

# Our Neighbourhood News

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## Coming Together and Getting to Know Each Other Better

Let's get to know one another! How can we build an even better community?

Most of the original homes in our area were built in the 1950's and 60's. New residents represented the many cultures of the GTA at that time. There were many young families and the park and schools were full of kids. Neighbours got to know each other, friendships developed and challenges such as the destruction of Henderson School were overcome through a united front.

You only have to go for a walk to know that over the last few years there have been many changes and the news tells us there even more are coming. Most of us on the GARA Executive have lived in the neighbourhood for many years. We work with GARA because we feel it is something important to take care of and enjoy the sense of community. However, the 2016 census tells us 40% of residents have moved here within the last 5 years. We believe old neighbours and new have a great deal in common. We have come here to live looking for so many of the same things. We asked ourselves how do we connect and get to know each other.



To start to build those connections, we have created a neighbourhood survey. Please click [this link](#), or go to [www.thornhillgara.com](http://www.thornhillgara.com) to find the survey. It will take only a very few minutes and your participation will help us all build a stronger community.

*We wish to respectfully acknowledge the land on which we live is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek Nations, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation*

## Coming to a Corner Near You ... A Subway Station?

Metrolinx continues development work in our area to prepare for the long-awaited subway extension. Residents in the Royal Orchard area are currently battling to ensure that the chosen route does not tunnel under their homes <https://royalorchardra.com/stop-subway-option-3/> and those near Clark Avenue are advocating for a station located there. For us, the plans for the Steeles station are paramount. We asked Metrolinx for information. Here is their response.

*In March 2021, Metrolinx released its updated plans for the Yonge North Subway Extension. This project will extend TTC Line 1 subway service north from Finch Station to Richmond Hill. The plans include a new transit hub at Steeles Avenue.*



*Steeles Station will deliver major benefits to the project by providing convenient connections to local bus services operated by the TTC and York Region Transit, and serve as the new connection point for the TTC's planned rapid transit service along Steeles Avenue. About 9,400 subway riders will transfer from buses to this station each day.*

*The exact location and size of the bus facilities at Steeles Station will be determined through the next phase of the business case analysis. We're working with neighbouring property owners along with our municipal partners to make sure we minimize impacts to communities as we deliver major transit benefits to them.*

*Planning and design work for the project is still in early stages and there is significant work to be completed. There will be many opportunities for residents to share their feedback and insights. If you'd like to learn more about the project or to sign up to receive the latest project updates via email, I'd encourage you to visit our website at [www.metrolinx.com/yongesubwayext](http://www.metrolinx.com/yongesubwayext) or email us at [YongeSubwayExt@Metrolinx.com](mailto:YongeSubwayExt@Metrolinx.com).*

*Michael Paolucci  
Community Relations and Issues Specialist  
Metrolinx | 20 Bay Street |  
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T: 416-268-9446*

GARA will continue to be involved in Metrolinx consultations wherever possible and to keep community members informed.

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## Big and Tall Changes Coming our Way

It is hard to grasp the changes that face our neighbourhood and those nearby within the next five to ten years.

The Yonge Street north corridor (from Steeles Avenue North to Langstaff) is the focus of intense interest from development companies. A total of 28 condo towers [as of April 30, 2021] averaging 34 storeys each, and an additional 30+ condo towers at Langstaff Gateway will add approximately twenty-seven thousand new units and 40,000+ new residents to the area.

GARA has joined with all the local residents associations to form the Thornhill Community Coalition to address the issues jointly. More information on proposed developments and our response can be found at <https://www.thornhillgara.com/huge-neighbourhood-changes-are-coming-to-grandview-neighbourhood/>

Like you, we have just learned from Councillor Irish (see page 7) about the updated plans for the proposed Xonix development between Steeles Avenue E and Highland Park. The new plans are extremely concerning. The proposed density is almost double that of World on Yonge and Vanguard. We will be working hard to learn more about them and strenuously lobby for revisions to ensure the minimum negative impact on our neighbourhood.



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## Back by Popular Demand

GARA's ten-dollar membership fee has never been increased and now is even more of a bargain! Thanks to the generosity of our experienced volunteer gardeners led by Peter Cox, once again, we are offering free one-hour garden consultations to our mem-



bers. You can find more information on GARA's website.

Ready to sign up? If you are already a GARA member, contact Peter Cox at 905.889.8963 or [pcox1@rogers.com](mailto:pcox1@rogers.com). If you are unsure if you renewed your membership or need to join for the first time, contact Rhonda Duma at [garamail@yahoo.ca](mailto:garamail@yahoo.ca) and then set up your appointment with Peter.



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### City Permits – Just a Money Grab? Bureaucracy at Work?

Individual homeowners often complain about needing a building permit. They hope they can get away without one for their particular project.

Why should we be glad that building permits are required? City permits exist to protect homeowners doing the work, their immediate neighbours and the entire neighbourhood. They are designed to make sure that homes are safely built or renovated.

Among other things, the process ensures that critical elements like plumbing and electrical work are safely done, that load-bearing walls are not removed by accident, either by unknowing homeowners or unskilled contractors. They also protect us from things our neighbours may want to do to their property that would be dangerous or unfair to us.

The City of Markham [website](#) clearly lists the types of projects that require a permit and helps get the process started. You can also speak to someone in the Building Standards Department at 905.475.4858.



### Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

Our new splash pad, skateboard spot, playground and washrooms are a reality!! They represent the work of many, many years by so many residents. It is a joy to see. Now the park is becoming a treasured destination for many of us, so let's work hard to share it. We have small children, teenagers and older people! We have bicycles, skateboards and dogs! What could possibly go wrong? Yes, there are rules and regulations but above all else let's be considerate and generous to each other.



## Coyotes In Our Midst

For many of us, it is an exciting moment to glimpse a coyote. However, recently, in areas close to ours, their presence has caused growing concern. SpringFarm residents, just the other side of Yonge, report seeing them walking down their streets or exploring local parks in daylight. Sadly, they have attacked and killed at least one small dog. Wildlife officials believe that an essential factor luring the coyotes into the area has been the generous availability of food which increases their numbers and makes them less shy. There have been sightings in our area, however, so far, they are rarer and the animals seem warier.



Coyotes play a valuable role even in a suburban area such as ours. For example, many residents have recently been concerned with increasing local infestations of rats and mice. Studies show these rodents are a prime food source for coyotes.

For us to continue to coexist successfully, it is critical that we do not feed these animals, intentionally or unintentionally. This means not leaving dog or cat food outside or being careless with our garbage. To keep pets safe, owners should make sure cats are not allowed to wander, especially at night, and that small dogs are supervised even in fenced backyards again, especially between dusk and dawn.

Check out more helpful tips. <https://www.coyotewatchcanada.com/site/coexisting-with-coyotes>

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## Message From Our Councillor

Thank you for the opportunity to share this update with GARA members.

### **Proposed New Development: Steeles Avenue East and Highland Park Boulevard**

The Zonix Group has revised their Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications and their second submission was recently received by the city. It is being circulated among various departments for review.



You may recall their first OPA application applied to the entire block bordered by Dudley and Willowdale Avenues, Highland Park and Steeles and consisted of four buildings between 8 and 13 storeys in height, 877 units, 1351 m<sup>2</sup> (14,542 sq. ft.) of retail, and a Floor Space Index (FSI)\* of 3.95.

The current submission is for the west half of the block only, applying to 36-48 Steeles Avenue East and 37-49 Highland Park Blvd. The east half of the block is not part of this application. The proposal is now for a 27-storey building with 407 units and a 6-storey building with 126 units (533 units total), no retail, and a FSI of 5.32. *\* FSI is an indicator of density. It is derived from the total floor area of the buildings divided by the area of the property. For instance, the World On Yonge FSI is 3.5 and the Vanguard is 3.75.*

Planning staff anticipate a preliminary report and Statutory Public meeting in Q4 2021.

### **Small Touches that Enhance our Neighbourhoods**

The Broken Windows Theory of prevention is that visible signs of crime, anti-social behaviour, neglect, and civil disorder that go unaddressed can create an urban environment that encourages more crime and disorder.

As I visit our Thornhill neighbourhoods, I am always on the lookout for instances of this as well as opportunities for small enhancements within my sphere of influence. I pay particular attention to “orphaned” common areas crying out for care and attention.

One such area is the grassed traffic island at the intersection of Henderson and Proctor. Until recently it was a barren and forlorn strip of grass likely unnoticed by most. It now hosts two large seasonal planters that add life, colour and vibrancy to this part of our neighbourhood.

### **Keeping you Informed & Connected: Announcing MarkhamWard1.ca**

This new website, [www.markhamward1.ca](http://www.markhamward1.ca), brings Ward 1 Thornhill residents a wealth of local information and news. It also gives you an opportunity to let me know how you feel about important issues facing our community. Visit often and keep up-to date.

Keith Irish  
Councillor, Ward 1 Thornhill  
City of Markham  
905-948-5101  
[kirish@markham.ca](mailto:kirish@markham.ca)





## Grandview Area Residents Association (GARA)

Join GARA or renew your membership and be a part of the important work it does.

[Click](#) here to join electronically

or

**Complete the form below** and deliver or mail it along with your payment to:  
**Majda Ambrozic 12 Almond Avenue Thornhill, Ontario L3T 1L1**

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*E-mail addresses will not be used for any other purposes or shared outside of GARA .*

Please share your issues and views on how we can best pursue our mission while fulfilling our roles and responsibilities in the space below:

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GARA always needs your help in our community. Please indicate how you can contribute:

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Membership is \$10.00 per household per year. Payment by cash, cheque or on-line is welcome. Please make cheques payable to **Grandview Area Residents Association**