



GOVERNOR'S BRIDGE RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Governor's Bridge Neighbourhood Newsletter – February 2022

Welcome to 2022. No doubt many Governor's Bridge residents are feeling angst about the Great Reset, the Great Resignation and the Great Adaptation associated with COVID-19.

The good news is that the GBRA Board has been very active over the last 12 months working closely with Councillor Layton and his Senior Advisor Angela Surdi to make things better for residents of Governor's Bridge, neighbouring communities (through the 5 Residents Associations [5RA's] network), and FoNTRA.

And we're all very excited about the renewed spirit of the community to come together and launch special projects like the Halloween Walk and Holiday Gnomes that appeared out of nowhere on many GB front lawns. Thank you for these great spirit builders that bring joy to all who live in Governor's Bridge. If you have an idea for a "fun raiser" in Governor's Bridge - please do share it and we'll see what we can do to support you and your team of volunteers.

We continue to work closely with neighbouring residents associations to make sure you're well informed in advance of the upcoming provincial election in June and the civic election in October.

We plan to work harder with other organizations and Councillor Layton to see the creation of the East Toronto Railpath and better cross-city walkways and bikeways - so once spring arrives you can get out and enjoy them.

And our hope is that you'll continue to join us as not only active members of the GBRA (we have a record 135 members this year) but you'll share your ideas and enthusiasm for local improvements and fun events.

To this end, we wanted to share the 2022 schedule of our Board meetings so you can advise us in advance of the meetings about ideas and issues that you'd like discussed:

- February 21
- April 25
- July 4
- September 12
- December 7

Our goal is to get this newsletter out to you in advance of these Board meetings.

Finally, our ultimate goal is to get back together as a community on September 25th to celebrate our 53rd Annual Community BBQ, in Nesbitt Park, following all public health guidelines.

What's going on in Governor's Bridge:

East Toronto Railpath (ETR): Imagine being able walk down to the Brickworks via the rail tracks crossing below Bayview (just south of Nesbitt) and the Half Mile bridge (beside the Brick Works over Bayview) to connect with the Don Valley trail down to the Waterfront and the Martin Goodman trail and over to the Bentway and the [West Toronto Railpath](#). This is our objective in [working with the City of Toronto](#) to purchase this property from Metrolinx and enable future generations to enjoy active transportation in the ravines. We will keep you informed on progress of this project as it proceeds from idea to reality. We are making progress and will no doubt need your support in making this happen for our kids. Please see the ETR here in red:



Governor's Bridge Lookout: Permits are almost complete and financing for this project, which now also includes recognition of the value of the North Slope, is proceeding thanks to the herculean efforts of Toronto Urban Forestry Natural Environment Specialist Cheryl Post, Angela Surdi and Councillor Layton, and of course the kindness of all the donors in Governor's Bridge.

Bayview StART Underpass Mural Program: Progress on this major mural project has slowed down because of planned renovations to the Bayview underpass. Once the City of Toronto has confirmed state-of-good-repair plans, we will provide an update.

Safety on Bayview: Thanks to the efforts of neighbour Mike Grey and his great colleague Yesim Ozalp, we've attempted to connect with leaders at 53 Division to talk about traffic safety. To date, no progress has been made on this initial meeting but as our bulldog logo demonstrates, we will not give up until we achieve our Vision Zero goals of no FSIs (fatal and serious injuries) on Bayview.

Traffic safety: Councillor Layton continues to push City of Toronto Council and staff for [better road safety](#). The City's growing focus on safety comes from [growing safety challenges on roads in North America](#). If you want to receive Councillor Layton's regular newsletter and updates on this all-important file, please sign up to receive it [here](#).

Active TO: Last summer, many people took advantage of local road closures to enjoy walking, running and biking on Bayview and Yonge Street. New ideas continue to sprout for Torontonians to get more active with walking and biking. Here's what [Ottawa offers on Sundays](#). [Bike trains](#) are also developing. And great cities like Copenhagen continue to develop more ways to teach young people to ride their bikes safely.

Snow Media: Angela Surdi continues to work with City staff to make Bayview safer to walk, bike and drive. Angela and City of Toronto's 311 service were critical in getting the Bayview's west side sidewalk (below Bennington Heights) cleared after the major storm - to ensure easy access to transit, Bennington Heights School, and Loblaws/Bayview Avenue area - Governor's Bridge's 15-minute city.

28 Bus/Ontario Line: The GBRA Board has been active with Councillor Layton and [FoNTRA](#) in discussing how the new Ontario Line will help provide more effective transit connections for Governor's Bridge residents. Key questions include - how can the [28 bus service](#) on Bayview be improved and will it connect to the south with the Ontario Line. If you are interested, here is in an [appraisal](#) of Metrolinx's newly released [Draft Ontario Line Environmental Assessment](#).

Neighbourhood Watch - Connect and Protect: We have been active on local issues. [High End Auto Theft](#) (H.E.A.T.) continues to be a problem at different times of the year. The North Slope and illegal trespassing on active railroad lines continue to be areas of concern re: trespassing and people walking the rails. And January's 55 cm "snowmagedon" was also a concern and discussion will take place about how to improve snow clearing in the neighbourhood, on Bayview, and throughout the City.

Garden Suites: Garden Suites have been [approved by the City of Toronto](#). [The GBRA Board feels that the permission to build Garden Suites, like new home construction or major renovations, should be first discussed with your neighbours and then the GBRA before proceeding - to try to avoid conflicts that may otherwise arise.](#) While Garden Suites will provide more options for housing in the core like inter-generational family living, there is a feeling that the City has been rezoned with this addition.

Net Zero Buying group: A Net Zero Buying group is being launched. Tim Smith, of the Harbord Village Residents' Association is leading a buying group for interested residents of environmental Net Zero technology. Updates will be included in future newsletters on how to participate.

Metrolinx Layover site: Considerable RA discussion continues about Metrolinx's addition of a layover site in the Don Valley north of the Bloor viaduct. Attempts have been made to ask Metrolinx to put washrooms and a water fountain adjacent to their planned facility without any progress or positive feedback.

More parks in Governor's Bridge: Angela Surdi has started the process to recognize the triangular park as a park in Governor's Bridge. Other discussions are underway to look at the possibility of making the wooded area at Nesbitt and True Davidson into a natural park.

Skating rinks and winter activities: Unfortunately, we weren't able to find a Nesbitt Park lead volunteer to build a rink this winter. With March break coming up, there are lots of local options to use - Bennington Heights School, the Brickworks, to Rosedale Park, and Ramsden Park.

If you want a new rink to try, head down to Harbourfront and check out the Bentway's skating path system. Sledding fun on the hills beside Bennington Heights School continues. And of course, Nesbitt Park has lots of snow to enjoy, sculpt and have fun in. **And if anyone feels up to organizing an ice sculpture program at Nesbitt Park, please contact the GBRA about how to make it happen.**

FoNTRA's new [Website](#): If you get a chance - please visit this web site to get a sense of the many issues that this federation of north Toronto residents associations responds to. And please do visit [Governors Bridge's website](#) as Gary Stothers continues to post important information on it. FoNTRA is also helping member RA's with needed updates to Ontario's Not-For-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA).

City Building for all ages: University of Toronto's School of Cities continues to offer amazing research and programming necessary to help us all build a better Toronto. One of the newest programs to be introduced is YLabs - getting youth involved in researching and helping build a better, safer and walkable city. Please take a minute to take advantage of this great [School of Cities presentation](#) - and a [great book to read](#) over March break.

Governor's Bridge History: Discussions are underway with York University students about the potential to create an area history with images and background information.

Board profiles: George Paradi has been an active Board member for several years and we felt it was important to profile him in this newsletter. As a longtime resident of Governor's Bridge, the Paradis have been incredible contributors not just to organizing GBRA's yearly Community BBQ, but also the Community Clean-up and many other local events. Here is a note from George on why they moved to this "hamlet" within a big city:

We moved to 57 Douglas Crescent in the spring of 1975 as a young family. The railway behind Douglas Crescent and the Brickworks was fully operational - blasting their horns on a regular basis. The major appeal of the neighbourhood was that it was and still is a "neighbourhood". The first introduction to our new neighbours was at the annual BBQ in September where we met the neighbours at large and got involved by contributing to the event.

We realized how fortunate we were to have selected this neighbourhood where our kids along with all the other kids could play anywhere in the neighbourhood and be safe. The traffic was

limited so riding a bike and playing road hockey was relatively safe. Help was available and freely given by the neighbours if any child needed it.

We realized that there were several multi-generational families living in the neighbourhood (grandparent, parent, grandkids). This is still the case.

Naturally this closely knit neighbourhood didn't and does not happen by itself. It takes commitment and willingness of the residents to step up and take responsibly to continue and create the type of neighbourhood they wish to live in. Over the last 47 years my family and I have had the pleasure of working with many current and previous residents by being a member of the ratepayers' association and organizing community events to maintain and enhance the neighbourhood.

We have welcomed the development and addition of Governor's Bridge Estates to our neighbourhood. Many residents may not be aware that that development is where a 7-storey apartment building that sat unfinished for 20 years - the "white elephant" or "Bayview Ghost" - with plans to build high-rises until the residents of the day and the GBRA convinced East York and Ontario to rezone the property to "R1" - to ensure NO high-rises were ever going to be built.

So, why am I writing this note? I am hoping that when you read this short note you will get the "urge" to join the GBRA or one of the committees to further enhance the appeal and livability of this wonderful community.

If anyone has any questions or would like to know more, please contact me at George.paradi@gmail.com.

If you see George out with his dog Roxie, please say hi.

Finally, a very special thank you to our Board members, Angela Surdi and Councillor Layton - who work tirelessly on your behalf on a daily basis.

[Chris Fraser](#) – President

[Jeff Hanemaayer](#) – Secretary/Treasurer and Neighbourhood Watch Program Manager

[Kathryn E. Langley Hope](#) – Director

[George Paradi](#) – Director

Links that might help you with your March Break or family gathering activities.

- [Active for Life](#)
- [Evergreen](#)
- [The Bentway](#)
- [Harbourfront skating](#)