



Mount Dennis Community Association



To be a liveable, net-zero energy neighbourhood and inspire others to do the same.

Mount Dennis ecoNeighbourhood CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT

INSIDE:

- * Planning our future
- * Dennis School changes
- * Irving Upgrades
- * Spring Clean-Ups

Help a kid learn reading:
Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 pm
or 5:30-6:30 pm. Details
at the Library.



MOUNT DENNIS

Excellent questions raised by meeting participants added to the evening's exchange of info.

CLIMATE ACTION HERE IN MOUNT DENNIS

It was jam-packed at LEF's Biidigen Room for the Mount Dennis Town Hall meeting on Government Climate Change Plans on February 26th. Despite a stormy winter evening, more than 60 people crowded in to learn about the Mount Dennis ecoNeighbourhood Initiative's Climate Action Project.

Together they listened intently as our three elected officials, Councillor Frances Nunziata, MPP Faisal Hassan, and MP Ahmed Hussen via video, talked about how the three levels of government are responding to the climate emergency. Presentations were made on City, Provincial and Federal climate policy and program details by Fernando Carou from Toronto Environment and Energy, Rick Ciccarelli from the Climate Action Project, and Sacha Smart from MP Hussen's Office. The wide-ranging question and answer session was capped off by consensus of all in the room that action is needed on climate change. Please go online to mdencap.ca for a full report on the meeting.

The Town Hall event was the Climate Action Project's first stage, and is being followed-up at the end of March with the 2-day **Mount Dennis Climate Action Summit**. We welcome you to join us from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday March 27th at the LEED 501 Alliance Avenue building where innovative actions already happening in Mount Dennis will be showcased. Government, business and community members are helping shift Mount Dennis toward "carbon neutrality" already, and are eager to show you what they are up to.

On the following day, Saturday March 28th, the Mount Dennis ecoNeighbourhood Climate Action Summit will be back at the Learning Enrichment Foundation (116 Industry Street). The morning will begin by examining the risks and opportunities in our neighbourhood relating to climate change; then, in the afternoon, we will identify what climate-related actions we want to take. Reducing emissions from buildings, transportation, community energy, waste management, and natural solutions will be key themes. Actions involving lifestyle, work and culture are all on the day's ambitious agenda. Doors will open at 9:30 a.m. with the summit in session from 10 until 4 p.m.

We are lucky to live in a part of Toronto where people are actively looking for ways to deal with climate change right here in our own neighbourhood. At this time when many new buildings (and residents) are expected in the next few years, local pressure can help make sure what is built helps solve the climate crisis rather than worsening it. **Come out and share your own ideas and concerns, as we work together to strengthen Mount Dennis.**



NEW ON THE STREET

Weston road has seen a lot of changes in recent months. On the east side, south of the new traffic lights at Dennis, #1017 is now a **barber shop**. North of Barr Ave. both **The Nutmeg Spot** at #1085 and **Tommy's Dry Cleaners** at #1121 have closed.

But the big changes are happening north of Eglinton. **Shilla Dynasty** (#1161) has closed and will soon be occupied by **Hobo Cannabis**. At #1172a the signage for **Pier 6 Seafood** is finished, but the store has yet to open. The vacant former CIBC building at #1174 has been leased for 15 years to **Men at Work**, a design-build firm (it includes women!) of "Renovation Experts for Older Toronto Homes", relocating from Bloor West this spring.

#1178 now boasts signage for the **X-Calabar Grill**, which is expected to open once its liquor license comes through. **Châtelet** has opened at #1188; owner Teresa calls this unusual store "a fusion of Shabby Chic, French Country, Hollywood Glam and Paris Apartment Style, with a design aesthetic that is eclectic, whimsical and unabashedly feminine". The closure of **Subway** at #1194 caught a lot of us by surprise; it had been open just over a year and seemed to be meeting a real need in the community. Another big loss is across the street, where the wonderful free museum and **Skull Store** at #1193-5 were forced out by the landlord's decision to redevelop the premises for a future dental clinic.

Changes continue further north. At #1213 (which long-time residents may remember as Nancy's) the **Doner Bar & Grill** has closed and the building is up for sale.

North of Ray Ave., Ghetsum Office Products at #1282 has now become **Going to the Office**; across the street, the former Vintage Shop at #1289 (beside Louison Automotive) is now **Jobs Jobs Trabajos**, a place to find short-term work opportunities (that sometimes turn into long-term work); Spanish speakers are welcome.

Beside the next stoplight, Fardus Décor and Varieties at #1350 has now been replaced by **Marka Cadeey Market**. In the little mall opposite Craydon Ave., several stores (and the former Action for Neighbourhood Change offices) are now closed, while the former ZK Design at #1360 is now **Pure Glam Studios**.

Finally, just just before Jane St., a formerly vacant store at #1381 has become **Higher Level Hair Salon**.



Faisal Hassan
MPP York South–Weston

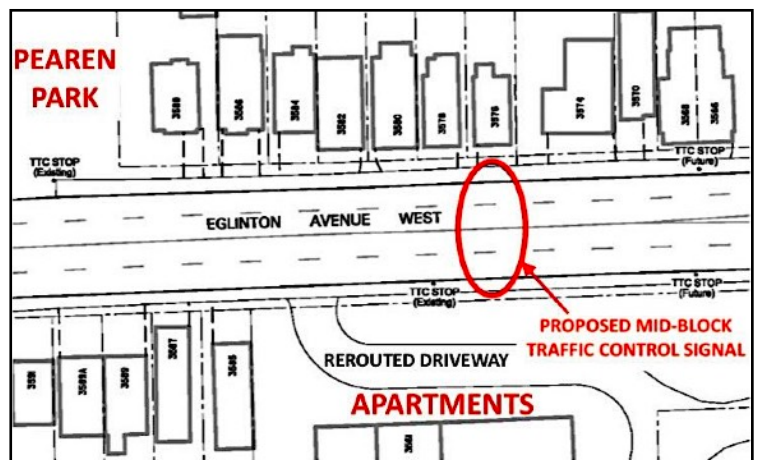
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TRAFFIC & SAFETY

On December 18, 2017, MDCA members were part of a group of pedestrian safety advocates meeting in the Mount Dennis Library to create a list of dangerous spots where the City needs to make changes to improve safety. Tragically on that same night, a longtime Mount Dennis resident, 85 year old Maria Do Carmo Amaral Leite was struck by a driver as she was walking across Eglinton Ave. from the bus stop to her home. Maria died of her injuries shortly thereafter. Where she was struck was one of the danger spots on our list.

On January 29, 2020, after years of public advocacy, Toronto City Council approved a set of new traffic lights on Eglinton Ave. W, in front of two big apartment buildings, 200 metres west of Weston Road and close to where this tragic accident happened. We expect these traffic lights to be installed in 2021. The existing bus stops will then be moved further east (see map). For details google "TMMIS 2020.EY12.5".

Have you noticed that the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Weston Road and Dennis Ave. got replaced by traffic lights earlier this year to improve public safety? This was approved by Council in June 2018.




Councillor Nunziata and City of Toronto
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Hon. Ahmed Hussen
MP for York South–Weston

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TOWER TALK

A new residential tower proposed for Locust St. has got people talking. We've been expecting development near Mount Dennis Station, but at 35 storeys, Trolleybus Urban Development wants something a lot taller than anyone expected. Some say we need to keep tall buildings well away from Weston Road, and that the 374 units will generate far too much traffic on Locust and on Weston. Others say big buildings near the station are the best way to meet the need for new homes here. They like this tower's design, say its shadows would fall mostly on the rail corridor (not on nearby residents), and that the extra people will do lots to support the stores on Weston Road. Go online to mountdennis.ca and tell everyone what YOU think.



Proposed Locust St. Tower

LOCAL TENANT UNION FOR RENTERS' RIGHTS

More than 120 renters and community activists met at the Weston King Neighbourhood Centre (near Lawrence) on Feb. 1st for a York South-Weston Tenant Union summit. The YSWTU's organizing committee includes presidents and chairs of seven tenant associations in the Weston, Mount Dennis and Amesbury neighbourhoods.

The summit featured a video from Leilani Farha, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing. She congratulated the attendees on banding together, and spoke on Toronto's housing difficulties, including higher rents, increased evictions and an increase in homelessness. Farha mentioned that Canada has ratified UN resolutions that make housing a human right, and that governments and states have an international obligation to uphold the right to housing. Participants then took part in several workshops, and arranged follow-up meetings and actions on various issues.

The YSWTU invites Mount Dennis residents to visit tenantunion.ca for more info, or to email yswtenants@gmail.com to volunteer, learn more about their rights as a tenant or get help organizing a tenant association in their building.



Fire at 1175 Weston Road

FIRE STORIES

There have been some fires in Mount Dennis recently that have caused concern. The fire at 1175 Weston Road early in the morning of January 25th caused injuries to four tenants. A young woman living in the basement received third degree burns to 50% of her body while trying to escape through the back door. The other tenants had less severe injuries but all were taken to hospital. Last November 13th, there was a house fire at 10 Louvain Street - all escaped, one with burns, and it affected the adjoining houses and a vehicle parked outside. Last year, there was a fire at a house on Lambton Avenue when a large, extended family was given support by local churches and residents after they were displaced by the fire.

The fire fighters at Station 421 on Lambton Ave. want to remind people of **basic safety procedures** that may prevent further fires. **DO NOT take out the battery in a smoke alarm** if it goes off accidentally. Lots of people who do that forget to put it back! Remember to replace the battery every 6 months when you change the clocks. Also, test your carbon monoxide alarms every month, and make sure you have one on every floor, especially near bedrooms.

If you are someone who uses space heaters during this time of year, make sure you **use a heavy-duty extension cord** to carry the heavier electrical load that space heaters require. With warm weather coming, the firefighters encourage us to make sure our barbecues are thoroughly cleaned before we start to use them, and to keep them away from fences and walls. Remember that bonfires are not allowed without a permit. Finally, our firefighters encourage us to clear up piles of leaves or outdoor trash that may be a fire hazard, and to take batteries (along with partly used paint and aerosol cans) to the City's Environment Day (*see page 2*) or the Ingram Street yard. **Let's make sure we all stay safe in Mount Dennis!**

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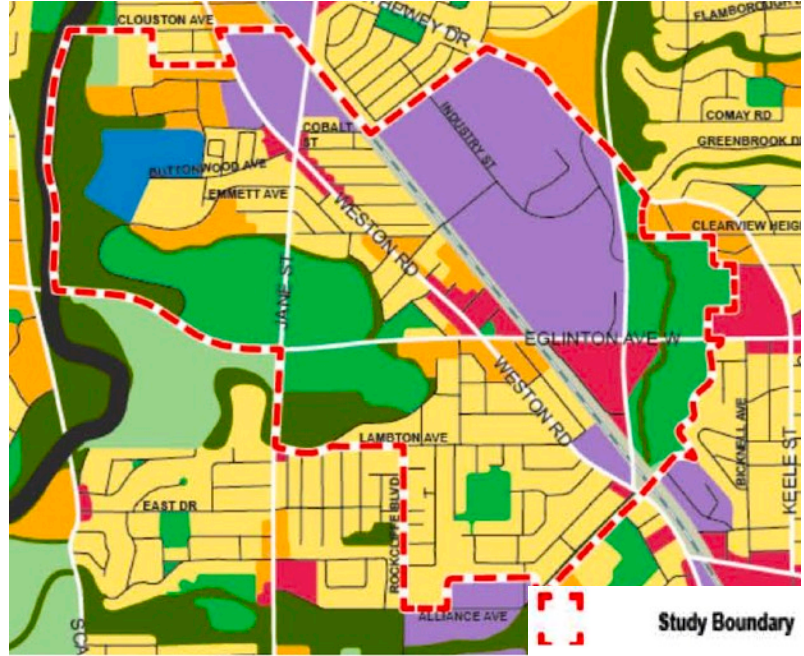
CITY STUDIES LOCAL ECONOMY & REVIEWS PLANNING RULES

We know the new Mount Dennis Station will change our area in a big way. It's not just the Eglinton Crosstown LRT; The Union-Pearson Express, GO trains to Kitchener, and even some inter-city trains will stop here, as well as lots of buses.

To help deal with the coming changes, the City has been studying Economic Development options and ideas, and is also doing a Planning study that will recommend new rules for property owners and developers in the area.

An **Economic Development Study** (led by City staff and TCI Management Consultants) got underway last summer. The Study team has worked closely with Councillor Nunziata, members of the Mount Dennis Business Improvement Area, MDCA and many others. At a December public meeting the team put forward 20 priorities, based on five strategies:

- Leverage transit infrastructure and connectivity
- Create a unique and positive identity
- Encourage cluster investment and development
- Promote business, creative and cultural enterprise
- Support local talent and skills development



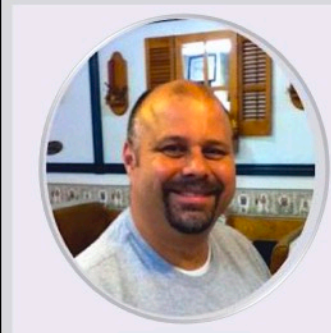
The **Strong Neighbourhoods Planning** process is led by a second, ongoing City group, which includes MDCA members. The group has been working on ways to strengthen less affluent communities (Neighbourhood Improvement Areas), including creating more jobs locally.

More than two years ago it became clear that to guide change in our area and control its impact, the zoning and planning rules would need a complete review. The City decided to do a Mount Dennis **Planning Framework Study**. It has taken distressingly long to get going, but now a consultant has been appointed and work is finally moving ahead this spring. With growing signs of developer interest in local property, we expect the study to address rules concerning land use, street design, possible new streets, parks and open spaces, cycling and walking routes, water and sewer services, historic buildings to be saved, and more. (See map for study boundaries).

Your input will be important to this planning study, which will include a series of community meetings (dates not yet set). The City will advertise these, but MDCA will also help make sure local residents and businesses know about them. Keep reading our Newsletters and checking our website. Best of all, email info@mountdennis.ca and ask to get our occasional e-blasts, which will keep you updated on what is happening.

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DENNIS AVENUE ECO-SCHOOL IS ON THE MOVE!

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is moving ahead with plans to replace Dennis Avenue Community School's old building. This elementary school first opened in 1891, with the most recent of many additions to the building being completed in 1969. It is now home to a Gold Eco-School program as well as being part of Toronto's "Model Schools for Inner Cities", which provides added resources for literacy, health and children's services during the school day and after school. This is a key support for community integration, as Mount Dennis is a less affluent part of the City with larger numbers of recent immigrant families, many not speaking English or French as their first language at home.



Artistic rendering of the new school facility

Plans were reviewed at a recent open house for the school community. The design process for the new Dennis Ave. School building was completed back last spring, after consultations with staff, students and the parent community. It is now at the stage of finalizing details for building permits, with tendering expected this spring after final approvals. Demolition of the old building and work on the new school will start as early as the next summer. It is now nearly a "shovel-ready" project, and MDCA is hopeful TDSB and the City of Toronto will work together to make the school facilities as energy-efficient as possible, to help with climate action and achieve operating cost savings. The opportunity to train youth in green building practices was raised as an additional community benefit, and TDSB representatives have agreed to look into it. Memorializing the school's history, and deciding what should be done with the building's existing solar panels are other matters to be resolved.

As of the new school year next September, Dennis Ave. School staff and students are relocating into the Rockcliffe Public School building until construction is complete. Dennis Ave. will grow from an elementary JK-5 school to educate students from Daycare and Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8. TDSB plans to expand its catchment area when Cordella Public School closes in July 2021.

Reopening of the new building at 17 Dennis Ave. is anticipated for September 2022. The school will accommodate 358 students and 98 children in daycare, and TDSB estimates it will be at 83% capacity by 2026. Growth in the area's family-age population is anticipated in TDSB projections of the area's current demographics, and more can be expected from new residential developments in our area.

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IRVING TISSUE PLANT IMPROVEMENTS

Irving Tissue is the second-largest employer in Mount Dennis, after West Park, and as the photo makes clear, there are changes happening at the plant. Some local residents wanted to know more, so we asked the company and they explained.

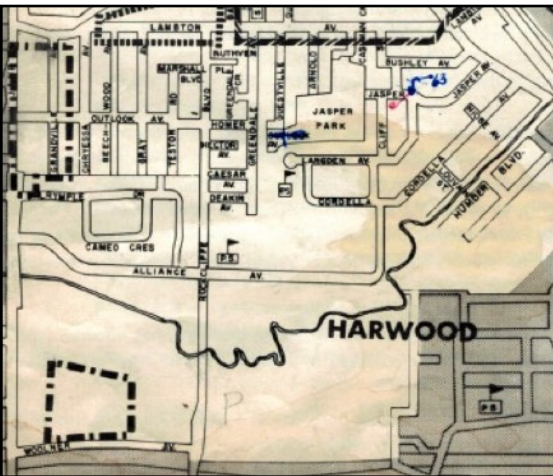
“We’re building a combined heat and power (CHP) facility which is going to help us improve our greenhouse gas emissions and modernize all of our steam production equipment which makes steam and hot air for the facility,” said project manager David Michaud. The turbines, fired by natural gas, create electricity for the plant as well as exhaust heat which feeds the tissue-drying process, and they create steam used to heat the building and make tissue products.



The new stacks are where the hot gases, which Michaud calls “the small percentage of waste heat not being used in our process,” leave the facility, and are built to minimize noise levels which might otherwise bother neighbours. Irving points out that since they will be using less electricity, Hydro will have more capacity to serve other customers in our area. And fewer unplanned power disruptions make the plant safer for employees, as well as more productive. Of course, Irving’s reduced carbon emissions bring it right into line with the Mount Dennis eco-Neighbourhood goals.

This \$60 million upgrade project started last July and will finish this summer. It is just the latest of many upgrades to a plant which was first built in 1937. Over the years it has been expanded and improved many times, and changed ownership more than once before Irving Tissue bought it in 2001. This plant’s last major upgrade was in 2013, and you can read about it on our website in MDCA’s fifth Newsletter (Winter/Spring 2014). Also on our website you can read the longer version of the article provided to us by Irving Tissue, and see a “before” photo of their construction zone.

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PLEASE SUPPORT FLOOD PREVENTION

This 1966 map shows the Rockcliffe floodplain, back before Black Creek was a concrete channel. Many experts think the best way to prevent future flooding here is to make the valley more like it used to be, restoring Black Creek and Lavender Creek to their natural alignments. This would protect all of us in Mount Dennis, since we all share the Black Creek Sanitary Trunk Sewer which runs under the Creek and is regularly overwhelmed by combined sewer overflows.

In 2018, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority took away that option by voting to approve the sale of green-space lands along the original creek path to industry, rather than keeping them undeveloped to help with flood control.

The Black Creek Alliance has consulted a lawyer about this, and learned that a judicial review of the Authority’s decision is still possible. MDCA believes restoring the valley is vital to prevent future flooding, especially for Basement Flooding Area 4, and has agreed to support the legal challenge. We urge local residents to help with the cost (every donation helps ... even \$5 or \$10). Donate at <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/protect-black-creek> or contact the Black Creek Alliance from the GoFundMe page.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FRI. MAR.27TH, EcoNeighbourhood Actions Showcase, 7-9 p.m.
501 Alliance Ave. @ Rockcliffe Blvd. (see page 1)

SAT. MAR 28TH, EcoNeighbourhood Climate Action Summit, 10 am – 4 pm
Learning Enrichment Foundation, 116 Industry St. (doors open 9:30 a.m.)

SAT. APR 25TH Spring Craft Sale & Flea Market @ M.D. Legion 10am-2 pm

SUN. MAY 30TH D-Day Service 2 pm @ Sanctuary Park (Royal York & Westway)... with Reception to follow at Mount Dennis Legion

MDCA /supercoffee ANNUAL SPRING CLEAN-UPS #MDSpringClean

Apr 4TH - Jane & Pinehill ravine edges. Meet 10 a.m., end of Bartonville @ Jane

Apr 11TH - Somerville/Sunnybrae ravines. Meet 10 a.m. W. end Glenvalley Dr.

Apr 18TH - Lambton & Astoria ravine edges. Meet 10 a.m. Lambton @ Astoria

Apr 25TH - Dora Spencer & Emmett Ave. Meet 10 a.m. Weston @ Dora Spencer

May 2ND - Eglinton south side. Meet 10 a.m. @ entrance to SE Flats parking lot
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