

SERRA News - COVID-19 impact on our community

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Presidents' letter

Dear Resident,

What a difference five weeks can make – from watching countries on other continents struggle with **COVID-19** outbreaks in January to finding ourselves in the middle of our own outbreak by early March, and now hoping that Canada is close to flattening the curve. We would like to acknowledge the loss of lives at the Salvation Army's Meighen Manor long-term-care home on Millwood Rd. in midtown Toronto, as reported by the Toronto Star (see <http://b.link/tostar-april-20>).

The unsung heroes in all of this are the healthcare and frontline workers keeping our society going as best they can. Thank you!

The measures governments, school boards and businesses have taken are meant to slow the spread of the virus as we all practise social distancing and take other measures.

How will these measures impact the liveability of our neighbourhoods, and what will be the longer-term effects?

More about this in our section below on '**Midtown and COVID-19**' and a section on '**How you can help with COVID-19**'.

On the **development file**, one of the surprises for us has been the ongoing push by developers to get their current applications through the review and approval process (11 in the SERRA area). Once approved, a development becomes "as of right" (entitlement to proceed without recourse by City Council or the community). There are no restrictions on when the developer must commence construction. Developers we have spoken to have said that in the current economic climate, they might not proceed with construction of a new project for some time. You can find the status of current projects in the '**Development**' section below.

Unfortunately, the format for the Jane's Walk will be different this year, so our SERRA Heritage group is offering a self-guided heritage tour, which would be great fun for a family outing. Please see the section below.

Because of the COVID-19 virus, we need to **postpone SERRA's AGM, originally scheduled for May 11th**, to an as yet to be determined date. We are aiming for a Fall 2020 AGM when we hope to return to an environment where public meetings are "normal" again.

In the meantime, we thank all who have renewed their membership and paid their dues. If you have not renewed for 2020, please visit <https://southeqlinton.ca/membership/> . In addition, donations are always welcome to help us with expenses such as legal and planning support.

Please keep safe and healthy,
Andy Gort,



President, SERRA

In this newsletter

- Midtown and COVID-19
- How you can help support local businesses and stay active during COVID-19
- Heritage Walk - Davisville walking tour reimaged
- Tall and mid-rise development update
- Residential in-fill development update

Midtown and COVID-19

How will measures introduced to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus affect our neighbourhoods in the longer term?

Midtown is a very densely populated area, especially in the Yonge/Eglinton and Yonge/ Davisville neighbourhoods. Not everyone has backyards or balconies and apartments can be small. Accommodating two adults working from home as well as attending to children is difficult. Getting outside for a break is often a necessity either for an infrequent errand, walking a dog, or simply doing something to boost your spirits.

Unfortunately, our sidewalks are so narrow that social distancing often involves using roadways. Closures or restrictions to public parks, playgrounds, and now the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery mean fewer outdoor options.

We also worry about the fate of small businesses on our main streets and whether they will survive financially. They are key to the character of our neighbourhoods. Please shop locally, and if your budget allows, make use of local takeout services. At some point employment locations will begin to reopen and residents will need to commute again, but for the immediate future fewer people are using public transit? There's an upswing in cycling and walking. Will we return to public transit once the crisis passes?

Recommendations for change

In the meantime, we at SERRA recommend a number of COVID-19-sensitive measures to help ensure the liveability of our area:

Short-term

- Restrict some local roads to local traffic only to allow for more pedestrian street use. Consider one-way pedestrian usage of sidewalks on major streets and neighbourhood roads.
- Assign (on a pilot basis) at least one of four vehicular laneways of a major N-S street (such as Yonge St.) as a dedicated cycling route to establish an alternative safe transportation node between midtown and downtown. Explore similar E-W dedicated cycling routes.
- Reopen or relax access restrictions at local parks such as Sherwood and Sunnybrook and, at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery (with permission from the owners), while maintaining current social distancing and social group measures.
- Reopen main street retail and service stores, but with restrictions on the number of shoppers, physical spacing and mandatory hygiene standards, to emulate the grocery model. Consider mandatory wearing of masks, if not already legislated.

Longer-term

COVID-19 has demonstrated that we cannot accommodate increased midtown densification without an increase in parks and open, green spaces. We advocate that the Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing reassess and reconsider:

- the recently enacted provincially planning blueprint for midtown (OPA 405) and instead consider the lower development density/height provisions and building setbacks for wider sidewalks, stipulated in the City of Toronto Midtown in Focus (MIF) plan.

- the proposed provincial Community Benefits Charge regulation (Bill 108), which effectively relieves developers of the requirement to provide parkland provisions when proposing a significant densification of neighbourhoods.



Davisville Walking Tour Reimagined

The Heritage Working Group is offering a self-guided walking tour to all of our residents. This year's walk repeats our Jane's Walk from two year's ago. SERRA encourages everyone to take the walk sometime from May 1st to May 3rd to honour the late Jane Jacobs.



We have prepared a walking tour map and a companion guide that describes 24 points of interest. You may choose to walk the entire route (takes 90 minutes) or walk smaller segments of the tour.

Please mind the social distancing rules and enjoy the tour.

Use the following links to download the map and tour guide. You will be able to find the same links on our website within a few days.

[Download Tour Map](#)

[Download Tour Guide](#)

Tall and mid-rise development update

Tall /Mid-rise development applications in the SERRA area

The SERRA Tall and Mid-rise Working Group is involved in all the developments listed below, including at the LPAT with Party status.

Development has now arrived in the **Davisville neighbourhood** with 11 applications approved or in the approval process (**more than 2,500 new units and 4,500 new residents**).

- 1955 Yonge St. – construction nearly completed (9 storey mid-rise)
- 140 Merton – recently approved (16 storey tower – affordable housing)
- 265 Balliol – recently approved (26 storey tower)
- 30 Merton – at the LPAT (37 storey tower)
- 22 Balliol – at the LPAT (38 storey tower) ... Sobeys's Urban Fresh location
- 141 Davisville – at the LPAT (16 storey tower)
- 1951 Yonge – at the LPAT (2 towers of 34 and 25 storeys, but expect developer to request much taller towers)
- 95-131 Balliol – under review at City Planning (24 storey tower)

- 276 Merton – under review at City Planning (13 storey mid-rise)
- 1984 Yonge – approved (9 storey mid-rise)
- 24-26 Imperial – under review at City Planning (9 storey mid-rise)

The ***Soudan neighbourhood*** is seeing heavy construction and a few new applications (13 developments ... 4,300 units and 7,500 new residents). **This area will grow from 6,600 (2016 Census) to more than 14,000 residents ... an increase in excess of 100%.**

- 45-77 Dunfield – construction completed (26 and 24 storey towers)
- 2131 Yonge – construction mostly completed (28 storey tower + mid-rise) with retail to come
- 33 Holly – under construction (34 and 27 storey towers)
- 2221 Yonge – being constructed (56 storey tower)
- 11 Lillian – under construction (19 storey tower)
- 71 Redpath (was “18 Brownlow”) – under construction (21 storey tower)
- 2161 Yonge – construction about to start (36 storey tower)
- 2112 Yonge – construction about to start (10 storey mid-rise)
- 1 Eglinton Ave East – approved (65 storey tower)
- 55 Eglinton Ave East – approved (55 storey tower)
- 700 Mt Pleasant – at the LPAT (25 storey tower)
- 2100 Yonge – under review at City Planning (11 storey mid-rise)
- 2128 Yonge – under review at City Planning (13 storey mid-rise)

Development is also moving to the **SERRA East area** (between Mt. Pleasant Rd and Bayview, and south of Eglinton).

- 733 Mt. Pleasant – under review at City Planning (27 storey tower)
- 1408-1420 Bayview – approved (8 storey mid-rise)
- 1674-1684 Bayview – under construction (7 storey mid-rise)

We have been told that a developer has acquired a block of properties at the SW corner of Bayview and Eglinton.

Residential in-fill development update

The Province of Ontario has defined residential construction as an essential service and has defined the rules for allowing construction of residential infill development. Construction can begin or continue if a footing permit or above-grade structural permit has been issued or renovations started before April 4. The province also recently extended the work hours at residential construction sites from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. with work allowed seven days week.

The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a significant reduction in City services related to residential infill development. The City's website provides a comprehensive description of the service changes that can be found with the following link:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/affected-city-services/>

You should consult the City's website for the most up-to-date information. Here is a quick summary of the relevant changes as recently posted.

Building Permit and Inspections

Current Services

- 24/7 emergency building inspections services ...
- Inspection services to support building occupancy ...
- Issuing building permits that were submitted and ready to be issued prior to March 16.

- Processing building permit applications that were received prior to March 16 for new residential (mixed-use, row housing, semi-detached homes, triplexes, houses and major additions to homes)
- Processing building permit applications for projects that are underway in order to allow them to proceed to next phase of construction.
- Accepting and processing building permit applications for affordable housing units.
- Accepting and processing of building permit applications to address immediate life safety issues.
- All building permit applications to support the City's response to COVID-19.

Suspended Services

- Building applications, other than as noted above
- Building inspection services, other than as noted above
- Zoning approvals
- Sign permits
- Applications for minor alterations to existing buildings, new decks, carports, or detached garages
- Information requests or complaints

City Planning

Current Services

- Limited reviews of planning applications received on or before March 16
- Working with applicants' solicitors to register agreements where the agreements can be finalized.
- Committee of Adjustment decision appeals will be accepted electronically. Note: the Province has suspended deadlines for submitting appeals, retroactive to March 16. Should you still wish to submit an appeal it can be done via email.
- Limited review of Heritage Planning applications received on or before March 16.

Suspended Services

- Committee of Adjustment meetings have been cancelled and will be rescheduled.
- New applications to the Committee of Adjustment will not be received.
- Updates to the online Application Information Centre will be suspended.
- Design Review Panel meetings have been cancelled and will be rescheduled.

Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB)

- TLAB hearings have been postponed and will be rescheduled.
- Some correspondence may be exchanged for on-going cases.
- Check with the general TLAB phone number or email for additional information.



**Support local businesses and stay active
during COVID-19**

Below are some ideas on how residents can stay connected to our community while continuing to help keep our local businesses going.

How to connect and shop local:

Many of our local neighbourhood restaurants are offering takeout & delivery. Let's support them.

Local businesses are having trouble staying in business - Shop local whenever possible.

Businesses such as Mabel's Fables are still "open" with local delivery.

For a directory of local stores, check your local BIA (Business Improvement Area).

Bayview Leaside BIA: <http://www.bayviewleasidebia.com/directory-selection/>

Mount Pleasant Village BIA <https://www.mountpleasantvillage.ca/>

The Eglinton Way BIA <http://www.theeglintonway.com/local-businesses-during-covid-19/>

Midtown Yonge BIA
<https://midtownyongebia.ca/>

Uptown Yonge BIA
<http://www.uptownyonge.com/>

Visit the **City of Toronto website** for the complete list of Business Improvement Areas. <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/business-operation-growth/business-improvement-areas/bia-list/>

New website allows residents to make donations to support local small businesses:

A new initiative was set up to help residents make donations to small businesses which have been impacted by COVID-19 closures. A website called distantly.ca was founded to help provide support to main street businesses such as Mabel's Fables, hair salons, coffee shops and restaurants that have been unable to continue to operate through the mandated closures during the COVID-19 quarantine.

Local BIAs help shop owners to set up an account for accepting donations from residents. All funds go directly to the business to help them manage expenses during this difficult time.

To read more, read this article in Streeter.

Mayor Tory lauds launch of distantly.ca to collect donations for local main street shops

<https://streeter.ca/beaches-leslieville/news/small-businesses-to-receive-community-donations-through-new-site/>

Staying connected with neighbours

Some communities have set up Nextdoor Digest to help neighbours communicate with each other more easily. For details go to:

<https://ca.nextdoor.com/#neighbors>

Note: Please do your own research about this platform and make sure to read the privacy policies posted on their website at: <https://about.nextdoor.com/#your-privacy>

SERRA does not take any responsibility for safety related or privacy issues resulting from using this platform.

Working from home while social distancing

What can social-distancing people working from home continue to do to stay sane?

Staying active:

Go for a self-guided Jane's Walk through Davisville Village. See our article in this e-newsletter.

Some parks are now restricted, and the Mount Pleasant Cemetery is temporarily closed to the public.

For current updates about parks, a Q&A about social distancing, and where residents could be ticketed, please refer to the **Toronto Police Enforcement Policies posted on their website at:**

<http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/covid-19/#enforcement>

Other COVID-19 Resources:

Resources for seniors who need help managing during the social distancing and isolation: <https://covid19.211central.ca/resource/>

Government of Canada website for current updates about COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Sign up to receive updates from our local City Councillors.

Follow the links below to subscribe to their newsletters and current updates.

Councillor Jaye Robinson (Ward 15 - Don Valley West) <https://www.jayerobinson.ca/newsletter>

Councillor Josh Matlow (Ward 12 - St. Paul's) <https://joshmatlow.ca/>

Councillor Mike Colle (Ward 8 - Eglinton - Lawrence) <https://www.mikecolletoronto.com/>

**Please note:
SERRA's AGM, originally scheduled for May 11th, 2020
has been postponed.
The new date will be announced as soon as possible.**

[Click here to visit our SERRA website](#)

