



## This Week in the Annex:

July 06, 2022

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### What's in a BIA?

The Annex is served by two BIAs (Business Improvement Areas). The longest established and most active of these is the *Bloor Annex* BIA (BA-BIA) that traverses Bloor Street between Bathurst and Madison. The other, much younger BIA is *Dupont by the Castle* (DBC-BIA). Located just south of Casa Loma, it runs along Dupont Street from Bathurst to Avenue Road, while also reaching north into territory across the tracks and consequently well beyond our Annex borders.

For those of you unfamiliar with these institutions, a BIA is, according to City files, *a collective of the commercial and industrial properties in a prescribed geographical district who unite to carry out improvements and promote economic development within their designated area*. These BIAs work in partnership with the City to enhance and promote business areas as safe, vibrant places to do business, as unique destinations for tourists, and as focal points for neighbourhood activity. And the owners of commercial properties within them are assessed extra taxes to support the BIA's work – taxes that are most of the time paid from the profits of the businesses that occupy those properties.

### Bloor Annex BIA

We in the Annex have been tremendous beneficiaries of the BA-BIA's efforts. They are administered by a volunteer board of business and property owners who have, for example, overseen the installation of special wraps on hydro poles and telephone boxes to prevent graffiti. Most recently, the BA-BIA initiated the street party in celebration of Wiener's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. But on a day-to-day basis, it's had an even greater impact on community life, sponsoring art installations and murals and public gardens in five separate parkettes located at Robert, Major, Brunswick and Howland.

We agreed with Micky Fraterman that it's time we brought attention to the neighbourhood plaza at Brunswick and Bloor. Designed and maintained by the BA-BIA for several years now, the plaza is furnished with benches and tables for those who wish to sit and perhaps enjoy a meal. And at the northernmost end are planters bursting with herbs – with basil, cilantro, parsley, you name it – that are on offer to anyone who wishes to source a handful for their own kitchen.



The sign on the planter invites the passerby to "help yourself." As Micky wrote: *So special don't you think? Where in Toronto or the country can you take beautiful fresh herbs compliments of your BIA?* Kudos to BA-BIA General Manager Brian Burchell for having installed the planters in the first place.



Also comforting is the welcome sign that actively invites everyone to enjoy and linger in this communal space. It's a wonderful refuge from the bustle of Bloor. And it's a tribute to the collective energy of the Bloor Street businesses who give so much to enhance our neighbourhood.

### **Dupont by the Castle BIA**

Next month we'll feature work by the comparatively junior BIA of Dupont by the Castle. But we didn't want to close without celebrating the arrival this past week of cheerful baskets of yellow petunias. They're a delightful touch that not only brings welcome life to those boring hydro poles but also helps define and unify the community.



Photo courtesy DBC-BIA

## Notes and Queries

### Farmers' Market Gives Thanks

Last week's inbox contained a lovely message from Eleanor Levine, treasurer for the Bloor Borden Farmer's Market. She had written to thank the ARA for its annual donation to the enterprise, and we thought all our members deserved to read her words:

*We received ARA's generous contribution. We need it and we appreciate it. Our market is thriving, and we can continue year-after-year because of our residents' enthusiasm and participation AND because of the help from some of the Residents' Associations. It gives our volunteers, our farmers, and our communities joy and healthy food. It reinforces our sense of community, and all generations enjoy it. I love watching the young children and older visitors clapping and swaying to the music of our talented musicians. Please convey to ARA that your contribution helps us carry on.*



The importance of the market to the 'hood can be measured by the number of signs our residents gladly post on their front lawns and gardens.

### **Stroll TO an Annex Bust**

We mentioned [this Stroll TO itinerary](#) more than a year ago with the comment that the program was in its infancy and consequently the offerings a tad hit and miss. Surely, we thought to ourselves, City staff would be fleshing this out, getting this right, in the intervening months?

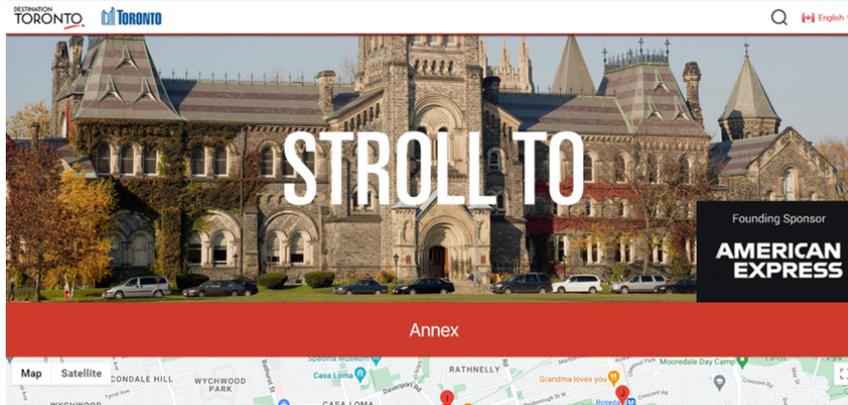
Alas. Not so. To our consternation, the itinerary still embraces a swath of the City that goes well beyond our formal Annex boundaries, and only six of the fifteen sites listed are located within our proper borders – not all of them obvious choices at that.

So now – don't you agree? – it's time for action.

**Annexonians unite!** If you care about our community, if you'd like to see it represented appropriately on the City website, then why not click on [this Stroll TO link](#) and complete the short survey? There's no need to complete the second half which asks increasingly intrusive personal questions. But there's sufficient room in the first section to write an impressive screed that also includes the

names of distinguished Annex sites that you believe to have been inexplicably overlooked.

After all, if we Annexonians don't protect our own image, then who else will? Please let us know at [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) when you've completed the survey. That'll help us increase the pressure on the powers that be to get this right.



We're in the riding of University-Rosedale, hence the picture above of UofT's University College at the top of our Annex stroll.

## Ants in Your Branch?

We reported last week on the untoward crash of a large branch from a seemingly healthy silver maple on Brunswick. The fallen limb was so large that it took the City several days to schedule a transport strong enough to truck its remains away. We reached out to UofT Professor Sandy Smith of Forestry (the self-same leader of last week's tree tour during the Mulberry Festival) to ask about the carpenter ants who caused the limb's demise.

Sandy replied that carpenter ants will always be an issue in large old trees. They're difficult to diagnose unless you watch for sawdust at the base or see unusually large ant activity. If you're worried about a tree on your property, she knows of [a Toronto arborist](#) who has high-tech German instrumentation that can do stress tests and ultrasound measurements of tree decay. Apparently just sticking in a probe, as the City does, is a superficial test at best.



*Photo courtesy Micky Fraterman*

## **A NICE Option**

The lead article of the *Globe and Mail's* [Report on Business](#) last Monday featured the woes of students trying to find affordable rental accommodation as universities and colleges across the country return to in-person learning. That put us in mind of the [Canada HomeShare™](#) program, an intergenerational housing solution operated by the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE).

As this not-for-profit organization explains:

*We work to match older adult home providers who may have extra space in their homes with students who are looking for safe and affordable housing to create mutually beneficial living solutions. Our work, completely facilitated by social workers, aims to support aging-in-place for older adults while increasing flexible off-campus housing options for post-secondary students.*

In return for housing, students pay \$400-\$600 in monthly rent directly to their home provider and contribute up to seven hours per week, either through

assistance around the home or simply through companionship. Sounds like it could be a win-win situation.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

This email was sent to [gillianbartlettara@gmail.com](mailto:gillianbartlettara@gmail.com). To stop receiving emails, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

The Annex Residents' Association