



Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association (CSVSWRA) was asked to speak at an event organized by SUN, (Scarborough United Neighbourhoods) with special guest Councillor Matlow in attendance on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

We were asked to share some of the concerns we are experiencing with development in our Scarborough neighbourhoods. We created the following narrative to help bring to life how Scarborough is changing.

A SHOPPING TRIP IN SCARBOROUGH

Today I'm going to be taking my friend Lynne shopping and I'd like take you along with me for a ride also.

The store is 2 kilometres away. Lynne is 80 and the walk would be too much for her. Lynne likes to bike but it's icy outside and the snow has not melted so not a good idea. A significant walk to the bus stop and three short bus rides would get us to the store but its not efficient and very time consuming. So, looks like we will have to drive.

On the way I drop off my husband at the Go Station, the parking lot is full. Good thing I'm dropping him off or he would have had no place to park.

As I drive passed a new build on the street, I recall a weekend call from an upset neighbour where 5 LARGE mature trees were cut down without permits. With no bylaw enforcement on weekends all we could do is place a call with 311 and lodge a complaint with Urban forestry. Many letters raising concerns for our trees are never responded to and ignored.

This same home then went to COA, (Committee of Adjustment) and variances were approved for this monster build. I remember that when engaging with local residents to prepare for the COA hearing explaining to them that we were not allowed to question why 3 kitchens and 10 bathrooms were needed. You may be interested to know that stats reflect that only 2% of applications that go to COA in our catchment are refused. This is not including the homes that fall within "small residential builds."

As we sit waiting for the red light to turn, I look over at the white and blue sign posted on the side of the road.... any guess's what the sign is for?

The sign shows **outdated** information but I am very familiar with the details. More than 100 residents attended the Community Consultation for this application. Many follow ups and concerns raised with City Teams were never responded to. Despite the fact that the applicant submitted studies that City Staff were not satisfied with, the application was deemed complete and the applicant was able to appeal to the OLT, (Ontario Land Tribunal).

The RA engaged legal counsel and professional planner to ensure that we had a seat at the negotiation table for this part of the process. For the most part we found ourselves in the dark. The City, as lead by their legal team, chose to work with the Developer without **once** engaging with the RA.

This is just one blue and white sign and one experience. These signs can be found all over our city and from speaking with other Residents Associations, they also echo the same concerns. Community Consultations are more like presentations and reports/studies appear to be a check box.

The car behind me honks to let me know the light has turned green and so I continue my drive.

We pass the Doris McCarthy Trail. Lynne mentions, that there were two separate significant landslides that occurred recently just east of the Trail. I remember that I need to send another follow up email to the city. Since 2022 the RA has been asking the City Teams for the studies that report on CUMULATIVE IMPACT of development.

For example, there are 3 immediate proposals with 2 story deep parking lots within a block of each other running parallel to the Bluffs, Data reveals a potential population increase of 2500 residents just from these 3 developments. None of the Avenue Segment Studies look at the BIG picture of all three of these proposals collectively. What will the impact be to infrastructure, traffic & safety, schools, healthcare, environment and our spectacular Bluffs!

Each of the 14 applications currently being reviewed by City Planning in the RA catchment is assessed on a site by site basis, none address the affordable housing crisis or that Scarborough Village has been identified as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area. The full impact to fragile environment with high water tables by the Bluffs is not given due attention. Little consideration is given to how this rapid growth has the potential to destabilize existing neighbourhoods unless looked at holistically.

I turn the corner and pass a condo that was completed 3 years ago, Lynne points that ALL the retail spaces are still empty. I notice a parking enforcement officer is giving out a ticket for a car parked illegally on the road. Looking down the street I can see the overflow parking from condo residents along the street. I complain out loud to Lynne, "Well if they did have stores I don't know where I would park?" The elimination of minimum parking for new developments needs to be reviewed again. Unless there is sufficient transit, there should be parking provided. Nobody wants to park illegally, they do it because they have no other choice.

Traffic is backed up here, the city is again doing some infrastructure work. *I tell Lynne that a friend that lives in the Birchmount area shared with me that a report for from the Basement Flooding Improvement Study Team for just the Birchmount area indicates "A probable total net cost to the City of \$339M for the recommended works on public property". I looked into the studies for our area and they are still not complete. How can City Planning can move forward with mass development without understanding current and future limitations of our infrastructure?*

As we sit in traffic, I observe traffic going in the opposite direction and notice 3 buses pass, one right behind the other using one of the red bus lanes. Then I don't see any buses for some time. Traffic starts to move and as I come down the road towards the store, my car hits a big pot hole and Lynne comments, "In the 40 + years I have lived in this neighbourhood I do not recall the roads being in such disrepair, and what are those battered white poles along the road, what is happening to our city? "

I notice Tony walking his dog and pull over to say hello. He tells me he has made another call with regards to the build next door to his home. Review of the Toronto Building Permit Status page for this site reveals many failed inspections in addition to many calls by residents for safety violations over the last 3 years.

I comment that I remember when this house was a "suspected" rooming house for more than 2 years occupied anywhere from 2 to 15 renters with multiple cars on the driveway. Calls were made to 311, MLS and Fire Dept for investigation at least once a week for the entire two years to enact enforcement for potential bylaw violations with no real consequence. Lynn comments, "Wow that's 5 years you have been dealing with that build Tony! I am concerned for the homeowners that will buy those homes" and we all agree.

Tony points to 8 other homes recently purchased by developers on his street alone. He explains that there is group of investors, architects, and builders who have amassed an overwhelming inventory of homes in our local neighbourhood. One of them recently was in the news for having his building licence evoked. Lynn asks "Will these homes become rooming houses also?" I share that these homes will likely sit empty or become "POP up rooming house". These homes will probably never get registered or be brought to compliance, they are a temporary step in their very organized process by a group of developers as they wait for permits to be issued. These homes are easy to identify, unkept lawns, overflowing cars, not enough garbage bins etc.

I tell Lynn that the home next door to me is a “suspect” rooming house also. I often walk around picking up garbage that has blown over from the house next door. I have spoken to the tenants before and told them they should ask their landlord for more garbage bins, 2 is not enough for 10 people. **They ask me to please not say anything, they do not want to risk being evicted.**

“That sounds like a real problem” says Lynne. I agree and tell her its going to get much worse.

I go on to explain that despite many RA and resident letters raising concerns Multi-tenant Housing will be permitted in Scarborough as of March 31st. Toronto has NOT received enabling legislation from the province to allow inspection; Without a tested framework for MTH that has proper controls and remedies in place, these significant and abrupt policy changes have the potential for unforeseen and unintended impacts on residents and entire neighbourhoods.

The RA participated in ALL the recent EHON initiative consultations, again these appear to be presentations and check marks in the process. *Letters were sent with no response.* We have yet to see what the challenges and impacts of the approved Multiplexes and Garden suites will be as well as the not yet approved Major Street initiative.

It is a frightening to consider the future of our neighbourhood knowing rooming houses want to be expanded, the city continues to approve more **Condos** and push the **EHON initiatives** without evaluating full impact. Furthermore, these builds **will NOT deliver the much-needed affordable housing the city needs.**

While I help Lynne unload her shopping from my car, Peter will speak to you all with regards to some of the concerns we saw during our drive today.

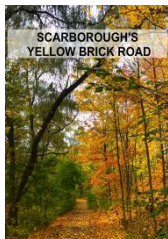
Thank you for joining us for a drive through our special neighbourhoods. **If you would like to learn what information Peter shared with the group, his notes are captured below.**

Thank you to SUN for organizing this event and Councillor Matlow for reaching out to meet with us.

It was a pleasure to connect with so many Community Leaders in Scarborough, you are all amazing! Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,
Marina Tadenc & Peter Thachuk
Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

www.cliffcrestscarboroughvillagesw.ca/about-us



**For anyone that is not familiar with this part of Scarborough have a look at,
“Scarborough Yellow Brick Road” a memory book created by the RA.**

John Smee of the Bluffs Monitor created a virtual copy of the memory book,
<https://www.bluffsmonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/flipbook/122/book.html>

Printed copies of “Scarborough’s Yellow Brick Road” are also available at your local library,
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDM4386915&R=4386915>

PETER'S SPEAKING POINTS:

Please note: Given time constraints in the actual meeting I had to paraphrase; therefore, not all of the following made it into the video.

I am going to be speaking specifically on housing and on a few housing related city initiatives. I believe it is important to move beyond the 'more housing narrative' and therefore in this spirit, I offer up the following suggestions, and am happy to answer any questions and/or speak with any & all, time permitting.

Multiplexes and Rooming houses should only be allowed when either the owner (beneficial owner or otherwise), or property management is licensed with 24 hour contact info. IT SHOULD NOT BE UP TO NEIGHBOURS TO MONITOR PROPERTY STANDARDS.

All costs associated with the Rooming house program, including licensing and bylaw enforcement should be paid for by the investors/owners and not borne by the taxpayers at large.

Additionally, the city should not legalize rooming houses until they both seek and receive enabling legislation (or regulations) from the province, that allow the municipality a big enough stick, to compel existing unlicensed rooming houses to become licenced. Currently there is no incentive, that I am aware of, that requires unlicensed Rooming homes to comply. The real issue here is that the city is unable to enter these unlicensed and therefore unlawful properties without permission.

NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE ENTITLED TO CERTAINTY. APARTMENT ZONES IN THE Official Plan CURRENTLY ALLOW A HEIGHT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT RATIO OF 1:1 - MEANING THE HEIGHT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SHOULDN'T BE ANY HIGHER THAN THE WIDTH OF THE ARTERIAL ROAD. In most instances Arterial road, higher density Apartment Zone developments should be capped at 9 stories, in order to supply the missing middle, which most Urban Planners agree is missing from Toronto, but few seem to be advocating when they are being paid by 'For profit Developers'. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE PERMISSION HOLD-UPS, THAT DEVELOPERS ARE FOND OF COMPLAINING ABOUT, SOMETIMES, MAY BE THE RESULT OF DEVELOPERS ATTEMPTING TO EXCEED CURRENT AS OF RIGHT ZONING??

Environmental (Neighbourhood) Discrimination needs to stop. Currently, Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (N.I.A.'S) that are 'DESIGNATED' parkland priority neighbourhoods', are losing their green space at an alarming rate. It would be interesting to check if the non N.I.A.'s are losing their green space at the same rate.

The tree canopy must be preserved better than the current 3 to 1 ratio for tree replacement - PERHAPS MORE LIKE 50:1 as some scientists are suggesting.

Housing is a complex issue and we will not pretend we have all the answers - I am not sure anyone does. However, we do have a few suggestions: So, If I may leave you with anything today, it would be the following 4 words: LAND, LABOUR, CAPITAL & MATERIALS

For it is these 4 simple words: LAND, LABOUR, CAPITAL & MATERIALS that are the 4 fundamental components in the development of any type of housing. Currently, I have been informed, from a variety of sources, that For Profit Developers cannot currently afford to build in Scarborough.

THE OBVIOUS QUESTION IS WHY? To varying degrees the answer has to be, the current costs of LAND, LABOUR, CAPITAL & MATERIALS

The Cost of capital - particularly, the returns required by PRIVATE EQUITY has gone up greater than any decrease in land values in Scarborough. I have been informed that this is the reason why numerous, way past the approvals stage, shovel ready projects, have not yet broken ground.

Another important issue may be the insistence that housing - particularly rental housing, can concurrently serve two masters.

Master # 1 is treating housing as a commodity &

Master #2 is expecting it to be someone's home.

In my mind these are two conflicting priorities. Please understand that I am not suggesting there isn't room for 'FOR PROFIT HOUSING', it is just that it does not work for providing more 'Affordable Housing' for lower to middle income families and/or sustainable housing for complex needs or unhoused people.

So what if, in some instances, we think about decoupling Housing as a Commodity - from the provision of housing; or if that is too ambitious - seriously consider some ways to reduce the cost of even one, or possibly more of : LAND, LABOUR, CAPITAL and MATERIALS

For instance: The Land component could be reduced by not selling City owned land. It instead could be leased for 99 years with or without options. This is not without precedent - I am happy to speak to anyone about this later. Leasing, instead of selling municipally owned land, would not only be used as a tool to decrease land costs - but it would allow future generations to chart their own course depending upon their future priorities.

I further understand that an idea from a generation or two ago (Equity and Non-Equity co-ops) is gaining traction and support through the various levels of government. Personally I applaud this 'Back to the Future' forward thinking.

I am also aware of organizations such as OPTIONS FOR HOMES or HOME OPPORTUNITIES and I am not here to comment on their viability, or the merits of their models - but the general idea, as I understand, is a home ownership model resulting in deeded title, financed through a cooperative financing medium. I believe this idea, if done properly, has merit. Stated as simply as possible, I believe it would be like creating a 'Bank of MOM & Dad, for those who don't have a Bank of Mom & Dad', by deferring a goodly amount of the required down payment, until the owner sells or rents their premises out. I am being very simplistic here - but any plan that has the potential to reduce the upfront cost of Home Ownership by deferring the COST OF CAPITAL down the road to disposition; or some other triggering mechanism should be considered as well as carefully scrutinized.

Additionally a cheaper alternative to Private Equity may be TAX-FREE MUNICIPAL BONDS - specifically earmarked for various projects. The nuances of how these bonds would work could be both specific to end users, or those looking for personal investments. The point being that they could be project specific or lumped in with other 'infrastructure like funds' depending upon needs and wants. Again FEDERAL/ PROVINCIAL cooperation in terms of permissions would be needed.

Lastly, it would be our contention that CITY OWNED LANDS SHOULD NEVER BE SOLD UNTIL HIGHEST & BEST USE HAS BEEN DETERMINED WITH ALL APPROVALS IN PLACE - otherwise the city (which is ultimately all of the taxpayers) may not have received full market value for taxpayer-owned City properties.

Peter Thachuk
CSVSWRA

RECORDING OF SUN COUNCILLOR MATLOW FORUM on March 19.

Josh Matlow met with SUN and the various Scarborough Leaders and listened to Scarborough specific areas of concern and suggestions to make improvements.

The information shared resulted in everyone learning something new which is Sun's Goal. Considering all the various topics, they all connected to the same base...Caring about Scarborough Residents & Our Communities!

Thank you SUN for this successful event and Josh Matlow for taking the time to meet with us.

Here is a recording of the event, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u3BFDhC5Rs>