

abcra

ABC RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT

LIVEABILITY



2025



The well-used field at Jesse Ketchum School. ABCRA is funding an upgrade to the track surrounding the field, thanks to a generous donation from KingSett. Completion in fall of 2026.

WHAT IS THE ABCRA

The ABC Residents Association (**ABCRA**), established in 1957, is a volunteer-run organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in our neighbourhood - bounded by Yonge Street, Avenue Road, Bloor Street, and the CPR tracks - we are a community rich in heritage and character.

We represent all residents, including those in condos and apartments, by actively engaging in local and city-wide issues. This includes ongoing collaboration with Councillor Dianne Saxe, City Planning, Heritage Preservation, Transportation Services, Parks and Forestry, and neighbouring associations such as the Greater Yorkville Residents Association (GYRA) and the Annex Residents Association.

With so much growth and change in Toronto, ABCRA works tirelessly to monitor development proposals, city policies, and council activities that may impact our community. We advocate through reports, deputations, meetings, and surveys, and keep residents informed on issues affecting our shared liveability.

Your voice matters - please consider volunteering with ABCRA to help shape the future of our neighbourhood!



Learn more by visiting abcra.ca



'Love Negotiation' with Rabbitwoman and Dogman on Scollard Street, by artists Gillie and Marc.

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TOWN HALL & AGM INVITATION



The Heliconian Club, established in 1926, celebrates 100 years of being a cultural fixture on Hazelton Avenue.

FROM THE ABCRA CO-CHAIRS

As we reflect on this year's newsletter content, it's clear how the ABC Residents Association helps to shape our community. These stories highlight our mission to protect character, enhance livability, and ensure that development also serves the public good. It is a constant challenge as the forces of intensification have remade some of our neighbourhoods in ways unimaginable 25 years ago. One can only look to Yorkville Village east of Bay Street as an example, and recent high rise development proposals for Yonge Street. This is one legacy of a development industry that largely geared itself to fulfilling investor demand, not housing demand, a concern we have been voicing for 15 years. Perhaps one positive result of the downturn in the condo market is that we are seeing development proposals being refashioned from units of 500 square feet in size that have engulfed our city, to 1200, 1500, 1800 and greater square feet. Actual residences. It's worth remembering that our ABC neighbourhoods are the original "15 Minute City" the next time someone justifies destroying something by citing that fashionable narrative.

Our efforts span improving development proposals, advocating for safer streets, and funding cultural and academic projects that together demonstrate ABCRA's dedication to making a meaningful impact in our community.

“Our neighbourhood is strongest when thoughtful city planning and community participation move hand in hand.”

Progress on a safer Avenue Road reflects years of collaboration with partners, developers, City staff, and our councillors. The result: safer crossings, better sidewalks, and a more welcoming Avenue Road. The new pedestrian activated crosswalk on Avenue Road will lead to a re-imagined Ramsden Park "Gateway"; a singular achievement that involved a collaboration between the Annex Residents Association, GYRA, ABCRA, and developers Tribute Communities, Greybrook and Devron and City staff - and the critical support of Councillor Saxe.

We also remain focused on the significant construction occurring on Yonge Street and the measures to ensure safety and minimizing local impacts.

Continued FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Projects such as the Ramsden Community Centre, together with our efforts to create much-needed public space remind us that good planning builds places where people thrive. Our influence is visible in more shared spaces that continue to define community life across the ABC area. In the coming few years you will see and experience the manifestation of these efforts including the extension of Village of Yorkville Park from Bellair to Bay Street; the reimagined York Square as part of the 138 Yorkville development; further enhancements to Ramsden Park; a soon to be announced public realm initiative commemorating our community's deep Indigenous history, and significant sidewalk improvements tied to multiple development sites.

“
| **Good planning is not about saying ‘NO’**
| **... it's about shaping ‘YES’.** —”

The Changing Skyline article underscores what lies ahead. Tall buildings bring opportunity and challenge; ABCRA's work attempts to ensure they respect context, heritage, and livability. In this regard we acknowledge recent positive outcomes with the 126-130 Avenue Road development (the Avenue Road flower shops), 1 Roxborough West, York Square (Yorkville and Avenue Road), and others. However, success comes amid headwinds. Provincial changes, tight budgets, and City processes increasingly detached from local consultation strain our influence. Long-standing goals like underground hydro burial and the Secondary Plan remain delayed. These hurdles reaffirm why ABCRA's fact-based advocacy matters. Our recent Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) success in defeating a 39-story proposal for the Dynasty restaurant site at 69 Yorkville Avenue is a remarkable achievement. However it was disconcerting to see City Planning staff reverse itself and support this absurd proposal. Councillor Saxe showed her support for the community by advocating its refusal at City Council, who in turn directed City Legal to hire, at considerable taxpayer expense, third-party planners to join with ABCRA in successfully defeating this application. Balanced and evidence-based advocacy remains our compass.”

“
| **Even in a changing city, balanced and**
| **evidence-based advocacy remains our**
| **compass.** —”

The strength of ABCRA lies in our members; your letters, meeting attendance, and ongoing support amplify our voice. Whether a singular issue or a general interest, **we welcome your participation.**

**Become a street representative or board member and please join us
November 27 at our Town Hall and AGM.**

John & Ian

FROM YONGE



SHAPING OUR STREETS IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

Our neighbourhood is defined by its streets. Bloor, Yonge, Avenue, Bay, and Davenport are not only bustling arteries but also collectively the largest share of our public space. Done well, they can be vibrant, safe, and welcoming places for residents, businesses and visitors alike. ABCRA works to ensure that new developments and planning decisions consider the role of our main streets to enhance the liveability of our community, from traffic flow to retail vitality to pedestrian safety.

We advocate for:

- * Active, safe building frontages that animate the streetscape.
- * Better-designed sidewalks for safety and for pleasant walkability that includes room for trees.
- * Enhanced intersections that help to ensure safe crossing and also contribute to the public realm network with space for improved landscaping, seating and art installations.
- * Smart servicing, parking and loading to reduce conflicts with pedestrians
- * Directing through-traffic away from local streets

The iconic Masonic Temple at Yonge and Davenport (above)

Yonge Street - Coordinating Growth, Protecting Liveability

Yonge Street is poised for major change over the next five years. Anticipating overlapping construction projects, ABCRA secured Councillor Saxe's support in 2022 to establish a 'Construction Hub' between the CPR tracks and Bloor.

Today, the Downtown Construction Hub is in place, with 1 Roxborough being the first coordinated site. Monthly meetings bring together ABCRA, Yonge for All, the local Business Improvement Association, City

Transportation staff and construction managers to help address safety, traffic and community concerns. Residents are encouraged to share related issues with us. They will be raised in discussion at Hub meetings.



1 Roxborough construction(right)



Wider sidewalks make room for runners on Avenue Road. A street for people not just traffic.

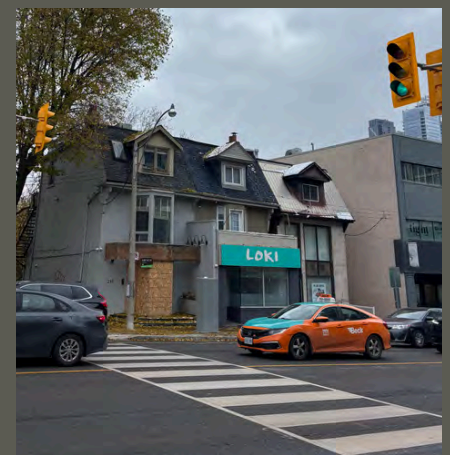
Continued SHAPING OUR STREETS, IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

A Safer Avenue Road Gateway to Ramsden Park

As a founding member of the Avenue Road Safety Coalition, ABCRA together with 33 city wide organizations and 100s of supporters has long championed improvements along this busy corridor between Bloor and St Clair where sidewalks are narrow and safe crossings scarce. Significant progress has been made: improved safety by design with 6 lanes reduced to four, bike lanes south of Davenport, pedestrian upgrades north toward Dupont, and a new mid-block crosswalk north of Pears Avenue is now installed.

ABCRA also helped secure the demolition and parkland dedication of three properties at 207, 209 and 211 Avenue Road at that crossing point to create a new, more visible gateway to Ramsden Park. Together, these changes provide safer passage - especially for seniors and children - and strengthen the connection to one of our community's most treasured green spaces.

Our thanks to Councillor Saxe for her ongoing commitment to a more safe and people friendly Avenue Road. We encourage Councillor Matlow to show similar leadership by addressing the dangerous 6-lane expressway stretch north of the tracks in his Ward 12.



New pedestrian crossing on Avenue Road where enhanced entrance to Ramsden Park will be created.

RAMSDEN COMMUNITY CENTRE

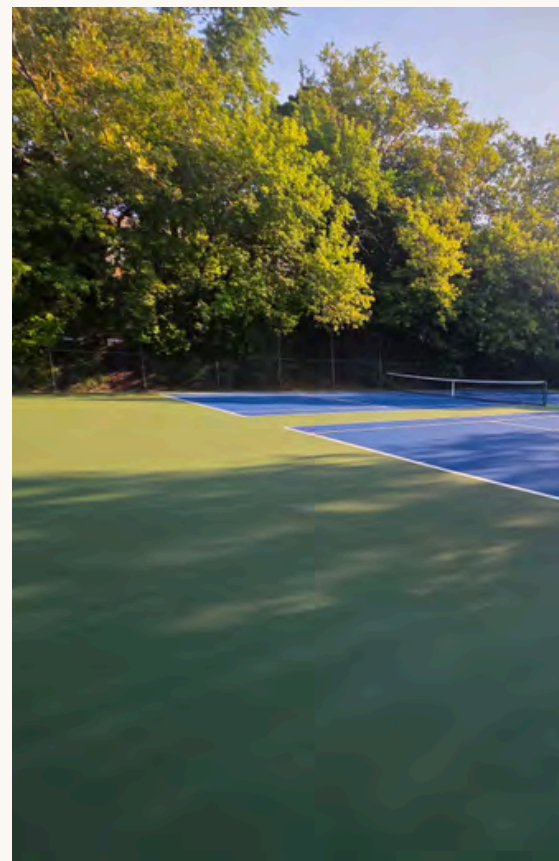
At the Yonge Street southern-edge of Ramsden Park, a new chapter in civic architecture is taking shape. The City has launched an international design competition for the 75,000 square foot Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre. A net-zero, fully accessible facility envisioned as both neighbourhood anchor and urban retreat. The design brief calls for openness and light: a six-lane pool and adjoining leisure pool, a gymnasium with running track, and flexible studios that extend visually into the park's tree canopy.

Councillor Saxe notes it will be the first full community centre in Ward 11. The project's foundation is collaboration. Through multi-phase engagement, residents and local organizations, including ABCRA, are helping define how the centre looks, feels, and functions within its park setting. The Downtown Plan identified this area as significantly deficient in community facilities, and with continued intensification, the need for accessible civic space will only grow. Locating the centre on a major street with direct transit access is a unique planning opportunity, offering connectivity that supports year-round programming and broad public use.

The project also reflects the City's Parks & Recreation Facilities Plan, which recognizes the need for more recreation space in fast-growing neighbourhoods. This location lets us thoughtfully repurpose long-standing municipal infrastructure while renewing public facilities and making better use of City land. A structured engagement process through a Community Advisory Committee, public meetings, and online activities is helping shape the vision, guiding principles, and key moves that will define the design.

When the doors open in 2032, this new community landmark will be more than a building; it will embody the values that shaped it: inclusivity, renewal, and the shared belief that great cities grow strongest under the shade of their own canopy.

LIVEABILITY



RAMSDEN TENNIS



Location of the new community centre

IN ABC



COURTS REFRESH

TREES - THE LUNGS OF ABC

Toronto's main streets lack trees — and our city is poorer for it. The clean air, cooler temperatures, and calm beauty that trees bring are missing from too many of our busiest corridors. Many neighbourhood trees are now approaching a century in age, and the canopy that once defined our side streets is in decline. **ABCRA is determined to change that.** Trees along with the area's heritage assets are central to our neighbourhood character and are vital infrastructure.

In midtown, where sidewalks narrow and towers rise ever closer, trees must be prioritized in all development reviews. The City should require developers to include wider planting zones, proper soil systems, and long-term care maintenance plans as a condition of approval. Residents, too, can help by valuing, reporting, and protecting City trees on both public and private property.

As density increases, trees struggle to survive. New developments compete for sunlight, soil, and space. Utility corridors and compacted ground make it nearly impossible for young trees to mature. Too often, they are planted quickly, then left without the support they need to thrive.

Toronto's tree canopy now covers 27% of the city, far short of the 40% target by 2050. The new Private Tree By-law strengthens protection on private land, but it does not apply to street trees or require developers to add them along main streets. The City must extend protection to public right-of-way trees, enforce planting standards, and fund soil infrastructure that ensures long-term growth.

ABC Residents Association continues to champion this vision: examples include a 50 foot tree planned for York Square, a 35 foot tree planned for the Tribute Development at Avenue Road and Davenport and larger caliper trees where sidewalk space allows it.



An autumn tree at the CN Tower



Ongoing construction at One Bloor West

A CHANGING SKYLINE ACROSS ABC

We've all noticed the unprecedented development all around us – some complete, several underway, and many more in the pre-construction or application stage. ABCRA's involvement in all these proposals has been a substantial part of our efforts for well over a decade. Amidst the changing City and Provincial rules and processes for development and density, we work with our Councillor, the developers, City planners, our residents and others to advocate for structures that integrate well in our community, particularly regarding height, transitions to adjacent residential streets and public realm elements such as sidewalk width, park space and trees/plantings.

Many of these projects take upward to 10 years from initial applications to completion, with no control on when or how many can happen at the same time. Given current economic and real estate market conditions, several are on hold or moving slowly, while some approved projects are subsequently reopened, often asking for additional storeys.

Here is where some of these developments stand, all under the active attention of ABCRA

Along **Bloor Street West**, there are 3 mega-towers proposed of 79 to 90 storeys – two on the south side between Yonge and St Thomas streets and one on the north side, site of the current Harry Rosen shop.

Yonge Street is targeted for densification. Following extensive input from ABCRA and City planners, we await an updated proposal for the large Canadian Tire site at the important Yonge/Church/Davenport crossroads that we expect to include two tall condo towers sitting above a podium and much-enlarged store for Canadian Tire and its related brands.

A 32-storey rental apartment building that includes affordable housing has been approved for the City property at 931 Yonge Street at Aylmer – an RFP has been issued for developers to construct and manage the building under a 99-year lease arrangement. The former Ridpath's furniture shop at 906 Yonge will have a 40-ish storey tower on Yonge and a shorter tower in the rear on McMurrich St. – one stipulation is that some resident Chimney Swift birds must be re-homed prior to construction.

Further north, we await news about the approved 10-storey development at the former **Staples** (1140 Yonge at Marlborough) that had requested 3 additional storeys. Across the street at the **Sleep Country** (1091 Yonge) and Running Room site, the proposal has stretched from 16 to 35-storeys and is in current discussion with City planners and ABCRA regarding this height and the extent of building setbacks and sidewalk / public realm space – stay tuned.



Heritage windows to be restored at 1140 Yonge Street (Staples site)

Continued A CHANGING SKYLINE ACROSS ABC

In **Yorkville**, we strongly opposed the proposal for a 39-storey condo development at 69 Yorkville Avenue (home to the Dynasty restaurant) as such a height is egregiously out of proportion with the prevailing low-rise 'village' character of the historic Village of Yorkville. ABCRA has been a party at proceedings over several stages about this development and as captioned below we are thrilled that the project has been rejected. One street north, where a devastating fire in March levelled six historic rowhouses on Scollard Street, we are advocating that future rebuilding continue the heritage nature of the destroyed properties.

Meanwhile we applied our persistence for better and safer pedestrian space on **Avenue Road** to the 11-floor condo development proposed for the south half of the flower shops at 126-130 Avenue Road. Improvements include a greater building setback to accommodate a wider sidewalk, more landscaping on both Avenue Road and Bernard Street, and a better arrangement to keep the building's garbage collection off City streets and sidewalks.

At **Belmont Place**, an 11-storey building has been approved to add much needed long-term care and assisted living units. ABCRA and many nearby residents participated in several consultation sessions about the project given its large scale opposite the homes on Belmont Street, and the implications for shadowing, traffic and removal of green space.

ABCRA has a longtime collaborative relationship with Belmont Place and is represented along with other neighbourhood designates on the construction committee to provide input as the work advances.

Come to the ABCRA town hall on November 27, 2025 if you have any questions about these or other developments, or send us an email.

Breaking News

The development proposal for 69 Yorkville Avenue was denied on November 10 by the Ontario Land Tribunal following the skilled opposition of ABCRA's lawyers and planners. (Image from developer proposal)





ABC helped fund the roof replacement at the Heliconian

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY: TURNING DEVELOPMENT INTO LOCAL BENEFIT

Through the ABCRA Community Fund, contributions negotiated with developers during the planning process for new building projects are transformed into lasting, meaningful improvements across the ABC neighbourhood. These funds — managed responsibly, transparently, and in accordance with ABCRA's by-laws — attempt to mitigate the impact of new development by enhancing the community's livability, accessibility, and cultural vitality.

Just a few examples of our collaborations:

As described on page 5, with Tribute Communities, Devron Developments and Greybrook, properties on Avenue Road have been acquired to create an extension and gateway to Ramsden Park. This will improve accessibility and, with the pedestrian activated crosswalk on Avenue Road, safety.

With KingSett Capital, a composite running track will be installed in 2026 at Jesse Ketchum School as part of the overall playing field refurbishment which includes outdoor workout stations. With our Councillor, ABCRA advocated for additional 'Section 37' funds for this project. The playing field is an important asset not only for the students, but is actively used by the community at large.

With Greybrook, the Gupta Group, North Drive, and Tricon Residential, plus the advocacy of Councillor Saxe to secure Section 37 funds, a total donation exceeding \$2.1 million for the building of the Tapestry + Nightwood Theatre at 877 Yonge Street.

With First Capital REIT, Greybrook, and Section 37 monies, the building of accessibility ramps, washrooms and a new roof for the Heliconian Club - preserving one of Yorkville's most historic cultural spaces while improving access for all. These improvements also expand opportunities for arts and culture in our neighbourhood, ensuring that this creative hub continues to welcome artists and audiences alike for another 100 years.



ABCRA Board members in Nancy & Ed Jackman Performance Centre



Celebrating ABCRA's 65th Anniversary in Ramsden Park



Our walkable neighbourhood

Continued INVESTING IN COMMUNITY: TURNING DEVELOPMENT INTO LOCAL BENEFIT

The ABC / GYRA Yorkville Cultural Fund supports the Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival, the Vesuvius Ensemble concert series at the Heliconian, and the upcoming Yorkville Festival of Lights.

Beyond culture, ABCRA's commitment extends to social well-being and education. We secured a \$500,000 donation from Cityzen, Greybrook, and the developers of 80/82 Bloor for the Church of the Redeemer's Common Table Outreach Program which provides essential services to Toronto residents in need. The Church of the Messiah Food Bank also benefits from the Community Fund.

With RioCan, Zinc Developments, Prowinko, Reserve Properties, and Parallax Developments we have created the "Building Black Futures Scholarship" within the Toronto District School Board Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement. The scholarship will provide 2 graduating students per year a \$10,000 annual bursary to attend an accredited architecture program in Canada.

Lastly, during the April – November period you may see our "guerilla" gardeners out and about attending to various parks, parkettes, tree beds and public spaces. Our philosophy is that by investing in community, and by working with our development partners, ABCRA turns growth into lasting benefit for all.

“
Partnership is an exercise in trust and shared vision, which we definitely have, but also it is practical. We do more together than we can do on our own. Partnership is a lot of math, and a little bit of magic.
”

~ ANDREA ADAMS

Executive Director of St Clare's Housing at the opening of the Nancy & Ed Jackman Performance Centre



ABCRA Community Fund supported the Common Table Community Outreach Program at the Church of the Redeemer



Advocating for beautiful public space in Yorkville

BEYOND BUILDINGS: SHAPING THE SPACES THAT CONNECT US

The shared public areas in our neighborhood - our public realm - enrich our daily lives. Parks and squares within new developments, landscaped areas, benches, public art, and walkways all help knit our community together and foster belonging.

Working collaboratively with City planning staff and developers, we review development applications and planning policies to identify opportunities to enhance and expand these shared spaces. Our goal is not only to support well-designed buildings but also to shape the green, welcoming streetscapes that respect our neighbourhood character. Development should always consider the quality of the spaces between buildings as much as the buildings themselves. Our efforts are emerging with each new development and our focus also extends to strong connections between our urban areas and the surrounding ravines that define our landscape.

Ramsden Park serves as a key “portal park” within Toronto’s Core Circle green network. Together with City planning staff and developers, we are working to improve walking and cycling links between Ramsden nearby streets - especially as plans move forward for the new community centre on the park’s southeast side. Strengthening these connections will better integrate our community’s natural and social spaces with the Rosedale Valley and Don Valley ravines.

Now emerging at the southeast corner of Bay and Scollard is an example of innovative thinking and advocacy.

Overcoming City resistance, ABC negotiated the relocation of the 4 heritage rowhouses approximately 30 metres to the east, thus creating room for a treed, public square on the corner.

Looking ahead, the planned redevelopment of the large Canadian Tire site at Yonge and Church streets offers an exciting opportunity to demonstrate this approach - one that connects people, nature, and neighbourhoods - ensuring our community remains vibrant, welcoming, and well connected.

“**Development should do more than fill land it should bring people together and connect city life with nature.**”



Design concept for York Square 33 Avenue Road (Image courtesy of First Capital)

MARLBOROUGH CALL TO ACTION

Marlborough Place Trail and Parkette that runs adjacent to the CPR tracks is suffering from decades of City neglect. It is unsafe and in urgent need of care.

Plants have died, grass is gone, and benches sit among wood chips and gravel that has replaced the grass. Trees are overgrown with invasive vines and dead branches, creating hazards, while the wooden stairs are unsafe after decades without repair.

ABCRA has allocated approximately \$25,000 for park upkeep and a design proposal in the last two years.

However, the park needs much more and we are advocating for the City to commit to a comprehensive revitalization plan and to prioritize a State of Good Repair project.

This small-scale investment would restore safety, beauty, and community use to a unique public space. We continue to press the City and our Councillor to take action. Contact ABCRA to find out how you can get involved.



Marlborough Parkette unsafe trees needing maintenance.



STAY IN TOUCH

Join our email list to stay up to date with developments, neighbourhood news & community events.

ABCRA is always welcoming new volunteers and board members. If you would like to contribute, send us an email.

You're Invited to the

abcra

ABC RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

TOWN HALL & AGM



THURSDAY

27 NOVEMBER, 2025

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 PM

HELICONIAN - 35 HAZELTON AVE

LIVE MUSIC & REFRESHMENTS

Join us for a community meeting where your voices matter. Raise a glass with your neighbours & share your ideas for the coming year.

Newsletter photo credits Roman Price & ABCRA archive.