



Letter from a Concerned Resident

Dear RA:

I have been a resident of the CSVSW community since I was a child. I was raised in Scarborough Village, and spent countless hours as a child and young person climbing trees, catching tadpoles in small ponds, exploring the Bluffs, swimming in the lake, helping neighbours harvest apples, feeding horses at recess, and enjoying all that a semi-rural childhood has to offer, while also being relatively close to downtown.

I moved away as a young adult to the East York area, and when pregnant with my first child in 1986 decided to move back to my neighbourhood to raise my child in this special place close to nature. I currently live in the Cliffcrest Community about a block from the Bluffs. In those days, young middle income families could actually afford a house in this area, but things are very different now. The Developers/Builders have changed everything.

I saw our house, walked into the backyard, looked at all the beautiful mature trees and gardens, and decided to buy it before even entering the building. The building could be altered, but the area, landscape, large yard, and mature trees could not. These were the things that drew our family to this area, and I am sure this is the same for most of the families that call this area home. My adult children can attest to what a wonderful thing it was to grow up in this special area. It helped them develop their love and respect for nature and our fragile environment.

In 1994, when the area was still part of the City of Scarborough, we built an addition onto our 1.5 story home that was within zoning and fit in with the character of neighbourhood. We basically built on our existing driveway, did not tear down the existing structure, did not cut down one tree, or mature shrub, and moved and preserved perennial plantings. Many other young families in our area did the same, again while preserving the trees and Character of the Neighbourhood.

In the past 10 years, I have watched as our neighbourhood has become a construction zone dominated by Developers. The noise, pollution, and disrespect for existing residents disrupts the peaceful enjoyment of our homes and has altered the character of our neighbourhood. No longer have young families moved into smaller homes and eventually renovated them. Young families could not purchase these homes as they are outbid by developers, whose actions have continued to drive up prices. These viable well built homes are being torn down along with the cutting of mature trees, to make way for massive new builds in excess of what zoning

permits, and not in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

I am not against development, but feel that in 2022 any development should preserve permeable land, the mature tree canopy, and builders should be forced to build energy efficient sustainable homes. A permit to demolish a home should only be issued if the home is a safety hazard and not viable. How is creating tons of construction waste, and building massive homes that require large amounts of energy to heat and cool helping to solve the climate crisis or meet the City's 2040 Net Zero target? How is cutting down countless mature trees helping to mitigate climate change, address storm water drainage, or maintain and enhance the tree canopy?

We live in a very fragile, ecologically and geologically significant area. Our area has numerous underground springs flowing to Lake Ontario. The mature tree canopy of the residential homes support countless species of birds and other wildlife, some of which are endangered. As well, this area and the Scarborough Bluffs is a major migratory bird route for many species and the residential tree canopy supports this.

Once purchased by Developers, these houses sit vacant for years or become pseudo rooming houses until the Developer is ready to build. Several homes just on my street alone have taken over 8 years to build, and still are not finished. At one point 12 of 85 houses on our street sat empty, or half built. This pattern is repeated on all streets in our area. How is this solving the housing crisis in our city? The Developers seem to have endless amounts of money and can afford to sit on vacant properties while the value increases. Can a young family afford to do that?

As well, noting that all of these massive new builds want 12 foot basements, they disrupt the water table and underground spring systems. All of the new builds have sump pumps in their basements, some of which are running 24/7, especially in Spring or after it rains. How is disrupting underground springs good for the environment? The water table study

for our area is still outstanding, yet they continue to approve these massive builds that disrupt the water table.

I participated as a member of the Stakeholder's Committee for the Toronto Regional Conversation Authority (TRCA) Scarborough Waterfront Project from 2015 - 2018 and learned so much more about the Scarborough Bluffs during this process. We on the Committee

including the TRCA Experts ensured that the focus would be on preservation of the Scarborough Waterfront and preservation and enhancement of the natural environment. We did not want the area to be overdeveloped and the natural environment destroyed. We spent countless hours, consulted with local residents, and reached a compromise in the design of the trail which enhanced and preserved the natural environment.

<https://trca.ca/conservation/green-infrastructure/scarborough-waterfront-project/>

The Scarborough Bluffs are a geological treasure and need to be preserved. They are a unique sequence of glacial sediments on the shore of Lake Ontario, and represent 60,000 years of glacial history. The Bluffs are one of the last remaining and most complete records of the glacial advance at the end of the Pleistocene Ice Age, and the shoreline of Lake Iroquois. They are world class examples of preserved glacial sediments and of significant scientific interest. It was recommended in 1912 that a wide verge be left to accommodate erosion, but the developers came and subdivisions were built. Today, the most significant erosion threat to the Bluffs is from storm water, hardened watersheds, removal of vegetation and replacement with paved surfaces, disruption of underground streams, and deforestation. Should we not learn from past mistakes? How is the overdevelopment of this area with massive residential builds and condos preventing this erosion?

The Scarborough Waterfront supports a wide variety of floral and fauna that is more diverse than many rural areas in Ontario. The TRCA February 2012 study; Scarborough Shoreline Terrestrial Biological Inventory and Assessment identified over 656 species of plants 94 of which are species of concern. There were 87 species of fauna identified including; 69 birds, 11 mammals and 7 herpetofauna, some of which are endangered and their habitat needs to be preserved. This study confirms the importance of the surrounding residential mature tree canopy to the ongoing existence of these species. This environment should be preserved and enhanced not destroyed.

After extensive Committee meetings, community consultations etc., the proposed plans for the Scarborough Waterfront Project were sent to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in 2018. Immediately after our Committee work was completed, and us "tree huggers" out of the picture, the Developers came. That is when all of the Condo proposals were submitted. The most egregious being the Windy Ridge condo which is a stone's throw away from one of the only access points and major storm drainage

ravines The Doris McCarthy Trail. Our worse fears were realized, and the Developers were circling like vultures to build unaffordable Condos and market them as being close to the Bluffs and the Waterfront Trail.

All of these concerns have been brought to our municipal and provincial politicians with little response and action. The City of Toronto seems blind to the concerns of the residents of Scarborough. Their departments operate in silos with no coordination between planning, water, and urban forestry. Their ongoing approval of these massive residential builds and condos that include the cutting down of hundreds of mature trees are in direct contradiction to their 2040 Net zero goal and preservation and enhancement of the tree canopy and have a significant negative impact on climate change and the erosion of the Scarborough Bluffs.

I will continue to work on preserving the unique nature of our community and protecting the Natural Environment for future generations to enjoy. I hope you will all join me in this effort.

Thank you. Sincerely,

Concerned Resident