



TORONTO

From citizen vision to professional action

Thornccliffe Park and Flemington Park are dynamic communities located next to one of Toronto's biggest ecological resources, the Don Valley Ravine. As neighbourhoods favoured by recently arrived immigrants, the communities are anchors for numerous new Canadians. Thanks to highly effective community organizing and a politically active population, local resident groups like the Thornccliffe Park Women's Committee have worked to revitalize and re-energize public spaces in the area with events like the community markets they hold in R.V. Burgess Park. Inspired by local residents' exceptional commitment, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation partnered with local groups to help continue the revitalization of public spaces and examine local streets.



WITH EACH PROBLEM ITS SOLUTION

In recent years, several reports and community forums identified pedestrian and cyclist safety, as well as safe access to the Don Valley Ravine's trails and parks, as persistent issues. There had been only limited progress and minor improvements on improving these, and residents still wanted more. The unique work process of the Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project made it possible to bridge the gap between residents' wishes, concerns and ideas and the expertise of local professionals and decision makers. As a result, TCAT was able to support the community by helping them identify their planning priorities to encourage even more ownership of spaces by local residents.

TANGIBLE RESULTS, THANKS TO COLLABORATION

There have been many benefits from aligning residents' vision with the expertise of professionals:

- The project helped support pop-up initiatives to celebrate public spaces, including a "Ravine repair day" in which young people and other local residents helped create a mural and signage to clearly identify Don Valley Ravine trailheads and paths;

- New Flemington Park facilities were tested with the help of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, local residents and the local city councillor. A structure to provide shade and seating was added to give new life to a neglected area of the park and encourage residents to gather and socialize;

- The City of Toronto's transportation department took note of the demand and potential for active transportation. They proposed that these communities should receive federal investments in cycling infrastructure to connect the neighbourhoods for cyclists and, above all, to improve local road safety and mobility.

The example of Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park shows that when a neighbourhood is dynamic, committed and motivated, these attributes tend to be contagious! Not only because they can inspire others to take the same approach, but above all because they motivate people to become part of a lively environment. Several ongoing initiatives in the area led decision makers to take an interest. In turn, that led to funding from the federal infrastructure program.

The example of Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park demonstrates that a neighbourhood that is dynamic, committed and motivated, is contagious!

 **VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:**

Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park, Toronto
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