



**THE ANNEX  
RESIDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION**

## **This Week in the Annex:**

**April 12, 2023**

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### **A Cautionary Tale**

Today is the day that Councillor Saxe's motion to reduce speed limits and protect pedestrians on the section of Avenue Road between Bloor and St Clair comes before TEYCC (Toronto East York Community Council). At press time we counted 65 – count 'em – 65 communications submitted on the issue. A shout out to all of you who stepped up (you can read your names [by scrolling down at this link](#)). Thank you! We'll let you know next week whether the motion has made it to the second and final stage of approval.

But the hard fact is that while the situation on our stretch of Avenue Road to the east is downright dangerous, Annexonians also face peril along our northern border. The CP trains that trundle benignly along that track are getting longer and heavier each year. On average they're an imposing 2.2 kilometers long and weigh almost 9000 tons. Hard to credit, but the longer ones are over 4 kilometers in length. That's a whole lot of heavy metal rolling through our community.



There may be a wall separating the tracks from the Bianca on Dupont, but it's clear from the graffiti that the barrier is no match for humans. That's patently true for rail cars as well.

*Photo courtesy Terry Montgomery*

## Accidents Do Happen

Railway officials who revel in the financial efficiency of longer trains are [also eager to tout](#) their comparative safety. And we have no evidence to dispute their claims. That said, trains aren't impervious to accident. And there are two recent examples to drive that home.

Back on August 21, 2016, at about 5:20 in the morning, two CP trains collided near a junction at Howland and Dupont. According to the [Transportation Safety Board report](#), the cause was human error: The crew of the westbound train missed a signal to stop for another train soon to cross their path. The derailment injured a train conductor, caused a spill of 2,500 litres of diesel fuel, and sparked a number of small fires.

Then, in the early afternoon of August 24, 2017, two cars left the tracks in exactly the same area, almost a year to the day later. CP said no hazardous goods were involved in [that particular derailment](#) – the cars were empty – but that was small comfort to some.



*Photo courtesy CBC*

## The Shadow of Lac-Mégantic

Hanging over the route is the shadow of Lac-Mégantic, site of a rail disaster unparalleled in Canadian history. It resulted in major loss of life, massive environmental destruction, and the evisceration of a small Quebec town. And many of the cars loaded with flammable liquids that formed part of that fated train had travelled days before along our very stretch of track.

You can read about the disaster in [Bruce Campbell's compelling book](#) published in 2018. Or, if you like your facts in video format, the Lac-Mégantic documentary series is airing at TIFF Bell Lightbox on **April 29** at 4:00 pm. Apparently a small group from Lac-Mégantic and possibly some railroad workers intend to be there.





Burned out corpses of the rail cars lie on the street at Lac-Mégantic after the inferno was extinguished

*Photo courtesy Business Insurance*

## Get Involved

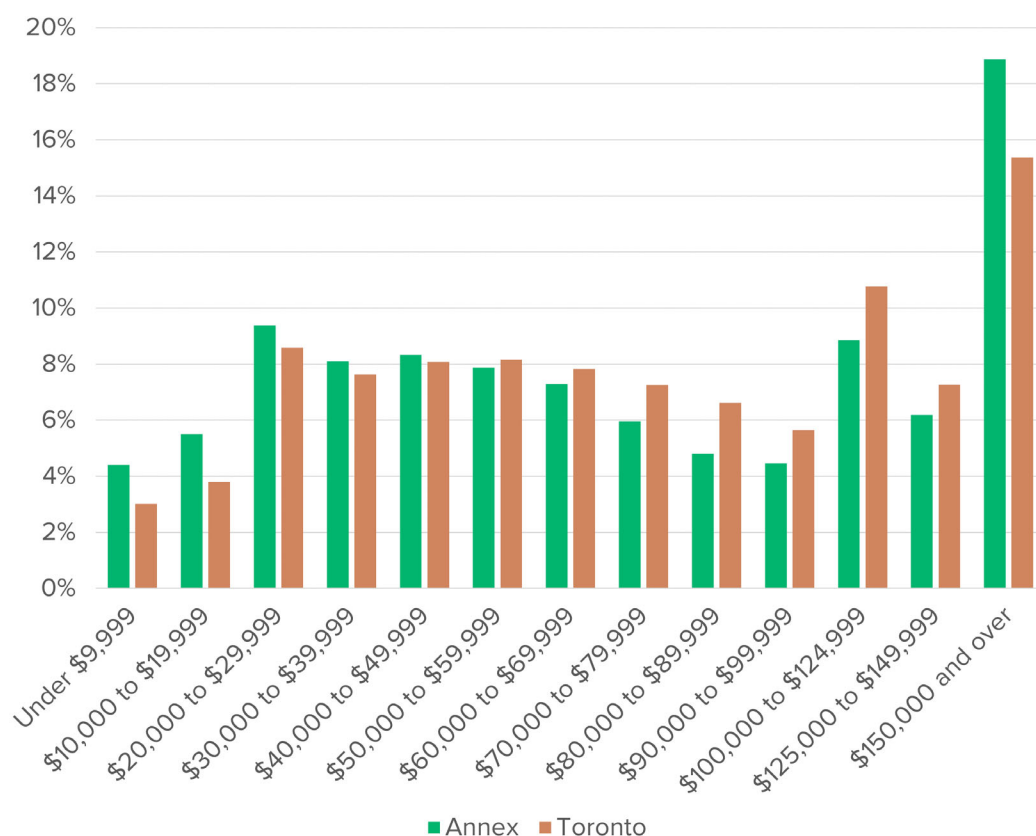
Whatever source you choose, members of the ARA Road and Safety Committee want all residents to keep informed about what's happening on those tracks and what's being carried along them. "Complacency is the enemy of safety," says Henry Wiercinski, chair of the sub-committee on rail safety. And that's why he's asking for volunteers to help as they make plans to mark the tenth anniversary of Lac-Mégantic this coming July 6th. Write to [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) if you're interested in signing on to the project

## The Annex by Numbers

What are your bets about the level of income reported by Annexonians vis a vis Torontonians as a whole? If the image that's painted in the popular press holds true, folks might guess that we skew high. But while that is the case at the richest end of the scale, Alex Topp's findings this week might surprise you.

He did some rummaging in the 2021 census files to dig up data on after-tax household income – a figure he argues is the best indicator of how much cash people have to spend.

You can see from the following chart that the census starts out by measuring income in buckets of \$10,000. But after it reaches \$100,000 it jumps by two increments of \$25,000, and then gives up altogether above the \$150,000 level, lumping everyone into a single pot. Not much you can do about that.



While the chart shows that our distribution differs only slightly from the city's overall, what's of interest is that the Annex has a greater than average representation on both ends of the spectrum. As Alex says, normally you see this sort of chart lean one way or the other – but we are as equally weighty at the

lower end of the scale as we are at the top. That's yet another indication of the diversity of our population.

## Community Consultation on 425 Bloor

Next **Tuesday April 18** from **6:00--7:30 pm**, the community is invited to weigh in on a proposal for development of the **site of the Metro store** on Bloor. The developer has asked for 30 storeys, 418 units, plus retail, and a density of 10.41 FSI.

It's important to remember that proposals are wishes. Every developer expects to file changes in the drawings based on their consultation with the City, the Councillor, and the community. And that's why you're encouraged to bring ideas to the meeting in addition to inevitable concerns about the building's height.

Consider what else you'd like to see such as rental, affordable, family-sized units, or live-work spaces. Or perhaps you're interested in improvements to the streetscape? Are there community needs like daycare that could be addressed? Will the developer make and fulfill any sustainability goals?

This is not the last opportunity to have an impact. We expect there will be further detailed discussions between the developer and a variety of stakeholders, including a working group composed of local residents and neighbours, Trinity St. Paul's, Metro, JCC, ARA, Bloor BIA, and HVRA.

But the developer will be sure to take note of the amount of community interest evident at this coming Tuesday's meeting. So the more of us who attend, the better.

Click on the [official notice for the meeting](#) to find the link for the City's list of consultation meetings. Scroll through the pages until you find **425 Bloor West** - - and that's where you'll find the link to register. A lot of clicking to get registered, for sure, but the cause is well worth it.



## Notes and Queries

### Rakes at the Ready?

You may have noticed City crews out recently repairing potholes, sweeping streets, and cleaning up dumps of litter. That's all prelude to the 2023 campaign to ***Clean Toronto Together***. The City is asking schools and businesses to devote all or part of Friday April 21 to cleaning around their own properties. Then that

weekend – **April 22** (Earth Day) and **April 23** – residents are encouraged to host community cleanups to remove litter from public spaces.

If you're interested in corralling a group of neighbours to spruce up a nearby parkette or laneway, sidewalk or boulevard, the City would love to know about it. Participants are asked to register their cleanups online at [www.toronto.ca/cleantoronto](http://www.toronto.ca/cleantoronto) by next **Wednesday, April 19**. Registration helps the City arrange special litter pickups, avoid duplicate cleanups, and measure results.





Rumour has it that the First Block Association of Bernard Avenue is reassembling this month to groom the parkettes at the end of their street. We'd love to know in advance at [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) of any other such initiatives in the 'hood.

**Hydro's Survey Is Now Open to All**



You might remember (or not – no worries!) our item on Toronto Hydro published in the [March 29 newsletter](#). That's where we told you about [Hydro's on-line survey](#) seeking customer input on future priorities. The survey takes a daunting 20 to 30 minutes to complete – but it also makes for a remarkable education as you work through the diagrams, charts, images, and videos.

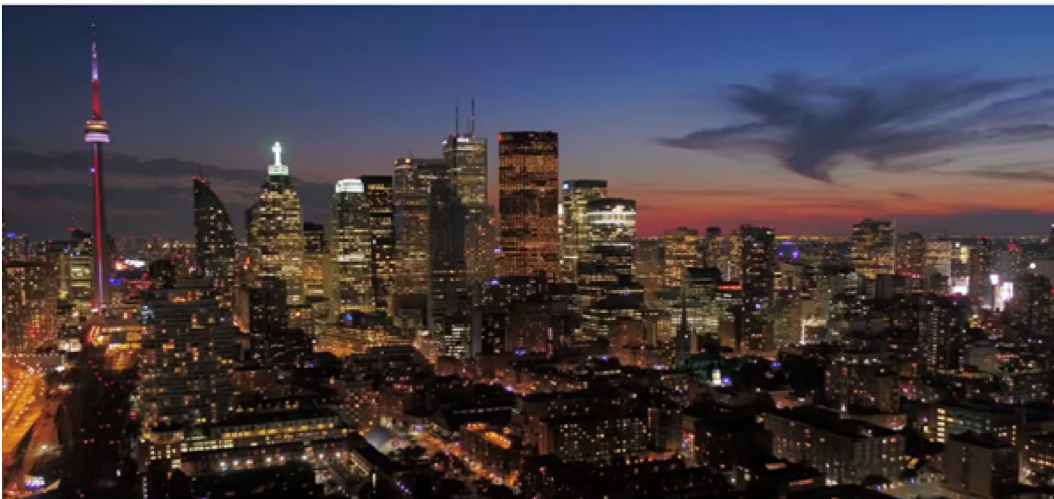
What's more, if you complete the survey, not only will you have learned about the complexities of delivering electricity, but you will also be eligible to win a draw for free electricity for a year. What's not to love? [Just click here to access the site](#).

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### What is this customer engagement about?

**The goal of this engagement is to share Toronto Hydro's draft five-year business plan for the future of the city's electrical grid and collect your feedback. This will help Toronto Hydro align its plans with your needs and preferences.**

*Click on the video below to learn about Toronto Hydro's customer engagement.*



## Plant to Support Huron PS

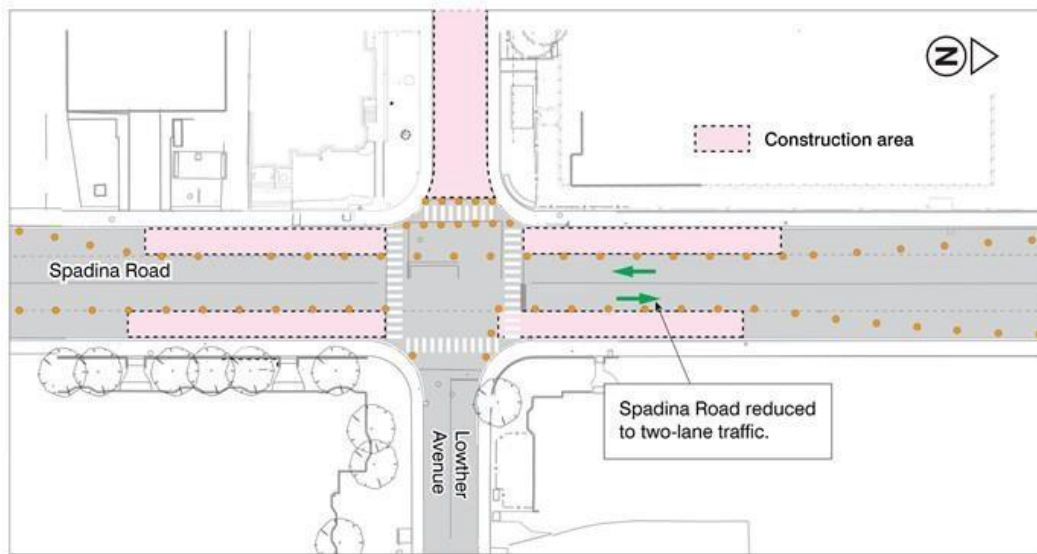
The indefatigable Fiona Groening reached out to tell us of another opportunity for residents to support Huron Street Public School. They have partnered with Plantables to sell dozens of varieties of garden/container-ready plants organically grown right here in Ontario. At just \$4.50/plant delivered right to your door, this is the perfect opportunity to help a great cause. Simply click on

[this shareable link](#), select your delivery date, use the code **HURONFFCPLANTS** at the checkout, and start dreaming in green! Ten percent of all sales go to the school to support curriculum enhancement and community needs.



## TTC Construction Update

If you didn't have reason enough to avoid the disruptions at Spadina and Lowther, the TTC advises that for the next two weeks Spadina Road will be reduced to two lanes -- one each for northbound and southbound traffic. Those who use the bus stop in the vicinity are advised that it, too, will be out of commission for the duration. You can [read the full notice here](#).



## Register for the AGM

We were delighted to see so many registrations flood in last week for the ARA Annual General Meeting. It's scheduled this year for **Thursday April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** via **Zoom**. If you're one of those who heard the call, thank you for showing an interest. But there's still lots of time for the rest of you to sign on. Just [go to our website to RSVP](#). Closer to the date, we'll email you links to both the meeting documents and the Zoom call itself.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



## GET INVOLVED!



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