

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS

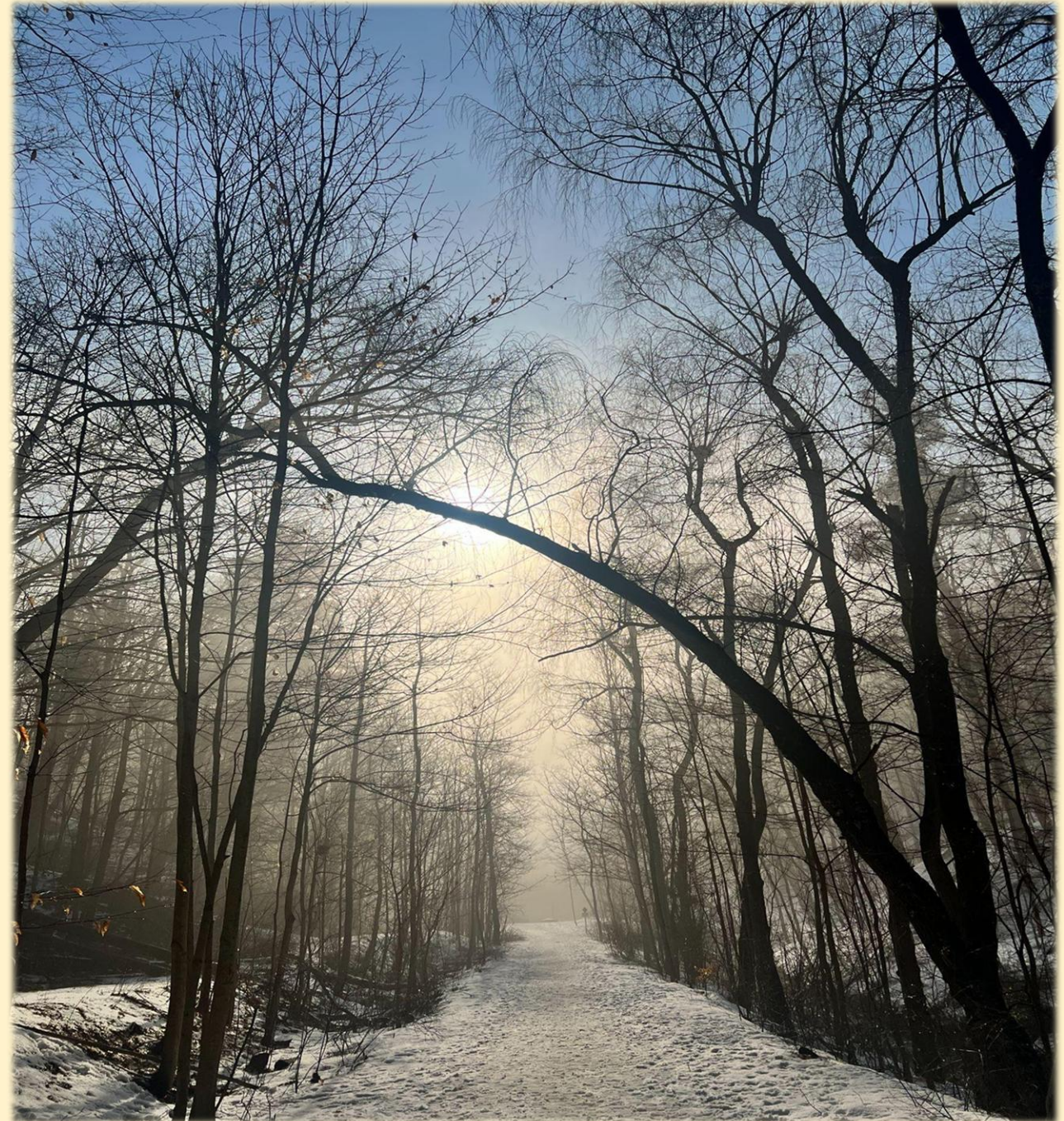


SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS

It's a known fact that trees record information about their surrounding environment. Scientists examine tree ring data to learn more about the past climate to help them predict future changes, sometimes going as far back as hundreds or thousands of years!

How much more could our trees, **Scarborough's Quiet Guardians**, tell us about what they have witnessed over the years if we could reminisce a little ...

Would they tell us all about what they have seen, perhaps they might even tell us to imagine **what could be...**



SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - PREFACE

Scarborough's Quiet Guardians, our trees, were respected, close and dear friends with the First Nation's people that had established settlements along the Scarborough Bluffs around 10,000 years ago. For many years there was a mutual and important understanding that **their own well being was directly connected to the well being of the land.**

In the last 200 years Scarborough Quiet Guardians have witnessed many changes....

Looking down from ancient white cliffs our Quiet Guardians would have spotted and waved their branches to Elizabeth Simcoe in 1793 as she sailed by and looked upon what is known as the Scarborough Bluffs for the first time.

Our Quiet Guardians hold many secrets, in fact in 1803 they most certainly pointed the soldiers marching up the Bellamy Ravine to the best hiding places for their smuggled treasures, in fact hidden so well that to this day the treasure still have not yet been found!

In 1903 our Quiet Guardians surely would have welcomed and provided shade to A.P Coleman, Head of the Geology Department at University of Toronto, as he explored and studied the land they kept watch over. Without a doubt our Quiet Guardians would have raised high winds about ignored environmental warnings and been worried when we pushed forward with development not paying attention to documented concerns and indigenous stewardship practices.

If we tried to listen closely, what message would they have for us today, would we hear their quiet whispers of concern or would their warnings be lost in the wind....

This document will attempt to capture some of the historical information about Cliffcrest Scarborough Village, review impact of change and what lessons have been learned over time and, reflect on the evolving needs of the community. It intends to explore how we can together work to create something that is long lasting and fosters respect for each other's rights and property. Something that promotes pride and sense of community for all that call Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village home.

Let us explore how we can enhance this corner of the world moving forward. Let us record a dialogue of concerns and issues that have and may arise. Let us ensure we address the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability within the neighborhood so that the treasures we still have today remain for tomorrows future stewards.

WE can not go back but we must remember the lessons from the First Nation's people long ago....**that our own well being is directly connected to the well being of the land where we live.**



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SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS
THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE

LOOKING BACK

This section will look back at changes to this area over the last 200 years that had remained mostly undisturbed for thousands of years...



Image of 2023 landslide just east of the Doris McCarthy Trail

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - LOOKING BACK

Archaeological evidence indicates that sand and clay deposits going back to earths last ice age formed the spectacular Scarborough Bluffs we now look up to today!

It was the original Lake Iroquois shoreline and what is believed to be an early route followed by prehistoric animals. First Nation's people established settlements along the Scarborough Bluffs around 10,000 years ago, making it one of the oldest inhabited sites in Toronto.

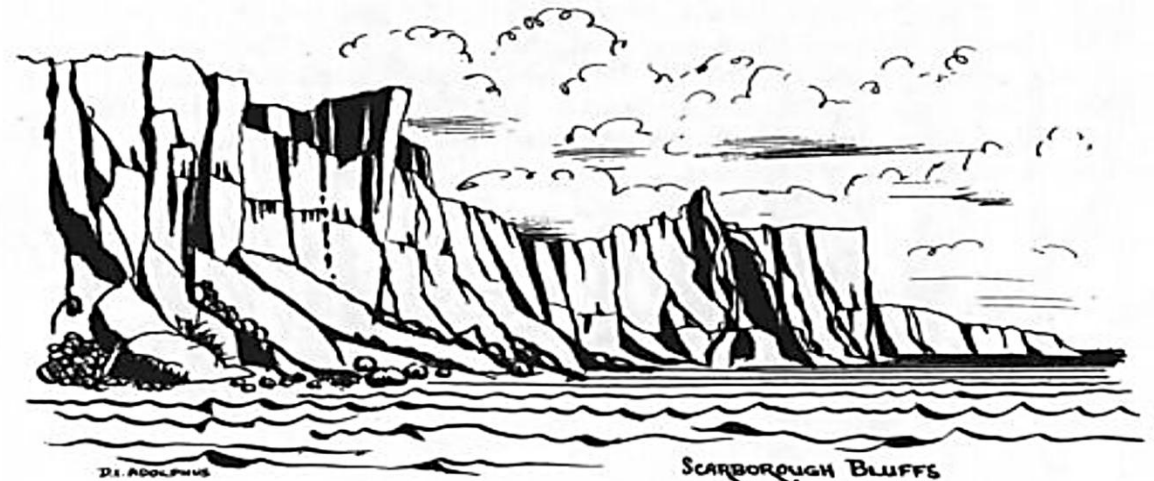
The name Scarborough, in Toronto, was given by Elizabeth Simcoe, who noted the resemblance of the Toronto bluffs to the cliffs North Yorkshire, England. Her diary records her arrival on August 4th, 1793 at the site selected by Lieutenant Governor Simcoe for a new town in Upper Canada on the shores of Toronto Bay, she writes, "The shore is extremely bold and has the appearance of Chalk Cliffs... they appeared so well that we talked of building a Summer Residence their and calling it Scarborough."

Over the last few hundred years this land has experienced significant change under French and British regimes.

CHAPTER III

THE PIONEERS

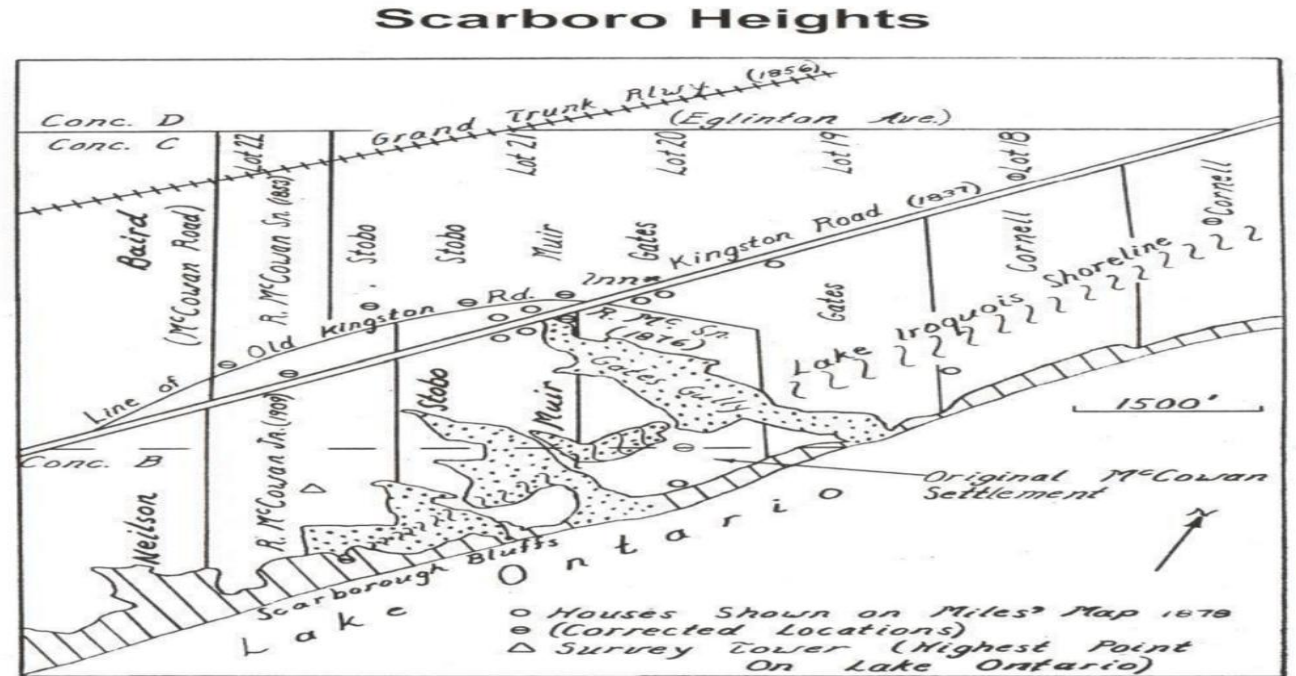
On August 4th, 1793, a few days after her arrival at the site selected by Lieutenant Governor Simcoe for a new town in Upper Canada on the shores of Toronto Bay, his wife recorded in her diary how in a surveyor's boat, "we came within sight of what is named in the Map the high lands of Toronto — the shore is extremely bold and has the appearance of Chalk Cliffs they appeared so well that we talked of building a Summer Residence there and calling it Scarborough."



Source: The History of Scarborough edited by Robert R. Bonis

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - LOOKING BACK

The old survey map shows the first settlements of farms and where a look out tower once stood; these neighbourhoods are the highest point in the City and were the ideal location as high point by Lake Ontario. Gate's Scarboro' Inn was built and located at the top of what is known today as Bellamy Ravine. The ravine was a very significant and well-known passage to the lake in the 18th and 19th centuries. Not only did it provide a great lookout from the top of the Bluffs it was also easy for boat landings and to carry a cargo wagon up the incline. Both legal and illegal trade took place at the bottom of the cliff. Smugglers used the access at night attempting to by pass paying import taxes.



The Scots of Scarborough V1#1

James McCowan Memorial Social History

P. 17



Stories tell of Americans Soldiers in our area back in 1813 that looted and buried the treasure in the Gates Gully, to this day it has not been found! The steep ravine with its powerful waterflow and many springs was once ideal for a water powered sawmill. Rumors that the McCowan brothers had sawmill in the mid-late 1830s near the top of the Bellamy Ravine, today know as the Doris McCarthy Trail. Imagine the many trees cleared for these first settlements of farms. **These were the early days and first changes impacting this area that had remained mostly undisturbed for thousands of years.**

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE -LOOKING BACK

In 1903, A.P. Coleman, Head of the Geology Department at University of Toronto, reported on the geological importance of the Bluffs. He cautioned against development to mitigate erosion on the unstable cliffs.

Images compare Scarborough Bluffs in 1947 prior to urbanization, and in 1962. by Unknown. (9)



Large scale development went forward despite the risk and, in recent years, **houses and backyards started to fall over the edge as predicted.** Yet, A.P. Coleman's warnings continue to be ignored. Development continues Erosion control projects to alleviate the impact resulted in the 'greening' of the cliffs with loss to habitat and ecology of the Bluffs.

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - LOOKING BACK

Kingston Road, that was originally a First Nations trail, would become a key route for settlers and trade, eventually evolving into a modern city road and an important gateway to the City.

Scarborough Village neighbourhoods reflect a historically significant time in the history of Toronto and have features of noteworthy architectural, historical, archaeological and scientific interest, some of the earliest houses built in following the 1905-6 construction of the radial, street-car line on the Kingston Road which resulted in the historical transformation of southern Scarborough from a 19th-century settlement of farms with a cluster villages to a series of planned communities along the lakefront and the picturesque terrain of the Scarborough Bluffs. **Cliffcrest and Guildwood were added as an extension of the original Historical Scarborough Village.**

The completion of Highway 401 between 1947 and 1965 significantly impacted Kingston Road by shifting traffic away from it, effectively transforming it from a major through route to a series of urban arterials. Kingston road was no longer the important gateway to the City it once was.

What was to become of one of the most historic roads in all of Ontario, "The Kingston Road" ?



Image: The Toronto & York Radial Railway provided service to Scarborough along Kingston Road. This view is looking west from Victoria Park Avenue. October 16, 1922 Fonds 16, Series 71, Item 1607

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - LOOKING BACK

In the 1950's Scarborough was flooded with various types of residential development. There were few restrictions on developers. Planning in Scarborough at the onset of the postwar boom was minimal. Under the leadership of Reeve Oliver Crockford from 1948 to 1956, Scarborough underwent unbridled growth at Council and was slow to devise an Official Plan or adopt zoning by-laws to structure and control growth and development.

Archives from the Mc Cowan files reveal the hopes shared by the community for Kingston Road to be developed to look more like a Parisian Avenue, with a grassy median and park benches.

"On April 19 1994 I attended an informal introductory planning session of the "Kingston Road Study". As Bruce pointed out at the meeting, these fertile farms were subdivided 40 years ago with relatively little "planning" at all -- get rid of the houses and trees, put in the roads (as straight and predictable as possible, if you please) and bury the water main. Should the Kingston Road Study focus perhaps on the fact that this is the most historic part of our City -- from the 10,000 year-old Indian village to the Annis brothers' log shanty to William Cornell's potash works? How can we use our community's past to build a better community future? What planning mistakes did we make before? To what successes can we turn for guidance?" (11)



Kingston Road, 1913 Looking West toward Bellamy.
One of the most historic roads in all of Ontario, "The Kingston Road" (12)

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - LOOKING BACK

Scarborough's 1998 amalgamation to Toronto has not benefited Scarborough. We no longer have a voice on Council as the rest of council continuously out votes Scarborough's desired wishes. The differences between urban and suburban ideology and values are not considered. Reports indicate loss of businesses and jobs, poorly maintained roads and parks, loss of green space, inferior transit and no real political will to deal with these issues. It's time that the politicians started to listen to the people in Scarborough on what they want. **One size does not fit all.**

A report published in 2017 states, *"As awareness of the Township's intensifying transformation grew, calls for a 'master plan' to guide development and achieve an optimal pattern of development arose. Ontario's Planning Act of 1946 provided municipalities with the authority to devise and enact an Official Plan. Planning or 'the need for a pattern', as an editorial in the Enterprise (a weekly community newspaper) put it, was necessary given the tremendous growth underway in the Township."*

Without a plan it was feared Scarborough would "become a hodge-podge settlement" rather than "a joy to the eye and a comfort to every citizen who lives within its boundaries." (6)

In a March 2018 interview Councillor Crawford of Ward 20 comments, "In many ways it's exploded. We're seeing an incredible amount of applications, and all combinations of mid-rise and detached townhomes." (10) Exploded it did! Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village has been under enormous pressure from developers. Not only are condominium developers circling retail plazas to assemble properties, but smaller speculators are drawn to the large lots in order to demolish the somewhat affordable houses and replace them with extremely large luxury houses.

It appears the vision and hopes shared back in 1994 at the community meeting were lost. Let me ask again today the same questions local community asked in 1994... *"How can we use our community's past to build a better community future? What planning mistakes did we make before? To what successes can we turn for guidance?"*



SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS
THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE

OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS

This next section will review what is unique about
Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village.
No place else in the City does development come so
close to our Bluffs...



SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS



Let's zoom into...

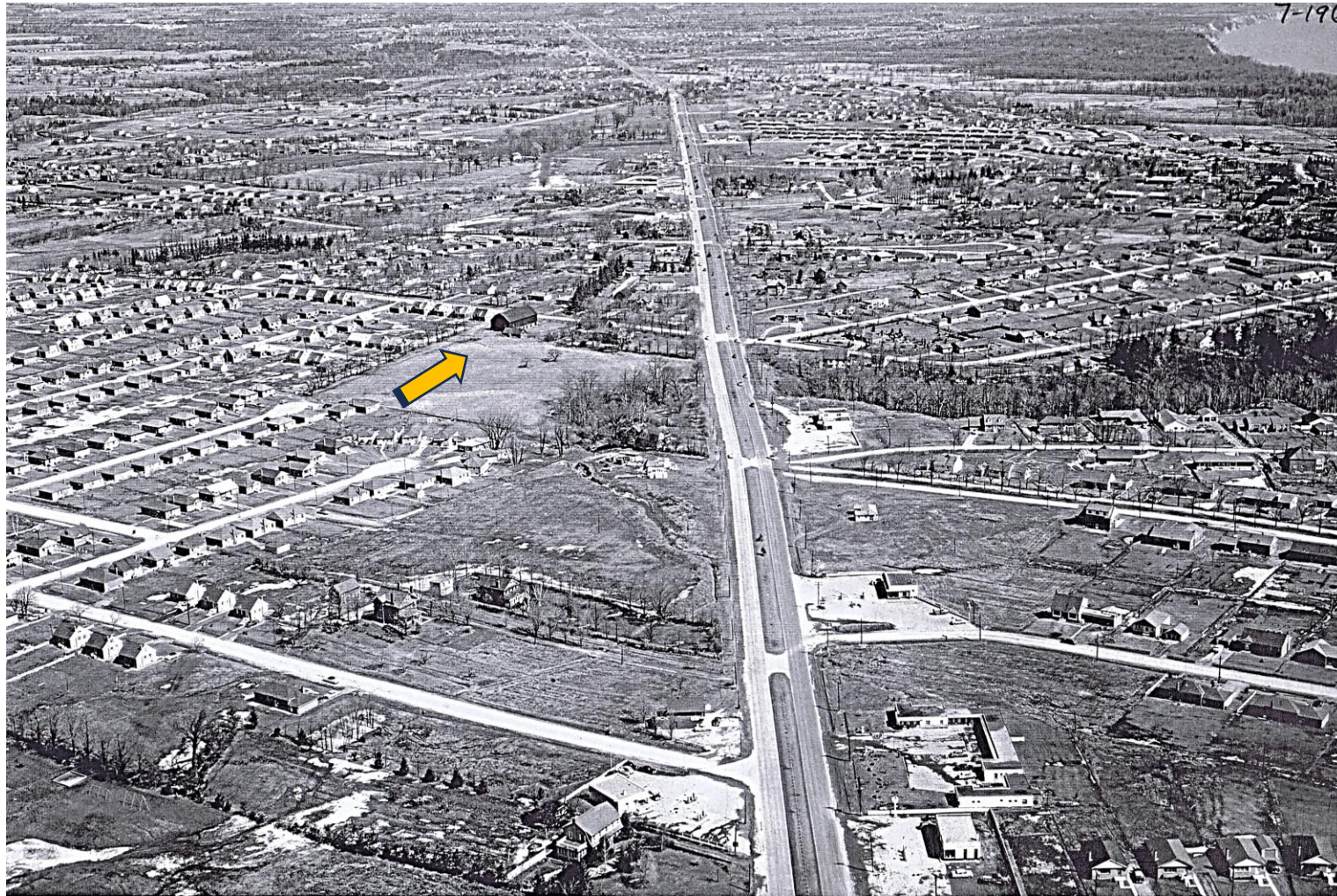
The unique neighbourhoods of Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village located on the edge of Lake Ontario. Midland Ave to the west, Scarborough Golf Club Road to the east, south of the the Canadian National Railway to Lake Ontario and parallel to the spectacular Scarborough Bluffs, that Elizabeth Simcoe first sailed toward and looked up at 1793.

As stated previously, these neighbourhoods reflect a historically significant time in the history of Toronto and currently have some of the earliest houses built in a series of planned communities that run parallel to the Scarborough Bluffs.

No place else in the city does development come so close to our Bluffs, despite caution against development to mitigate erosion on the unstable cliffs over the years development has moved forward and continues to move forward.

Lessons learned continue to be ignored. Due diligence is needed today to protect the Bluffs and Ravines along the stretch of Cliffcrest and Scarborough Village today before there will only be photos left to remember what we once had.

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS



This areal photo shows the landscape of Cliffcrest Scarborough Village in 1959.

Running east to west down the centre of the photo is Kingston Road.

North of Kingston Road towards the centre of the photo where a barn  is located, to assist with orientation, is now the location of Bliss Carman Senior Public School.

The homes located to the north are part of wartime legacy Victory Homes built in the 1940's.

South of Kingston Road is the Park Hill subdivision, with characteristic of the principles of the late 19th and early 20th century Garden Suburb movement with a mix of early 20th century houses exhibiting period styles of the Arts and Crafts and Georgian Revival with consistency of scale, setbacks and landscape creates a cohesive neighbourhood environment.

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The neighbourhoods of Cliffcrest were built to provide affordable housing for veterans returning from WWII and to address the post war housing crisis. These Victory Homes, a wartime legacy, were prefabricated and built from standardized plans for quick construction. These small houses were purposefully built on large lots - governments wanted to encourage families to grow vegetables to provide food for themselves.

In a 2018 TLAB hearing related to a consent application for 119 Harewood Avenue, Expert Witness Cecilia Wong, a City of Toronto planner testified: **“This particular neighbourhood has a character of wide lots, generous side yard setbacks, landscaped open spaces, so I would say that is the character of the neighbourhood.”** The TLAB Chair agreed with Ms. Wong and denied the application. (The study area was bounded by: McCowan (East), Brimley (West), Kingston/St Clair (South), Oakridge(North).

In 1998, Canada Post issued a stamp which featured a modest, affordable “Veteran’s House”, to capture their historical significance.

Deep ravine systems, buried to allow development, run through and under this area. The large lots and mature trees which characterize our neighbourhoods, absorb storm water and mitigate flooding in an area known for its high-water tables.



There was a significant housing shortage in Canada after the war and one of the enduring wartime legacies was the building of new communities for veterans, their families, and other Canadians.

Photo Fight for History by Tim Cook (5)

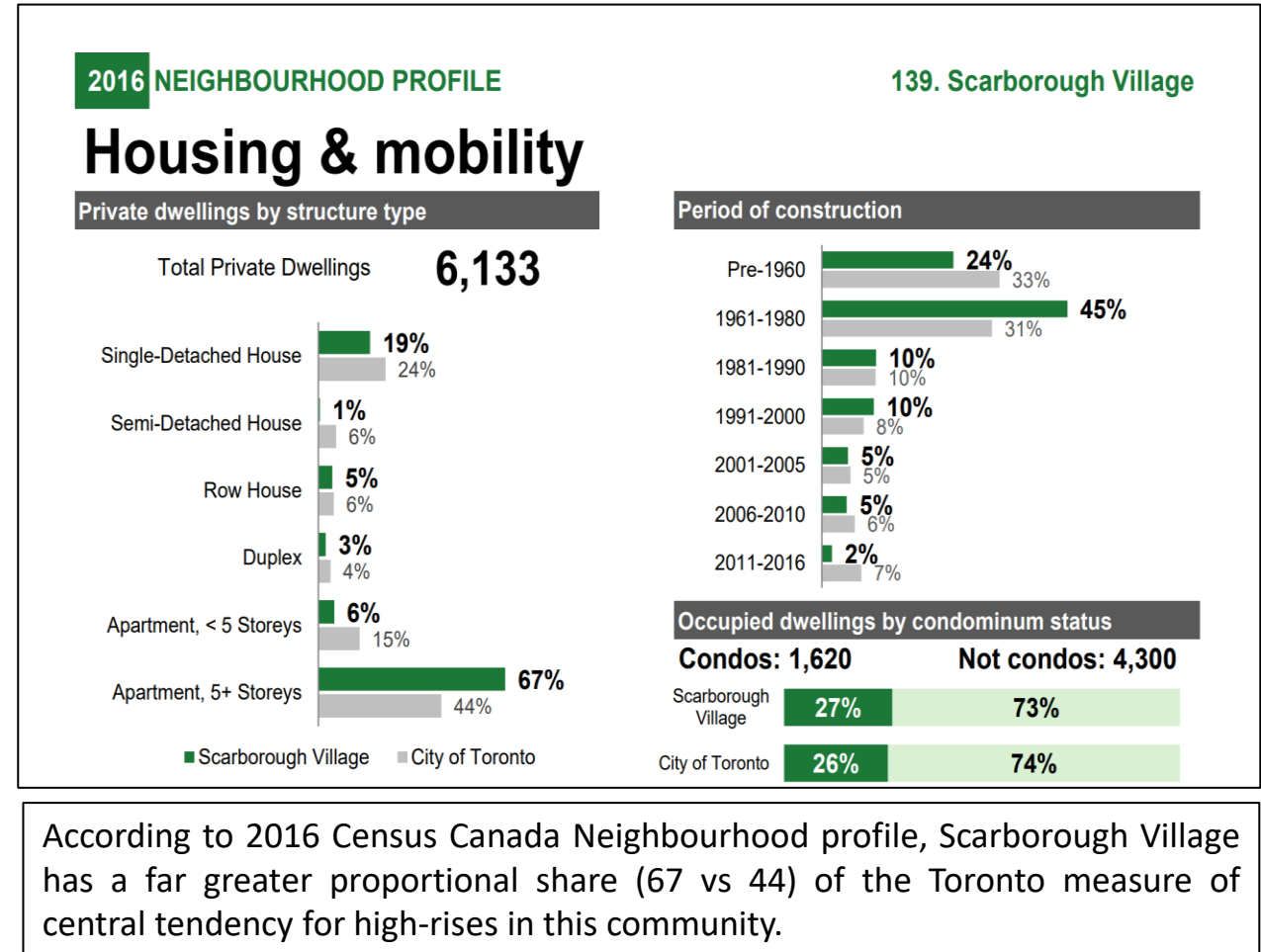
SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Scarborough participated in the apartment boom that swept across Metro in the 1960s and was said to have more public housing than any other Metro municipality. Archives from 1972 confirms that **Scarborough has always been attractive to developers with large tracts of land that remained undeveloped.**

"Planning, or lack of it is a big issue, say hopefuls in booming Scarborough," Toronto Star, November 13th 1972. An earlier newspaper story portrayed Mayor White as staunchly pro-development, while Cosgrove expressed a desire for more consultation with residents and lamented that younger people active in community associations were "tired of Scarborough being a developers' borough." Cosgrove feels like a David challenging Scarborough Mayor," Toronto Star, November 14th 1972. (6) **"Scarborough needs to resist the pressure to accommodate more housing and allow infrastructure to catch up."**

Let me ask again today the same questions local community asked in 1994...

"How can we use our community's past to build a better community future? What planning mistakes did we make before? To what successes can we turn for guidance?"



SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - OUR UNIQUE NEIGHBOURHOODS

South of Kingston Road is the Park Hill subdivision (1)

Surveyed and laid out in 1911-1912, Park Hill's design is characteristic of a Garden Suburb. In Canada, Garden Suburb planning went hand in hand with Arts and Crafts architecture and can be seen in Toronto's Rosedale, Kingsway, Lawrence Park and Leaside neighbourhoods. In contrast to the gridded street patterns of the city, the Garden Suburb was characterized by its curvilinear street patterns, retention and enhancement of natural topography and **the creation of parklike settings through extensive tree planting**. The name Park Hill captures the essence of these principles.

These neighbourhoods have some of the earliest houses built in the start of the 1900s. Homes and streets are aligned with the topography and contours of the Scarborough Bluffs. The bucolic character is enhanced by the absence of sidewalks. Later post-war bungalows and more recent 21st century houses have been added, but the consistency of scale, setbacks and landscape creates a cohesive neighbourhood environment. To the right the words of the 1911 advertisement catch the ethos of the area. Included are homes with heritage designation.

17 THE TORONTO DAILY STAR, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1911

PARK HILL, SCARBORO, LAKESIDE HOMES FOR PARTICULAR PEOPLE



This most beautiful and sightly tract of land starts from the Kingston Road and rises in a rolling slope to its highest point in about the centre of the property, where it tops the bluffs overlooking the broad expanse of Lake Ontario, and the generous and level lots at its base on the lake shore. In all the sections that have been offered to the public of Toronto for rural or summer homes in the last decade, there are none that have even approached this block of and in scenic advantages. It is the one best spot in all outlying Toronto for the man who wants an ideal home in the country. SEE IT.

Schuman on the property, just East of Stop 34 on the Kingston Rd. all day "Saturday, 9. we will motor you out any day next week. Phone M. 5498 for appointments.

Located in Scarborough between Kingston Rd. and Lake Ontario, just Last of Stop 34.

Lots contain from One-Half to Three Acres Each

C. WHITE & CO.
58 Victoria Street

TORONTO'S SUBURBS
The city is growing rapidly. The wilderness of to-day is the metropolis of to-morrow. Modern means of transportation and progress eliminate both time and distance—so that living in the outlying districts is not so much of a hardship to-day as living north of Bloor street was a few years ago. With the change in methods has come a change in living conditions. The city man looks from cramped quarters with longing eyes at the broad expanse made possible, and expands. If you are going outside of the city's centre to live—much to the lake. The air is pure. The temperature is more even—warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, because of the well-known equalizing virtue of a big body of water. The outlook is better—far not bit of scenery or landscape is ever complete without its fair proportions of land, water, hill, and dale.

"This most beautiful and sightly tract of land starts from the Kingston Road and rises in a rolling slope to its highest point in about the centre of the property where it tops the bluffs overlooking the board expanse of Lake Ontario... It is the one of the best spots in all outlying Toronto for the man who wants a home in the country."

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS
THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE

THE LUNGS OF SCARBOROUGH

A look at Scarborough SW's Tree canopy...
the lungs of Scarborough!



12 Hill Crescent

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - THE LUNGS OF TORONTO

What has changed since the 1958 areal photo on page 14?



It took 70 years to grow our magnificent tree canopy!



Cliffcrest Scarborough Village looking WEST

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - THE LUNGS OF TORONTO

While planting new trees is essential, protecting the ones we already have, especially large, healthy, mature trees, is the foundation of a thriving urban forest.

Toronto's Official Plan states that protection "of the natural environment and urban forest should not be compromised by growth, insensitivity to the needs of the environment or neglect." (O.P.3.4). In addition, the Official Plan is clear: d) New development will be located and organized to fit with its existing and/or planned context. It will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces to improve the safety, pedestrian interest and casual views to these spaces from the development by: ii) Preserving existing mature trees wherever possible and incorporating them into landscaping designs (3.1.2 Policy 1)

Developers and investors do not care about preserving our tree canopy. With the rampant increase in development applications in this area we need clear rules to protect our urban forest with abundant with century old trees.



Looking west on Annis Road and looking back ... Annis Road is named after the Annis family arrived in Scarborough Heights in 1793. Not only were they among the first settlers, but they were also very probably the first in the entire Township!

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - THE LUNGS OF TORONTO

Windy Ridge Drive looking EAST



Our Neighbourhoods are an URBAN FOREST... we call ourselves the lungs of Toronto!

One of the definitions of an urban forest is an area of land containing at least 10 percent forest trees. The trees may be of any size. The minimum area for forest classification is one acre.

Trees are also an important integral part of the Character of our Neighbourhoods. Every effort should be made to retain large-growing, long-lived shade trees.

We support adopting ALL the recommendations made by Urban Forestry in this most recent bylaw review to be part of our Neighbourhood Guidelines to underline the importance of protecting our urban forest.

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/water-environment/trees/tree-bylaw-review>

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - THE LUNGS OF TORONTO

Urban Forestry initiatives would include:

- Lowering this threshold to protect more trees earlier in their growth.
- Higher financial penalties for Tree Bylaw contraventions.
- A new “Distinctive Tree” category is being considered to recognize and better protect big trees.
- Providing incentives that would help offset the cost of maintenance of large, healthy trees for homeowners.
- introducing these fees in ravines to help cover the cost of reviewing and processing permits.
- **deny iceberg homes**—large houses with deep, multi-level basements that go beyond the building’s footprint on issues like soil erosion, tree damage, stormwater management and effects on nearby properties

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.MM36.33>

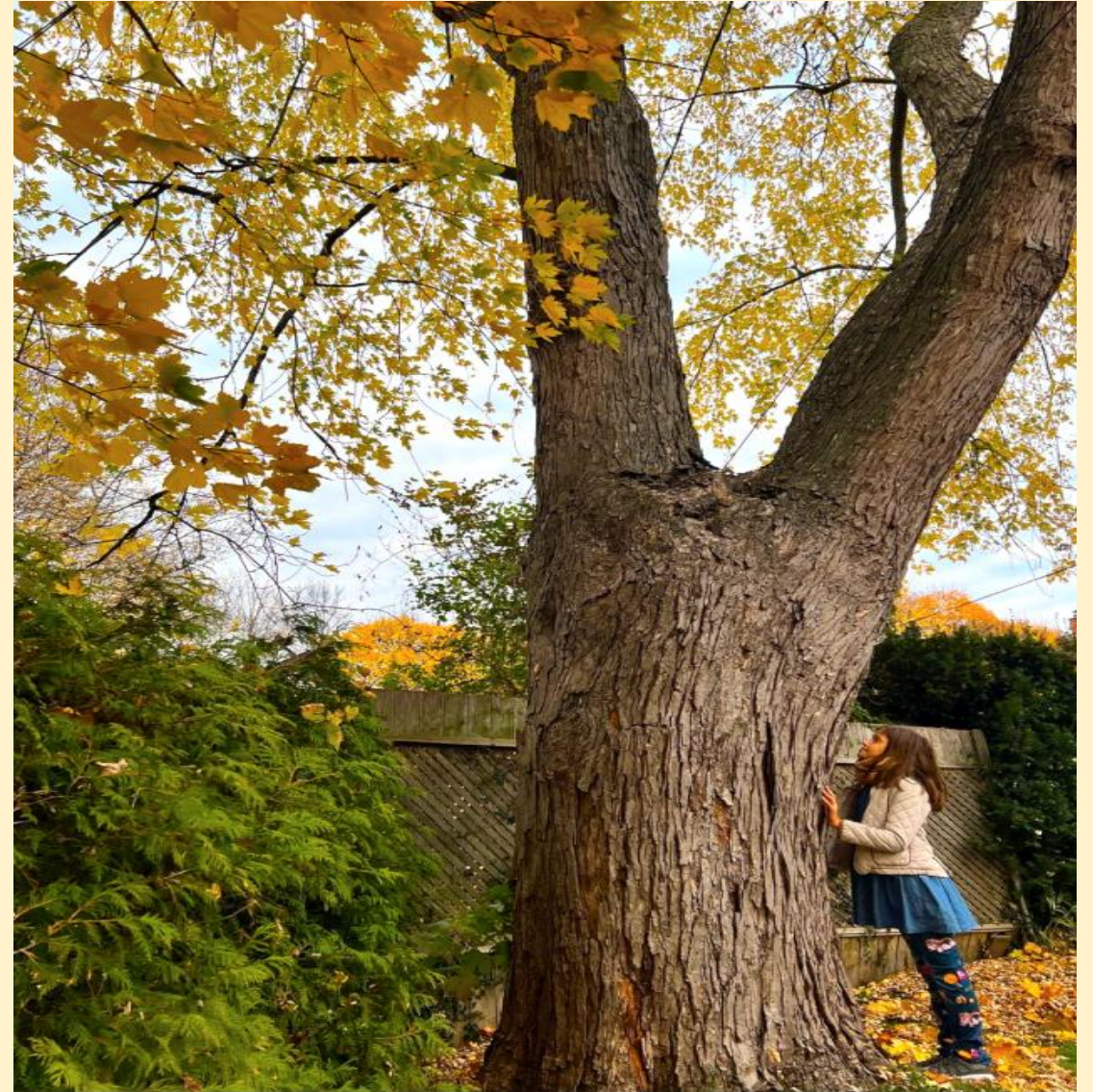


Bliss Carmen field looking NORTH

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS
THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE

TODAY

The Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association looks forward to taking you on a Tour next week to explore our Unique Neighbourhoods. We will review what is driving the change in our neighbourhood with **analysis of issues and opportunities** and why clear guidelines are needed to help preserve the Character of this historical, & environmentally fragile and unique area in our City.



4 Windy Ridge Drive

SCARBOROUGH'S QUIET GUARDIANS - THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF CLIFFCREST SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE - TODAY

Living just a short walk from the Doris Mc Carthy Trail, I have had the opportunity to frequently chat with many visitors that travel to enjoy this part of the city and they always comment about our spectacular Bluffs as well as how beautiful it is to walk through our winding tree covered streets. We really could say we live in a park! I can say for certain that accessible outdoor gathering places is something very much needed in our City.

Locals and visitors depend on the support of City and TRCA to ensure the right decisions are being made for our neighbourhoods, and local environment. Recalling again the vision and hopes shared at the 1994 planning community meeting when they asked "How can we use our community's past to build a better community future? What planning mistakes did we make before? To what successes can we turn to for guidance?"

Looking forward to exploring together today, what could be...

Sincerely,

Marina Tadenc

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

Something extra special you may not know...

Our urban forest is filled with secret trails which are home to and traveled by our special four legged and winged residents. This spring 2 baby fawns were born in my backyard, how special is that! We must ensure that our special residents continue to live and exist happily in our urban forest.

See you tube video of deer traveling through our backyards

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6E-TF08Ftl>



Reference:

- (1) <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/pb/bgrd/backgroundfile-168266.pdf>
- (2) <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-24/the-design-history-of-toronto-s-victory-houses>
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- (12) [*The Scarboro Heights Record* V11 #7](#)

