

This Week in the Annex:
September 07, 2022

A Semiotic Nightmare at Ave and Dav

We reported some weeks ago the arrival of a fourth service pole at the corner of Ave and Dav. And now its mysterious appearance has been explained: it's a key part of the City's [bike lane upgrade project](#) along Davenport Road.

Unfortunately, while the newly programmed signals at three of the affected corners are relatively easy to grasp, our [ARSC](#) champion, Henry Wiercinski, is not far off when he says that decoding the set for those heading westbound on Davenport requires a PhD, the major challenge being that right turns on red are now forbidden at this corner.



We stood for some time deciphering the sequence of lights. The pattern captured in the image above calls for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians to travel

directly forward. But it simultaneously prohibits right hand turns and perhaps – if you can read the small print on the fly – also turns to the left.

All well and good if you've got the time to ponder. But for those barrelling along (especially for the majority who seem to be allergic to speed limits) the ban on right hand turns is not so readily evident: There's momentary confusion at being faced with two conflicting lights – one green, one red – while also taking the milliseconds to read and process the words "Right Turn Signal." One could even be forgiven for reading that green light as permission to make a left turn, not an invitation to drive forward.

Draw back to see below just how cluttered the intersection is. It's difficult enough for a regular commuter to process, let alone an out-of-towner trying to decipher the messages in this complex streetscape.



Protecting Cyclists

Most poignant at the corner is the presence of a ghost bike – a memorial to 29-year-old Adam Excell who was victim of a hit-and-run on June 13, 2015. His 19-year-old killer turned himself in the next day and was ultimately convicted to four years in jail according to [this story from CP24 News](#).

The ban on right turns on red makes perfect sense. It's designed to protect cyclists who are legitimately riding through the intersection. On the other hand, during our observation period it was clear that those on two wheels had no conception that the prohibition might also apply to them – this despite the presence of a second "Right Turn Signal" light and the standard picture banning such a manoeuvre on red.

Added to this, some cyclists are refusing to restrict themselves to their designated lanes. Just [watch this video](#) of a pair sailing eastward along the other side of Davenport – one outside, the other inside the newly installed physical boundary markers. You can't blame drivers for crying foul.

The Takeaway?

The crowding on our roads, the introduction of physical barriers to protect bike lanes, the addition of signs and light signals – all these combine to make driving, cycling, and walking that much more complex.

Clearly the simplest way to mitigate any danger would be a reduction in speed. We're all human. We need time to figure things out. Wouldn't it be magic if the City got serious about reducing and also enforcing speed limits? Now that would be Vision Zero!



Our MP, Chrystia Freeland, herself a sometime cyclist on Avenue Road, gave a video shout-out to the Avenue Road Safety Coalition for its efforts to make this a safer street. [Click here](#) to watch her comments on YouTube.

Notes and Queries

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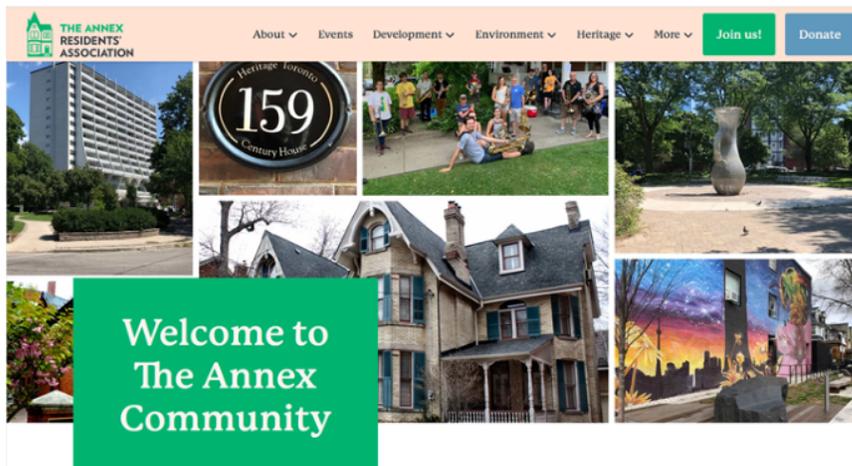


Image Associated Press

According to [Wikipedia](#), Dadaab is the site of a UNHCR base hosting 223,420 registered refugees and asylum seekers in three camps as of 13 May 2019, making it the third-largest such complex in the world. The father of this Annex-bound family has been in the camp for more than twenty years ever since he fled Somalia at age 14 when his journalist parents were killed.

ARA Board Meets This Thursday

It's not just the kids and teachers who are gearing up for a new year. Our monthly ARA Board meetings resume after a summer hiatus beginning tomorrow, September 8, at 7:00 pm. Board meetings are open to Annex residents, so if you'd like to see our volunteer members in action, write to info@theara.org to receive the Zoom link. Note that it's always an idea before you attend to rummage around [our website](#), beginning at the top left of the navigation bar with the section labelled **About**. That, at least, will help you know the players.



Want to Vote by Mail?

There's something electric about lining up to vote on election day. But in our pandemic sensitive world going the virtual route will seem preferable to many. So if you're willing to brave the City's somewhat clumsy "[My Vote](#)" website, you could opt to cast your ballot through the post. Note that the deadline for applying is **by end of day, Friday September 23**.

You'll need to upload a photo of government approved identification to ensure your mail-in option is approved. But before you get to that stage, you'll be asked to key in some basic information, starting with your address.



Note that addresses can only be entered through accepting a suggestion in the drop-down menu. You will quite likely see your street address appear together with the words "former Toronto." Just ignore this legacy feature. It refers to municipality names prior to amalgamation way back in 1998.

Critter Corner

Well, well, well. We finally caught up with a bunny rabbit going about its business in the 'hood. Because Critter Corner has seen more than its share of skunk videos this past summer, we were delighted at the prospect of bringing you some hoppy footage. But the hard truth is that the skunks are vastly more entertaining.

The bunnies? They sit frozen to avoid being spotted and then skip off in a flash once they realize they're in your sights. The skunks? They frankly don't seem at

all perturbed at being on camera, especially if they're occupied with an especially tasty snack.

Consider this particular member of the [Mephitidae family](#) (you're not alone: we, too, had to look that one up) who worked diligently to extract every lick of sugar from some ice cream that had splotted and dried on the sidewalk. We videoed the action for more than 8 minutes before losing interest: [Click here](#) for the best 2 minutes of footage.



As for this bunny at Admiral and Bernard, at least there was some daylight to enable filming. Still, you may have [to play the video twice](#) to catch the critter.



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.

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