



Mount Dennis Community Association



VIRTUAL AGM:

* **Wednesday, Dec 9th,**
* **@ 7 pm**

* **Free to join**

* **Details at**
mounddennis.ca



MOUNT DENNIS

"Weston Road and Toronto Towers". Photo by Jeremy Gilbert, <https://flic.kr/p/XiH7WT>

WORKING TO GET A COLLEGE CAMPUS IN MOUNT DENNIS

At a public meeting last January, staff and consultants working on the City's Mount Dennis Economic Development Study talked about the benefits of having a college or university level campus in our area. MDCA decided to help take this idea further, since it fits well with our ecoNeighbourhood climate action strategies.

Mount Dennis is part of an area where only a small number of youth move on from high school to higher learning. MDCA hopes that a local post-secondary campus will help change that, and Mount Dennis Station could be the key to make it happen. With the Eglinton LRT station open in 2022, Mount Dennis will have the third best transit connections in the GTA - the perfect spot for a new campus!

Since August our Campus Development Planning Group has held three meetings with stakeholders, government agencies and elected officials. Another session is to be held before year-end, and we aim to organize a town hall meeting in 2021. At this early stage, the planning group is working on development principles, goals, possible campus locations and program partnership ideas. Core values include indigenous reconciliation, racial equity, healthy community objectives, and a community benefits approach.

Ideally we want to attract an educational partnership willing to go beyond learning to include research and innovations. It should support area business growth; provide opportunity for employment, training and local procurement; and improve the environment. Program ideas identified to date are sustainable transportation and energy technologies, plus general studies. Physically, we expect a "green" campus with a range of new classrooms, design labs, and meeting spaces.

MDCA already has ongoing partnerships with local groups that educate community members and teach skills. *UrbanArts* in communications, arts & culture; the *Learning Enrichment Foundation* in community economic development; *Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre* in food security; and the *Toronto Community Benefits Network*. More people will be reached through our area's Neighbourhood Improvement Employment and Economy Working Group, faith groups, the BIA and the Library.

The challenging process of making the Mount Dennis campus development a reality is underway, although we expect it may take at least six years before new facilities could be ready for students. By joining MDCA, you can help plan the campus, and together we can create a more sustainable future for the Mount Dennis community!

Want to help elect MDCA's Board? Or join it? Learn more on page 3...

OTHER MDCA ACTIVITIES IN 2020

2020 has been an unusual year for all of us, including the Mount Dennis Community Association. A mild winter meant no January-February community skating program in Pearen Park. Then COVID stopped most everything else, cancelling the March Climate Action Summit, April community clean-ups, summer Newsletter, July Party by the Pond and all in-person public meetings.

But MDCA did not take the year off! Before COVID, more than 60 people were at our Government Climate Change Plans meeting, and we issued our Spring Newsletter right afterwards. Our Board held on-line monthly meetings, we upgraded our mountdennis.ca web-site, and sent out 17 “e-blasts” – informal newsletters about local issues. Early in the pandemic, MDCA twice visited all Mount Dennis retail stores, posting their hours of operation on-line and via e-blasts.

***Why not read past eblasts at mountdennis.ca, where you can subscribe to get new ones automatically?
Or email eblast@mountdennis.ca to get all future e-blasts (you can cancel any time)***

Periodic flooding in the Cordella / Black Creek area has been a long-time concern, as has the City’s decision to sell off a large area of green space to a meatpacking company. MDCA has acted on both matters, supporting a possible judicial review on the green space issue, and being part of the August 16th flooding awareness march. We were delighted on October 30th when Mayor Tory and MP Ahmed Hussen announced \$19 million in federal funding plus \$28.5 million from the City to resolve the flooding issue, starting in 2024. The CBC printed MDCA’s news release, which described this as “a critically important move ahead by governments in making people in our community more safe from the impacts of climate change”.

MDCA has also worked to stay on top of – and provide input about - plans for new development in Mount Dennis. We were happy to learn that City planners shared our concerns about a proposed 35 storey tower between Locust and Oxford Streets. Nearby, we met with a developer who has bought buildings on Weston Road between Hollis and Locust, planning to redevelop them (and perhaps the City parking lot too). We are watching proposals to build mid-rise residential on the site of a small industrial building at Rutherford and Railway Lane, several apartment towers between Sidney Belsey Drive and the Humber Valley, and West Park’s plans for non-hospital buildings on Charlton Settlement, as well as smaller developments.

There is an area known as Railway Lane Parkette on Ray Ave. Despite Metrolinx’s promises, its contractors often park their trucks on the green-space, so this summer MDCA and nearby residents cleaned the parkette and put up signs and posts to discourage parking. Nearby, a bright flashing red light above the LRT’s Maintenance and Service Facility was bothering area residents. MDCA researched and presented evidence that the light was not needed for aviation safety, and Metrolinx agreed to shut it off. We continue to work with Metrolinx to make our neighbourhood safe and accessible to everyone. Finally, this fall we asked the City to find a way of making the SE Flats, including Topham Pond, wheelchair accessible.



MDCA volunteers installed these posts on the Railway Lane Parkette to discourage parking on the grass.

BIG CHANGES COMING TO EGLINTON

MDCA is working hard to influence changes coming to Eglinton Ave. west of Weston Road. We want to fast-track the approved signalized pedestrian crossing in front of the south side apartment buildings (see *Spring newsletter*), and to have narrower traffic lanes and wider sidewalks on both sides of Eglinton. On the north side, east from Jane, the City will soon build a sidewalk plus a wide multi-purpose trail. MDCA is happy this is happening, but disappointed that (despite the City’s “every tree counts” signs) 69 mostly young trees will be cut down. We also see a serious issue with the east end of this trail. It is supposed to connect cyclists to Mount Dennis station, but will swing north through Pearen Park, then along Glenvalley Drive through daycare centre drop-off traffic, then south along busy Weston Road to reach the station. We fear some cyclists may instead follow a direct route using the narrow Eglinton sidewalk in front of the north-side homes and driveways. Our suggested alternative is a route through the park behind those homes, then onto a safe two-way bike trail on a narrowed Eglinton (where the present merge lane is longer and wider than needed) between Pearen and Weston.

The other huge change to this area, coming just a few years later, will be the west extension of the LRT. The good news is that Metrolinx has committed not to demolish the historic Scotiabank building or the north-side homes on Eglinton. But the extended tracks will be an underground “cut-and-cover” job from Weston Road until they pass the north-side homes, where they will emerge along the edge of Fergy Brown Park to become overhead tracks that will continue across the south edge of the NW Flats. All this will mean years of serious disruption along Eglinton Ave.

WHY NOT JOIN THE MDCA BOARD?

Under MDCA's constitution, Board members must be elected at our Annual General Meeting under the supervision of our City Councillor or another elected official. The 2020 AGM will be held on-line, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9th. Login details will be posted at mountdennis.ca. You are welcome to take part (and vote if you want to). There are 10 Board meetings per year, and in between, lots of opportunities for members to work on other issues as they want.

To learn more, check out our by-laws and other formal documents on mountdennis.ca, or call 416-614-3371 to talk to Board Secretary Simon or Vice-President Judith, or 416-550-2683 to reach President Mike.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Over the past thirty years, our area's largely European/ Anglo population has transformed into one of Toronto's most globally diverse communities, with a rich mix of flavours, music and art emerging. First Nations peoples, historically displaced by settlers from traditional trading lands along the Humber and Black Creek, are moving into the area and engaging the wider community by sharing indigenous values, knowledge and culture. With the opportunities being created by our new station, there is planning for more investment in urban development to intensify the number of people living in Mount Dennis. But will this growth be a good thing, offering opportunities to people from all backgrounds and walks of life?

*Our area must continue finding ways to share the benefits of urban growth fairly, and the Mount Dennis Community Association must use its influence to help moderate gentrification and build an inclusive community. We live, work and play in a neighbourhood facing the stresses of major change, amidst a global awakening to existential threats to health and environment. We need the involvement of more local people – **maybe you?** - to ensure Mount Dennis becomes a sustainable community as our future develops. If you live or work here, consider joining us to make a difference.*

More detailed information is available at mountdennis.ca.

- Mike Mattos, President

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Hon. Ahmed Hussen
MP for York South-Weston

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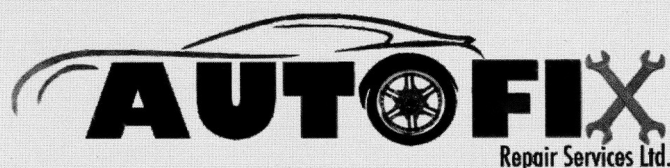
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