

## The Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association

Spring 2024 Newsletter

### What's Happening in the Park



*Watch Yor Speed (WYS) Monitor on St. Leonard's Ave Looking East towards Bayview Ave*

#### **Hello Neighbours,**

Winter has been a non-event this year with little snow accumulation (until recently!) and temperatures well above normal. Unfortunately the Cheltenham Park outdoor rink, which is usually enjoyed by many in the neighbourhood, never got off the ground. However, it is time to say goodbye to the vestiges of winter and look forward to welcoming warmer temperatures and spring flowers.

Winter or spring, the LPRA has not stopped working on behalf of Lawrence Park residents including 1) representing the concerns of Lawrence Park residents at hearings for newly planned residential developments, (2) monitoring car thefts and break and enters, and (3) supporting neighbourhood events such as the Lawrence Park Fun Fair. If you are not currently a member of the LPRA please consider joining this spring. Why and how to join the LPRA can be found at the end of this newsletter.

## Residential Development in the Neighbourhood is a Major Concern

Of grave concern to the LPRA is a newly proposed nine story residential development at 49-59 Lawrence Avenue East and Weybourne Ave. This development is being proposed in advance of the City's planned by-law changes that are targeting increased housing densification along major city streets which includes Lawrence Avenue East. Current zoning in the neighbourhood allows for single family homes up to 10 metres in height. The proposed by-law changes will permit buildings of up to 19 metres (six storeys) on Major Streets.

The Major Streets Proposal - <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/major-streets-study/> - identifies Lawrence Avenue East between Yonge Street and Bayview Avenue as an Opportunity Area. See "Reports" – Attachment 6. This Proposal has not been passed by City Council and any comments on the proposal should be directed to the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods team (EHON@toronto.ca). You may have heard Premier Ford's comments on March 21, 2024 - "I can assure you 1,000 per cent you go in the middle of communities and start putting up four-storeys, six-storey, eight-storey buildings ... there's going to be a lot of shouting and screaming. That's a massive mistake. We are not going to go into communities and build four-storey or six-storey buildings beside residences like this. It's off the table for us. We're going to build homes, single dwelling homes, townhomes, that's what we're going to focus on."

The proposed development at 49-59 Lawrence Ave East has a height of 35 metres, more than triple the maximum under current zoning and almost double the suggested maximum height suggested by the Major Streets proposal. Details of the application can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/application-details/?id=5236864&pid=961360>. The LRPA is not against increased housing density as long as it promotes an appropriate transition given the current residential designation of the neighborhood. However, the LPRA has issues with this development.

In addition to the proposed height other LPRA concerns include the invasion of privacy for residents that are in close proximity to the development, an expected increase in traffic flows on nearby neighbourhood streets, and a loss of green space. Our city councillor, Jaye Robinson, is also very concerned by the scope of the proposed development and the impact on residents in the area. A working group (comprised of immediate neighbours and LPRA Board members) will be meeting with city planners and other government officials responsible for development in the neighbourhood to express our collective concerns.

Although the working group will be sending a consolidated response, it is important that other Lawrence Park residents who have concerns with this development and the overall City plan to increase housing density, please send their comments to the City Planner, Amie Chung. **If residents don't provide feedback to the city there will be no chance of changing amendments to the official plan and by-laws which will allow these types of developments will proceed.**

Amie Chung

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With respect to planned new single home residential developments in our neighbourhood most applications are requesting variances to the city's by-laws. In a number of these applications developers are requesting significant variances. Unfortunately, it has become too common place at Committee of Adjustment (CoA) hearings that committee voters will readily approve the request for variances. The LPRA is working with residents affected by many of these developments to get changes made to a development plan if it is not designed to be in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood, the developer is requesting excessive variances and/or the development poses a significant risk to the surrounding neighbours such as ground stability or privacy issues. If you have concerns regarding a planned development please contact us at [development@lpra.ca](mailto:development@lpra.ca).

### **Community Consultation in the Development Review Process**

This section is an excerpt from FONTRA's March monthly newsletter and is to notify Toronto residents of the City's plan to conduct city-wide public consultation, targeted stakeholder consultation and industry consultation in order to receive feedback on the proposed changes to the City's development review process. The City is exploring options for public participation in the review process and is interested in hearing from the public due to the ongoing changes to the City's development review process, including reduced timelines for decision making and the approval of developments under Bill 109. The City is also seeking input from residents on how they would like to be informed of changes in your area. To let your views known City residents can participate in the remaining in-person consultation shown below or virtually, with the date/times also highlighted below:

#### **Remaining In-person Consultation Events**

**March 26, 2024: 6 to 8 p.m.** – Scarborough Civic Centre,  
150 Borough Drive (Ground Floor, Central Rotunda)

No registration is required for in-person events.

#### **Toronto-wide Virtual Events**

**April 9, 2024:** 12 to 1 p.m.

**April 10, 2024:** 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Register for a virtual event [HERE](#)

#### **Fill Out a Short Survey:**

The City is also asking for feedback from the public to better understand how members of the

public engage with City Planning about development proposals. The survey is to help the City to shape improvements to the process.

[FIND SURVEY HERE!](#)

### **Neighbourhood Safety-Traffic is a Serious Problem that Needs to be Addressed**

As the volume and speed of vehicles on neighbourhood streets escalates at an alarming rate the safety of our neighbourhood children, pedestrians and cyclists is critical. Given the reality that a number of Lawrence Park streets do not have sidewalks the risk of accidents has risen as people on foot and cycling share the road with vehicular traffic.

Many of our streets in Lawrence Park have maximum speed limits of 30 km/hr. The limits are there for a reason-safe passage for all through the neighbourhood. You may have noticed Watch Your Speed (WYS) monitors (see photo) have been placed at various spots on neighbourhood streets. The monitors stay in one spot for a short time and then moved to another location. Hopefully the monitors, which rapidly flash when a vehicle exceeds the speed limit, will curb some of the speeding in our neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the volume and speed of vehicles using our neighbourhood streets has to be curtailed particularly those vehicles that are taking shortcuts through Lawrence Park. These drivers are often going well above the speed limit and are not necessarily mindful of pedestrians. Furthermore, the monitoring and enforcement of the rule of law against drivers who speed excessively, turn onto neighbourhood streets during restricted hours, drive dangerously and park illegally needs to be increased. The LPRA recognizes that traffic through our neighbourhood is a serious problem and is liaising with the City and police to find appropriate solutions.

In this regard, this spring the City plans to hold a public consultation with Lawrence Park residents on its Lawrence Park Transportation Plan <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/public-consultations/infrastructure-projects/lawrence-park-transportation-plan>. The Transportation Plan is designed to assess neighbourhood traffic concerns and identify improvements which can be implemented along with planned road reconstruction. The Plan will identify traffic management improvements to address traffic concerns related to:

1. Road safety for vulnerable road users (seniors, school children, people walking and cycling)
2. Excessive speeding
3. Excessive motor vehicle volume

When the City has arranged a date and location your LPRA will notify all Lawrence Park residents of the details. A high level of participation from residents will be vital as it will show

the City how important this issue is to the residents. **This will also be your opportunity to voice your concerns on neighbourhood traffic and put forward ideas for improvements.**

### **Auto Thefts in the Neighbourhood are Almost a Daily Occurrence-It Doesn't have to be that Way**

The high frequency of neighbourhood auto thefts and carjackings is very worrying to the LPRA. We all know neighbours who have been victimized and the use of violence has been increasing. Our Neighbourhood Watch groups have circulated many tips, including tips provided by Toronto Police Services and detectives to deter the risk of auto theft and carjackings:

- If you are a victim of a carjacking, comply with the thieves demands and give up your car. Your life is worth far more than a car.
- If there is a child in the vehicle, shout "my child is in the car"; this may be a deterrent.
- If you are suspicious, use your key fob car alarm; thieves don't want noise
- If a carjacking is occurring, get away as quickly as possible and scream loudly.
- Park close to parking/security attendants or store entrances
- Try to remember what the carjacker looks like: sex, race, age, hair and eye color, tattoos, special features, clothes / logos and anything unusual or specific, like an accent.
- Report ALL crimes to the police 911, online or non-emergency at 416-808-2222.

### **Be Aware of Your Surroundings**

Carjacking and car thefts are crimes of opportunity. Here are examples of where carjackings take place:

- Intersections controlled by traffic lights or stop signs
- Parking garages, shopping malls and grocery stores
- An intentional rear-end collision where the thieves jump inside your vehicle as you get out to examine the damage, etc.
- Self-service gas stations and car washes
- ATMs (automated teller machines)
- Residential driveways and streets as people get in and out of their cars
- Highway exit and entry ramps, or other places where drivers slow down or stop

## Connecting and Networking with Toronto Police Services

Our Neighbourhood Watch liaison, Didi Cameron, continues to meet regularly with our 53 Division Police to receive updates on crime prevention, statistics and trends. She was invited to the Ottawa National Summit to combat theft and has been invited to the Peel Auto Theft Summit at the end of March; a summary of these events will follow in our next newsletter. In February, Didi met with our Deputy Chief of Police at Police Headquarters (see photo) to express concerns on the level of community crime and to maintain an open dialogue on exchanging ideas and concepts to make our communities safer, residents and businesses more aware and to increase communication and sharing of information. If you have any concerns or comments, please do be sure to email her at [safety@lpra.ca](mailto:safety@lpra.ca) .



*Deputy Chief Robert Johnson (left), Didi Cameron (middle) and Superintendent Paul Rinkoff (right)*

## **Why and How to Join the LPRA**

The mandate of the LPRA includes promoting a strong sense of community and providing a voice that represents the interests of all residents.

The LPRA has accomplished so much for the neighbourhood over the past years including:

- Support for residents at Committee of Adjustment hearings on new residential developments
- Lawrence Park Road and Safety Initiatives
- Newsletters and updates to residents on neighbourhood news
- Volunteer work, financial support for the Cheltenham rink initiative
- The Neighbourhood Watch initiative in cooperation with local police

This work is possible only because of our volunteers and your support. LPRA depends on motivated volunteers and neighbours' generosity through donations and membership fees. The LPRA has no other source of funding.

Please become a supporting member, or renew your annual supporting membership, online using our secure PayPal server on our website ( <https://lpra.ca/membership/> ) . If you prefer, download and print the membership form from the website and send it along with a cheque by mail. The cost is \$50 for one year or \$140 for three years.

Thank you and we appreciate all your support!