



Date: November 30, 2021

To: David.driedger@toronto.ca; Allison.reid@toronto.ca

Re: Garden Suites Community Consultation Comments

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village South Resident Association (CSVSWRA) has several concerns regarding the draft proposal for Toronto Garden Suites. We appreciate the opportunity to respond to Toronto's various initiatives to expand affordable housing opportunities. However, we are concerned with the new form of a seemingly accelerated community consultation, restricted distribution, and the assumption that lay persons understand the specific terms and impacts without clarifying dialogue.

Blanket Application of Garden Suites

The **blanket infill** proposal of **Garden Suites** imposed across **physically diverse environmental Toronto communities** is a serious concern to our Scarborough residents. Our current residents purchased their homes because they know the value of a sustainable natural environment consisting of a mature canopy and green spaces which provide essential permeable surfaces.

We believe and are hopeful that a recent proposal approved by the Toronto Housing and Planning Committee will be similarly approved by City Council: The removal of a mature canopy due to development must be replaced by similar mature canopy.

Toronto and Global Concern Regarding Climate Crisis

Collectively these green elements, mature canopy and green space, ensure a healthy environment for each resident and their community. As recently as the November 2021 COP 26, global science experts have convinced nations that climate change and global warming is accelerating and needs immediate attention. On June 4, Toronto presented its 2019 Resiliency Strategy and on October 2, 2019, Mayor Tory declared that we are challenged by a **climate emergency**. The removal and reduction of natural elements due to the inclusion of a proliferation of additional ancillary structures, such as the **unrestricted inclusion of Garden Suites**, on potentially each **residential property** conflicts with the esteemed wisdom of Global and Toronto declarations of an environmental emergency response. We anticipate the **integration of environmental by-laws** to complement and enhance our current development plans to genuinely address augmenting **sustainable and affordable** homes for a wider breadth of residents with marginal incomes.

Flooding

We ask for the City's protection of our permeable ground surfaces and mature canopies. Climate change has caused increasing and frequent torrential rainfall and precipitation. These induced storms have caused documented flooding witnessed currently in BC. The area of **defined soft landscaping** between the main residence and the Garden Suite in the rear yard should be sufficiently large to reduce negative flooding impacts. We recommend a by-law of a 7.5m separation distance between them. Additionally, we ask City Planning to identify topography such as floodplains when refusing permissions for Garden Suites as suggested by the City Steering Group Planners.

Overlook, Massing, Shadowing and Loss of Applicant and Neighbouring Mature Canopy

We ask City Planning to define the specifics of the size of Garden Suites to ensure that they are clearly an **ancillary building** and thus, much smaller than the main residential building. Residents are worried about the introduction of an additional rear residential structure which, potentially, will cause a loss of their existing privacy due to overlook, and massing, and the resulting shadowing onto their properties. Each Garden Suite may impact **three to possibly 5 neighbouring homes**, those on the sides and in the rear. The mature trees on the property and those of the adjacent neighbours are potentially at risk.

The applicant's mature trees certainly may be dispatched for Garden Suite erection. Additionally, the overarching branches of the neighbour's adjacent mature canopies are also endangered from above ground development and potentially the tree roots, with Garden Suite basement excavation. Consequently, we ask for a **restriction that no basements be allowed with Garden Suites.**

Safety

We ask if the emergency one-metre-wide exit/access be identified in the By-Law to ensure alternate safe accommodation.

Infrastructure

Our fear is that should very small lots be permitted, more hard surfaces will result, thus **augmenting Toronto's existing heat island.** We ask the City to be proactive in providing the infrastructure such as storm water and sewage drains to support the proposed onslaught of increased density and hard landscape. We, as Toronto residents, would expect City Council to pass a motion to cover city-wide communities with Flood Insurance when Insurance Companies refuse it to their customers as was the case in BC.

Trusting that you will be receptive to considering our concerns and those of other residents and residential associations more knowledgeable of the ramifications of implementing Garden Suites into our diverse communities.

Sincerely,

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

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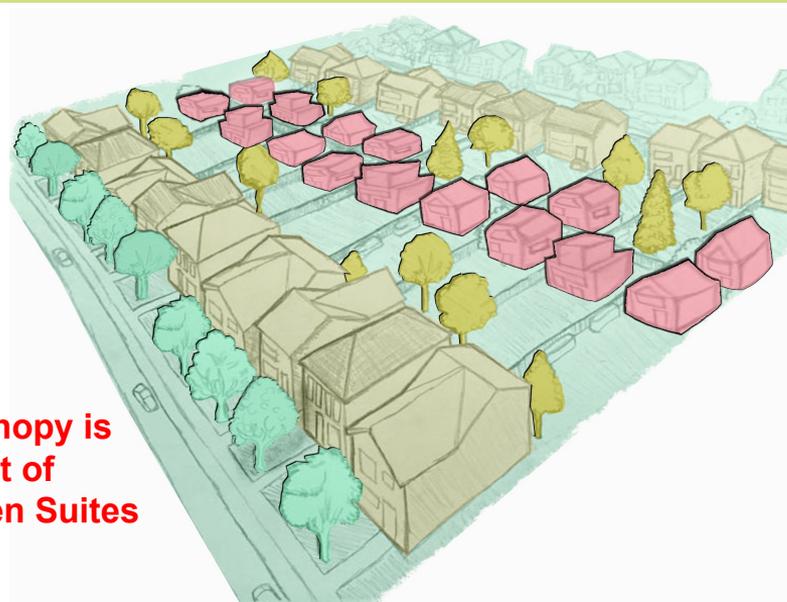
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Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



Notice how the canopy is reduced as a result of incursion of Garden Suites into backyards

Garden-Like Backyards with Border-lined trees



What in the new proposed bylaws prevents this tragic destruction of some of our beautiful neighbourhoods?



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



**3 Garden Suites
surrounding a small
property**

City Wide Bylaws don't consider the individual characteristics of suburban neighbourhoods.



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours

Before Garden Homes - open space...neighbours just far enough away.



Just like Front Yard Setbacks, Back Yard setbacks are
part of **Shared Community Space**
that people who chose the suburbs Value over the density of Downtown.



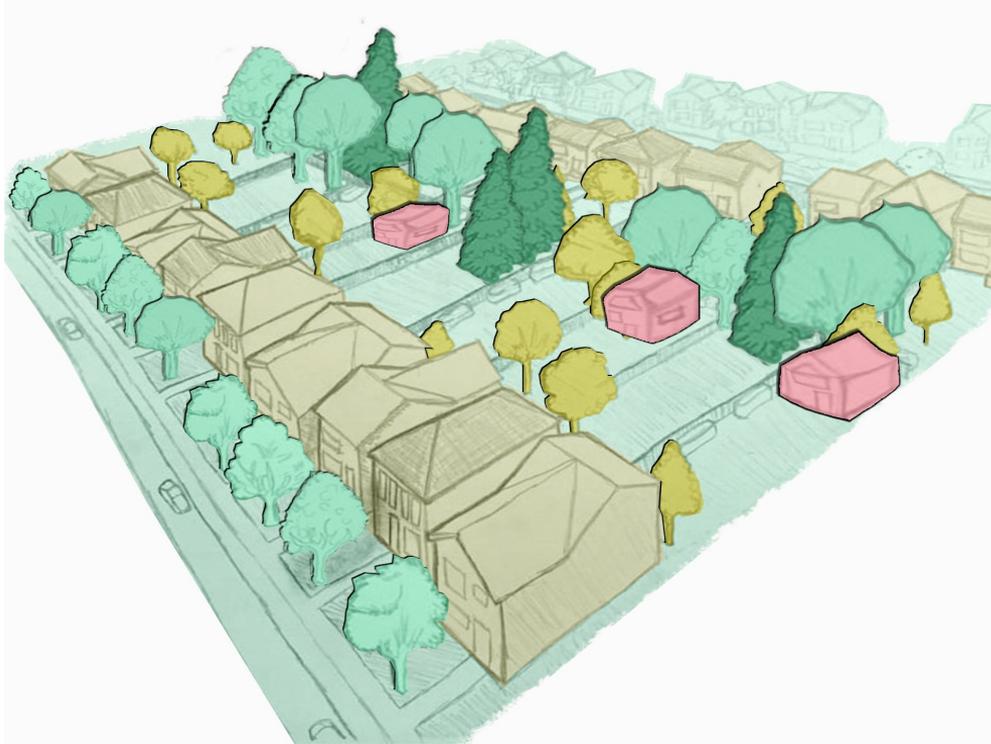
Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



After Garden Suites - would this change will be heartbreaking to those existing residents who love their backyards



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



For each Garden Suite added many more neighbours will be negatively impacted.



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



- Imagine long-time mature residents who enjoy their backyard having 6m high Garden Suites on either side of their modest lots.
- What happens when one of these Garden Homes appears on either side of your modest backyard?
- This is fundamental change to the Character of the Neighbourhood and not in keeping with the Official Plan.
- Much of this impact is driven by the two storey, 6m heights that are are being proposed.
- This scale of building is no longer an addition to affordable housing. The larger that Garden Suites are allowed to become, the less affordable they will actually be.



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



Toronto, due to provincial legislation, is actually the amalgamation of six distinctly characterised cities. City wide bylaws by definition can not respect the distinct character differences and desires of existing and valued diverse types of neighbourhoods.

The idea that a bylaw intended to guide the character development of a neighbourhood in downtown Toronto can be also equivalently applied to a suburban community in Scarborough is either naive or unfortunate downtown planning perspectives.

The fact that these are being considered sheds light on one failed aspect of amalgamation. It also is an indicator that City Planning staff are simply underfunded and understaffed to implement the critical neighbourhood by neighbourhood analysis required to ensure thoughtful area specific bylaw evolution.



Garden Suites - Destroying Neighbourhoods and Neighbours



City-wide As-of-Right bylaws take away the ability of community and immediate neighbours to have a say by providing contextual review of the implications of development changes. When a blanket bylaw can lead to improper development in unique circumstances, the minor variance applications process allows the community a voice and an appeals process.



Significant policy changes, like these, require careful examination of the unintended consequences because the resulting changes to communities, if negative, are almost impossible to undo.

