



July 19, 2023

Dear Councillors, Matlow, Burnside and Robinson,

Thorncliffe Park Urban Farmers (TPUF) is a community-based group in the Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood in Toronto. Thorncliffe Park is a high-density, apartment neighbourhood with a high population of recent immigrants, refugees, and racialized communities. It is identified by the City of Toronto as one of the priority neighbourhoods for improvement based on the socio-economic challenges faced by the residents.

TPUFs objectives are to provide resources and knowledge of gardening, farming, and the importance of ecological biodiversity to promote team building, community engagement, volunteerism, and love of nature. We also strive to address food insecurity by growing vegetables that are distributed amongst the residents and donated to the local food bank. TPUF maintains two vegetable plots, pollinator habitats and 20 fruit trees. Last year, TPUF produced more than 1500 lbs of produce and over 2000 volunteer visits to the farm during the season.

Through our outreach with the local schools and youth organizations, we host weekly programs for youth where they learn about gardening, story writing, importance of nature and natural habitats, value of ecological biodiversity while developing their social and team building skills.

TPUF strongly supports keeping the Ontario Science Centre in the Flemingdon Park neighbourhood. It is a keystone organization in the area that has been serving the high needs sister communities of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park for decades. Ontario Science Centre has been a nucleus of learning and adventure for families and youth of these communities. By moving this to Ontario Place we will disenfranchise these families. We are very hopeful that this landmark organization will continue to serve in its existing location for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Najeeb Siddiqui, PhD

Pollinator Garden Lead - Thorncliffe Park Urban Farmers

Lead Steward - Toronto Nature Steward - Lower Don Trail, Flemingdon Park