

UPCOMING DATES

JULY

19 – 21
Council, 9:30 a.m.

25 CreateTO, 1:30 p.m.

AUGUST

29 Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 6 Council (urgent heritage matters), 9:30 a.m.
- 7 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 8 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 12 Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.
- 18 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 19 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 20 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 21 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 26 TTC Board, 10:00 a.m.
- 28 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m.

OCTOBER

- 2 General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 3 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 5 CreateTO, 1:30 p.m.
- 10 Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.
- 11-13
Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 16 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 17 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.



PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL PATHWAY WOULD IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS IN NORTH YORK

FORGING A PATH

Lana Hall

A Toronto-based developer is partnering with members of the local active transportation community to connect and extend a well-used trail network in North York and make it publicly accessible all-year-round. If completed, the extension would encourage local residents to walk, bike and take the subway in what has traditionally been viewed as a car-dependent neighbourhood.

Tenblock is proposing the development of a new multi-modal path that would connect existing pedestrian and cycling pathways and ravines in Earl Bales Park, located near Bathurst Street and Shepard Avenue West. During the winter months, these trails are publicly accessible through the Don Valley Golf Course and connect the park to Yonge Street near the York Mills subway station. In the summer, the portion of the network that runs through the golf course is closed to the public, and only accessible to golfers. Tenblock, along with pedestrian advocacy group Walk Toronto and local city councillors, is exploring

the possibility of developing a year-round pathway that would follow the northern edge of the Don Valley golf course, keeping pedestrians off the course, while still connected to the existing pathways.

Increasing public access to the existing pathway so that it can be used year-round would improve the neighbourhood's walkability, in turn, making it a more desirable place to work and play, says Tenblock senior development associate, **Graeme Kennedy**.

"More and more young people are choosing to forego car ownership, and others of all ages do not want to have to rely on a car for their everyday trips and commutes," he told *NRU*. "Homes in neighbourhoods that are viewed as not having safe walking and cycling options or easy access to higher-order transit will fail to be attractive to an ever-increasing share of the population."

The pathways and park are well-used during the winter, says Kennedy, and extending them would build on an increasing desire for more and

better active transportation and other recreation opportunities.

"The existing wintertime connection is used by a multitude of communities, including cyclists connecting to Yonge Street, people of all ages accessing the ravines, and the local dog community who demonstrate a sincere level of enjoyment romping around the golf course," he notes.

"Our hope is that creating opportunities for year-round access will help promote cycling or walking as part of everyday trips, broadening the number and type of people who can enjoy a safe, beautiful connection to the subway."

It is unclear how much developing the pathway connection might cost or how it would be funded, but Kennedy says Tenblock intends to participate in conversations with the City about whether trail investment funds already earmarked from the redevelopment of 4050 Yonge Street could be applied. In addition, the City is tendering updated operating contracts for City-run golf courses later

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FORGING A PATH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

this year, and those updates could influence the scope of the project as well.

City of Toronto ward 6 York-Centre councillor, **James Pasternak** supports the trail expansion idea, but says it will require careful route planning and collaboration with several different City departments.

“You’ve got some real challenges — you’ve got some great assets. You’ve got Earl Bales Park and a wonderful trail system — but the first challenge is the golf course,” he told *NRU*

“...The question is, how do you accommodate cyclists and walkers with golfers? It’s not an easy task. The other part is Highway 401. That’s a barrier we need to figure out how to get across ... So there’s a lot to think about, there’s a lot of work to do, but at the end of the day, it’s creative, it’s innovative, it makes a lot of sense to have a multi-purpose trail from a transit location to the community.”

Pasternak says the next step is to assess the area’s topography and determine a viable route for the pathway extension.

WalkToronto steering committee member **Lee Scott** says the organization has been working with Tenblock to formalize that route for the new connection, which she says would significantly improve walkability in the surrounding neighbourhood.

“There are few options for pedestrians making their way north-south in this area,” she told *NRU*. “Opening up The Don Valley Golf Course to a pedestrian and cycling path would offer a significant improvement to this north-south traverse of the 401.”

Scott says she hopes the

pathway extension project might pave the way for other golf courses in Toronto to be incorporated into pedestrian networks.

“There are three public golf courses in Toronto which interrupt pedestrian networks in the city: Don Valley, Tam O’Shanter, and Dentonia. Walk Toronto is in favour of having all of these interruptions of the pedestrian network be eliminated.”

Tenblock is organizing a

public walk along the trail on Sunday, July 30th with councillor James Pasternak and ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence councillor **Mike Colle**, which is open to collaborating organizations or anyone interested in being part of the project. 🌸



Left: Map showing parts of the well-used trails surrounding Earl Bales Park near Bathurst Street and Sheppard Avenue West, and York Mills station. The solid brown lines indicate existing hard surface trails, while the yellow squares indicate mid-trail access points. The two sets of trails also connect via the Don Valley Golf Course, but are only accessible during the winter. Developing a year-round connection for pedestrians and cyclists would require careful route planning and collaboration with several City departments.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

Below: Photo showing pedestrian pathways that run through the Don Valley Golf Course. The pathways connect to Earl Bales Park and to York Mills subway station, but are not accessible to pedestrians during the summer due to golf course operations. Developer Tenblock, in consultation with Walk Toronto and local city councillors, is exploring the possibility of extending the existing pathway connections to make them accessible to active transportation users all-year round.

PHOTOGRAPHER: GRAEME KENNEDY
SOURCE: TENBLOCK

