



This Week in the Annex:

November 03, 2021

Have Your Say: New Housing

Do you sometimes get the feeling that construction is out of control? There's no doubt that Toronto is in the midst of a mega building boom. Just take a gander at the latest [crane index report](#) for North America. It reveals a steady increase in Toronto over the past year – mostly in the residential and mixed-use projects that continue to dominate the market in our city.

That said, there's clearly a need for development in order to accommodate the thousands expected to swarm to Toronto in the coming decades. We can't fight every proposed change. And that makes [Shawn Micallef's most recent article](#) in the *Toronto Star* especially urgent reading.

Shawn's right. The status quo is not a viable option to this pressing demand. What we do need, however, is to continue advocating for human-scale buildings, gentle intensification, and, most important, more affordable housing. Luxury condo towers of 40, 50 or more storeys are not the answer – at least not here in the Annex. If the current proposal for inclusionary housing is enacted, only 10 % of newly built units would be affordable. And that means 90% are still out of reach of most. Not good enough.

City of Toronto Consultation

Here's your chance to have input on the City's plan to expand housing options and to support the idea of legalized multi-tenant housing in Toronto. You have until December 31 to give your feedback on expanding permission for multiplexes across the city. Just [click on this link](#) and you'll be taken directly to the survey site.

November 8: Save the Date

And closer to home, here's a final call! This is our last reminder about the community consultation for a proposed development at the northwest corner of Ave and Dav. The developer wants to build a 35-storey tower here with 355 dwelling units. As we've noted before, the details are available at www.toronto.ca/148AvenueRd. And you can register for the November 8th meeting by going to <http://www.toronto.ca/cpconsultations>. As always, once you've registered, you'll be sent the link that allows you to join the meeting.



The developers do promise to place a sculpture on the corner plaza to honour the flower district of Ave and Dav. But is this enough to appease the community?

Have Your Say: Leaf Blowers

If ever there's a topic that's pitted neighbour against neighbour, it's got to be the debate about gas powered leaf blowers. And with our Prime Minister in Glasgow promising significant reductions in green house gases, there's huge pressure to stem carbon emissions no matter how small the target might be.

Recently Chris Keating, the chair of the Noise and Pollution Action Committee, Deer Park Residents Group, reached out to our own ARA Chair, Rita Bilerman, to test the waters of support.

As he explained, just this week, the City's Infrastructure and Environment Committee adopted a motion "requesting that the Transportation & Fleet

Services report on a transition plan, to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers for municipal use by 2025.”

So that’s the City. What about us in the Annex? As Chris notes, “A few months ago, we started a ‘Gas Busters’ campaign within our community to build support among residents for the proposal for a ban gas-powered leaf blowers, ” with the team issuing flyers that [provide information](#) on the initiative.

Chris and his team are hoping to build relationships with similarly minded groups. Should the ARA join forces with the Gas Busters? Thoughts anyone? If you’ve got a point of view, do let us know at info@theara.org.



Rick Madonik / *Toronto Star*

Top of the Huron to You!

Two months ago, we featured Brian Burchell and the work of the Bloor Annex BIA. But we’d be remiss if we didn’t give a shout out to our community’s youngest Business Improvement Area – [Dupont by the Castle](#) – established in 2009. Spanning Dupont from Avenue Road to Bathurst, this organization serves the northern verge of the Annex. And we are delighted to showcase its efforts to enhance the neighbourhood.

Most recently this BIA has sponsored the creation of a parkette at the top of Huron, just as the street plunges blindly towards the CP railway tracks. We [watched the crew at work back](#) in September and were impressed by the seriousness with which the job was being done. The project is now almost complete with the recent installation of public benches sporting the distinctive

yellow that references both the Dupont subway station entrances and the BIA's very own banner. Hearty thanks to Dupont by the Castle for affording this oasis of calm in an otherwise neglected junction.



Notes and Queries

A Shortage of Treats?

Wasn't it wonderful to see our Annex streets so alive this past Hallowe'en Sunday? The joy was palpable, and the porch stoops crowded with eager trick or treaters who were wonderfully polite: "Thank you's" came in unaccustomed profusion, and delight shone from every masked face. Only trouble was -- the crowds caught us by surprise. When perhaps we would have expected fifteen or twenty knocks on the door in years past, this post-Pandemic street party produced dozens and dozens of joyfully costumed revellers. Never mind. The candy may have run out -- but the joy of being BACK was there for all to share.



Going to the Dogs

Admit it – there’s no place better to live than in the Annex. (How’s that for a bit of self-satisfied complacency?) And now we have proof positive – just ask the dogs. We accosted dog walker Luis the other day, quite confident that we’d be interviewing a pack of canine Annexonians. Turns out only one of the six pooches in tow can rightly be said to belong in the ‘hood – the rest hail from the Lawrence/Yonge neighbourhood well to the north. Luis has been walking dogs for 20 years now – clearly he knows the best spots in the city to be out on foot.



Huron Street Saga

The grins the workers are sporting in the picture below can’t begin to match what must be the delight Huron Street residents are feeling as the last visible

signs of Rogers' invasive infrastructure project are erased from memory. But isn't it always the way – one project ends and another begins? No telling when the pavement will be free of bandages – the City is back in full force digging pits in the road to facilitate upgrades to the supply lines to individual houses. Heavy sigh...



Concert Hall Meets Subway

Last week we wrote about the travails of residents who live in close proximity to the Bloor subway line. Turns out that's one of the culprits behind the delay of construction on KESKUS – the Estonian Cultural Centre on Huron. The blue fencing went up around the site late last July, but all has been silent in the interim. According to this week's [KESKUS newsletter](#): *Given the build is over TTC subway tunnels, monitoring equipment is being installed in the tunnels in preparation for construction.* That's the TTC rightly ensuring the safety of its own infrastructure. But can you imagine the lengths the builders will have to go to in order to soundproof the concert hall to-be?



A bird's eye view of the construction site courtesy KESKUS.

Heads Up at Bloor and Spadina

The official notice follows in italics. But suffice it to say that if you're on foot or a bicycle, life could be tricky at this intersection for the rest of this week. Internal combustion engines will -- no surprise -- continue to flow through unmolested.

During the week of November 1st the City's contractor will be completing underground deficiency work in the Bloor Street West and Spadina Avenue intersection area. This work will take place in close proximity to 322 Bloor Street West. During this work the north side sidewalk and bike lane will be temporarily closed. Work is anticipated to take 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete and demobilize from the area. There will be short-term localized traffic control setup on Bloor Street West while the work is being performed. Traffic flow in both directions will be maintained during this work. Timelines of this work may change depending on weather.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

This email was sent to gillianbartlettara@gmail.com. To stop receiving emails, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

