

February 2024 Newsletter

Interview with Councillor Shelley Carroll, Toronto Budget Committee Chair

By Maryam Siddiqi

In the midst of a series of public budget consultations, Councillor Shelley Carroll (Ward 17), who is Chair of the Budget Committee, spent some time discussing, for our readers, budget priorities, why she supports a municipal sales tax and what's behind some of the tax increases we're hearing about in the news.

Fundamentally, what is the issue with the city's finances? Is it that we don't have enough revenue streams or that the population is growing faster than we can keep up with or is it something else entirely?

It's really a combination of the fact that the CVA (Current Value Assessment) system and property tax system does not really properly account for growth. What we began to see, even before the pandemic, is

that we started to experience rapid growth, and that's very much a generational and demographic thing as much as it is immigration. We function without the revenue tools of a large megacore city and have done since amalgamation. On the spending side, we have been underspending to try to accommodate for that. When we decide that "here's an area where we do need to spend" and we invest, that sticks out like a sore thumb because we're always underspending.

I think anyone who wants to improve the city and pays attention would agree that we need more revenue tools. What are the advantages of a municipal sales tax?

It has its overall advantages, but now in particular it has a timing advantage. If we do this property tax increase this year, where we're actually asking a lot of people with this 10.5 percent combined tax increase, then we really can honestly say that we are in line with the other GTA municipalities. You can't say our rate is too low anymore.

But there are the needs that property taxes weren't designed to accommodate that a mega city has and the advantage of a municipal sales tax is it gives the City direct access to the economy. The people who have endless spending power, I will get a lot of revenue from what they buy. The people whose income or pension is down they're probably not spending much, so I won't get a lot of revenue from them from sales tax.

Something like this would need to be okayed by the province, right?

The province would have to give permission, but the federal government would have to be willing to apply it onto their HST. We need them both to

be on board with this, which is why it was so exciting for us that the federal government did send a public servant to sit at the working table that resulted in the New Deal. And at that table, the Premier's people have said, We need to help you right now, so here's something that will help you over the next three years. We would like to look at these revenue tools that you think would help the city and maybe get you off our backs, he said jokingly. (Laughs) It's going to take a while to figure out and we all have to be together on it. This immediate New Deal will make sure that for the next three years, you're good on the operating side. For the next 10 years, we're making a great impact on your capital by uploading the highways, and now we have time to figure out what we need to do to make you a mature city with a mature funding model.

I'm surprised this is coming from Doug Ford's government.

It was not on my bingo card. I spent four years with him in this building and never in a million years would I think this would be the answer. But you know what, I've had direct conversations with him, and the penny dropped for him at some point. He does get that this is the future.

There's a lot of money being dedicated to community services, which is great. But our infrastructure is crumbling. So why is the State of Good Repair backlog receiving lower priority than something like community services?

Being underfunded chronically for a number of years, part of what happens is you do have to balance the operating budget by law. You can run debt in in your capital budget, but there's a limit to how much debt one can take on as well. What has happened over time is we get to the end of a budget season and we realize we can't really balance this thing.

We're gonna have to start to cannibalize the capital program because we can't afford to take a chunk of the property tax and put it over into the capital program to do repair work. Our operating budget has been cannibalizing our capital budget to stay afloat. Now, we still have to be disciplined, but now that the Gardiner is off our books, we take those monies and put them into a state of good repair projects.

Lastly, if the Feds refuse to support our refugee initiatives, can we expect that 6 percent federal impacts levy?

It will be an absolute tragedy if they do. Here's why I said that I would have to ask staff to prepare a 6 percent levy. I have a different job than Mayor Chow. I'm the budget chief. My role is to oversee the accounting, pure accounting. So for everything I spend, I need a funding source. I currently have no funding source for the servicing 6,000 asylum seekers and refugee claimants in our shelter system. So it will be my role, if we have not heard from the federal government, to prepare a motion that asks the City staff to prepare a report to the mayor that the best funding source for asylum seekers is a 6 percent property tax increase.

Now, if the Mayor decided she didn't want to do that, then we're right back where we started before the provincial New Deal. She would have to start pulling all sorts of one-time sources of economy out of the capital program to do that. Now we're right back to cannibalizing the capital program to fund something, and the something we're funding is fundamentally not our responsibility.

Area Developments: Updates

Avenue and Lawrence (Northeast)

In December 2023 following its acquisition of the Royal Lighting store site, First Capital (the Developer) submitted a new development proposal. It will go before the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

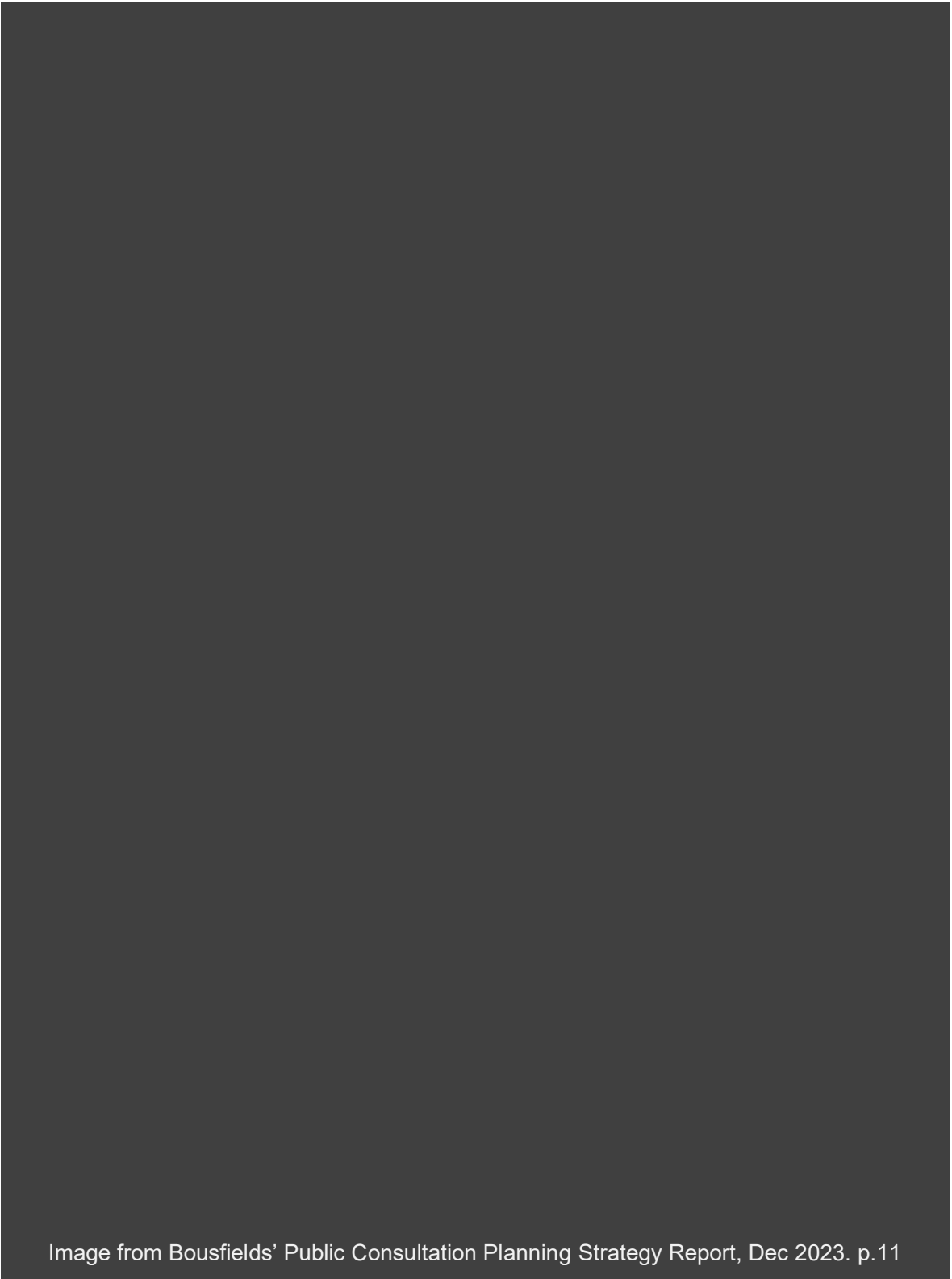


Image from Bousfields' Public Consultation Planning Strategy Report, Dec 2023. p.11

Proposed by the Developer:

- A 1088m² public park at Avenue Road and Douglas.
- An extension of Rosewell Ave. along the east edge of the site, north to Douglas Ave.
- Two buildings:
 - Building A: a 12-storey/40m building along Avenue Road north of Lawrence.
 - Building B: a 14-storey/47m tall building at the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Lawrence. At street level on Lawrence Ave, the proposal shows the building at 8-stories/29m in height, extending 80m from Avenue Road to the proposed new road opposite Rosewell Ave.
- A 703-space underground parking garage.
- A private driveway with direct access to Avenue Road, with no traffic signals, between the two buildings. This would have vehicles cutting across the busy sidewalk on Avenue Road.

2350-2352 Yonge Street (at Orchardview Blvd.)

In July 2022, a proposal was submitted to the City for a 50-storey residential building at the site of 2350-2352 Yonge Street – replacing two 3-storey retail buildings - 12.5 metres in width and 41.2 metres deep. In July 2023, the applicant appealed the application to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT)

View of applicant's proposal in looking southwest

from *Staff Report for Action – Appeal Report – 2350-2352 Yonge Street*, pg. 23

The August 2023 City Planning Report to the North York Community Council reported that a community consultation meeting was held in February 2023, with City staff and Councillor Colle present. The following issues were raised:

- lack of retail on the ground floor along Yonge Street;
- size of development site is too small;
- size of proposed units too small; privacy and overlook concerns to nearby buildings;
- lack of any residential parking or on-site space for deliveries and drop-offs/pick-ups will cause more traffic issues in an already heavily trafficked area;
- lack of on-site accessibility parking space; and
- height of proposal much higher than Secondary Plan permissions

Council directed that the City Solicitor, with appropriate staff, attend the OLT in opposition to the application in its current form, and continue discussion with the applicant to try to resolve outstanding issues.

500 Duplex Avenue

LPRO is a member of the incorporated 500 Duplex Coalition, along with Eglinton Park Residents Association, Stanley Knowles Cooperative and the 500 Duplex Tenants' Association. The Duplex Coalition had Party status in the OLT appeal and participated in the Mediation sessions.

2908 Yonge Street (former Petro-Canada station)

The developer has not submitted a site plan application to date and will not commence construction in the near term.

41 Chatsworth Drive

The developer has appealed their site plan application to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). A hearing date has not been scheduled. The site plan application will not result in any major changes to the development concept approved by OLT through the official plan amendment and rezoning process. Building permits cannot be obtained until the site plan is approved.

2500 Yonge Construction Hub Update

The developer reports that construction is on schedule with three and a half floors (below grade) completed so far. This brings the height close to street level. By June it is expected to be three to four floors above grade. Truck deliveries will increase as new supplies are required but the onsite staging area mitigates the construction vehicle congestion on Castlefield.

Photo: by LPRO volunteer, Jan. 23, 2024

Photo Courtesy 2500 Yonge St.

At the most recent Construction Hub meeting LPRO raised two issues the community would like resolved: traffic calming on Castlefield between Duplex and Yonge - eastbound cars speeding to make the light at Yonge - and a non-slip treatment for the plywood flooring on the sidewalk which is slippery during inclement weather. LPRO will follow up with the developer and the City on these requests.

So far the Hub seems to be working well, with all participants - the developer, the Councillor's staff and the City - working collaboratively to address the community's concerns.

Ward 8 Speed Reductions

Speed limits are currently being lowered, along with corresponding signage, to bring uniformity throughout the City of Toronto. Local roads - as defined in the City's road classification system - will now have a 30 km/h speed limit. Local roads are distinct from collector, major arterial and minor arterial roads. See the colour-coded maps below for classification of roads in our area. This change is part of the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan.

Excerpt from City of Toronto website:

"The Vision Zero Road Safety Plan Speed Management Strategy focuses on how higher speeds contribute to higher risk of serious injuries and fatalities, and that setting lower speed limits is a key tool for reducing operating speeds on Toronto's roadways. The Vision Zero Speed Management Strategy includes a program for reducing speed limits on local roads, as defined in the City's Road Classification System and public lanes or public alleys, to 30 km/h on a neighbourhood basis. With this approach the City is no longer required to sign every individual street within that designated area but only the entry and exit points to/from the designated area where speed limits change and any internal roads with a different speed limit."

Refer to the maps below for changes coming to your local street.

Neighbourhood Street Plans

In 2023 the City introduced Neighbourhood Street Plans (NSPs) to work with neighbourhoods to implement traffic management strategies to help make them safer and healthier. Through the NSP process, a team of City staff will collaborate with communities to identify local issues and opportunities, prioritize the greatest needs, and recommend changes to traffic operations and street designs. According to the City the program is best suited to neighbourhoods “facing several, complex, interconnected issues that need to be studied and addressed as a whole.”

NSPs consider the needs of all road users and emphasize the safety of vulnerable road users such as seniors, school children, and people walking and cycling. NSPs will result in short-term actions (one to two years) that can be taken using temporary, flexible materials like signs, paint, and bollards, and will identify longer-term changes that can be accomplished alongside future programmed road work. The outcomes of each NSP will be different based on local conditions and the needs of each neighbourhood. Generally, NSPs will recommend actions related to motor vehicle speed, volume management, and traffic safety conflicts on local streets. NSP recommendations are informed by the [City's Traffic Calming Guide](#), [Vision Zero Action Plan](#), and [Complete Streets Guidelines](#). A plan typically takes 12 to 18 months to complete from the time of selection.

Neighbourhoods will be selected based on prioritization criteria that considers equity, the potential for impactful change, alignment with planned road works, and community support.

The nomination deadline is June 30, 2024 for the 2024-25 program cycle. All nominations are expected to be submitted in collaboration with the local Councillor.

For more information on this program

see: <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/trafficmanagement/neighbourhood-streets-plans/>

City of Toronto Transportation Department planner Adam Wenneman provides helpful insights in: [NSP initiative commentary](#)

Public Vandalism in Our Neighbourhood

Automated Speed Cameras

The City's Automated Speed Camera program is part of its Vision Zero comprehensive plan to reduce traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on Toronto's streets. Not surprisingly we are seeing vandalism of the camera boxes throughout the city.

According to CP24, there were 555 incidents of speed camera vandalism reported between June 1, 2022 and May 31, 2023.

In our neighbourhood, the latest act of speed camera vandalism took place on Blythwood near the Sunny View School which serves the needs of elementary students with physical disabilities. What shameful

disregard for the safety of vulnerable children as well as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

If you see an automated camera that is vandalized, you can easily report it online [here](#) or simply by calling 311 on your phone. It is understood that a charge for vandalizing speed cameras could fall under the Criminal Code of Canada as Mischief.

Canada Post Boxes

Canada Post has replaced the damaged post box in front of their office located at Yonge St. and Alexandra Blvd. The new box has a tamper-proof design, however Canada Post advises against putting your mail in post boxes on weekends and evenings when there is no scheduled pick-up. Instead they recommend using the post boxes on the same day as and prior to the scheduled pickup.

**Bedford Glen Architect Honoured with
Memorial Plaque**

By Glenn Miller, LPRO Resident

Photos by LPRO volunteer

Hungarian-born architect Ernest Annau received many awards during his lifetime, but for his family, recent recognition as the designer of the sprawling six-storey apartment complex known as Bedford Glen may well rank as the most memorable.

Just before Thanksgiving, the Board and residents of Bedford Glen,
Annau's family, friends and former colleagues gathered to unveil a plaque

to honour both the building and its positive impact on the community. Completed in 1979, Bedford Glen comprises two condo buildings, linked with a striking wooden bridge. Many of the 156 units have more square footage than single-family dwellings in the surrounding neighbourhood. Tucked into a ravine-like setting on Avenue Road north of Lawrence, complete with its own waterfall and ponds filled with Koi, Bedford Glen was one of the city's earliest condo projects. But it almost didn't happen.

Cadillac-Fairview had wanted to construct three hi-rise towers, but after losing an appeal at the OMB, the developer was ordered to work out a solution acceptable to the community. Already established as a designer with a knack for coming up with innovative solutions, Ernest Annau's mandate from Cadillac was to help the developer regain credibility with local residents. He also had to win over skeptics about a new form of housing tenure, as the Condominium Act was then less than a decade old.

Credited by the Toronto Star with establishing a precedent for how to collaborate successfully with ratepayers – he somehow achieved consensus with six different ratepayer groups – Annau believed that "Architects have a responsibility to design buildings that respond to the physical and cultural settings." His brick facades, pitched roofs and tall chimneys proved popular with residents and also secured awards from Canadian Architect (1976 and 1980) and the Canadian Housing Design Council (1983).

Ernest Annau arrived in Canada in 1951. He initially studied painting and drawing at the Ontario College of Art, but switched to architecture while

on a scholarship to the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in the 1960s. After gaining experience with John B. Parkin Associates and Bregman and Hamann Architect, he established Annau Associates in 1972. As noted in remarks by Bedford Glen Board President Kim Smith, original resident Alisa Posesorski and daughter Adrienne Annau, Bedford Glen reflects a desire to create a "Garden of Eden" and Annau's belief in "architecture's first principle as the harmonious integration of a new structure in its context."

Other Toronto projects to win acclaim include the Winona Housing Co-op and Rosegarden Mews (Walker Avenue Townhouses). Approaching its 50th anniversary, Bedford Glen is now listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

Deadline for 2023 Vacant Home Declaration

A reminder that owners of vacant residential properties in Toronto are required to declare occupancy status every year. The deadline to declare the **occupancy status for 2023** is **February 29, 2024**. The City has a secure online portal to submit a declaration, or you can submit a paper one. For more information, including allowable exemptions, see [Vacant Home Tax – City of Toronto](#)

We Need Volunteers!

Several of our volunteers have recently retired after many years of contributing to a better community. LPRO depends on volunteers, and needs your involvement to continue our work. Some of the areas where you could share your skills or develop new ones are:

- planning and development
- community safety
- parks, trees, and the environment
- road safety and transportation
- heritage
- communications via e-blast, newsletters, LPRO website
- special events, such as our yard sale and AGM.

If you are interested in helping out, please email us at lyttonparkresidentsorg@gmail.com.

Join or Renew Your Membership for 2024

LPRO is a volunteer-run group but we do have expenses such as website maintenance, costs associated with our Yard Sale and AGM, and on occasion the retention of professional consultants. Please support our work through an annual membership - it's only \$30 per household (Jan 1 to Dec 31). To become a member or renew, please go to our website.

[Join or renew your membership](#)

If you aren't sure whether you have paid for 2024, please email us at membership.lyttonparkro@gmail.com and we will let you know.

Together we DO make a difference!

[Follow us on Twitter!](#)

P.S. We encourage you to use the **Forward to a Friend** button below to share this e-newsletter with neighbours who may not have received it.

Better yet, ask them to [subscribe on our website](#) or [email us](#) to be added to our distribution list.

Let's keep our community connected!



[Forward to a friend](#)

This email was sent to cathannker@gmail.com

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Lytton Park Residents' Organization · PO Box 1348 Stn K · 2708 Yonge St · Toronto, ON M4P 3J4 · Canada