



December 16, 2024
Toronto City Hall
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To: Councillor Kandavel
Councillor Ainslie
Mayor Olivia Chow
John Elvidge, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Item 2024.PH17.2 - Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods Neighbourhood Retail and Services Study Phase Two Final Report - Request to Amend the Zoning By-law to facilitate small-scale retail, service, office, and house occupation users within Neighbourhoods

The Cliffcrest Scarborough Village Southwest Residents Association (CSVSWRA) is located in south Scarborough, our residents are not opposed to reasonable commercial development, but we strongly feel that more work needs to be done before permitting bars and restaurants with patios and delivery-based business in residential areas so that we can better understand the full impact of these significant changes as well as controls needed to keep communities safe.

We join other resident associations across the city to express the concerns raised about the EHON Neighbourhood Retail and Services Study Phase Two Final Report. We believe that the expansion report is poorly thought out and will negatively impact all neighbourhoods. Some members of our RA participated in the last-minute virtual Residents Association consultations that were held on December 12th. Many concerns were expressed, but it was the general feeling that our concerns were not being listened to by Michael Noble and his project team. Toronto planners claim that safeguards are in place to prevent adverse impacts. However, we know the safeguards are inadequate because we've dealt with real world examples of these kinds of businesses opening or trying to open in residential neighbourhoods and the problems they cause.

What are our main concerns?

1. Bars

Alcohol licenses are controlled by the province, not the city. The proposal will allow an "eating establishment" (i.e., a restaurant with seating and a patio) in residential areas without further permissions needed from the city. The business owner can then obtain a liquor license from the provincial AGCO, and they rarely deny a license. Convenience stores are already allowed to sell beer and wine. Once seating is allowed—either inside or on a patio—patrons can consume on-site, effectively turning the business into a bar.

2. Patios

Patios are the most problematic element for neighbourhood streets. Imagine living next to a property and then one day waking up to find your neighbour has opened a bar with a patio just one metre from your property line. You would have people hanging out, smoking, and drinking in front of your house at all hours. The bar can stay open until 2 a.m., and since the



property is zoned for this business, you would have no recourse to the City.

Does that seem fair to residents who have bought homes or rented apartments on what they believed were quiet residential streets? If you have a noise complaint, the police will not respond anymore, and bylaw officers, already overworked, would be unavailable. Furthermore, loud voices are not considered noise, only music.

3. Increased Traffic and Child Safety

Businesses that primarily operate for delivery, resulting in delivery vehicles will lead to more traffic at all hours and less parking. Businesses that attract customers from outside of the neighbourhood will bring more traffic and lead to less parking as there is no requirement for businesses to provide parking. This could impact child safety, as increased traffic in residential communities may heighten the risk of accidents, particularly during school hours when children are traveling to and from school.

The City claims that these businesses are intended to support local residents. However, in most cases, there aren't enough customers within a neighborhood to sustain a business solely on local patronage. To be profitable, these businesses would inevitably aim to attract customers from outside the community leading to more traffic.

4. Proposed Maximum Sites do not Appear to be Based on Studies

The maximum site of 110 and 150 sq. m is the size of many of the dwellings in our catchment area. Has any study been done to see what the size of existing legal non-conforming stores are for comparison? Was there any analysis of the sizes and issues created by such operations?

5. Other Concerns:

- Cannabis shops replacing residential housing.
- Stores selling vapes, cigarettes, and alcohol opening near schools.
- Impact on housing supply, as developers or landlords convert residential properties to more landlord friendly commercial leases.
- Restaurants and take-out establishments on Major streets creating issues with unpleasant odors, increased garbage, and crowds.

Given the permanent and radical nature of these changes, real safeguards for Toronto residents are essential and the by-law should contain them. As it stands, the proposed by-law will likely lead to future problems for residents and set the stage for needless confrontations. We believe these changes will disrupt the fabric of our communities and ask for your support in pressing for meaningful safeguards before this proposal moves forward.

The CSVSWRA recommends that the matter needs to be sent back for further review and refinement and **NOT** be approved by Council. It has been clear from the virtual meetings held on the 12th that many groups were not fully aware of the depth and the expansive nature of the proposed amendments. We also recommend that the City auditors examine the impacts on regulatory costs, such as bylaw enforcement, noise complaints, and inspections which are certain to increase, and the cost benefit to the City and its ratepayers.

Sincerely,

Tanya Baksh, CSVSWRA Director and Co-Chair of Planning and Development

Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association

<https://cliffcrestscarboroughvillagesw.ca/>

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