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## King Edward Avenue Task Force

### Groupe de travail de l'avenue King Edward

#### History

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The King Edward Avenue Task Force had its beginnings in the mid 1980's with the excitement formed around the then Mayor Durrell's plan for the grandiose Champs-Élysée treatment for King Edward Avenue. The two individuals that had formed the group were David Arenburg and Vivian Hostetler. Angie Todesco joined the group seeking community action to address traffic concerns. Originally she had tried to join the Lowertown West Community Association but was told that the group's boundaries did not include Lowertown East where she lived. Le Comité de réveil, which existed on the east side of King Edward was the association that dealt with largely francophone community issues and saw the King Edward Avenue traffic situation as peripheral to their community.

By 1986-7, the hopes for a rebirth of King Edward Avenue as a Grande Allée were dimmed and the founding individuals became inactive. Angie Todesco held a meeting at the Armand Pagé Community Centre in October 1987 to see what interest there would be in forming a group to address traffic issues. A group of about 30 people attended and a small core of interested individuals set about establishing goals and objectives. The boundaries of the group were set at one block east and west of King Edward, from Rideau Street to Sussex deliberately to involve residents on both side of King Edward. The area covers well over a 1000 households. The Lowertown West Community Association provided the group with some seed funds to get it going.

The group has always stayed small and informally organized. There are no membership fees. Names of people who attend meetings are collected and residents are called to help with tasks. The Task Force holds an annual general meeting where elections are called each year (on several occasions, the AGM has been held after a year and a half). The executive consists of a president, vice president, secretary/treasurer and an unlimited number of councillors (usually 4-6).

The group meets at the Routhier Community Centre every first Tuesday of the month. Because of other community activities in the centre which have priority, this may change this year. In the past the meeting schedule was not always fixed because of members' work and family responsibilities.

Despite its size the King Edward Avenue Task Force has had a variety of accomplishments:

- ▶ was successful in getting the City of Ottawa to develop the King Edward Avenue Community Improvement Plan and actively participated in all phases of its development;
- ▶ fought to save King Edward from further lane expansion during the OMB appeal of the Vanier Parkway extension;

- ▶ prepared a video showing the serious and dangerous conditions on King Edward;
- ▶ fought to prevent the corner of King Edward and St. Patrick from becoming a parking lot;
- ▶ provided survey data to show traffic violations at the intersection of King Edward and St. Patrick;
- ▶ organized guest speakers for AGM's or special meetings of concerns eg Market Value Assessment;
- ▶ developed a community garden on the empty municipal lot on King Edward and Clarence;
- ▶ helped naturalize King Edward park through the planting of daffodils provided by the NCC;
- ▶ suggested a number of truck traffic -calming initiatives including a night time ban of trucks;
- ▶ pointed out the need for an emergency measure exercise on King Edward;
- ▶ participated actively in all regional and municipal plans relating to King Edward;
- ▶ surveyed the neighbourhood for potential safety and lighting problems.

This is not the end of the King Edward Avenue Task Force's history. But we have come to an important crossroad: the appeal of the Official Plan may be the last chance we have to save our neighbourhood.