 2015, thereby enacting By-Law no. 1329-2015 under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18. Public notice was issued and any

person objecting to the By-Law was able to submit an appeal to the OMB via City Hall, by February 5, 2016. There are three appeals. We are currently awaiting a pre-hearing date at the OMB. City Legal will act on behalf of City Council. The Annex Residents Association will be invited to the pre-hearing and will determine further action to be taken by our association at that time.

On a happier note, a committee of the ARA and other organizations in the Annex are working towards the creation of a new fall event based on the Annex Tour of Homes and Gardens. The Tour of Homes and Gardens, took place in the 1990s and early 2000s, attracting several hundred people each year, and raised funds for local social community services and community projects. The new program will have similar objectives.