

CCFEW NEWS

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

April 2009

Annual General Meeting



Waterfront West LRT

CCFEW's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 23**, in the large Community Room at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street, at 7:00pm.

Our guest speaker will be Ken Sharratt, from the **High Park Community Advisory Council (HPCAC)**. He will be speaking about the **history and growing pains** of that organization. The HPCAC is probably the most successful park advocacy organization in the city. What can we learn from their experience to apply in South Etobicoke? We have several large parks, but only one group focused on a specific park, the Friends of Sam Smith Park (FOSS). What can we do to foster community engagement and cooperation with the City in our parks?

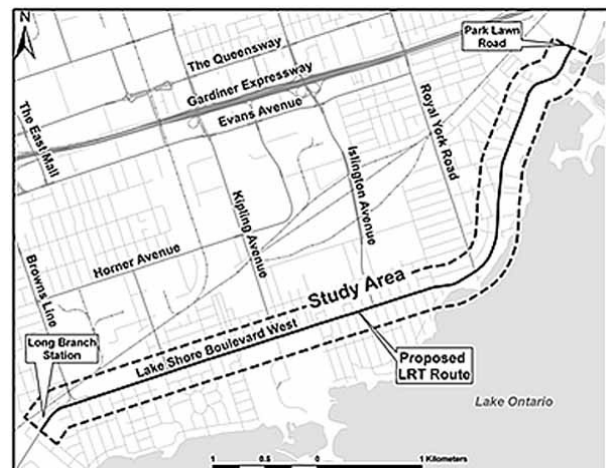
We will also be electing our Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting. The board positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Serving on the board is a rewarding experience. It does not necessarily require a large commitment of time, just a commitment to your community.

If you are interested in becoming more involved, but don't want to commit to being a member of the executive, our monthly planning meetings are normally held on the second Monday of each month (except July and August). Everyone is welcome to attend.

As part of the Transit City initiative, the TTC is studying the idea of replacing the existing Lake Shore Blvd streetcar with an LRT (Light Rail Transit) line in a dedicated right of way in the middle of the road from Parklawn Road to the end of the existing streetcar line near Brown's Line.

While we applaud efforts to improve our public transit system, we have some serious doubts about this plan. We fear that an LRT in this area will have a negative effect on both transit service and neighbourhood businesses.

This is the area being studied:



Two public information sessions were held in December 2008 for area residents to become

informed and make comments on the proposal. Along with some detailed drawings of the route, they also had a long series of display boards explaining the project. A very interesting slide was the one at the bottom of this page.

It shows the width of the existing road right of way through the study area versus the preferred width of right of way (36 metres). Note how little of the area has the required width (medium gray), and how much is a full 10 metres (3 lanes) too narrow (dark gray).

CCFEW submitted the following comments on the plan:

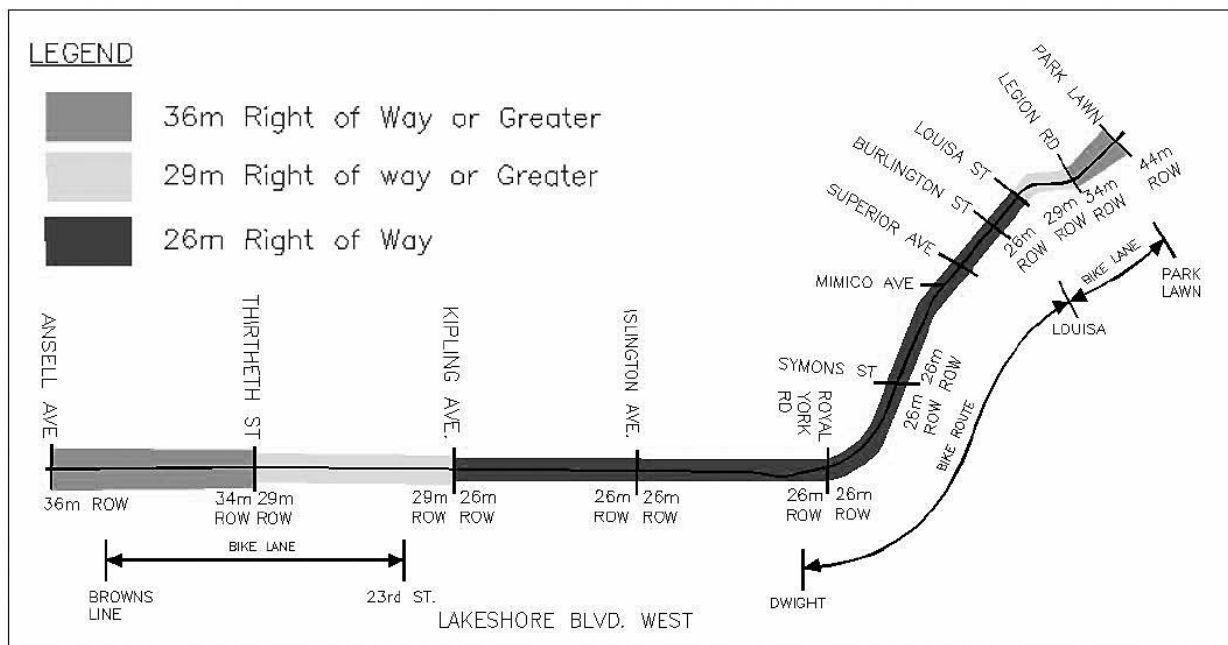
We oppose the extension of the Waterfront West LRT beyond the (proposed) Park Lawn Road Loop. This proposed extension will cut the north part of the community off from the lake without solving the two key problems with the existing streetcar service.

The two biggest problems with the current streetcar are frequency of service and speed to

downtown. An LRT is unlikely to do anything for the frequency. It may even make it worse, since larger cars will run less frequently in order to maintain capacity utilization. Speed to downtown is largely dependent on what happens on Queen Street, east of Roncesvalles. An LRT line from downtown to Roncesvalles or the Humber Loop is needed to address this problem. A dedicated right of way solves the problem of streetcars being held up by cars, but that is not a problem in the Mimico to Long Branch area. The streetcars often delay the cars, but not visa versa.

The TTC analysis identifies the majority of the corridor as 7 to 10 metres narrower than that required to maintain on-street parking and two vehicle lanes in each direction. On-street parking is critical to the businesses on Lake Shore Boulevard. The low parking utilization identified in the parking study is a symptom of the existing weak retail environment, not the parking required by the thriving retail environment we all desire. Disruption during construction would magnify negative impacts on business.

EXISTING LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD RIGHT OF WAY



A dedicated transit right of way would create a physical barrier separating one side of Lake Shore Boulevard from the other, one part of the community from the other, and one part of the community from the lake. It is very ironic to contemplate spending a large amount of money to cut a community off from the lake at a time when the City is studying the removal of the Gardiner Expressway to remove a barrier to the lake. What we need is to make Lake Shore Blvd our neighbourhood main street. What the LRT would deliver is a transit corridor.

The needs of the community would be far better served by terminating the LRT at or near the existing Humber loop, and serving Mimico, New Toronto, and Long Branch with a separate streetcar. Alternatively the LRT could be extended to Sherway along Queensway. The shortened streetcar route would facilitate reliable, predictable service intervals, and the LRT from the Humber loop would eliminate the bottleneck to downtown.

A further suggestion to enhance the community and build ridership is to create a local streetcar fare. This could be a reduced rate fare for travel on that streetcar line only, with a full fare required only to get a transfer to buses or the LRT. That would encourage people to take the streetcar for short local trips, shop locally, and leave the car at home.

We recognize that light rail can provide a development stimulus in the right location. However the proposal for light rail in Lakeshore is likely to reduce transportation service and damage the accessibility and viability of businesses through parking removal and limitation on traffic circulation. Main Street Lakeshore would be economically undermined. Modifications to the existing streetcar system provides a far superior solution at a fraction of the cost. Saving tax dollars, it is the better stimulus for economic development.

The December information sessions were intended to be the only public consultation on this project, but the TTC has since agreed to hold further community consultation.

Details have just been announced for the next round of consultation meetings:

Monday May 11 at the Mimico Adult Centre

Tuesday May 12 at the Assembly Hall

Stormwater Management EA

Back in 2003, the City of Toronto approved the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan (WWFMP). This is a 25 year plan to deal with Toronto's stormwater. They are now considering options for implementing this plan in south Etobicoke. Etobicoke has 30 storm sewers that empty directly into Lake Ontario. The run-off water from rainstorms and snow melt carries with it salt, dirt, oil, and grease, directly into Lake Ontario.

There are three basic means of stormwater management:

Source control – capturing or slowing the flow into the sewer

Conveyance Control – diverting, slowing and/or staggering the flow of stormwater

End of Pipe (EOP) Control – storage and/or treatment of stormwater before discharge into the receiving water (Lake Ontario).



Most of the measures under consideration for South Etobicoke fall into the EOP category and involve most of the larger waterfront parks plus Mimico Memorial Park. The plans range from a distributed system of storage tanks and embayment areas to a single storage and/or treatment facility at Colonel Sam Smith Park. Different scenarios would involve varying amounts of excavation for storage tanks and enlarged storm sewers.

The City of Toronto has initiated a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study to assess these options. We will be posting details of the public meetings and the plans on our website as soon as they are available.

Bonar Creek EA

Another part of the WWFMP involves a Stormwater management facility at the mouth of Bonar Creek. This is a small creek flowing into Mimico Creek just north of Lake Shore Boulevard. Currently, the preferred alternative in this project is a stormwater management pond forming a naturalized wetland. The final public meeting on this EA will happen before this newsletter is delivered, but you can find links on our website or at http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/bonar_creek/index.htm.

The second part to this EA is the extension of Legion Road through (under) the CN rail corridor. The extension of Legion Road between Manitoba Street and Lakeshore Boulevard West, was found to be the preliminary preferred solution. Although it may encourage automobile use instead of public transit, it will provide an opportunity for much needed pedestrian and bicycle linkages across the CN rail corridor.

Skateboard Park - Finally Settled?

It looks like the long-debated skateboard park finally has a home in the Eighth Street Parkette. Two years after it went from being a top priority to the project no one at the City wanted to talk about, a new planning process was started in November. A 12-member committee of community members was struck to select a site. On March 3rd of this year, they announced their recommendation: the Eighth Street Parkette (between 8th & 9th at Birmingham St.).

It is truly bizarre how a project touted as a priority for the youth of south Etobicoke completely disappeared for two years after it was decided that it shouldn't be built at Colonel Sam Smith Park. Back in May of 2007, CCFEW, along with several other community groups, wrote to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation urging her to restart the site selection process. We have never had a response. It certainly makes one wonder whether the priority was in fact the skateboard park, or simply building an attraction in Sam Smith Park. That suspicion is only reinforced by the fact that there was \$2,000,000 in the 2008 capital budget for an ice skating trail at Sam Smith Park. The skating trail is an idea that first appeared in the mid-1990s. Most people had forgotten about it until it showed up encircling the skateboard park in the plans presented in 2006. The skating trail didn't get much attention at that time, but remarkably, it's the project that got renewed funding in the capital budget.

CCFEW argued (unsuccessfully) at 2008's budget committee, that this was not a project on which we should be spending money. Part of the argument was that Etobicoke is second only to the former City of Toronto in its per capita supply of

outdoor recreational ice. Since there are no skateboard parks in Etobicoke, the mathematics says it would be an infinitely more worthy project. The Skateboard park may soon be a reality, and so may the skating trail.

Skating Trail at Sam Smith Park

The ice skating trail proposed for Sam Smith Park has not followed the same consultative process as the skateboard park. An updated version of the plan was presented at a meeting last June. This plan shows the skating trail winding through the trees north of the Power House. Our primary concern with this plan is the impact on trees. We believe that many of the trees not removed during the actual construction of the trail will ultimately die as a result of root damage, soil compaction and grade changes. There was considerable opposition expressed at that meeting, but many of the questions raised there went unanswered even after the consultant's report was released in August of last year. Some of the unanswered questions were quite basic, like "How much will it cost to operate?" They are the questions that one would hope are answered before a facility is built, but the City decided to push ahead anyway.

In early September CCFEW made an application to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to have the project designated under the Environmental Assessment Act. Our application was based on four main points:

- The environmental impact of the City's proposal has not been evaluated within the context of current natural heritage policies.
- There has been no evaluation of the environmental impact of this proposal on the woodlot where the artificial rink is to be located or on the park in general.
- There has been a lack of genuine and open

consultation in the decision-making process.

- The Province has both an historic and ongoing connection and involvement in The Lakeshore Grounds.

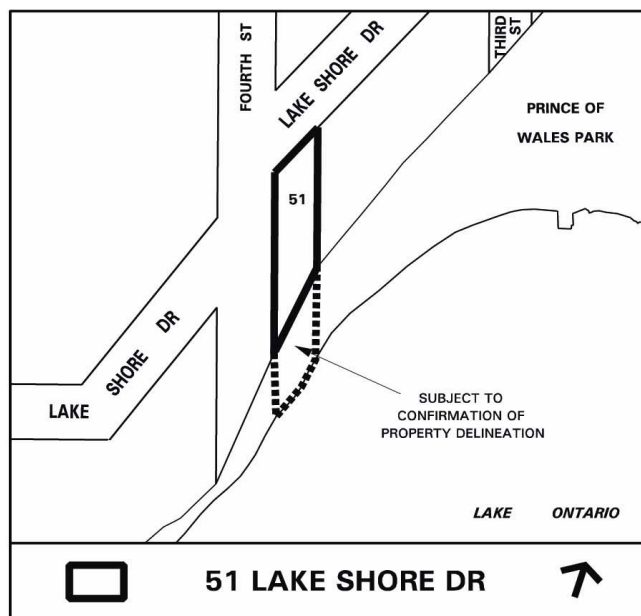
In December we received notice that our application had been rejected. While we were disappointed with this decision, the one positive piece we saw from this was the implicit acknowledgment that there never was an arborist's report. This alleged report was referenced several times in defense of the project at the June public meeting. That explains why no one who asked for it, was ever provided a copy of the arborist's report. Page three of the Minister's letter states, "*The City has further advised that an arborist's analysis of the proposal will be undertaken and a formal report completed and brought forward for Etobicoke York Community Council's consideration.*" CCFEW has made a formal request to speak on this issue when the report comes before Community Council.

51 Lake Shore Drive

51 Lake Shore Drive is becoming a well known address in New Toronto. It is a large piece of waterfront property at the corner of Fourth Street. It has become well known because of the development proposals put forward by its current owner. There have been two proposals put forward to date, and both have been vigorously opposed by CCFEW and the rest of the community. The first, in late 2007, was for a large single family dwelling. That proposal was withdrawn and replaced last spring with a townhouse development. That proposal was withdrawn in December, and there may be a new one by the time you read this.

Why all the fuss? This property has beautiful views of downtown, and the waterfront portion has been open space for many years. The

buildings being proposed are much taller than the surrounding single family homes, and would largely block the views currently enjoyed by the rest of the neighbourhood. That's part of the reason, but a bigger issue is the precedent it could set. Both of these proposals have been contrary to the intent of Toronto's Official Plan. If they were approved, the waterfront protection built into the official plan would be meaningless.



Our key concerns with these and the applications that are likely to follow are:

- that they "*respect and reinforce the physical character of the neighbourhood, including in particular...prevailing building types*" as called for in the plan and,
- that future applications that are approved should dedicate land at the rear of the lot to a public agency, as called for in the Official Plan, as part of a link from 4th Street to Prince of Wales Park.

The experience in Mimico has shown very clearly that we should not waste opportunities to convert shoreline to public ownership. If we don't secure this piece now, it will be lost forever.

Arsenal Lands a Go

Two years ago, at our AGM, we heard all about the new park to be built at the Arsenal Lands, on the border with Mississauga. The plans were in place, but the funding was not. That situation has finally changed. The City of Toronto was the last of the partners in the project to commit funds, but the \$1.52 million for construction has been approved in the City's 2009 budget. We expect to see work begin later this year.

At the same time funding was approved to complete the master plan for Marie Curtis Park in 2010. This is sort of Arsenal Lands Part 2: the section completely within the City of Toronto.

Mimico 20/20

The Mimico 20/20 process is still moving forward. Earlier this month a series of charettes were held to explore a variety of ideas for the revitalization of Mimico by the Lake. A 'charrette' is an open and fully collaborative hands-on planning process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties (including residents, community groups, the City, agencies, land owners and businesses) to create a plan that represents transformative community change. Results of this process will be available on our website or at

<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/mimico2020.htm>

E-Mail Updates

There is more information on everything in this newsletter on our website. If you are not already receiving notices of events and meetings, send an e-mail to: subscribe@ccfew.org, and we'll put you on our list.

Sam Smith Park Signage

After several failed attempts to replace the interpretive signage at Sam Smith Park, it may finally happen later this year. The original signage was removed several years ago after being badly vandalized. A group of students from Sir Sanford Flemming College have been working on the content, and we have people in the Parks Department who truly want to see it happen!

Mimico Waterfront Park Phase II

Phase One of the long-awaited Mimico Waterfront Park opened last summer, and we have just learned that a funding agreement for Phase Two has been signed. There are still a lot of things that need to happen before the bulldozers arrive, most importantly land acquisition, but it is hoped that construction will start late next year.

International Migratory Bird Day

We will be holding a special bird walk on Saturday, May 9th to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day. Why is this a special walk? There will be prizes from Birds & Beans for some of our participants. This is earlier than our usual date in May, right in the middle of prime time for songbird migration. This walk will be on **Saturday, May 9th** at Colonel Sam Smith Park from 9 am to 11 am. Meet in the South Parking lot (the usual place).

For the dates and locations of upcoming walks, plus photos and reports from past walks, visit http://ccfew.org/html/bird_walks.html These walks are made possible through the ongoing sponsorship of Birds & Beans, 2413 Lake Shore Boulevard West, in Mimico.

South Etobicoke Community Action Area

A group called the South Etobicoke Community Action Area got started late last year. This is an TRCA led initiative, building on the work of the Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks Watershed Coalition. This group is focused on watershed rehabilitation initiatives in the southern part of Etobicoke Creek and the Lake Ontario Waterfront across to Mimico. These initiatives include trail construction in the creek valley, and the implementation of the Arsenal Lands park development.

The group could still benefit from additional members. Watch our website for details of upcoming meetings.

CCFEW Contacts
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E-mail: info@ccfew.org
Web: www.ccfew.org

CCFEW Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Individual : \$10 ___ Family : \$15 ___ Institutions/Corporate : \$25 ___

Mail this form along with a cheque/money order payable to "CCFEW" to:
 CCFEW, 6 Meaford Avenue, Etobicoke, Ontario M8V 2H5

CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Thursday, **April 23rd**, 7:00 pm
at the LAMP,
185 Fifth Street
(see page 1 for more details)

CCFEW Bird Walks



Saturday, April 25th
Saturday, May 9th

Our May walk will be a special International Migratory Bird Day event - see page 7 for more details

9:00 am to 11:00 am
rain or shine

at **Colonel Samuel Smith Park**
(meet in the south parking lot)
Sponsored by Birds & Beans

6th ANNUAL

SAM SMITH PARK CLEAN-UP

*Celebrate upcoming **EARTH DAY** with neighbours, friends and family!*

Sunday, April 19, 2009 @ 9 am – 3 pm

Where: Meet on the path southeast of the marina

Why: Protect our urban green spaces by reducing the amount of garbage in the park and along the shorelines

Provided: Garbage Bags, water & snacks

Bring: Boots, gloves, rakes and shovels

Pack: Picnic lunch

13th Humber Bay Shores Waterfront Cleanup



Saturday, May 9, 2009

(Rain Date: May 16, 2009)

9:00 am COFFEE AND DONUTS

9:30 am CLEANUP

to Noon

Noon BARBECUE LUNCH

FOR VOLUNTEERS

hosted by ETOBICOKE YACHT CLUB

WHERE Humber Bay Park West (near the pedestrian bridge across Mimico Creek by the ESSO station)

For more details on these and many other events and meetings, visit

<http://ccfew.org/html/activities.html>



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