

Scarborough's Development Dilemma

The Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association (CSVSWRA) is appreciative of Mr. Snider's article to bring attention to the work underway to develop Neighbourhood Character Guidelines for Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village.

I would however like to add clarification about the April 21 Community meeting and more about why the community should pay attention.

What Mr. Snider's article missed was that the meeting was announcing a major win for our neighbourhood! **Let me tell you more.**

You are not imagining that our neighbourhoods are changing. They are. City data supports that, over the last few years, Scarborough SW has been undergoing much physical change from ongoing infills and redevelopment at a rate which is **significantly higher than that of other neighbourhoods** across the City. In fact, 52% of applications that go to Committee of Adjustment (COA) for Scarborough are in Scarborough SW.

Summary of COA Decisions 2017 to 2025: Scarborough Southwest **1605 applications**, Scarborough Centre **427 applications**, Scarborough North **203 applications**, Scarborough Agincourt **214 applications**, Scarborough Guildwood **253 applications**, Scarborough Rouge Park **446 applications**

Typically, investors will try to put the biggest home possible on the lots they purchase, and they have learned that the COA will almost always give them permission to build more. **COA approves 98% of applications reviewed in Scarborough, the 2% that are declined almost always go to TLAB.**

In the fight to influence responsible development the CSVSWRA has worked hard to lobby for and get the City Teams engaged in the development of guidelines that can inform what **future infill development should look like**. City Council formally adopted a Council motion [2025.MM29.27](#) to proceed. The guidelines will include the specific architectural elements and features that make a community unique (e.g., prevailing front porch designs, tree preservation) and provide the COA and City Planning staff the defined criteria to evaluate and deny inappropriate development variance.

Why is this important? With so many plans and applications currently in motion and no signs of slow down in how our neighbourhoods change, **CLEAR guidelines** are a proactive way to provide direction to the COA, Toronto Local Appeal Board (TLAB) and Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) and to help preserve the character of this historical & environmentally fragile and unique area in our city. In other parts of the city where similar Guidelines have been adopted, they have been identified by a number of TLAB members as extremely useful in their decision making. The Planning Department has used them also in their Planning Reports.

Guidelines now will give existing residents, community associations, and city council a formalized document to reference when mediating disputes with developers, although they are an urban design tool and do not override municipal zoning by-laws the Guidelines are something now to point to when before we had nothing.

Once **approved and adopted by City Council** our Neighbourhood Character Guidelines document will hold weight at COA and the TLAB. This will make it much harder for developers to argue that their large infill projects or lot severances are appropriate.

No more guessing for the Scarborough COA panel. When we have clear guidelines on what is best for our cherished neighbourhoods, we challenge you to ignore them!

The draft document for our Guidelines is scheduled for a big reveal at a second community meeting on July 22, 2026, before it proceeds to City Council for adoption.

Call to Action: Please come out to the open house and tell us what you think!

Marina Tadenc, Director CSVSWRA

Summary of Committee of Adjustment (CoA) Decisions - 2017 to 2025										
Ward	Year									Grand Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Scarborough Centre	47	52	55	44	59	35	46	33	56	427
Approved	43	51	53	42	58	32	45	33	55	412
Refused	4	1	2	2	1	3	1		1	15
Scarborough North	28	33	24	24	25	14	24	9	22	203
Approved	26	22	24	16	25	13	22	9	21	178
Refused	2	11		8		1	2		1	25
Scarborough Southwest	279	284	169	146	203	186	119	85	134	1605
Approved	253	252	161	131	190	179	114	81	127	1488
Refused	26	32	8	15	13	7	5	4	7	117
Scarborough-Agincourt	30	33	25	11	21	27	24	14	29	214
Approved	25	28	22	10	20	24	24	14	29	196
Refused	5	5	3	1	1	3				18
Scarborough-Guildwood	37	33	27	21	26	31	27	18	33	253
Approved	34	30	24	16	24	29	27	18	30	232
Refused	3	3	3	5	2	2			3	21
Scarborough-Rouge Park	67	73	47	44	53	46	50	24	42	446
Approved	65	73	47	42	47	44	42	24	34	418
Refused	2			2	6	2	8		8	28
Grand Total	488	508	347	290	387	339	290	183	316	3148