



SAHRA Report for 2022 presented at the SAHRA Annual General Meeting April 25, 2023

Communications

We normally publish one paper newsletter each year, and you should have received one in your mailbox in the last few weeks. Apart from those, all mass communication has been by email for the last several years. It is much less expensive and more timely. If you aren't receiving our weekly eBlasts, 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 so check it out frequently. Since we moved to a new provider, you will find that it loads more quickly.

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 heightened concern. 2022 was the worst year since we started tracking data in 2014 and 2023 looks even worse. In SAHRA's area, there were 34 incidents in 2022 and already there were 8 in 2023 through to the end of March. This is an issue across the city and the GTA. We collaborate with the Upper Avenue Community Association (UACA) to track these data. Together we feel that a multi-jurisdictional approach is 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 2021 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 2022 budget to establish a team within the city's police force. Through our involvement with the Community Police Liaison Committee, we've been told that the team is working with other law enforcement agencies. There have been a few announcements of large arrests and seizures of stolen vehicles as well as arrests in some of the carjacking incidents. Due to the complexity of dealing with the organised crime aspect, we've also been told that it will take some time to make significant headway. As such, we don't expect considerable reduction in the number of stolen vehicles until after the end of the year. Unfortunately, we need to be patient.

We've also met a couple of times with the Équité, the investigative arm of the Insurance Bureau of Canada. They provided some background information, such where and how stolen vehicles are being shipped overseas. They publish a top ten stolen vehicle list which can be found on their [website](#).

Some insurance companies are providing free tag trackers to their customers who own vehicles which are more likely to be stolen. You may want to talk to your insurance company to see what they might do for you. And if you are purchasing a vehicle, you might want to ask the dealer what they and the manufacturer are doing to curb auto theft.

In the meantime, there is 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, house B&E's peaked in 2017 and have been coming down since. This was especially evident after the pandemic started in 2020, since most people were at home. There were eight B&E's in SAHRA's area during 2022. This was an increase over 2021, presumably because people started to return to schools and offices.

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 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, was undertaken covering the area between Yonge Boulevard and Kelso, from Highway 401

south to Brooke. Effectively, the study found that our residential streets do not have more traffic than they are designed for and that speeding is not endemic. The study posits that pedestrians may feel they are more at risk because most streets do not have sidewalks which would more effectively separate them from vehicles.

The recommendations include the reduction of the speed limit on all “local” streets from 40 km/h to 30 km/h. All the residential streets within SAHRA’s boundaries are considered local, except Yonge Boulevard and Brooke, which are “collectors.” Those streets will remain at 40 km/h, although we are considering asking the Councillor to reduce the speed on Brooke as well.

These reduced speeds are being phased in on all Toronto local roads. 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 2023.

Another recommendation is to ensure stop bar pavement markings are painted at all stop signs, as per the City’s standard. This should help motorists and cyclists identify where to stop – and that complete stops are required. SAHRA supports this recommendation.

The final recommendation is to follow the City’s policy which is to have at least one sidewalk on each street. This would likely only happen as the street comes up for a complete rebuild which is expected to be 5 to more than 15 years away. SAHRA’s position is to make a decision at the time.

In a recent letter, Councillor Colle also identified the following options. “Watch Your Speed” radar signs can be requested from the City. They are installed on a rotating basis, typically for two to three weeks at a time. Speed humps can be requested, but SAHRA is typically not supportive of this measure: emergency vehicles don’t like them, for instance. Accelerated sidewalk installation can be requested. Finally, enforcement by the police – but understand that they have competing priorities.

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. Sadly, we were promised the same thing a year ago.

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 optimistic that we will be able to hold this event in September.

We are happy to report that the farmers’ market will return this summer to the Roe Bus Loop, just south of McDonald’s. It will expand to use both lanes of the bus loop and part of the adjacent Green P parking lot, where free one-hour parking will be available for those at the market. UACA is the prime moving force organising the market; they have arranged for the market with a different manager. The markets will run on every Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. More details to follow in our eBlasts and on our website.

We were pleased to participate in an all-candidates event for the municipal election last fall. The event was hosted by Lytton Park Residents' Organization.

Governance

Last year, I introduced the acronym ONCA to you, which stands for the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act. As a result, we have been examining our letters patent and by-laws. We had hoped to present our findings at this AGM but will need to defer until next year.

Development

Development Policies

You will have seen many times in the past year the acronym EHON. This stands for **Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods**, and is the City's broad initiative to increase and expedite housing growth in low rise areas.

EHON includes GARDEN SUITES (approved in Spring 2022), MULTIPLEXES (duplex-triplex-fourplex on current detached / semi-detached lot sizes) with proposed regulations which would allow certain occupations to work at home, and rezoning Major Streets for mid-rise buildings.

Garden Suite regulations are now in place, and include, among others:

- 2 storeys
- Maximum building height of 6m (17 feet)
- Minimum side yard setback of 0.9m (2.5 feet)
- Minimum back yard setback of 1.5m (4.3 feet)

SAHRA has not had any Garden Suite proposals within its boundaries as yet. There was a controversial application near High Park last year that featured many outlandish variances (i.e. the ancillary building to be right up against the property line) and was scaled back dramatically at Committee of Adjustment.

Development Reviews / Hearings

SAHRA continued to participate in Committee of Adjustment (CoA) hearings in 2022 and into 2023, where warranted, a total of 7 since Jan 2022.

Of these, SAHRA was able to stop a 3-storey application for 88 Felbrigg last year. The applicant withdrew his proposal when faced with past decisions against 3 storeys at TLAB and opposition from SAHRA, nearby residents, City Staff, and the Councillor. However, the great majority of application variances are being approved at CoA.

SAHRA and other residence associations (RA) have been concerned with Committee of Adjustment practices for a long time. Some of the issues:

- Up to 50 applications scheduled for a 1-day hearing, meaning limited time for application review, panelist burnout, and waiting around
- Low familiarity with neighbourhoods among panelists
- Zoning examinations not always correct
- Allowing applicants to identify variances, rather than City Examiners

The City hired KPMG in 2022 to review CoA practices and suggest streamlining improvements. Their report was submitted in February and City Staff responded with an implementation plan for changes in 2023-2024, for Council approval - to be determined.

Site – Specific Developments - STATUS

1. **Avenue Rd & Lawrence:** This is the FIRST CAPITAL application for the current site occupied by Pusateri's, McGillvray Animal Hospital, Starbucks and around the corner on Lawrence. This proposal was revised last year. SAHRA is not aware of the construction timetable.
2. **4050 Yonge St (Yonge & Wilson, NW corner):** Improvements were secured by a group of resident associations, including SAHRA. SAHRA contributed \$1,500 to this successful challenge and was reimbursed for this contribution, as apart of the final settlement.
3. **190 Ridley Blvd:** The green space on the north side of Ridley, just east of Avenue Rd. This is a 2nd iteration of the original proposal for this land, owned by Starlight and affiliates, that was approved back in 2015 at the OMB.

Improvements to Avenue Rd Streetscape

SAHRA worked with our two other partners on Upper Avenue (Bedford Park Residents' Organization and Upper Avenue Community Association) in the first quarter 2023, to develop proposals for improving the streetscape of Avenue Road, from Lawrence to Joicey. This was in response to a request by Councillor Colle.

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.