

LAWRENCE PARK NEWS

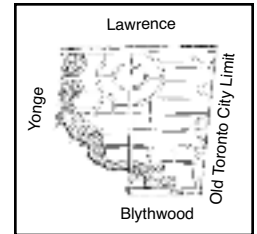
Published by the Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association

Winter 2008



Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association represents residents of the 700 homes in the area bounded by Lawrence Avenue East, Yonge Street, Blythwood Road and the old Toronto city limit at St. Ives Avenue. The Association's objective is to maintain and improve the residential characteristics of Lawrence Park and to assist the community in projects that benefit the neighbourhood.

Website: www.lpra.ca • E-mail: mailbox@lpra.ca



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Please contact us with your ideas, issues or concerns. And, if you would like to get involved, we would welcome your participation!

mailbox@lpra.ca
www.lpra.ca

President's Update 2008

Happy New Year from the entire LPRRA Board! As winter digs in (again) across Lawrence Park, we are delighted to present this first quarter newsletter for 2008: a roundup of LPRRA activities, initiatives and other news.

We believe that running a good ratepayers' association is about shaping our mandate around residents' interests and feedback, then creating the right structure so that everyone can get involved in key activities and initiatives.

For over 50 years now, the association has been actively involved in supporting your efforts to access and improve city services and also protect our neighbourhood from aggressive development activity. In several of our past residents surveys however, you told us that you were looking for more from a ratepayers' association. In response, we now have several active committees:

- *Traffic & Safety, chaired by Joe Kroon, driving a LP-wide task force to address our top speed, volume, parking and safety issues/problem areas;*
- *Parks & Trees, chaired by Nicholas Austin, committed to parks improvement and rebuilding the tree canopy across Lawrence Park;*
- *Communication & Events, chaired by Jaye Robinson, planning our regular newsletter updates and hosting/sponsoring regular community events;*
- *Development, chaired by Helmut Hock, supporting residents through builder consultation/negotiations, the Committee of*

Adjustment and OMB Hearings.

Engaging more LP Residents

While our membership base has grown upwards of 20% over the past several years, we are still looking for ways to make LPRRA more relevant and valuable to all LP residents. One of our overall objectives in 2008 will be engaging more residents as members and active participants across our various committees and initiatives. Addressing traffic issues and rebuilding the tree canopy across LP remain key focus areas where we need your continued support. We welcome your feedback and involvement in these and other initiatives as we strive to continually improve our beautiful neighbourhood.

Capturing Ratepayer Association Synergies

Many of you know that Lawrence Park has been served to date by two different ratepayers associations covering the west and east: LPRRA for the former City of Toronto area and LPBPOA for the former North York area (the dividing line has been roughly along the Wanless-St. Ives-St. Leonards-Pinedale-Strathgowan axis). This year we are looking at the synergies of combining resources to collaborate on more initiatives and potentially consolidate both associations into one.

Neighbour of the Year Nominations

Last year we introduced the Neighbour of the Year awards program at our annual neighbourhood social and update (this year's event will be held on April 11th at TFS). The intent of the awards was to recognize several residents for going "above and beyond the call." We are now

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calling for 2008 nominations to be presented in April, so if you have a neighbour that is worthy of this prestigious award, please let us know either directly through one of the board members listed on page 1 or via email at mailbox@lpra.ca

Call for Annual Memberships and More...

It's time to ask you to renew your annual membership to the ratepayers' association.

Membership funds are used to pay for committee activities and events throughout the year, including our Annual Social/Neighbourhood Update in April. We also welcome contributions of up to \$100 to our Neighbourhood Improvement Fund – these donations will go specifically towards special projects and expenses related to improving the character of our neighbourhood. We greatly appreciate your membership and contribu-

tions to the Fund – the renewal and donation form is on the back page.

In the balance of this issue you'll find an update on the traffic task force, parks & trees activity, development and other upcoming events. We are grateful for your continued support and feedback and look forward to a prosperous 2008 for all of Lawrence Park!

David Farwell, President

Ward 25 Update from Councillor Cliff Jenkins

2008 Capital Budget: Debt Financing to Pay for Growth-Related Infrastructure

City Council approved a Capital Budget of \$1.6 billion for 2008, an increase of about 7% over 2007. While there were certainly some worthwhile capital investments included in this year's budget, overall I felt it relied too heavily on debt financing and took no steps to curb the unfair practice of residential taxpayers subsidizing the development industry, by picking up the lion's share of growth-related infrastructure costs. Consequently, I voted against the 2008 Capital Budget.

On the positive side, the capital investments include:

- *about \$750 million for the TTC, including the purchase of new buses and hybrid buses, Wheel-Trans buses, and a down payment on new subway cars;*
- *\$112.5 million for road and bridge construction projects;*
- *3-1-1 technology to provide residents with better access to City services when the 3-1-1 centre launches in late 2008; and*
- *\$59.7 million for new, larger recycling carts, and green-bin programs for apartment buildings.*

On the negative side were two particularly telling line items in the Capital Budget:

- *growth-related capital expenditures: \$308 million; and*

- *development charge revenues: \$31 million.*

Development charges are supposed to pay for growth-related capital expenditures. Instead, we are financing about 90% of our growth-related spending with debt which is paid for by property taxes from our operating budget. Regrettably, that has led the City down a path where each year we are diverting more money from operational services to make up the shortfall in capital investment.

Our CFO confirmed that the \$277 million shortfall above translates into about a 1.5% tax increase – for 10 years. Hence the average Ward 25 property taxpayer (including tenants) will pay \$90/year for 10 years, i.e. \$900, for the City's failure to achieve fair development charges in 2008. That essentially is your subsidy to a very profitable industry – the development industry – and it is an explicit demonstration of the City's failure to levy fair development charges.

Sunday Construction Noise Ban Confirmed and Extended

On my motion, Council overturned a recommendation of the Licensing and Standards Committee on Sunday (and holiday) construction noise. The Committee had recommended that the Sunday ban, long championed by Councillor Karen Stintz and adopted by Council in 2006 for single-family residential neighbourhoods, be rescinded. My motion, not only over-

turned that, but extended the Sunday construction noise ban to all areas of the City. While certain types of infrequent construction noise are exempted (e.g. continuous concrete pour and crane placement), as well as non-noisy construction (e.g. dry-walling, painting), the construction noise ban will now provide relief to apartment neighbourhoods in addition to single-family home neighbourhoods.

Cliff Jenkins is our City of Toronto Councillor representing Ward 25: he can be reached directly at 416-395-6408 or through his email address:

councillor_jenkins@toronto.ca





Tackling Lawrence Park-wide Traffic Issues



One of our key initiatives through 2007-08 continues to be confirming our top LP-wide traffic issues and problem areas so that we can explore big picture solutions and ultimately develop a practical Lawrence Park Traffic Plan.

Last Winter, we formed a Lawrence Park Traffic Task Force made up of over 20 volunteers from both the former North York and City of Toronto sides of our neighbourhood. The group was launched under the direction of Councillor Cliff Jenkins, our City Traffic department and both Lawrence Park Ratepayers' organizations. The goal is to gather residents' views on issues and problem areas, then work with City Traffic and an independent traffic consultant to develop, socialize and plan potential solutions that could be implemented in both a short and longer term plan.

The overall mandate and objectives of the Task Force are:

- *To manage a high involvement and consultative process to develop a Lawrence Park-wide traffic plan that addresses resident concerns*
- *To explore and recommend big picture solutions to the major traffic issues and specific problem areas raised by LP residents*
- *To promote the safety of LP residents and keep it easy for residents to get around our neighbourhood*
- *To operate a resident-driven Lawrence Park-wide traffic task force made up of volunteer members from both the former City/North York sides of LP*

- *To appoint two resident co-chairs of the task force that will chair meetings and coordinate efforts, either appointed or elected*
- *To seek expert traffic engineering input from both the city and independent consultant regarding proven, possible solutions from other jurisdictions*
- *To establish an overall traffic task force gameplan with minimum quarterly milestones, regular meetings and a draft, socialized traffic plan in 2008*
- *To utilize seed funds from both the LPRA and LPBPOA ratepayers associations and raise/manage traffic improvement donations from residents*

Survey Responses Now In and Analysis Underway

Last Summer, the Task Force conducted a comprehensive resident traffic survey with over 300 responses received from residents across Lawrence Park. The survey asked residents to share their views on the top traffic issues, problem areas and potential solution ideas. It should come as no surprise that the top issues identified include excessive speed and volume, as well as parking, construction and pedestrian safety. Many creative improvement ideas were received to potentially address some of the more common problem areas.

The task force has been meeting regularly since last Fall to analyze the major survey findings and themes. We will present a summary of those findings by issue area along with the overall gameplan for traffic plan development at our annual meeting on April 11th.

Special thanks to our Co-Chairs Joe Kroon (from Lawrence Park West) and Carole Matthews (from Lawrence Park East) for guiding the Task Force to date. We are looking for a new Co-Chair from LP East as Carole retires to pursue family

and home renovation matters (Best wishes Carole!). We also need the active involvement and input from many other resident volunteers to accomplish the task force objectives and gameplan. The overall game plan includes several rounds of townhall meetings with residents to share progress, solicit feedback and build consensus on the potential traffic plan.



If you'd like to get involved in some of the different traffic task force activities or know a good co-chair candidate on your street, please contact David Farwell, LPRA President (416-481-2599) or email the LPRA Board using our address which is mailbox@lpra.ca.

We would also be grateful for your continued financial support to cover task force expenses which include paying for the part-time use of our independent traffic consultant, survey materials, mailing and communication costs, townhall and other expenses.

Finally, we will provide a full update and report on the traffic task force gameplan and preliminary survey findings at our annual LPRA Neighbourhood Update and Social Event in April – watch for a flyer and email reminder shortly with details on that event.

Drop us an email to share your story or views on a key issue, favourite place or interesting aspect of Lawrence Park life to mailbox@lpra.ca



Life in the Lawrence Park Canopy

It has been an interesting twelve months in and around The Park. Three things have caught my eye. Firstly, many of the ‘venerable’ trees in our canopy have succumbed to old age (aided and abetted by some particularly harsh weather). Secondly, it may be my imagination but there seems to have been a population explosion in the land of squirrels (our daughters’ pumpkins lasted all of 24 hours). Thirdly, the Blythwood Ravine continues to be as popular as ever (increasing the tension between natural and civilized space).

The bird feeder has been busy – and it has not even been cold. A couple of months ago there was fairly raucous competition between a flock of sparrows, chickadees, a Downy woodpecker, two Mourning Doves and a pair of Cardinals. It is always interesting to watch the inter-species pecking order in play; not as obvious as one would think. I spotted a hummingbird in the mêlée; the first I have personally seen in the city.

The big story is around how obvious it is that the canopy, overall, is fast approaching old age. The vicious storms early last Summer took their toll on trees (and

cars!). The city-managed canopy has over 3 million plus trees. As you can imagine, this is a significant forest to continuously juggle the demands of maintenance, regeneration and expansion.

Last May the Parks & Trees committee hosted its second annual Arbor Day. We had great weather and a good turnout. Last year we had a draw for a tree. We were graced with a ‘argument of politicians’; it was great to see federal, provincial and municipal officials, hot dogs in hand, aligned on the importance of the canopy. Once again we had Todd Irving from LEAF conduct his tree tours. Along with handing out 50 seedlings we also were selling copies of the re-published Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park (I have extra copies if you would like one). Arbor Day 2008 is on Saturday, May 3rd; we look forward to seeing you there!

The committee has been working on a number of new projects. One is a programme that would see a monthly activity (from bulb planting to invasive species culls) for kids (and adults) in the parks and ravines around the neighbourhood.

We have also identified the opportunity to partner with the Toronto Parks & Trees Foundation in a fund-raising initiative. This will allow us to raise funds that can be designated to the sustainability of the canopy in Lawrence Park. We are looking at using the money to help maintain the ageing canopy, invest in a proactive young-stock replacement strategy, and assist with sustaining the canopy on private property. We are hoping to hold our first event in January/February of next year: so stand by for details.

Last year we were the recipients of a cash award from Mayor Miller. We invested this money in having two obelisks built and placed in the Muir Park formal gardens. The Park staff, under Darrell Vossen, was very helpful in bringing this project to closure.

Once again I would like to tip my hat to the committee volunteers who continue to drive these initiatives ahead. Jane Summerville, Dennis Ing, Valentine Lovekin and Craig Hutchinson. We are always looking for volunteers (we meet once a month) so if you are interested then please get in touch with me.

**Third Annual
LPRA Arbor Day**

**Saturday, May 3rd
10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
at 90 Dinnick Crescent
Rain or shine.**

*Take a guided tree walk.
Learn how to care for your trees.
Sustain our vital canopy.
Enjoy free lunch and free mulch!*

For more information, call Nicholas Austin at
416 487 3625
n.austin@atthejunction.ca



No “Minto-scale Tower” at Yonge & Lawrence



The Toyota Site Condominium Development Application was heard this past Fall at the Ontario Municipal Board. Many residents representing ratepayers' associations from all four corners of Yonge & Lawrence were in attendance. Here are some of the details in this three-year public application process:

- Councillors Stintz and Jenkins were early to flag the development application and bring the issue to residents' attention
- A public meeting with the developer was held in late 2005 to gauge residents support for a 22 story condominium at the site – residents from all 4 corners of Yonge & Lawrence strongly objected
- The developer revised their proposal and applied to the Committee of Adjustment in 2007 to build a 16-story condominium complex with a 6.3 times lot coverage comprising of 198 units but only 133 parking spots
- The Committee of Adjustment rejected the application and the developer immediately appealed to the OMB to have the matter re-heard
- Hearings to review all aspects of the application began on October 1st and continued until October 16th 2007

- General concerns from Lytton Park, Teddington Park, Bedford Park and Lawrence Park Ratepayers' groups as well as the City of Toronto itself included: shadowing, parking, precedent set, traffic, lack of fit, etc.
- The developer is unable to build a structure that includes parking for all 198 condo residences because the subway is right below the proposed site (so residents and guests will need to park elsewhere)
- The current zoning for the site is 4-6 stories and in most cases all new Yonge Street development from Yonge Blvd. down to Briar Hill has been a maximum of 6-8 stories
- The only exception to the norm are the two 12-story apartment towers immediately south of the Toyota site that were actually built illegally in the 1960's (and exceeded the allowed height) with a 7.1 times lot coverage
- Many residents attended the public meeting and sent letters opposing the application

On January 10th 2008, the OMB handed down their decision. The OMB approved the construction of a condominium tower at 6.3 times lot coverage but not to exceed the height of the two towers at 3000 Yonge Street (immediately south of this development) or 12 stories, which ever is greater. The revised structure would also need to conform to the City's angular plane parameters on the South and West sides in order to reduce the shadowing impact on the residential neighbourhood. We consider this to be a minor victory. The OMB recognized that this would be a precedent setting decision, took into full consideration all of the evidence presented and then took their time to arrive at what we consider to be a fair ruling.

The full report can be found on the OMB website www.OMB.gov.on.ca under E-Decisions with reference to PL060944.

Development Committee Update

As is typical with ratepayer groups, they are often formed to unite the neighbourhood in an effort to oppose some significant development activity that threatens to de-stabilize the community. Development activity is a key portfolio within the LPRA's mandate but it has always been unclear if the association should spearhead or simply support its ratepayers to oppose applications before the Committee of Adjustment and appeals before the Ontario Municipal Board.

The LPRA Development Committee has continued to work with residents on a number of fronts:

1. Keeping residents informed of controversial and potentially destabilizing development activity;
2. Working with the City Planning Department and our Councillor to establish limits of acceptability for size and set back variances (i.e. Maximum density of 0.50 times lot size, etc.);
3. Educating the Committee of Adjustment of the established built forms (height, massing, green space, etc.) that fundamentally defines our neighbourhood;
4. Communicating, in support of local residents, to the Committee of Adjustment why a proposed application for variance(s) to zoning by-laws is unjustified and undesirable;
5. Informing the Committee of Adjustment when a proposed application for variance(s) is indeed appropriate and acceptable to the residents;
6. Acting as a mediator between the owner(s), builder, architect and affected neighbour(s) to review the application for variances and recommend potential modifications in order to reach a compromise for all shareholders;
7. Counseling ratepayers on the Committee of Adjustment and Ontario Municipal Board processes;

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8. Raising funds to hire the legal and planning expertise necessary to mount an effective appeal in the courts.

During the past two years we have provided briefings to City Planning, the Committee of Adjustment and the OMB on development patterns and norms for our neighbourhood. Based on residents' feedback, we have established an acceptable density threshold for new construction at 0.50 times lot area - this has been tested and upheld in recent

Committee of Adjustment decisions. Time and again we have been successful in working with all stakeholders to reach compromise positions that address the neighbour's concerns and also satisfy the home builder. If you are faced with a development proposal on your street, please feel free to contact our Development Committee to help consolidate the views of surrounding neighbours and ensure that the development application makes an effort to fit in with the surrounding area.

Lights Out Lawrence Park!

Saturday, March 29th, 8 p.m.

Toronto will join with cities across the world in simultaneously turning off our lights for one hour to raise global awareness of climate change.

We often assume industry is to blame for the bulk of greenhouse gases but our own personal lifestyles and choices contribute to one third to one half of greenhouse gas emissions. And Canadians generate more greenhouse gases per capita than any other country, with the exception of the United States and Australia.

Here are some tips on how to reduce our eco footprint:

- *Replace incandescent light bulbs in your house with compact fluorescents.*
- *Unplug televisions, stereo systems, printers etc. that draw energy even when you turn them off!*
- *Don't idle. Idling a car for more than 10 seconds wastes more gas than restarting it.*
- *Avoid the use of de-icing salt as it has a negative impact on our trees/plants and ground water.*
- *Participate on Saturday, March 29th at 8pm by turning off your lights for one hour to show Lawrence Park is a leader in the move toward a healthier planet.*

Simple changes in our everyday life can make a big difference. For more quick tips go to wwf.ca and check out Things To Do under the Global Warming section.

For more information about Lights Out Toronto please contact Jaye Robinson at jayerobinson@sympatico.ca

Salvation Army Development Update

As the neighbourhood is well aware, plans are underway for the redevelopment of the old Salvation Army Training College at 2130 Bayview Avenue.

The property has been acquired by Cresford Developments. After extensive consultation with our neighbourhood, the redevelopment plan is close to its final form and is going through the site approval process at the City of Toronto. Cresford is planning a high-end residential development on the site comprising 88 units in a mix of houses and condos. The plan calls for the site to be split into 2 sections separated by a new, internal road. The section to the west and north of this road (that abuts the existing properties on Dawlish Rd. and Daneswood Ave.) will contain 17 single-family, detached homes; the section that fronts Bayview Ave. will house 2 condo buildings. These condos will be 4½ stories in height, the top "half story" consisting of mechanicals and rooftop gardens.

Both the detached homes and condos will be high-end, luxury units. Overall site design and planning is being handled by J. F. Brennan Design/Build and Brian Gluckstein has been retained to do the interior design.

Site demolition is now complete with the exception of the Salvation Army Chapel building located near the site's center. This building will be reused for the Sales Office and will be demolished later once construction begins in earnest. Cresford hopes to have the Sales Office operational within the next couple of months. The construction schedule will depend on how sales progress.

For further information, contact Alison Noble of the Lawrence Park-Bayview Property Owners' Association at: ajnoble@sympatico.ca.



THE LAWRENCE PARK RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL WINE & CHEESE/NEIGHBOURHOOD UPDATE



Please come and join the LPRA Board, our Committees
and your neighbours for an informal “all residents” event:

Friday, April 11th, 2008
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Student Commons Room
Toronto French School
318 Lawrence Avenue East

~ Wine & Cheese Will be Served ~

Proposed Agenda Includes:

- *LPRA's Annual Neighbour of the Year Awards Presentation*
- *Traffic Task Force Survey Findings & Gameplan Briefing*
- *Lawrence Park Tree Canopy Revitalization Program Overview*
- *Meet and Mingle with Neighbours across Lawrence Park*
- *Childcare will be provided in the school gymnasium*

We look forward to seeing you there!!

**Please RSVP via e-mail to mailbox@lpra.ca or call
LPRA Communications & Events Chair, Jaye Robinson at 416-481-4047**



ENGAGING OPPORTUNITIES – LPRA CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted: New Board Members to represent all areas of Lawrence Park and play an active role in guiding the association and its various committees/activities

Wanted: Co-Chair to share leadership of the Lawrence Park-wide Traffic Task Force which is tackling our top speed, volume, parking and safety problem issues/areas

Wanted: Creative individuals who can help lead, plan and execute an overhaul of our LPRA website design, content and functionality

Wanted: Volunteers to join our traffic and safety, parks & trees, development and communications & events committees to support various events and initiatives

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of the LPRA newsletter, please contact the Editorial Team: **Jaye Robinson and Olympia Nicolcev** at jayerobinson@sympatico.ca or 416 481 4047

Please renew your membership for 2008. We need you!

We encourage you to become (or remain) a member of the Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association, particularly if you care about protecting and advancing the neighbourhood's interests and fostering a sense of community in our magnificent area of Toronto. We welcome contributions to our Neighbourhood Improvement Fund which go towards projects undertaken by each of our committees throughout the year. Finally we are calling for nominations for the 2008 Neighbour of the Year Awards to be presented on April 11th at our annual meeting.

Thank you in advance for your continued and active support. Please make cheques payable to **Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association** and mail to:

Heather Stewart, Treasurer LPRA, Suite 239, 3219 Yonge Street, Toronto ON M4N 2L3

LPRA Resident / Member to Renew:

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
E-mail _____

- I/we are enclosing a cheque for **\$40.00** (note new amount) to cover the 2008 LPRA membership fee
- I/we are enclosing a cheque for up to \$100 to go towards the LPRA Neighbourhood Improvement Fund
- I/we are interested in volunteering on the Board or one of its active committees

Neighbour of the Year Award Nominee:

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
E-mail _____

Reason for Nomination: (i.e. how this neighbour went above & beyond the call with an act of kindness or contribution to LP)

What issues or initiatives would you like LPRA to focus on in 2008?

(Potential focus areas, issues or initiatives: e.g. Traffic, Neighbourhood Watch, City Services...)

