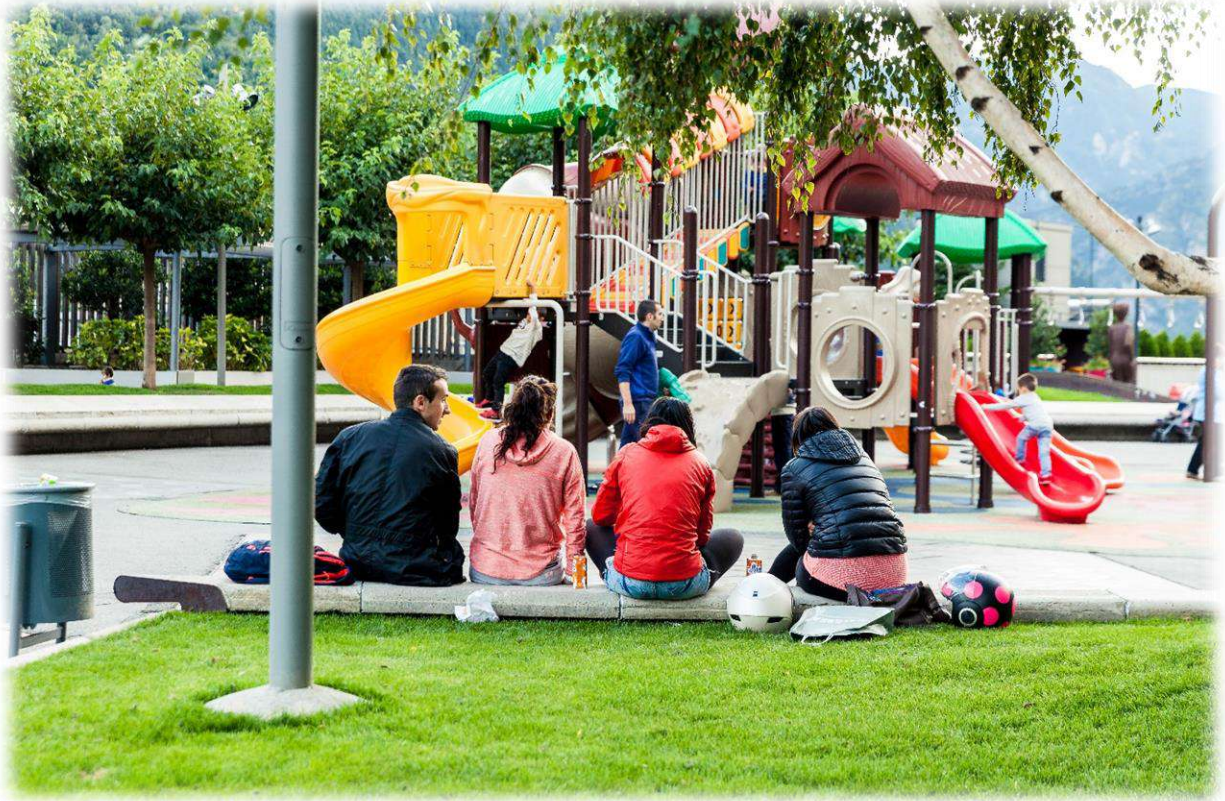


August 2017

Parkland Deficiency Report and Possible Solutions



DUKE HEIGHTS BIA

2 Champagne Drive, Unit C9, North York, ON M3J 0K2

Tel: (416) 739-1621

Fax: (416) 739-7816

Email: info@dukeheights.ca

Executive Summary:

The DUKE Heights BIA is concerned about the lack of green space accessible to the BIA's businesses and customers. Given over 2,500 businesses and rising are part of the DUKE Heights BIA, the City of Toronto needs to include addressing the BIA's parkland deficiency as a high priority.

Recommendations:

We propose that the City of Toronto seek to acquire or develop parkland in the following areas:

1. Northeast Quadrant:

- Park area in the Supertest Road and Alness Street zone needed
- Plaza at the southwest corner of Dufferin Street and Steeles Avenue West suitable for a parkette
- Hydro Corridor between Alness Street and Dufferin Street suitable for a wildflower garden and park

2. Northwest Quadrant

- Keele Reservoir along Keele Street to Steeles Avenue West should include park amenities and improved connections for people to walk and bike from Wildcat Road and Petrolia Crescent
- Park will be needed when Tangiers Road is extended to The Pond Road

3. Southwest Quadrant

- All or part of publicly owned land on the southeast corner of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West suitable for a park space

4. Southeast Quadrant

- Metro Place Condo's green space at Sheppard Ave West and Dufferin Street on De Boers Drive should be directly managed as a park by the City of Toronto
- Dufferin Transfer Station's front lawn on Vanley Crescent and Chesswood Drive should be managed as a parkette
- Southwest corner of Champagne Road and Finch Avenue West suitable for a parkette

Prepared by:

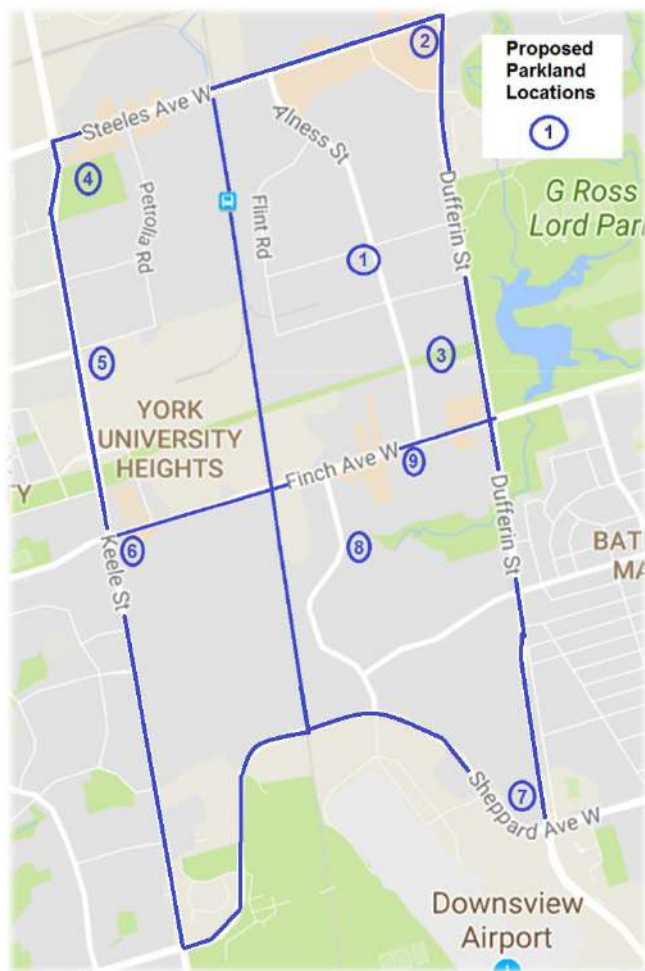
Darnel Harris
dharrisplanning@gmail.com

Prepared for:

The DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area
2 Champagne Drive, Unit C9, North York, ON M3J 0K2
Tel: (416) 739-1621
Fax: (416) 739-7816
Email: info@dukeheights.ca

Introduction

The DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA) is situated between Keele Street to the west and Dufferin Road to the east, Steeles Avenue to the north and Sheppard Avenue to the south. Stretching over nearly 2,000 acres, DUKE Heights is home to over 2,500 businesses which employ over 31,000 people. It is the second largest Businesses Improvement Area in Canada and is part of the York University Heights neighbourhood. It is designated as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area, along with the adjacent Black Creek and Glenfield-Jane Heights neighbourhoods; the City aims to create equitable outcomes and opportunities through customized investments to improve the area's quality of life.



As DUKE Heights continues to develop as a mobility hub, moving people and goods along three subway stations, the 401, 400 and 407 highways and a light rail transit line, there is a clear need to provide welcoming and well-maintained parks that are safe and sustainable green oases within a vibrant commercial setting.

Throughout the DUKE Heights BIA, it is challenging for people to enjoy the health and wellness benefits offered by green spaces. York University Heights is listed as green space deficient (2014 Neighbourhood Improvement Area Profile). Far from being accessible and enjoyable on a year-round basis, most people have no access to a park. The City of Toronto's Parkland Acquisition Priority Areas report approved, by City Council in July 2008 lists only the BIA's southwest quadrant as an area in need of parkland. However, the entire BIA (see map), does not contain a single park with amenities within its' limits.

Given the Duke Heights BIA's clear parkland deficiencies, opportunities to ameliorate the situation as development occurs are urgently needed. In collaboration with City Planning and other City divisions, steps are required to enable local parkland acquisition and stable management of future park space. This report examines nine proposed parkland locations throughout the BIA. These efforts will support the City of Toronto's Pollinator Protection Strategy, and create a biodiversity corridor linking Black Creek and the G. Ross Lord Park green spaces.

Potential Parkland Areas - Northeast Quadrant:

1. Supertest Road and Alness Street



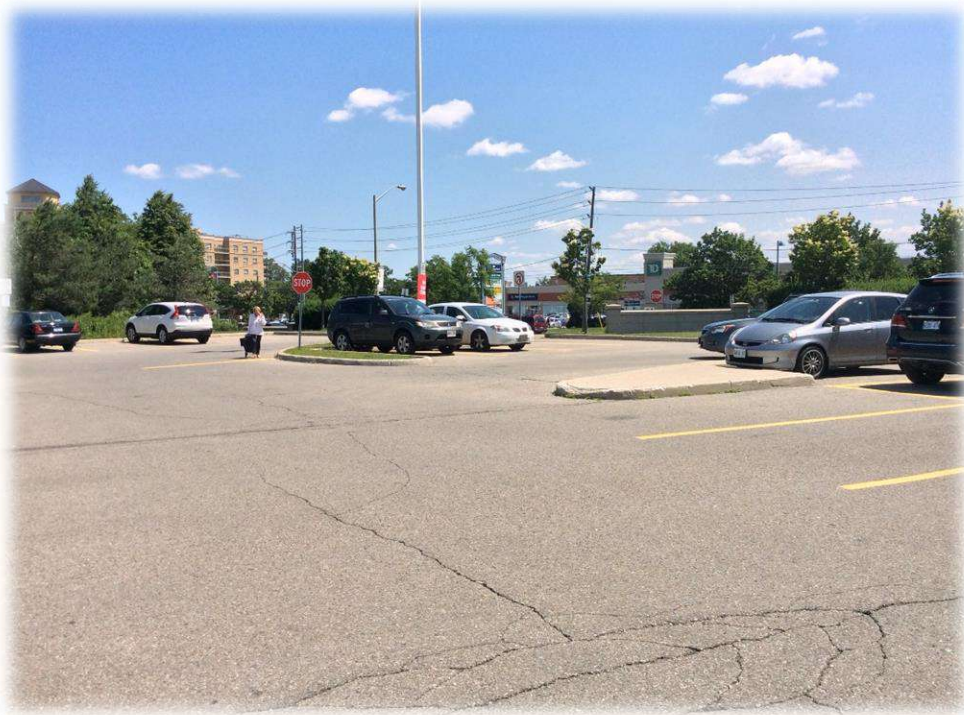
With over 18,000 employees within this quadrant, there is a need to ensure park space is available as part of future plans. Centrally located within the BIA's northeast quadrant, a park in this area would be a valuable amenity to businesses and customers alike. The G. Ross Lord Park, although sizeable, lies across a busy road which is unsafe to cross safely. A park located a comfortable 10 to 15-minute walk or 5-minute bike ride from any point within the northeast would be easy to reach, and would mimic the community node role

that this location already plays. The hotdog stand pictured has been operated on this corner for the last two decades – a testament to the centrality of this intersection to the local community. The park space acquired should be managed and resourced to accommodate regular community use.



2. Dufferin Road and Steeles Avenue West

The southwest corner of Dufferin Street and Steeles Avenue West contains the RioCan Marketplace, a retail centre spread across 46 units connected by sidewalks and sizeable parking lots. Despite supporting several major retailers (The Home Depot, Winners, Dollarama) that serve families with children there is no green space or play structures available for patrons to enjoy when they are not shopping. Converting part of the Marketplace's parking lot on the southwest corner of the intersection into a suitable park, would create a welcoming, attractive and relaxing green space for customers and staff to enjoy.



3. Hydro Corridor between Alness Street and Dufferin Street

The Finch Hydro Corridor contains a multi-use trail connecting people travelling from G. Ross Lord Park through to York University and Black Creek. Used regularly by people walking and riding their bikes for recreation or as a means of transportation, the Corridor lacks any park facilities. Improving this space will encourage workers from nearby businesses and their customers to access this area via Alness Road, Dufferin Road or the Finch

Hydro Corridor itself. Creating this inviting social node with play structures, benches, tables and shelter will attract patrons. Replacing the grassy areas surrounding the multi-use path with community garden plots and community maintained pollinator habitats will support Toronto's Urban Agriculture and Pollinator Protection Strategies.



Potential Parkland Areas - Northwest Quadrant:

4. Keele Reservoir along Keele Street to Steeles Avenue West

This large recreational space within the Duke Heights BIA contains two cricket fields and a soccer field/clubhouse operated by a private soccer club (Toronto Azzurri Soccer Club). Although it is possible to access the Keele Reservoir from Keele Street, people seeking to walk or bike from Wildcat Road to the south are unable to access the space. People seeking to access the site from Petrolia Road are required to first pass through



private property. Despite ample space and the Reservoir's heavy use by kids and families, no play structures or public seating are present. Adding play and picnic areas to the Keele Reservoir, and enabling people to walk and bike easily from Petrolia Road and Wildcat Road will contribute to a greatly improved public realm.



5. Tangiers Road to The Pond Road Future Extension

Lying directly across from York University, the area between Tangiers Road and Apollo Place is currently part of Petro Canada's petroleum facilities. North of Apollo Place lies a low-density retail plaza heavily used by students and workers in the Duke Heights BIA's northwestern quadrant. Despite these retail and commercial uses, no park space is currently available for patrons.

When Tangiers Road is considered for extension north to Apollo Place, it would be prudent to include park space in the new development proposals.



Potential Parkland Areas - Southwest Quadrant:

6. Southeast corner of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West and the Downsview Lands

When the construction of the Line 1 Subway extension is complete, the current construction staging area located on the southeast corner of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West will be surrounded by a subway station, the end of the light rail transit line, retail and office towers. Despite this planned intensification and future density, there is currently no green space for people to enjoy. Turning this publicly owned plot into park space would create a social node for people shopping, travelling, working and taking transit. We note that the Downsview Lands also intend to include significant park and natural heritage feature space, which will be of benefit to people living and working in the southern end of the BIA.



Potential Parkland Areas - Southeast Quadrant:

7. Metro Place Condos at Sheppard Avenue West and Dufferin Street

Despite the high density of residential units present and planned, as well as retail uses already present in and adjacent to the Metro Place Condos development, people do not have access to adequate park space. Downsview Park is not accessible, and the Canadian Military green space is off limits. While the green oval on De Boers Drive is currently city owned, privately managed park space, it is not even named as a park presently.

The space is also not managed or financed by Metro Place Condos to operate as an intensively used public asset. A review needs to be undertaken to ensure the park fulfills its function. Community consultations are needed to ensure the space is redesigned with the amenities and City management required to be suitable for intensive use by people of all ages throughout the year.



8. Dufferin Transfer Station on Vanley Crescent and Chesswood Drive

Located in a central part of the southwest quadrant, this sizeable piece of City owned land holds significant frontage along both Vanley Crescent and Chesswood Drive, one of Duke Heights BIA's main thoroughfares. As the only sizeable green space within the Southwest Quadrant, creating a park from the current mature green space and installing park amenities would create a valuable social node. With

several sizeable trees already present to provide shade, and because the Dufferin Transfer Station is already set back a great distance from the road, creating a comfortable parkette space with play and exercise amenities would be possible.



9. Southwest corner of Champagne Road and Finch Avenue West



This section of Finch Avenue West lies between Dufferin Street and Chesswood Drive; it includes several retail, food and office towers. While this area is already popular with people walking and driving to reach the services and goods offered here, no formal park space is available. The southwest corner of Champagne Road and Finch Avenue West contains the Champagne Centre, which contains a

mix of health, business and retail tenants. While the owner has arranged for a picnic table underneath the trees on Finch Avenue West, the community would benefit from the establishment of a formal parkette in this location.

