



Left: Chorley Park, forecourt bridge, with footpath leading down to the Beltline. 2012

Right: Chorley Park, lower level. The grassy slopes now have a ragged appearance. 2012



Chorley Park, overlooking the Don Valley and the Beltline. 2012

Gardner

The Beltline route through the east half of the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery passes near two notable tombs. Ken Thomson was once the wealthiest person in Canada ¹⁸⁵. Art lovers who have viewed the Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario may be interested in visiting Thomson's classically designed tomb, which stands just west of the Beltline's Merton entrance ramp.

The considerably less lavish grave of Mackenzie King, Canada's longest-serving Prime Minister, is located on the cemetery's north roadway, about 200 m. west of the Mt. Pleasant underpass.



Left: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. Grave of William Lyon Mackenzie King, 10th Prime Minister of Canada



Right: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. Tomb of Ken Thomson. Gardner trail is behind the fence, to the right

The Yonge St. bridge affords superb panoramic views of the nodes that have developed at nearby subway stations. To the north lie the TTC's O'Brien headquarters (1958), designed by Charles Dolphin, and the Minto Midtown condominiums. To the south stands the octagonal Wittington Tower, designed by Leslie Rebanks (1975).

Forest Hill's building code required each house to be designed by an architect – as opposed to the cookie-cutter designs of tract housing. This has ensured a great diversity of styles. Regrettably, architects have devoted most of their attention to the front facades of residences. The backside view from the Beltline is less flattering, often marred by garages, sheds, and fences. To properly appreciate Forest Hill's architectural offerings, it is necessary to detour off of the Gardner trail and explore the street-views.

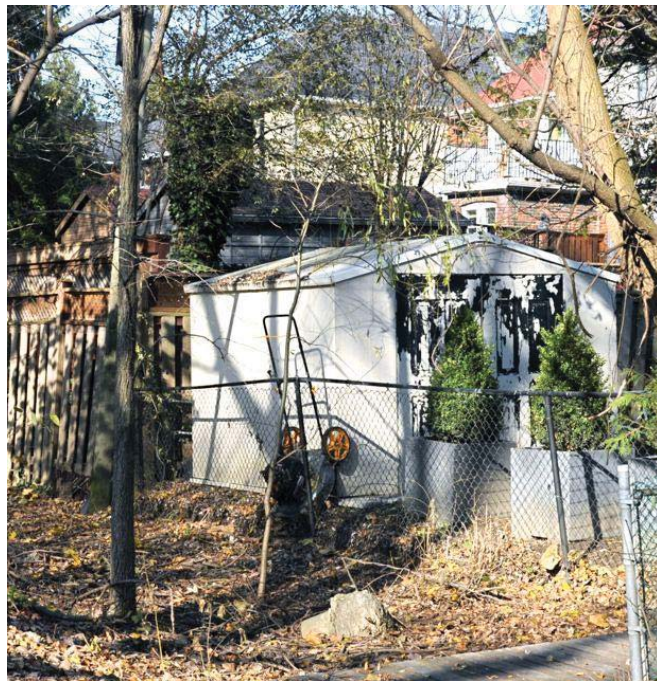
¹⁸⁵ "Ken Thomson, Canada's richest man, dies". CBC News. June 13, 2006
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/story/2006/06/12/thomson.html>



The TTC's William O'Brien headquarters (1958) with the Minto condominiums in the distance, viewed from the Gardner's Yonge St. bridge



Left: Apartment tower at 240 Oriole Pkwy. is a prime example of mid-century modernism



Right Backyard shed & garages in Forest Hill, by Gardner trail. This will not win any architecture awards

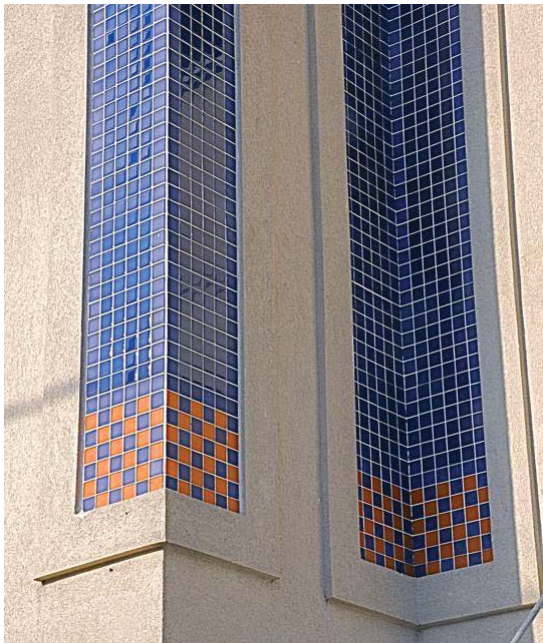
York

Facing the York Beltline's Walter Saunders Park is an Art Deco jewel that is worth examining from all sides. The Patons & Baldwin yarn mill was completed in 1932. It was sensitively converted to condos in 2002, and is

now known as 1001 Roselawn Ave. Another condo building, located on the west side of the park at 550 Hopewell Ave., is decorated with similar Art Deco style, polychrome tiles. At 1173 Roselawn Ave., a surreal wall mural by Miluska adorns the cinder block rear wall of 20 / 20 Auto Collision Inc.



Art Deco ornamentation at 1001 Roselawn Ave. Left: facing York Beltline Trail Right: main facade



*Left: 550 Hopewell Ave. Art deco style, polychrome tiles in another condo conversion
Right: Mural by Miluska. Rear wall of 20 / 20 Auto Collision, 1173. Work in progress*

RAILWAY HISTORY

The ill-fated Belt Line Railway was one Canada's first commuter rail services. In the present day, the Beltline betrays few signs of its railway heritage. Tracks have been ripped out long ago, and none of the original stations exist at their original locations, not even the Victorian-era Union Station. It is important to remind Torontonians as they go about various activities on the trail that the Beltline used to carry passenger and freight traffic. To this end, the Toronto Railway Historical Association should be consulted.

It might be possible to place on display several pieces of railway memorabilia. At the very least, historical information and reproductions of vintage photographs should be displayed on plaques or information boards. It would be most apt if these were installed at (or near) the sites of former Belt Line Railway stations. Some stations such as Moore Park and Rosedale were housed in substantial buildings; others may not have had any enclosed structures.¹⁸⁶



Left: *Union Station, the second of three, built in 1873. Note proximity of Lake Ontario to the rail tracks*
Right: *One of five 4-4-2T commuter side tank locomotives built in Montreal for the Belt Line Railway. After its demise, the engines were sold to the Thousand Islands Railway, Gananoque*

- 1 **(Old) Union Station.** A commemorative plaque should mark the location of the second Union Station which was used by trains on both Beltline loops. It should mention that the Beltline was the antecedent of GO Transit and TTC subway service. The public should be reminded that the 1927 edifice currently in use was preceded by a grand Victorian structure, located at the foot of University Ave. "When the station was opened on July 1, 1873, it was by far the largest passenger station ever built in Canada."¹⁸⁷ The Toronto Railway Historical Society believes that the most appropriate position for a plaque would be the Skywalk Bridge, east of Simcoe St.¹⁸⁸
- 2 **Winchester Street** (near the Toronto Necropolis) The Belt Line Railway tracks (later used by the Canadian Northern Railway) were laid on the west bank of the Don River, in parallel to the Canadian Pacific's Don Branch line. North of Winchester Station, the Belt Line continued along the west bank while the CP tracks crossed the river. A plaque could be placed on the Lower Don Trail.

¹⁸⁶ John Riddell, *The Railways of Toronto. The First Hundred Years* (Calgary: B.R.M.N.A., 1991) p.34

¹⁸⁷ Derek Boles, "Images of Rail. Toronto's Railway Heritage" (Arcadia Publishing, 2009) p. 33

¹⁸⁸ Email from Derek Boles (Toronto Railway Historical Association) to Michael Black, Dec. 12, 2012

- 3 **Rosedale Station.** Located in the Don Valley on the west side of the Don River, where the present-day Bloor St. exit road from the Don Valley Parkway crosses over Bayview Ave.¹⁸⁹ (East of Park Reservation Drive Trail) Destroyed by fire in 1917.¹⁹⁰
- 4 **Moore Park Station** (south of Moore Ave.) This was the most lavish of the suburban stations. The edifice's remarkable roof turrets might provide inspiration for a wrought-iron entrance gate to the Moore Park Beltline Trail
- 5 **Yonge Street Station** (about 150 metres east of Yonge) Several historic photos of the Yonge St. bridge exist. Also, near Mt. Pleasant Rd., a photo of the Dominion Coal & Wood silos would remind trail users of a local landmark, constructed in 1928 and demolished in the 1990s to make way for a condo development.
- 6 **Upper Canada College Station** (at Avenue Rd. intersection, 500 m. north of UCC) In 1891, the school moved from King St. to its present location, which was quite isolated at the time. The official opening was held on Oct. 14, and the Belt Line ran special trains for the event. The Upper Canada station was burned down by Halloween pranksters in 1902.¹⁹¹
- 7 **Eglinton Station**(south side of Eglinton) Site of future Chaplin LRT station. When built, this will form a rare example of a modern station operating almost exactly where an original Belt Line station existed. It would be unfortunate if the LRT design team repudiates the Beltline legacy.
- 8 **Forest Hill Station** (west side of Bathurst)
- 9 **Fairbank Station** (west side of Dufferin) Had the Fairbank subdivision been built as planned, this no doubt would have been one of the Belt Line Railway's busiest stations.
- 10 **Fairbank Junction** (Bowie Ave. at Croham) This is the junction where trains would join the Grand Trunk Northern Division Line/ CN Weston Sub, which leads back to Union Station. The trailhead at Bowie Ave. and Croham Rd. has enough space to permit the placement of railroad memorabilia (for instance, a switchstand might be appropriate for a junction location)
- 11 **West Toronto Railpath** (proposed southern extension from College to Strachan). This section of the Railpath will run past two Belt Line stops used by both the Humber and the Yonge Street Loop trains: North Parkdale Station and Strachan Avenue Station. At least one historical plaque should be placed to commemorate this fact.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ The Toronto Public Library preserves a photo ca. 1955 of James Victor Salmon standing on the Rosedale Station's boiler base. <http://static.torontopubliclibrary.ca/da/images/LC/pictures-r-2139.jpg>

¹⁹¹ Richard B. Howard, *Upper Canada College 1829 – 1879. Colborne's Legacy* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1979) p. 118

TORONTO BELT LINES. **Yonge Street Loop.**

	85	83	STATIONS.		Miles.	82	
	P.M.	P.M.	ARR.	LVE.		A.M.	
.....	6 42	3 58	Union Station A 137	.....	0.00	† 8 15	.....
.....	6 39	3 54	Yonge Street	.....	0.37	8 18	.....
.....	6 37	3 52	Church Street	.....	0.55	8 20	.....
.....	6 30	3 46	Berkeley Street	.....	1.10	8 27	.....
.....	6 27	3 43	Don	.....	1.68	8 30	.....
.....	6 25	3 40	Queen Street East	.....	2.05	8 32	.....
.....	6 20	3 37	Winchester Street	.....	2.90	8 35	.....
.....	6 18	3 35	Don Valley	.....	3.76	8 37	.....
.....	6 16	3 31	Rosedale	.....	4.23	8 39	.....
.....	6 13	3 28	Moore Park	.....	5.27	8 43	.....
.....	6 10	3 25	Yonge Street N	.....	6.03	8 46	.....
.....	6 08	3 16	Upper Canada College	.....	6.50	8 47	.....
.....	6 04	3 14	Eglinton Avenue	.....	7.45	8 50	.....
.....	6 02	3 12	Forest Hill	.....	7.93	8 53	.....
.....	5 58	3 08	Fairbank	.....	9.16	8 56	.....
.....	5 57	3 05	Fairbank Junction	.....	10.10	8 57	.....
.....	5 50	2 55	Davenport	.....	11.35	9 00	.....
.....	5 45	2 45	Dundas Street	.....	13.20	9 03	.....
.....	5 40	2 41	North Parkdale	.....	14.14	9 05	.....
.....	5 37	2 37	Strachan Avenue	.....	15.01	9 08	.....
.....	5 35	2 35	Queen's Wharf	.....	15.35	9 10	.....
.....	5 33	2 33	Brock Street	.....	15.70	9 12	.....
.....	† 5 30	† 2 30	Union Station A 137	.....	16.45	9 15	.....
	P.M.	P.M.	LVE.	A.M.		A.M.	

For Toronto Belt Line service see page 32 A.

For time of through trains between York and Toronto, see pages 22 and 23 ;
between Toronto and Weston, see pages 34 and 35.

Humber Loop.

	66	62	STATIONS.		Miles	73	
	Mix'd	Pass.	ARR.	LVE.		Pass.	
.....	P.M.	A.M.				P.M.	
.....	1 10	8 12	Union Station A 137	.....	0.00	† 4 15	.....
.....	1 07	8 11	Brock Street	.....	0.65	4 17	.....
.....	1 05	8 09	Queen's Wharf	.....	1.10	4 19	.....
.....	1 03	8 07	Strachan Avenue	.....	1.44	4 21	.....
.....	12 59	8 03	North Parkdale	.....	2.31	4 25	.....
.....	12 54	7 59	Bloor Street	.....	3.80	4 31	.....
.....	12 51	7 58	Royce Avenue	.....	4.50	4 34	.....
.....	12 49	7 55	Carl. Weston Road	.....	4.85	4 35	.....
.....	12 48	7 54	Carlton	.....	5.10	4 37	.....
.....	12 43	7 49	Symes Road	.....	6.18	4 39	.....
.....	12 38	7 45	Lambton	.....	6.90	4 42	.....
.....	12 30	7 40	Bloor Street West	.....	8.60	4 45	.....
.....	12 20	7 35	Swansea	.....	9.70	4 50	.....
.....	12 15	7 30	High Park	.....	10.44	4 55	.....
.....	12 10	7 27	South Parkdale	.....	11.54	5 00	.....
.....	12 05	7 23	Queen's Wharf	.....	13.07	5 05	.....
.....	12 03	7 21	Brock Street	.....	13.54	5 07	.....
.....	† 12 00	† 7 18	Union Station A 137	.....	14.17	5 10	.....
	NOON	A.M.	LVE.	ARR.		P.M.	

† Except Sunday. / Flag Station. *Eastern Standard Time.*



Left: Moore Park Station, viewed from the west (ca. 1912). When this photograph was taken, the station had been decommissioned

Right: Upper Canada College, looking north (ca. 1905). The former building was demolished in 1958-59. The Beltline's Upper Canada College station was about 700 m. north of the main building

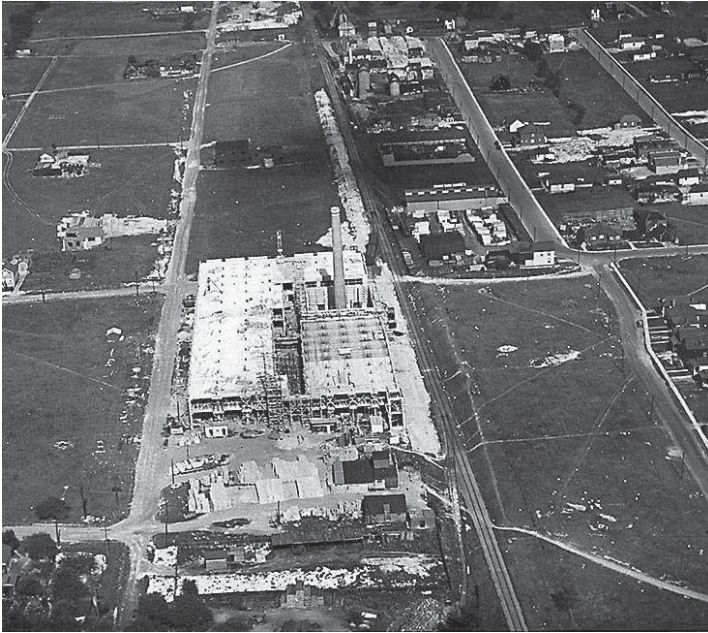
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Reforestation and gentrification have obscured many vestiges of the Beltline's industrial past. Archival photos make apparent the illusions many of us hold that nature has existed here undisturbed for millennia. As Toronto deindustrialized in the 21st century, it is crucial to preserve buildings, artefacts and collective memory of bygone times when we actually made things in Toronto. The Don Valley, into which the Yellow and Mud Creeks flow, used to be one of the city's industrial centres.

Castlefield- Roselawn corridor

In 1910, Grand Trunk Railway rebuilt what had been a passenger line in order that it could carry heavy freight cars.¹⁹² From that year to the end of the 1990s freight trains were operated along what is now the York Beltline trail, serving light and medium industry clustered along Castlefield Ave. and Roselawn Ave. The area is now taking on a second life as the Castlefield Design District, with design and building material firms on the ascendant.

¹⁹² Ron Brown, *In Search of the Grand Trunk: Ghost Rail Lines of Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2011) p. 77



Left: Aerial view of what is now the York Beltline, east of Dufferin ca. 1931/ 32. Rail line is in centre with the Patons & Baldwin yarn mill under construction.



Right: York Beltline Trail, near Caledonia Rd. Mix of industrial, utilities and natural elements

Davisville Yard

The Beltline's Yonge Street bridge passes over the south end of the TTC's Davisville Yard, which is responsible for the maintenance, cleaning and storage of Sheppard Line subway cars. From a vantage point on the bridge, trail users are afforded a superb view of the TTC's marshalling yard, the carhouse, storage depots and subway trains operating on the Yonge Line. In 1953, many of the city's first subway cars were delivered to the Davisville Yard via the Beltline tracks, which CN was still operating. On March 30, 1954, subway service was officially inaugurated by a train that left the Davisville Yard with Premier Frost and Mayor Lamport on board.



Davisville Yard, viewed from the north side of the Gardner's Yonge St. bridge

Merton Street

The south side of Merton Street from Yonge St. to Mt. Pleasant Rd. used to be lined with coal depots, building supply yards, a pottery, garage and other businesses. Freight service along the Beltline was invaluable in keeping them supplied. As a condition of constructing condos on these properties, the City stipulated that a continuous trail be laid out on the Beltline right-of-way between Merton St. and the cemetery's north wall.



Left: Dominion Coal silos, looking north from Mt. Pleasant Rd. bridge (under which the Beltline ran) 1957
Right: Merton St. 1913. Ontario Lime Co., builders supplies

Brick Works

The Don Valley was once filled with a great variety of industrial enterprises. The majority were removed after Hurricane Hazel, in the 1950s. In the vicinity of the Beltline, we are left with the Brick Works and Todmorden Mills as mementoes of a once smoke-filled valley. Of the two, the Don Valley Brick Works was far the larger in

scope. It operated for almost a century from 1889 to 1984. In its early days, it was served by a spur of the Belt Line Railway.¹⁹³ Quarry excavations resulted in what is arguably the largest man-made hole ever to have pierced Toronto's fair surface. Thanks to remediation efforts over the last few decades, the quarry has been transformed into an expanse of greenery. The Beltline trail now affords a fine vista of the Evergreen Brick Works, and spectators may be beguiled into rhapsodizing over the apparent natural beauty before their eyes – forgetting that the immense pit exemplifies human intervention in the affairs of nature on a huge scale.



Left: Don Valley Brick Works. 1930's



Right: Evergreen Brick Works. 2011

Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Crematorium

In Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, 400 m. south of the Beltline route, an industrial incinerator has been operated in the crematorium since 1972.

Used to incinerate 1100-1300 bodies and related caskets annually, this crematorium pre-dates Ontario air quality Regulations 346 and 419/05, as well as 1989 MOE Cremator Operating Guidelines. As such it is 'grandfathered' and thus exempt from any regulatory limits on dangerous toxic* emissions, such as mercury, dioxins and furans, and particulate matter.

MPGC recently announced plans and submitted an application for MOE approval to make substantial alterations to the existing incinerator, completely replacing the cremators with new equipment from Facultatieve Technologies that promises to remove "99%" of (some - as yet undeclared) toxic emissions. . . . The new equipment also will create highly toxic hazardous waste which will be stored on site and transported from time to time through the neighbourhood for disposal. The expected volume and composition of this toxic waste is not known.¹⁹⁴

It is our preference that the cremation facilities of Mt. Pleasant Cemetery be moved to a location far removed from the cemetery grounds and the Beltline route.

¹⁹³ "The Belt Line Steel Ribbon to Green Belt" Bob Wales, *Footnotes. Quarterly of The Toronto Bruce Club* Summer 1985, Vol. XXIII, no. 2, p. 8

¹⁹⁴ "Mount Pleasant Crematorium Background Document". Crematorium Working Group. Moore Park, June 2012. p. 3 - 5

Toxic soil

Industrial activities near the Beltline may have left to us legacies more sinister than architecture. Freight trains were run regularly along the Gardner segment from 1910 to 1970. Railroad operations over a sixty-year period invariably cause residual contamination of soil.

The most commonly reported contaminants along railroad corridors include arsenic, which was used as a herbicide to control weeds, metals and constituents of oil or fuel (petroleum products) which likely dripped from the rail cars as they passed over the corridor. Other possible contaminants include creosote used to preserve wood ties, coal ash from engines and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from diesel exhaust.¹⁹⁵

The most exacting method of remediating contaminated soil is the so-called cut and fill procedure, which entails the removal of the toxic top layer of soil and replacement with clean soil. Instead, it seems that less expensive methods were used with the Beltline. In 1988, the "City allotted \$20,000 for cleaning up the Belt Line"¹⁹⁶ with the goal "to remove debris and garbage and repair eroded areas"¹⁹⁷ This work does not appear to conform to contemporary standards of railway corridor remediation. If soil samples from the Gardner corridor have not been recently assessed for contaminants, we recommend that this be done soon. Since the Moore Park Ravine carried train traffic solely in the brief period from 1890 to 1892, we assume that toxin levels are quite low along the trail south of Moore Ave.

The York Beltline Trail is located in an industrial district where many nearby factories operated until very recently. The unauthorized dumping of garbage and waste onto the Beltline right-of-way compounded contamination problems caused by industrial and railway operations. We are unclear as to the extent of remediation efforts that were carried out when the York Beltline Trail was created. Soil samples from the currently derelict stretch lying between Beograd Gardens and Marlee Ave. should be tested before the trail is extended east into this section.

At Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, the Beltline route passes next to soil which has its own particular secrets. Let it suffice to remark that grass grows greener in graveyards for a reason.

Sewer

The Beltline has different meanings for different people. For dedicated sanitary engineering aficionados, the word conjures up the exquisite craftsmanship of the Belt Line Sewer, built in the early 1890s along the Yellow Creek floodplain. The finely arched stonework is 1.3 to 1.8 m. in diameter. Most of the storm drains in Forest Hill feed into the sewer, which starts at Bathurst St. and eventually discharges its waters into the Yellow Creek, south of Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.¹⁹⁸ The Belt Line Railway and the Belt Line Sewer were siblings, laid out one on top of the other along what Mother Nature had intended to be a watercourse. As we walk along the Gardner trail, we should remember that the vaulted, cathedral-like tree canopy we so admire on this section of the trail owes its existence to the vaulted sewer running beneath. Without the sewer we would be knee-deep in water!

¹⁹⁵ *Understanding Industrial Contaminants – Lessons Learned and Guidance to Keep your Rail-Trail Project on Track* (TrailDart, Sept. 24, 2004) p. 9-10

¹⁹⁶ Newsletter, Kay Gardner/ Councillor Ward 11, July 11, 1988

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Herb Pirk, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, to Alderman Michael Gee, May 11, 1987

¹⁹⁸ "The Beltline Sewer" See map at : <http://www.vanishingpoint.ca/belt-line-sewer>



Interior & exterior views of the Beltline Sewer, near Yonge St.– Left: 2001 (photo: Jeremy Kai); Right: 1916

SOCIAL HISTORY

New Urbanism

One of the less appreciated aspects of the Beltline's history is the activist struggle that led to the city's purchase of the Beltline lands from CN in 1990. This occurred in tandem with the fight to stop the Spadina Expressway, and many eminent figures were involved in both campaigns: David Crombie, Kay Gardner and William Kilbourn. The movement they helped to foster in its nascent stage – New Urbanism – was well established in Toronto by the end of the century. No new expressways on the scale of Spadina have been built in the downtown. Sustainable transportation is on the rise, and the Beltline has served as a significant prototype in Toronto. The saving of the Beltline was followed by the creation of many more trails. All of this should be commemorated on the trail itself.

Esther Carin

A plaque should be erected in honour of Esther Carin, who resided in the red brick apartment building that overlooks the Beltline, at 600 Eglinton Ave. West. The plaque should be located just north of the Eglinton Ave. underpass, on the northeast side of the trail opposite Forest Hill Memorial Arena; it will complement the plaque in honour of Kay Gardner which presently exists a few hundred metres up the trail. The two were friends and played an equal role in the inception of the campaign to save the Beltline lands as a public park. Kay Gardner recounts:

One evening in 1970 as I walked along the Belt Line with Esther Carin, an ardent bird-watcher and naturalist, who used to conduct nature walks there, we encountered a man who told us the CN was offering to sell the land to private owners. We vowed to fight to save it as a park. The next day Esther telephoned several aldermen. Our own alderman, David Crombie, was sympathetic. "Get some signatures on a petition and bring them to me", he said.

Esther drew up a petition and the two of us, with six-year-old Jack in tow, began to canvass. Esther soon formed a committee of 12 canvassers. Anne Bateman, mother of Robert Bateman, the famous wild-life artist, joined in. So did Pollution Probe, the Toronto Field Naturalists and many other groups and

individuals. One Sunday in 1970 we all marched down the Belt Line, carrying placards, with David Crombie in the lead and wound up with a meeting in the Forest Hill rink.¹⁹⁹

David Crombie was eventually able to boast that the petition was signed by almost 2,000 people, most of whom did not live immediately beside the Beltline.²⁰⁰

PETITION

PETITION AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Petitions are circulating once more. Through the late summer and autumn of 2012, Cycle Toronto Midtown has been collecting signatures on a petition, in order to gauge the level of community support for five key improvements:

We, the undersigned, are in favour of improving the Beltline Trail for all users, including:

Safe signalized crossings at major intersections of the Beltline (Avenue, Bathurst, Oriole Pkwy and Mt Pleasant)

Pathway lighting along the entire trail

Winter maintenance

Better drainage

A connection to the proposed Chaplin LRT station

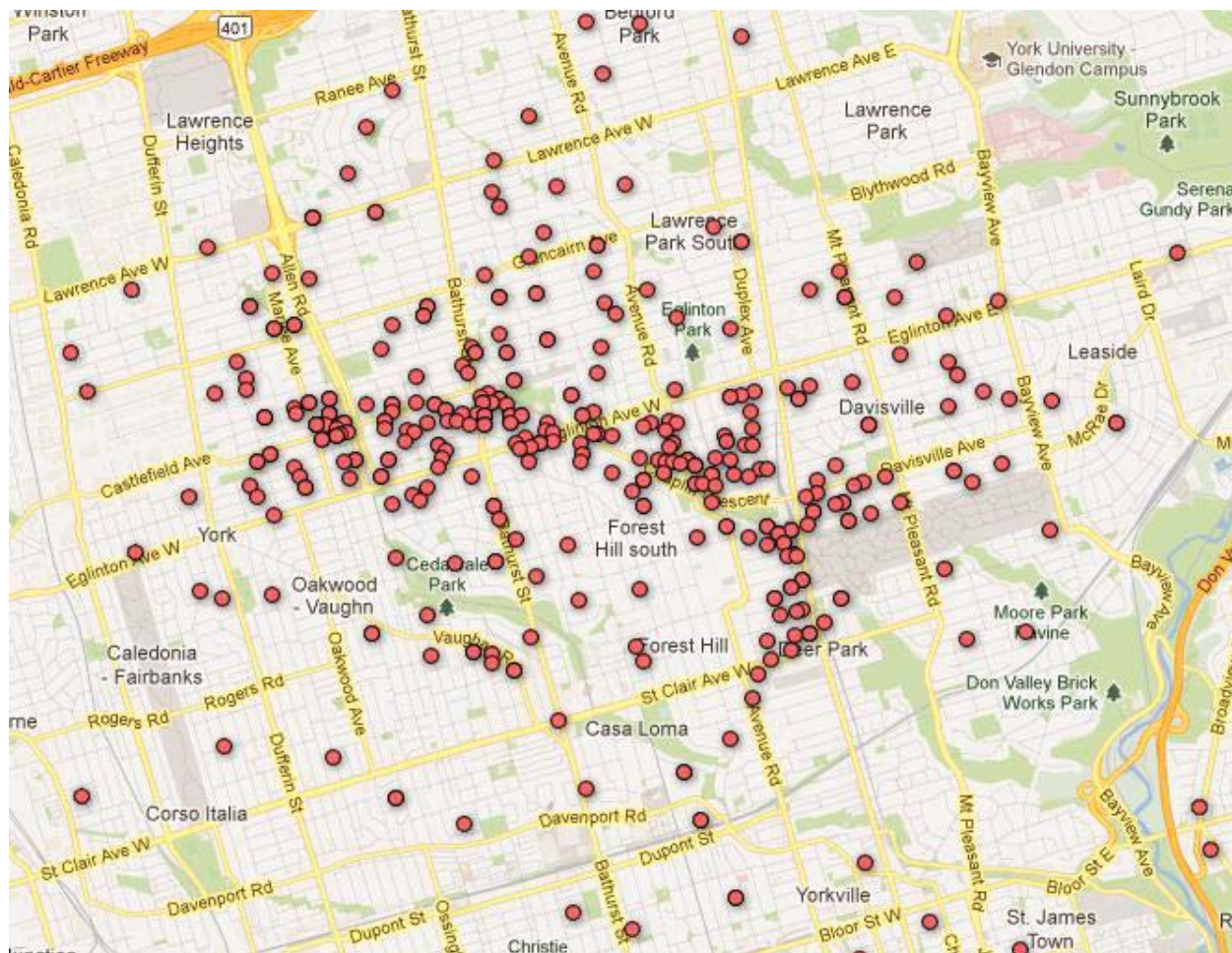
Cycle Toronto volunteers set up a table at various points on the trail (including Avenue Rd., Bathurst St., Old Park Rd. and Lascelles Blvd.) to canvass users on the trail itself. As of December, 2012, we have gathered over 500 signatures on our petition, from a broad cross-section of users – people running, cycling, and walking with friends, children, or with their dogs.

The map below shows the distribution of the postal codes of the paper petitioners. Most petitioners supplied their postal code. 78 of the petitioners actually live outside the map boundary! The map demonstrates that the trail is used heavily by the surrounding community, as well as people residing farther away. This broad distribution makes sense considering that the trail is favoured by long-distance runners and cyclists.

Because our petition efforts were focused on Gardner trail locations, we collected few signatures from trail users living in the vicinity of the Moore Park Ravine. The conclusion might be drawn that Mt. Pleasant Cemetery acts as an impediment. Conceivably, future improvements that make the cemetery more user-friendly might stimulate a freer flow of traffic between the Gardner and Moore Park Ravine segments.

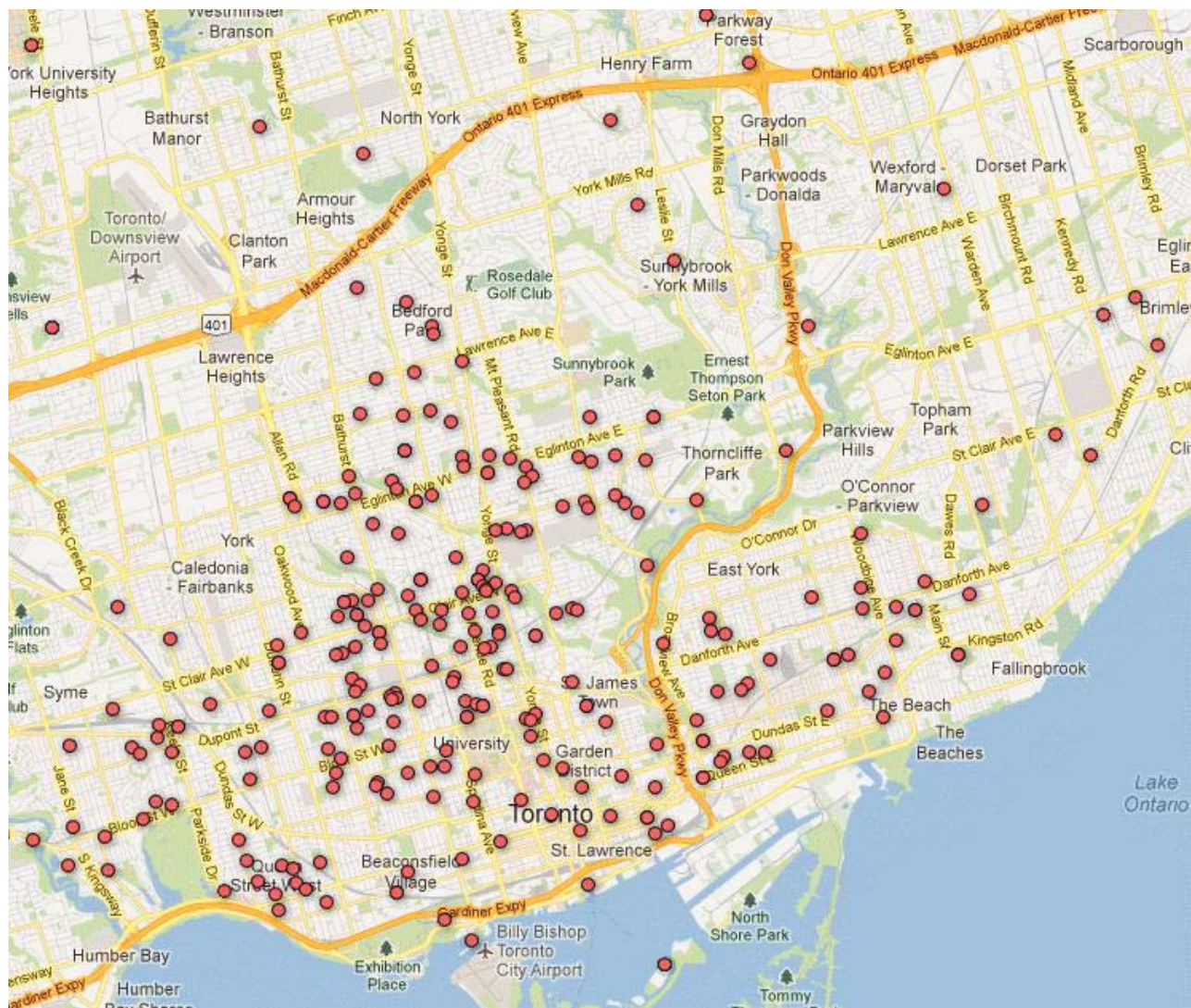
¹⁹⁹ Kay Gardner. "Memories of the Belt Line Train and the 20-year Fight for a Park". Manuscript submission to *The Town Crier*, dated July 17, 1990.

²⁰⁰ "OK Belt Line park", *Toronto Star*, ca. 1970



Map of Paper Petitioner Postal Codes. 78 petitioners are outside of the map boundary.

Additionally, we have set up an online petition at our campaign page at cycleto.ca/beltline. This petition has gathered another 290 signatures to date. A summary of the petition signatures is attached as an appendix. The online petition also allowed users to provide comments about the trail. Most petitioners bike along the trail, but nearly half use the trail in multiple modes (walking or running), and 40 of the petitioners do not bike at all.



Map of Online Petition Postal Codes. 15 petitioners are outside of the map boundary.

Our group also prepared a [6-page Beltline Trail Summary Report](#)²⁰¹ in September 2012. This report has been endorsed by a wide variety of elected representatives and community organizations, including:

[Former Councillor Kay Gardner](#)

[MPP Mike Colle \(Eglinton-Lawrence\)](#)

[Councillor Josh Colle \(Ward 15\)](#)

[Councillor Joe Mihevc \(Ward 21\) \(letter of endorsement\)](#)

[Trustee Shelley Laskin \(Ward 11 - St. Paul's\)](#)

[Councillor Mary Fragedakis \(Ward 29\)](#)

[Mount Pleasant Village BIA \(Business Improvement Area\)](#)

[Friends of Oriole Park](#)

[Eglinton2020](#)

[Oakwood Village Community Association](#)

[TO35Cycles](#)

²⁰¹ Cycle Toronto Midtown, "Beltline Trail Summary Report". Sept 17, 2012.

http://cycleto.ca/sites/tcu/files/Cycle_Toronto_Ward_22_Beltline_Trail_Summary_Report_2012-09-17.pdf

[Ontario Trails Council](#)
[Community Bicycle Network \(letter of endorsement\)](#)
[Brentwood Towers Tenants Association](#)
[Cycle 26](#)

Additionally, Councillor Josh Matlow supports safe road crossings, winter maintenance, lighting and drainage fixes, and Councillor Karen Stintz supports safe road crossings, lighting and drainage fixes. Councillor Matlow requested a meeting in the summer of 2012 to ask Transportation Services staff to investigate installing safe road crossings at Avenue Rd. and Oriole Parkway.

Our group has been working with Councillor Josh Colle and City of Toronto staff on improvements to the York Beltline, including extending the trail eastwards to Marlee, improving the connection with the Kay Gardner Beltline, and safer crossings at major roads like Caledonia.

CONCLUSION

The Beltline is a major community asset in Central Toronto, serving many purposes. It is used by vast numbers of residents as a recreational resource, while others rely on it as a safe transportation link. The trail helps to keep the population active, allowing people to get fit in safe, green surroundings. This is admirable, and they should no longer have to worry about risking bodily harm at dangerous crossings, currently designed to facilitate the passage of polluting automobiles.

The trail passes through many neighbourhoods with varied demographics. Connectivity enhancements will boost community cohesion. In a city where the cost of many leisure activities is prohibitive, entry to the Beltline has always been free. Enjoyment of the trail will be truly open once minor handicapped accessibility upgrades have been completed. As access is improved, the Beltline will become more intensively used. This need not be a cause for apprehension, as the establishment of simple etiquette rules will streamline traffic flow on the trail. Calming has another dimension. The Beltline is treasured as a tranquil oasis – but this is hardly so during storms. With proper upgrading, the sewers and river beds along which the trail is routed will do a better job of draining midtown Toronto's runoff water.

The Beltline must serve people at all times and during all stages in life's journey. The elderly require proper trail amenities. Winter maintenance will allow year-round enjoyment of the trail. Night lighting will extend usage to all hours, benefitting those whose job and child-rearing responsibilities keep them off the trail during daylight hours. Lastly, improving access to Mt. Pleasant Cemetery will enhance the city's most beautiful resting place for the deceased.

Our suggestions will require a modest investment that will improve safety for all trail users, increase property values and strengthen for years to come the Beltline's role as an outdoor showpiece that faithfully preserves Toronto's natural, industrial and architectural heritages.

#