

Rosedale Valley Ravine – Thoughts on best use

June 24, 2020

Present:

- Michiel Bagchus, Scribe – BENA (Bloor East Neighbourhood Association)
- Linda Brett – BENA
- Gail Graham – SRRA (South Rosedale Resident's Association)
- Austin Spademan – ABCRA (Avenue Bloor CPR Tracks Resident's Association)

Regrets:

- Angela Surdi – Senior Advisor, Constituency and Planning,
Office of Councillor Mike Layton

1. Gail mentioned that the SRRA approved her representing SRRA on this ravine committee!
2. Ramsden Park was discussed:
 - a. Has great facilities such as playground and tennis courts
 - b. The park improvements were one of the last efforts of Councillor Wong-Tam.
 - c. A \$60 million community center is planned, and Councillor Layton and others are working to ensure it will be built:
 - i. A community center in Ramsden Park would be a great use of public land and is close to Rosedale subway station and the Rosedale Valley Ravine (RVR).
 - ii. Location: where the parking lot currently is.
 - iii. Pool not included in current plans. But plans could be modelled on the Wellesley Community Center where initially there were no funds for a pool, but the design included it followed by fund raising.
 - iv. Gymnasium included but no squash courts.
 - v. Will draw people from all over the city, such as does the Wellesley Community Center where the children's center was fully subscribed almost right away!
 - d. The "spongy path" present where kids play has a short life span, apparently.
 - e. Connection of Ramsden park to the RVR:
 - i. Is needed.
 - ii. Wayfinding needed. Perhaps footprints on the sidewalks.
 - iii. The intersection of Yonge and Crescent was deemed to be adequate.
3. Access:
 - a. Bike Access:
 - i. Could use a bike rail to help in/out of the ravines. Wellesley Park contains a good example.
 - ii. Crescent Road RVR bike access needs to be explored and improved.
 - iii. Improved bike access will encourage cyclists to travel further to the west of the RVR.
 - b. Disability Access into RVR:
 - i. Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA) compliant?
 - ii. Requires grading, switchbacks, sidewalk requirements. For further discussion with Becky.
 - c. Cluny Drive RVR access:
 - i. Is non-descript, unmarked secondary access.
 - ii. Needs wayfinding.
 - iii. Need to develop the pathway to include cycling where there is the needed width.
 - iv. The slope is adequate for a pedestrian and bike pathway.
 - v. Consider improved lighting to the pathway, which would also lead to better security.
 - vi. **Action Item:** Gail to raise to the SRRA for consideration. See AODA compliant access? Ramsden AODA access it's huge and cumbersome.
 - vii. The neighbourhood might better appreciate the ravine once access is provided.
4. BENA Dropbox Contents:
 - a. Julia did the research. Carlos, Linda, John Burt, and someone from 235 Bloor East, collaborated and compiled the contents.
 - b. Al Rezoski produced the PowerPoint presentation April 11, 2010 based on a "walk" of the ravine from Park Road to Wellesley Park.

5. Pathway in RVR: need space for bi-directional walking and cyclist paths; the City might deem there to be insufficient space. We will need to be prepared to give pushback, accept or counter. We need to key on the accesses that give the city the biggest bang for the buck.
6. Accesses:
 - a. Old and new accesses needed for improvement.
 - b. Some accesses can be shared: bike & pedestrian, but other entrances might be one or the other depending on access characteristics.
 - c. Bike access could be via a metal rail along the stairs. For an example, see Riverdale Park access from the pedestrian bridge there.
 - d. Cyclists prefer a graded access rather than a metal rail.
 - e. Aylmer Avenue has been deemed not wide enough to have a bike path along it. This was confirmed by Al, Austin, and Linda.
 - f. Harold Town park to be reopened to the Group of Seven building.
 - g. ABCRA has only 2 entrances for pedestrians and bikes.
 - h. Cluny Drive
 - i. Prioritize accesses.
7. Next Steps:
 - a. Create a written proposal for Becky. Consider all of the following for the proposal:
 - i. Executive Summary
 1. Connectivity and overall footprint of the "Rosedale Valley Ravine".
 - ii. RVR layers to incorporate in report:
 1. Reference the reports in the BENA dropbox and in general:
 - a. City general ravine strategy
 - b. Lower Don strategy
 - c. Build upon city presentation format. See "Greening, Recreation, History" YouTube video by Mayor John Tory.
 2. Modes of transportation in the RVR.
 3. Access into and out of the RVR:
 - a. Big win would be access from RVR to the Don bikeway:
 - i. To flow connection right down to the lake, and connecting to the waterfront. Great way to get to the downtown core, avoiding traffic.
 - ii. Wouldn't take much to connect: little stretch missing along the Bayview Extension.
 - iii. **Action Item:** Linda to send a link to the Lower Don bikeway proposal.
 - iv. Noted that connection is low on their redevelopment list.
 - b. ActiveTO can be referenced as an example for areas closed off. If popular then the proper connectivity access needed.
 4. Greening of the ravine
 - a. In general
 - b. Invasive species present.
 - c. Native species present. (See item shared separately by Catherine, regarding native species and the Glen Road pedestrian bridge).
 - d. Reference a study conducted by a U. of T. grad student on the temperature of the Earth which is correlated to green space. Green absorbs and keeps us cooler. Toronto's Chief Resiliency Officer has confirms this greenhouse effect and cooling.
 5. Historical
 - a. Gee Chung of Heritage Toronto is on board with this group to work on the historical perspective of ravine.
 6. Lighting:
 - a. Problem: Hydro lighting for cars only (street lights). Toronto Hydro does not provide pedestrian lighting (e.g. along non along Bloor St. East). The Bloor Yorkville BIA pays Hydro for their pedestrian lighting.
 - b. SRRA is concerned about security (e.g. lighting, homeless, encampments). More activity can help deter the homeless.

7. Connectivity and infrastructure improvements:
 - a. Connect to
 - i. Ramsden Park, SRRA, Bloor
 - ii. Riverdale park and farm,
 - iii. Don River trails
 - iv. Downtown to alleviate heavy use of roads
 - b. Beneficial to:
 - i. BENA
 - ii. ABC
 - iii. SRRA
 - iv. North and South St. Jamestown
 - v. Cabbagetown
 - c. Glen Road Pedestrian bridge rebuild.