



Pam McConnell

2015/2016 Winter Newsletter
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STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Enhancing our Parks and Open Spaces

Building places for healthy neighbourhoods is a priority in our community. Working together, we will be continuing to improve the quality of our public spaces in 2016:

- ✓ A Master Plan process for St. James Park has launched and will focus on adding a children's playground, improvements to the Gazebo area, pathways, lighting, and seating. Public meetings will be held in early 2016.
- ✓ The Corktown Parks Master Plan was completed in 2015 and outlined how to improve the network of smaller parks in Corktown. Bright Street Parkette and Orphans' Green dog off-leash area received the first improvements in 2015. Sackville Park is the next project and public consultation on the detailed design will happen early in 2016.
- ✓ Construction on a revitalized Berczy Park is underway and will be completed at the beginning of summer 2016. This creatively designed space is planned to address the needs of a diverse and growing community.
- ✓ The Lower Sherbourne Promenade was completed this fall. An extension of the cycle track, a safe pedestrian crossing at Lake Shore Blvd, new trees, heritage lighting and a new plaza and planter treatment at Scadding Avenue were planned with the neighbourhood.
- ✓ Mill Street in the Distillery District is scheduled for watermain work and resurfacing in 2016. An improvement plan for a widened sidewalk, bump outs, new trees, and decorative pavers at the gateway to the Distillery is under review.
- ✓ Jack Layton Ferry Terminal: A Master Plan based on the winning design will be presented at a public meeting in January 2016. The Plan will lay out the structure of a new ferry terminal, integrated with an improved Harbour Square Park and Yonge Street slip. A first phase will be recommended and constructed in 2016.
- ✓ First Parliament Site: A Master Plan process for this site is beginning in 2016. The Plan will provide large scale direction for the organization of the site, including a new Library, public open space, and a commemoration of the history of the site that befits its importance. Public consultations on this process will be scheduled in 2016.



Pam with local residents planning improvements to St. James Park

City Council adopts Poverty Reduction Strategy

I was so proud when City Council unanimously adopted TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy on November 4, 2015.

This is only a first step on a journey that will require all our efforts to make Toronto prosperous for everyone.

It was an honour to be appointed by Mayor John Tory to act as Deputy Mayor with the responsibility of leading the creation of this strategy. Over the course of 2015, together with City staff and community stakeholders, we engaged with thousands of Toronto residents who have been directly touched by the effects of poverty in their own lives to help develop the strategy.

The final strategy directs the City's actions over the next 20 years with specific recommendations that focus on six key areas: housing stability, service access, transit equity, food access, quality jobs and livable incomes, and systemic change.

With this strategy, we have developed a vision with concrete actions to address the unacceptable inequality we face in Toronto. I am inspired by its ambition to address the obstacles and find solutions.

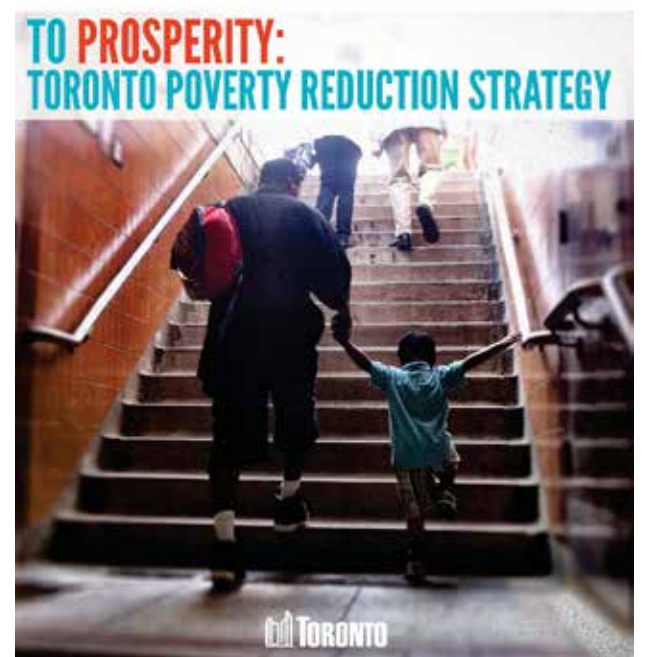
This work must begin immediately. It is time for a commitment from all sectors to move forward. Partnerships for ongoing action are critical. We need governments to work collaboratively to succeed.

Toronto's most precious resource is its people. Income polarization diminishes us all, as those living in poverty struggle and cannot participate in our city. The health of our residents is reflected in the health of our neighbourhoods, and in turn in the strength of our city.

I call on all Torontonians to ensure that the prosperity of Toronto is shared by all.

Poverty is everyone's business.

For more information, and to view the full strategy, please visit: www.toronto.ca/TOprosperity.



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WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD OUR CITY

2015 Budget Town Hall Meeting

Every year, I host a budget town hall meeting with residents of Ward 28 to present the staff-proposed City budget and to hear from residents about the community's priorities for Toronto.

The 2016 budget process was launched on December 15, 2015. Council will be debating the proposed budget early in 2016 with a final decision to be made in February.

It is important that community voices are active in these deliberations. I invite you to join me at a town hall so that I can hear about your priorities and concerns.

Date: **Thursday, January 21**

Time: **6:30 PM**

Location: **St. Lawrence Hall
(157 King Street East
at Jarvis), Great Hall**

St. James Town Updates

Community Improvement Plan

The residents of St. James Town have long known their neighbourhood needs better public spaces, sidewalks and areas for children to play. City of Toronto Planning staff have been working hard to turn those needs into a list of achievable projects that the

City and the land owners in the community can work on together over the coming years. Once the list is approved by City Council, builders will be able to contribute funds to get improved sidewalks and green spaces for everyone in our neighbourhood.

St. James Town Aquatic Centre

Construction will be starting this spring on the new St. James Town Aquatic Centre which will be attached to the Wellesley Community Centre. When it opens in 2017, the complex will have different areas for different users - a warm water pool, lanes for lap swimming, a shallow area for new swimmers and a special wall that braver kids will be able to jump into the water from.

New Buildings

In the spring of 2015, the Ontario Municipal Board approved a new development in North St. James Town which will bring a new park, heritage restoration of the properties on Glen Road, and 3 new buildings for the area between Howard and Bloor, Sherbourne and Parliament Streets. Tridel has recently announced that they will build the two buildings at the eastern end of the site - 37 and 45 storeys, on a 2 storey base. This is the successful result of years of community input and involvement on this complex development site.

In addition, we have an application at the south east corner of Sherbourne and Howard Streets. This proposal is for a rental building with a restaurant or café looking over a drastically improved St. James Town West Park. If you are interested in joining the park planning group, please contact my office.



Restored heritage homes on Glen Road

May we all have a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Pam



Pam celebrates the holidays with the seniors at Dixon Hall.



Artist rendering of the St. James Town Aquatic Centre

Updating the Rules of How We Live Together

Over the last few years, City staff have been reviewing many of the municipal standards that apply to how we live together in community and will be bringing policy recommendations to Council in 2016.

I hear frequently about the frustrating limits of the current Noise By-law, especially in our newly residential or mixed-use neighbourhoods. My experience working with you suggests that having clearer standards and officers to respond to complaints will be key to resolving chronic disturbances. We expect a final report on changes to the Noise By-Law in January at the Licensing and Standards Committee.

The Rooming House Bylaw was also reviewed in 2015 in order to harmonize the rules across the City. Rooming houses are an important part of our affordable housing stock, and there are some parts of Toronto where they are officially not permitted and operate illegally (a remnant of pre-amalgamation rules). As a result, there are fewer tools to ensure renters are safe or to mitigate impacts on neighbours when they occur. I support the introduction of city-wide rooming house rules accompanied by better enforcement to ensure that tenants and neighbourhoods are kept safe no matter how much they can afford to pay in rent.

The Vacant Property Standards by-law is coming up for review over the next year. Currently, if a property appears secure from the sidewalk, Municipal Standards Officers have only a limited ability to compel repairs or maintenance. This is occasionally a problem in our community when raccoons move into empty houses or row house roofs become leaky.

We look forward to improving these by-laws in the coming year. Please contact my office if you would like more information or to get involved in any of these processes.

Keep in Touch

Keep up to date on news events, and meetings from City Hall and our community!

Sign up for my e-newsletter at www.pammccconnell.ca.

Follow me on Twitter @PamMcConnell28

Find me on Facebook at [facebook.com/pam.mccconnell](https://www.facebook.com/pam.mccconnell)

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CITY BUILDING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Remembering City Builders

In 2015, we lost two community members who made significant contributions to our neighbourhoods and the City of Toronto.

Robert Frankford – A New Democratic Party Member of Provincial Parliament from 1990-1995, Bob served the residents of Scarborough East. During his time at Queen's Park, Bob used his medical background to advocate for sickle-cell disease and other health-related issues.

Bob was no stranger to the activities of the City of Toronto. He worked for three years as the Attending Physician at Seaton House continuing his commitment to serving the homeless and marginalized, and served on both the Toronto Pedestrian Committee and Food Policy Council.

Barbara Turnbull – A long-term resident of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, Barbara helped change the conversation about disability and accommodation from her position as a journalist at the Toronto Star.

Through her writing, she demonstrated that even with quadriplegia, she could live independently, research deeply and advocate fiercely. As an activist, Barbara worked to promote organ and tissue donation, the acceptance of medical marijuana, and the expansion of accessible spaces throughout Ontario.

Exciting Progress in Regent Park

Regent Park Legacy Fund – Building Community Together

During the 1980's, Regent Park tenants contributed two dollars per month over a three year period to fund a community centre for their youth. They raised \$10,000 and received contributions from different levels of governments that have today grown the fund to over \$600,000. Other funds were used for a community centre, so the money raised by tenants has been set aside in the Regent Park Legacy Fund by the City of Toronto, for use by residents of Regent Park to enhance the well-being of the community.

The Regent Park Community Reference Group (CRG) along with local residents and fund contributors, have been developing a process for allocating the Regent Park Legacy Fund to support the community's needs. The CRG is supported by my office, City Social Development, Finance and Administration staff and Toronto Community Housing. In 2013, 1200 Regent Park residents shared their opinions on how to use the funds. The result was a decision that every year, interest from the funds (about \$5,000) would be used to support community capacity building, community development, and special events organized by Regent Park residents.

The CRG is looking for new volunteer members, and for people to sit on the Application Review Panel. Membership is open to everyone who lives in Regent Park - connect with them at regentparklegacy@gmail.com. This spring, the CRG will work to support residents who want to make proposals.

We hope to announce the first grants at Sunday in the Park in July 2016.



Opening of Regent Park

Coming soon! Regent Park Neighbourhood Association

During 2016, watch for information about a new inclusive neighbourhood association in Regent Park.

The proposed mandate of the new association involves (1) advocacy – to provide a strong voice for residents on issues that will benefit our entire community (2) community-building – to help bring this culturally diverse and mixed-income neighbourhood together and (3) communication – to develop a hub for information in this bustling community.

Elections for representatives from all Regent Park buildings, new and old, are expected to take place throughout 2016. The building representatives will elect the association board, which will be 50% TCHC residents and 50% market residents. To find out more or to volunteer, email rpna.info@gmail.com.

New Public Amenities in Regent Park

Everyone is invited to come celebrate the opening of the new Regent Park Community Centre on **Saturday, February 27th**. This facility is located at the corner of Sackville Street and Shuter Street, adjacent to Nelson Mandela Park Public School. In addition to recreation spaces, a City of Toronto child care centre and employment services centre will be located in the building.

Many of us are also excited to see the Athletic Grounds taking shape in the south-east quadrant of Regent Park at Shuter Street and River Street. I expect that people of all ages will be able to run around on that space in the spring.



Pam at the new Regent Park Community Centre

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD OUR CITY

Protecting our Waterfront

No Expansion of the Island Airport

I was pleased that following the federal election, the Government of Canada announced a commitment to not re-open the tri-partite agreement to allow for the expansion of the Toronto Island Airport.

In December, we also heard from the Toronto Port Authority. They have acknowledged that the tri-partite agreement will not be re-opened, and they will consequently be ending all work related to the proposed expansion of the Island Airport.

This represents the final move to bring an end to this debate. We can now be confident that jets will not fly out of an expanded Island Airport.

With this formal confirmation, our City can now return to the work of ensuring existing airport operations better fit in with the local neighbourhood and the city.

The Island Airport is already the 9th largest airport in Canada with nearly 2 million annual passengers. Meanwhile, it is located within a local neighbourhood, abutting one of our most iconic parks, Toronto Islands Park, and is adjacent to a commuting corridor into downtown which is already heavily congested.

Our community has been clear in its position that the proposal to expand the Island Airport has been a dangerous one since the start. Island Airport expansion would have set back our ongoing work to revitalize Toronto's waterfront and resulted in significant environmental, health, and economic harms.

More work needs to be done to ensure that existing airport operations work better in the context of the local neighbourhood. To that end, the City is working with the local community and key stakeholders to complete a new Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Plan to guide necessary future infrastructure changes.

At City Hall, we are excited to re-focus all our energy on working together to continue to revitalize our waterfront, and to build the neighbourhood and City we want.

St. Lawrence North Market Update

The archeological assessment of the North St. Lawrence Market site has resulted in a discovery of rich historical value.

The North Market property has been an economic focal point and gathering place for over two hundred years. In 1803, the Lt. Governor first proclaimed the site as a public market. It was also used as the seat of local government. Four permanent buildings were constructed on these lands in 1831, 1851, 1904 and 1968.

Three trenches were excavated on the site in August and recovered evidence of all phases of occupation by the Market. The remains of foundation piers, sewers, concrete foundations, robber trenches, and other elements provide an important resource to understand the exact dimensions and construction of the old market buildings. As well, the intact structures suggest that other elements such as cellars remain preserved and will result in discovery of artifacts.

Because of this significant find, and the historical value of the property for Toronto, a further phase of archeological assessment has been recommended. The final phase of work will excavate the whole site, carefully catalog the resources, and recommend how they should be recorded and preserved.

The unearthing of a rich archeological record on this site will increase our understanding of its history and complement the buildout of a new North Market facility. A heritage interpretation program is being developed for the site that will honour this story.

The North Market revitalization project advanced this year with the opening of the Temporary Market in June 2015. The next phase of archeological work will begin in early 2016, and will include the demolition of the existing building. The archeological excavation will serve as the first step in construction of the new North Market building which includes a new underground parking garage.



Gardiner Expressway

I was deeply disappointed when in June City Council did not choose the Remove (Grand Boulevard) option for the Gardiner East Environmental Assessment (EA).

The preferred option was to be decided based on five criteria laid out in the Terms of Reference for the EA: Revitalize the Waterfront, Reconnect the City with the Lake, Balance Modes of Travel, Create Value, and Achieve Sustainability. After years of study and consultation with stakeholders the Remove option was recommended to create a grand boulevard to move people and cars safely and open up our waterfront.

A Hybrid proposal was then introduced that effectively kept the Gardiner structure intact while opening some development lands at the Unilever site. This option achieved none of the EA objectives and diminished the value of public waterfront lands in the Keating Channel and Villiers Island precincts with the introduction of new highway ramp infrastructure at Cherry Street, at an enormous additional cost. I proposed that the savings from the Remove option could have been used to advance congestion management technologies to improve traffic flow city wide. Despite the support of many Councillors from across the city, this proposal failed and the Hybrid option narrowly carried.

Although the best city building choice was not made, there are steps that can be taken to improve this decision. When Council approved the Hybrid option, it directed City staff to evaluate alternative design concepts to mitigate its negative impacts and report back with additional recommendations.

These conditions must align with the EA criteria through specific measures. They must address a more northerly alignment of the elevated expressway to free up waterfront land, a robust public realm strategy for the portion of the expressway that will not be modified from Jarvis to Cherry, improved safety of gateway intersections to the waterfront, and opportunities to advance flood protection on the Don River through expanded infrastructure.

I will urge City Council to make changes that bring the final design more in line with the original intent of the EA. A public meeting is being held in the New Year and I encourage you to attend and support a better design.



Pam with archeologist Dr. Peter Popkin announcing the important discovery at the North Market site.

Date: **Tuesday, January 19**
Time: **6:30 PM**
Location: **Toronto Reference Library**
(789 Yonge Street)

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