



SAHRA Report for 2021 presented at the SAHRA Annual General Meeting April 27, 2022

Communications:

We normally publish one paper newsletter each year, and you should have received one at your mailbox in the last few weeks. But for the last two years, all mass communication was by email. It is much less expensive and more timely. If you aren't receiving our eBlasts roughly every three weeks, please contact us at info@sahratoronto.com or click on "[Subscribe](#)" on our website and we will add you to our distribution list.

We are constantly updating our website. There is a [COVID-19 webpage](#) through which you can find vaccination locations and much other information. We maintained a graph of COVID case rates for our Toronto neighbourhood (Bedford Park – Nortown) along with surrounding neighbourhoods until the City stopped providing the data in February.

Community Safety:

All the specifics of the following information can be found on the [Crime Prevention page](#) of our website.

Every month, we take a look at Auto Theft and B&E stats, and provide an update through our eBlasts when we feel it is warranted.

Auto Theft remains a concern. 2021 was the worst year since we started tracking data in 2014 and this year looks even worse. In SAHRA's area, there were 12 incidents in 2021 and already there were 10 in 2022 through to Monday. Together with the Upper Avenue Community Association, we petitioned 32 Division through our membership in the Community Police Liaison Committee. As a direct result, a Divisional Auto Theft Suppression Team was formed. Still, we felt that a multi-jurisdictional approach was needed to combat this crime which is typically run by organised crime syndicates. That's why we were pleased to issue a letter supporting Councillor Colle's motion at City Council in December which asked for a multi-jurisdictional team as well as support from upper levels of government. The motion passed and we then supported the portion of the Toronto Police Service's budget for 2022 to establish a team within the city's police force. As we write this, we expect the team to be formed in mid-May.

Earlier in 2021, we also met with the Insurance Bureau of Canada to discuss auto theft. We attempted to meet with Lexus as four of their models were in the top ten stolen vehicles in 2020.



However, we never received a response to our request. (The top ten stolen vehicle list can be found [here](#).)

In the meantime, there are a number of auto theft prevention tactics which are listed below, and also available on our [website](#).

1. Park in the garage, if possible.
2. Strategically park vehicles in the driveway (less valuable vehicle blocking the more valuable).
3. Use a Faraday box/pouch to store your key fob whenever you are not operating your vehicle – even when shopping. Small pouches can fit in a pocket or purse.
4. Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
5. Install an anti-theft system in your vehicle (such as a steering wheel locking device).
6. Install a device which blocks access to the vehicle's Onboard Diagnostic Port (which is located under the steering column). Once inside a vehicle, thieves can otherwise access this port to program a new smart key.
7. Cover your VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) so it is not visible from outside. The VIN is located on the front driver's side corner of the dashboard and viewable through the windshield. Some newer vehicles have a QR code near the VIN – make sure it is covered too.
8. Install a flood light to brighten your driveway.
9. Point cameras in the direction of your driveway.
10. Avoid leaving valuables in the vehicle.
11. Avoid leaving garage door remotes in your vehicle overnight.

As for Break and Enters, in general, house B&E's are way down since the pandemic started (most people are at home). There were zero B&E's in SAHRA's area during 2021. Unfortunately, we are seeing an uptick since the year began with 4 year-to-date as people return to school and the office.

We are aware of the locations of two commercial B&E's on Avenue Road, one at Dickson Home Hardware overnight and the other within the last month at the Shoppers Drug Mart just south of Bruno's. This was a mid-afternoon robbery for narcotics, reportedly using knives as weapons. There have been six narcotics robberies at drug stores across the City. TPS is following up on the issue.

We are continuing to support Neighbourhood Watch Online and have several areas represented within our boundaries. However, we are still looking for others to step forward to be Group Captains in order to provide wider coverage. Please consider stepping forward and volunteering for this role, which doesn't take a lot of time or effort. We'll provide training and ongoing support.



Traffic and pedestrian safety:

Traffic continues to be an issue in our area, leading to concerns for pedestrian safety as well as vehicular safety. Thanks to Councillor Colle, a traffic study, with the objective of traffic calming, is underway covering the area between Yonge Boulevard and Kelso, from Highway 401 south to Brooke. This study has been delayed due to the pandemic: city traffic engineers need to measure traffic rates but traffic needs to return to “normal” before any measurements would be meaningful. In the meantime, the councillor’s office arranged for a virtual meeting with the traffic engineer leading the study. What struck me was the complexity of the issue with multiple City department impacts. Regardless of what will be done, traffic volume will not be going away. There will be an opportunity for the public to attend a future meeting with the traffic engineering team so stay tuned.

Reduced speed limits are being phased in on all Toronto local (residential) roads. The speed limits will be reduced from 40 km/h to 30 km/h. You may have noticed these new speed limits in the Armour Heights area north of Highway 401 or in other areas. Our ward will be addressed later in 2022.

For over a year, a traffic calming sign has been missing on southbound Yonge Boulevard just south of Wilson. The City has told us that a replacement sign will be installed this Spring.

Enhancing the environment and social life in our neighbourhood

Once again, our annual Neighbours Night Out celebration was cancelled last year due to the pandemic. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to hold this event in September.

SAHRA supports the greening of Avenue Road. At our request, the City pruned the trees on Avenue Road from the 401 south to Brooke, on the east side. We’d like the City to address the weeds at the bases of the trees.

We were also hopeful that trees would be planted at the ramps at the Avenue Road / 401 interchange through the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign. Unfortunately, trees were only planted on the northwest quadrant of the interchange. Neither the province nor the city appears ready to further green the area around the south ramps.

On Avenue Road, we would like to see planters, enhanced street lighting and street banners that hang from utility poles. We have been in touch with the Councillor’s office in previous years but there has been no movement on these items.

On occasion, we approach business owners to address cleanliness issues near their establishments. Additionally, we work with property owners and the city to clean graffiti when it appears.



For several years, we have been working with the current and previous councillors' offices, and neighbouring residents' associations, regarding the greening of the Roe Bus Loop which is the TTC-owned area just south of the parking lot which is just south of McDonald's. During last summer, SAHRA was happy to support the occasional farmers' markets which were organised by the Upper Avenue Community Association. We are happy to report that the farmers' market will return this summer.

However, changes are coming to the bus loop. In 2008, the Avenue Road Avenue Study identified that this area should be turned into a parkette. SAHRA publicly supports this goal with two provisos:

1. It must be accomplished without the significant use of Section 37 funds. (Section 37 of the provincial Planning Act permits the City to authorize increases in permitted height and/or density in return for community benefits, which are usually provided through extra funds paid by developers.) We are upset that Councillor Colle moved a [motion](#) at City Council, which passed, that calls for "the use of all available Section 37 funding to support the development of the park". Since 2018, SAHRA has made it clear that it was not in favour of using Section 37 funds for this end. This included [a letter](#) which we wrote to City Council for the meeting addressing the Councillor's motion.
2. This same letter expressed our desire that once the bus loop has been closed, buses must not turn around using residential streets. The TTC must find other alternatives. We were unpleasantly surprised to find that Councillor Colle, during the meeting, moved an amendment which passed, that requests the TTC "to establish an alternative on-street routing option or options for buses in the vicinity of the Roe Bus Loop and local streets to manage unscheduled service impacts and emergencies".

Both these items run contrary to SAHRA's publicly stated position. In our opinion, buses traveling on residential streets is a non-starter. And the use of all remaining Section 37 funds for this one project, when so many other opportunities exist for greening Avenue Road, is at best short-sighted.

In 2021, the City studied the future of City-run golf courses. SAHRA participated in the one of the public consultation sessions. The Don Valley Golf Course will continue to operate but with some minor changes. We are hopeful that a safe pedestrian path can be developed between the south end of Earl Bales Park and an area near the Yonge Street / Wilson Avenue intersection.

Last Fall, we supported the hosting of a federal election all-candidates meeting. We hope to do the same this year for the municipal election, although we won't be able to for the provincial one.

Since the sale of cannabis products became legal about two years ago, SAHRA has monitored and tried to limit the growth of cannabis outlets. Our initial concern was that too many of these in a concentrated area would drive crime and drug use among youth. The outlets that have appeared



in our area have been largely upscale. While crime still seems to be focussed on auto thefts (corner of Felbrigg and Avenue Road in broad daylight) and stronger drugs (recent robbery at Shoppers's Drug Mart beside Bruno's), nonetheless there has been undue proliferation of cannabis shops in our area:

- 5 stores in the 8-block section of Avenue Road between Fairlawn and Haddington, 4 of these on our east side of the street
- a 6th application on the east side of Avenue Road north of St. Germaine
- a 7th application for 1971 Avenue Rd (former Su Casa), which appears to have been approved but its opening is uncertain for financial reasons

SAHRA will continue to try to limit further proliferation through normal regulatory channels.

Overdevelopment Fundraising Campaign 2021

In the Fall of 2020, SAHRA's members clearly told us that they are concerned about both residential and commercial overdevelopment.

Developers maximize their profits by maximizing building size. This can have detrimental effects on our neighbourhood by changing its character, and on neighbours' properties through shading and reduced privacy. Sub-basements and burrowing can affect drainage and the water table. Commercial developments can also bring increased traffic with attendant parking, speeding and safety concerns.

For these reasons, SAHRA objects to many proposals at Committee of Adjustment. Often, decisions from the CofA are appealed to the Toronto Local Appeal Body, where having a chance of winning requires hiring a planner and a lawyer. We have one of each who provide very good value.

Since 2014, we have appealed 9 times on our members' behalf resulting in 7 wins and 2 losses. We feel this is a good track record. To prepare for our next appeals, we ran an Overdevelopment Fundraising Campaign in the last quarter of 2021. Thanks to 39 contributors, we raised an amount which is more or less in line with our expectations. We will continue to support appeals with significant guidance to neighbours on how to navigate the process of an appeal. We'll provide reduced financial support and will be requesting local neighbours to contribute more.

Governance

ONCA is a new acronym in our lives! Last October, the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act received royal assent. There is a three-year phase in period, after which all Ontario-registered not-for-profits must be in compliance. Over the next year, we will be working on the changes which we'll need to make to our articles of incorporation and by-laws. Of note, the definition of member will need to change. Currently, the definition reads, "All residential property owners, residential



tenants and residents living within [our boundaries] shall be considered members.” The issue is that ONCA requires us to maintain a complete list of members. We aren’t capable of doing that because we don’t know everyone who lives within our boundaries.

Expect to vote on the proposed changes at next year’s annual meeting.

Development Policies

SAHRA has been very active, working with the Federation of North Toronto Residents’ Associations and the Confederation of Residents and Ratepayers Associations of Toronto, participating in the reviews of major development policies being brought forward by the City, precipitated by the review/updating of the Official Plan which has a July, 2022 deadline. A number of these policies are brought forward as a part of the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative, dealing with the ‘missing middle’ situation.

Garden Suites (similar to Laneway Suites) are within the EHON program. This is a very important issue – it is a full-fledged second house behind a house! SAHRA has been involved since early 2021 with a FoNTRA Garden Suite Working Group. Despite our reviews with Planning and recommendations supported by a professional Planning Report, City Council approved the Official Plan Amendments (OPA) and the Zoning By-law Amendments (ZBA) in Feb, 2022. Our stated position was that we were not opposed to Garden Suites but we had concerns with the way they were being implemented, with specific by-law regulations and the unintended consequences.. A group of seven resident organizations, including SAHRA, submitted Appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) on March 7, 2022. The City has now asked for a Hearing (to be held on June 2 and 3) to put forward a Motion to Dismiss.

Multiplexes, Commercial Retail and Major Streets Rezoning are EHON initiatives that are now being reviewed as a means to also increase housing density in ‘missing middle’ areas. The major concern is that rezoning for all properties, across all Neighbourhoods in the City as-of-right is being proposed. A Neighbourhood approach is not being considered. The Multiplexes initiative would rezone RD (Residential Detached) areas, such as ours, for all forms of plexes (duplex, triplex or fourplex) and low-rise apartment buildings. Commercial Retail will expand home-based occupations and encourage retail operations within Neighbourhoods. The Major Streets initiative will review all major streets, with bus transit, for rezoning for mid-rise buildings (6-12 storeys) and additional commercial buildings. Multiplexes Official Plan Amendments are going to be presented to the City for approval in July along with OPA and zoning by-law amendments for Commercial Retail. Additional reviews will continue in 2022 (while Council is closed for the Election) and Reports will then be presented in early 2023, when Council reconvenes.

Parking Regulations changes were approved by City Council that no longer specify a minimum parking requirement for condo/apartment/commercial buildings. The developers’ decisions



whether to provide parking or not will be solely market-driven. It will be interesting to watch the impacts of the reduced parking, especially on Upper Avenue.

A lot of our residential and commercial issues involve Building, which is separate from Planning. Building is re-organizing to work on a 'functional' basis rather than on a district-basis but we really have not seen any changes as yet when dealing with our local problems such as Orders to Comply, inspections, driveway expansions, artificial turf, and zoning examination errors.

Development Reviews/Hearings

SAHRA reviews each application to the Committee of Adjustment (CofA). If merited, we share information with adjacent neighbours, offering assistance in their review of the variance requests. SAHRA may submit a Letter of Objection and/or speak at the Hearing. CofA meetings are now held virtually so it is even more challenging for SAHRA and the neighbours to make their opinions known.

In 2021, there were two neighbour-led appeals to the Toronto Local Appeal Body. SAHRA assisted in the preparations for these hearings and acted as a Participant.

250 Lawrence Avenue West development is underway – believe they are now at the ground level. The Public Park design review was completed in 2021. There always has been a No Left Turn sign from the parking lot of the medical building onto Lawrence but the condo is now planning on allowing left turns. The local residents associations are very concerned about this considering the traffic and the school situation in the Lawrence/Rosewell/Avenue Road area.

Grenwin is going to be proceeding with a 17-storey rental apartment building at 228 Wilson Avenue. An outstanding issue is how to ensure safe crossing arrangements across 4 lanes of Wilson, very close to the tunnel.

Major Developments

Avenue and Lawrence (NE corner of Avenue Road and Lawrence)

The new news is that First Capital has now purchased 272 Lawrence Avenue, the medical building just east of the site, beside 250 Lawrence Avenue to the west, so they are revising their Plans. The plans have not yet been released but the major changes would appear to be:

- Includes a public road, with one entrance/exit off Lawrence Avenue; the road ends at the Royal Lighting boundary.
- This entrance/exit is now lined up with Rosewell Avenue with a proposed traffic light.
- Still two buildings (10 storeys and now 14 storeys)
- There is on-site Parkland dedication but is positioned between the two tall buildings.



4050 Yonge Street (NW corner of Yonge Street and Wilson)

The developer appealed to LPAT (Local Planning Appeal Tribunal now renamed to the Ontario Land Tribunal) and a hearing was scheduled for May, 2022. The City and the two residents association Parties have now reached a Settlement:

- Reduced the 2 towers by 7 floors each (now 14 and 28 storeys).
- 45 degree angular tiering now exists back from Yonge Street.
- There are increased setbacks from Yonge and Wilson.
- \$1 Million of Section 37 money has been allocated for local trail and park improvements.

3180 Yonge Street (Woburn/Bedford Park block, West side of Yonge)

The proposed building is very precedent setting with significant variances. The developer directly appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). The City is opposing; as well, the Bedford Park Residents Organization and the Lytton Park Residents Organizations are Parties. The OLT hearing is currently in progress.

1648-1670 Avenue Road (Cranbrooke to Brookdale block, west side of Avenue Road)

An application was submitted in January, 2022 proposing 9 storeys with a 32.5 meter height plus a 4.5 meter mechanical penthouse. The tallest yet! 44% over the by-law permitted height of 22.5 meters. As well, the stepbacks are not located at the top of the second floor. Angular plane requirements are not even considered. All contribute to Massing! SAHRA, UACA, and BPRO are meeting with the applicant, Planning and the Councillor to review the height/stepback and angular plane issues.

The Avenue Road Avenue Study defined 10 possible large-sites. We are now at 6. We understand that Shoppers at Avenue Road is the next possible development site, so we will be at 7. Some of the identified large-sites have not yet surfaced so the 10 may increase to something like 14 over the next 10 years. A possibility!

Thank You to our Membership Contributors, Overdevelopment donors and Volunteers

Appreciation was expressed to our Membership contributors, Overdevelopment donors and Volunteers. They all contribute to supporting SAHRA so that we can carry on with our mandates for protecting and enhancing our Neighbourhood.