



To: Planning and Housing Committee (phc@toronto.ca)  
CC: Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillor Perks (PHC Chair) & all City Councillors  
SUBJECT: Concerns related to 2025.PH25.3 (Neighbourhood Retail & Services)

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee (PHC),

I'm a lifelong resident of Scarborough, spokesperson for SUN (Scarborough United Neighbourhoods) which connects to over 50 Resident & Community Associations, over 300 Residents and is connected with the newly formed COTRA (Coalition of Toronto Residents Associations) which connects to many City Resident Associations.

I'm writing of our concerns for the upcoming vote on the Neighbourhood Retail & Services (NRS) proposal and to ask that PHC seriously listen to the 1,000's of diverse residents & home owners voices Citywide, who stand with the Coalition of Toronto Residents Associations (COTRA).

The NRS proposal, as it is being put forward to PHC lacks local context and has not addressed the material impacts that new commercial uses bring into our neighbourhoods, including pests, after hours noise, traffic, garbage, the distribution of cannabis and alcohol, and reduction in housing for families. The city's enforcement resources are also limited and not always timely to address issues, and the process can be protracted. And given the city's concerns about lack of housing, the proposal could also negatively impact housing availability.

The realities in Scarborough are also not the same as in the old City of Toronto or downtown core, which Toronto City Planning always seems to assume.

The realities are:

- Limited rapid transit, and infrequent or badly connected buses where routes exist;
- Major streets, either within 15 minutes walking distance to our main streets where local businesses and plazas must thrive, or a half hour plus walk away from a main street and transit, often with no sidewalks and lined with trees;



We are adamantly opposed to any “**As of Right**” proposal that creates blanket permissions with no guardrails and brings these problems into the most precious of family neighbourhoods.

On residentially zoned Major Streets some stretches might suit small local businesses, while others are not appropriate for commercial use. A **One-Size-Fits-**

**All** does not work in this diverse city and the approach risks bringing disruptive uses into stable neighbourhoods instead of focusing new businesses where they’re actually needed.

It’s also important to note that the Scarborough feedback and the COTRA citywide survey results — both submitted to Planning — were not reflected in the Planning report. I have reattached the Scarborough feedback originally sent to Planning on July 10 for the Committee’s review.

We ask our Councillors to:

1. Remove Neighbourhood Interiors from this proposal.
2. Adopt a targeted approach to rezone some Major Streets, based on need and in consultation with residents, resident associations, and Councillors.
3. Maintain the COA process for change in residential usage.
4. Better support and protect current commercial and Main Street Retail
5. City instructed to look at adding enforcement resources sooner than later if the proposal goes through, rather than wait to monitor for two years.

On behalf of Scarborough, CONTRA & City RAs, we look for your anticipated support,

**If WE Don't Speak Up Now, WE Won't Be Heard...**

**SCARBOROUGH CARES!**

**Ron Parkinson, Spokesperson**

**SUN (Scarborough United Neighbourhoods)**

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NOTE: The SUN is non-partisan to the information provided which is for community awareness & discussion purposes only.



## Appendix: Scarborough Residents Association (RAs) Meeting Minutes – July 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting - Sent to City Planning

From: **SUN** <[scarbunited@gmail.com](mailto:scarbunited@gmail.com)>

Date: Thu, Jul 17, 2025 at 10:11 PM

Subject: Scarborough Residents Feedback — Retail & Services Proposal (July 10 Meeting)

To: Michael Noble <[michael.noble@toronto.ca](mailto:michael.noble@toronto.ca)>, Kyle Knoeck <[Kyle.Knoeck@toronto.ca](mailto:Kyle.Knoeck@toronto.ca)>

Cc: SUN <[scarbunited@gmail.com](mailto:scarbunited@gmail.com)>, <[olivia.chow@toronto.ca](mailto:olivia.chow@toronto.ca)>, Mayor Chow <[mayor\\_chow@toronto.ca](mailto:mayor_chow@toronto.ca)>, <[clerk@toronto.ca](mailto:clerk@toronto.ca)>, Planning and Housing <[phc@toronto.ca](mailto:phc@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Crisanti@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Crisanti@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_holyday@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_holyday@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Morley@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Morley@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_perks@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_perks@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_nunziata@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_nunziata@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_pasternak@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_pasternak@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_perruzza@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_perruzza@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_colle8@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_colle8@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Bravo@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Bravo@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Malik@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Malik@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Saxe@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Saxe@toronto.ca)>, Councillor Matlow <[councillor\\_matlow@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_matlow@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Moise@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Moise@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_fletcher@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_fletcher@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_ChernosLin@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_ChernosLin@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Burnside@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Burnside@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_carroll@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_carroll@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Cheng@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Cheng@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_bradford@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_bradford@toronto.ca)>, Councillor Kandavel <[Councillor\\_Kandavel@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Kandavel@toronto.ca)>, Councillor Thompson <[councillor\\_thompson@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_thompson@toronto.ca)>, <[Councillor\\_Myers@toronto.ca](mailto:Councillor_Myers@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_ainslie@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_ainslie@toronto.ca)>, <[councillor\\_mantas@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_mantas@toronto.ca)>, <[josh.Matlow@toronto.ca](mailto:josh.Matlow@toronto.ca)>, Parthi Kandavel <[Parthi.Kandavel@toronto.ca](mailto:Parthi.Kandavel@toronto.ca)>

Hello Michael,

Thank you for participating in the meeting with **Scarborough Residents Association (RAs) Leaders** on July 10 to discuss the Retail and Services proposal.

We're sharing the link to the Zoom Forum recording for your reference: <https://youtu.be/pKvhalRpUeU>

Below is a full summary of the key points raised. However, we wanted to highlight a few critical takeaways up front:

**Interior Neighbourhoods:** **Strong Opposition to As-Of-Right Permissions**, even with proposed limitations (e.g., collector streets, no patios or seating). Residents want to maintain safe, quiet residential neighbourhoods and believe these changes would undermine stability, increase noise, crime, traffic, and erode the character they value. Any new businesses should continue to go through the Committee of Adjustment, allowing for proper oversight and community input.

**Major Streets:** Concerns about approach. While some openness exists, residents stressed that blanket permissions do not work. Each street must be evaluated locally based on transit, built form, and community needs — **Not a One-Size-Fits-All Policy**.

**Plazas:** Very concerned about plaza redevelopments and losing essential services like grocery stores, which cannot be replaced by small-scale home-based retail. There is a need for better planning coordination to protect plazas and vital community-serving retail.

Please see the detailed summary below for additional context and examples. We hope this helps clearly convey Scarborough residents' views and priorities as you continue refining the proposal.

### **Summary of Scarborough Resident Feedback — Retail and Services Planning Presentation, July 10, 2025**

#### **Interior Neighbourhoods**

- **Strong Opposition to Allowing Commercial Uses As-of-Right In Residential Areas;** seen as undermining neighbourhood stability and quiet enjoyment.
- Belief that if a business is truly needed and supported, it should go through the CoA process, which provides oversight and community input.
- **Importance of Preserving Residential Character** — many choose these areas for peace, predictability, and a sense of community.
- Certain forms of retail also attract crime. Scarborough neighbourhoods do not want more crime. Currently there are large rates of car theft and break and enters.
- Concerns about **Garbage and Rodents**, given existing rat issues and weak enforcement in Scarborough; doubts about compliance with garbage storage requirements.
  - Example of an illegal mushroom shop in Scarborough's East End highlighted enforcement challenges
  - A Resident shared an example of a neighbour who violated bylaws for 10 years despite repeated enforcement visits — the issue was only resolved when the neighbour moved away.
- Worries about unintended uses, such as Cannabis shops operating out of converted garages, and the City's **Lack of Control over Business Hours**, potentially leading to late-night disturbances.
- Residents highlighted that the **City's Survey did Not Clearly Explain** to respondents that Bars, Patios, and Cannabis shops could be allowed in residential areas or that the hours of operation would not be restricted; many felt the **Process was Misleading and Not Inclusive of Scarborough's Diverse Communities**.
- **Survey Concerns** were compounded by the fact it was only available in English, and many residents never saw it. Some noted that Scarborough's Multicultural Communities were effectively Excluded from proper consultation.
- **Some Questioned the Viability** of any business that relies on walk-ins from the street when it is buried kilometers deep in the interior of a neighbourhood.
- A suggestion discussed during the meeting was that if any uses were to be considered in interior neighbourhoods, they should be strictly limited to low-impact professional offices (e.g., therapists, accountants) that operate weekday hours and cause minimal disruption. After the meeting, participants further noted that these types of uses could be more appropriately handled by **expanding the existing Home Occupation category under**

**Section 150.5 of the zoning by-law**, rather than introducing broad new as-of-right permissions.

- Residents noted that successful European mixed-use areas work because of strong infrastructure and enforcement — conditions Toronto currently lacks.
- **Broad Support for Retaining the CoA Process** as the best mechanism to protect neighbourhood safety and character and ensure proper community checks.

## Major Streets

- More openness to commercial uses on Major Streets, but need for careful more planning.
- **Concern about the “Major Street” Designation** — a resident specifically raised Meadowvale road, which is south of Kingston road (Hwy #2) as an example of a fully residential street with no transit access, illustrating that so-called “major” streets may be inappropriate for commercial uses.
- Residents felt that **Major Streets Without Transit** should not be automatically approved for commercial use; **Scarborough Lacks Adequate Transit Infrastructure** and should not be treated with a “one size fits all” approach.
- Participants emphasized that many who live on residential portions of Major Streets bought those homes for affordability and should not be forced to live next to busy restaurants or bars with patios open until 2 a.m.
  - Belief that proximity to transit, built form, and local context should guide permissions — not just road width or blanket designations.
  - Strong call for a planning-led, street-specific approach rather than blanket permissions; residents suggested collaboration with local resident associations to determine which streets might be appropriate.
- Support for creating a new, tailored zoning category rather than treating all Major Streets the same.
- **Concerns about housing loss**: converting ground-floor housing to commercial reduces housing supply during a housing crisis.
  - City staff noted 6-storey buildings are already permitted on Major Streets and retail at grade could be encouraged, but residents highlighted there is no requirement under this proposal to replace lost housing.
  - Some suggested certain areas like Sheppard Avenue might be better served by housing intensification, not additional commercial uses — pointing to a **misalignment between planning policy and community needs**.
- **Scarborough’s Car-Dependent Design and Limited Transit** mean new businesses would rely on driving, increasing traffic and parking challenges.
- Participants stressed that simply designating major streets as commercial corridors does not address food deserts or service gaps caused by plaza redevelopments.
- Pointed out that **Retail viability on Scarborough’s Major Streets is Not Comparable to Downtown Areas** and requires localized evidence and strategy.
- **Concerns raised about Safety and Crime**; participants asked whether Toronto Police had been consulted about the availability of resources to cover the increase in policing that

would be required with retail in neighbourhoods — staff confirmed they had not yet, but committed to follow up.

## **Plazas**

- **Widespread concern about plaza redevelopments** displacing grocery stores and essential community-serving retail, replacing them with condos and high-rent commercial spaces.
- Note that new ground-floor units in redeveloped plazas often go to professional offices rather than affordable, accessible local shops.
- Stressed that small home-based or street retail cannot replace the vital services historically provided by plazas.
- Suggested better coordination between planning staff and plaza redevelopment teams; ideas included adding residential density above plazas to help keep them viable rather than demolishing them.
- **Observed that many Scarborough residents still rely on driving for essentials**; the area is not walkable or well-served by transit, so small convenience-type shops won't realistically meet needs.
- Staff acknowledged that the **Major Streets proposal does not address grocery access** and agreed more work is needed in this area.
- Several participants argued that **the City is prioritizing developer interests**, allowing condos to replace community-serving plazas without ensuring essential retail is retained.
- Residents pointed out that simply adding home-based retail or small-scale storefronts cannot fix the larger planning failures that caused retail and grocery service gaps in Scarborough (and across other parts of the city).

## **Conclusion & Takeaways for Planning Staff**

- Drop or significantly restrict the types of retail and operating hours in the interior of neighbourhoods.
- **Retain the CoA process for any commercial uses in Inner Neighbourhoods** to preserve residential character and allow for case-by-case community input.
- **Re-examine and refine the definition and criteria for Major Streets**; permissions should be evidence-based and tailored to local needs, not blanket citywide.
- Coordinate more closely with plaza redevelopment planning to protect essential local services and community-serving retail.
- **Consider Scarborough's Car-Dependent Nature** and limited transit in evaluating viability and potential impacts of new retail uses.
- **Residents Urged the City to Slow Down (Why so many meetings during the summer?)**, consult more deeply with local communities, and ensure planning policy reflects real community needs and day-to-day realities.



- **Many Participants Expressed Broader Frustration with Cumulative Policy Changes** (e.g., multiplexes, multi-tenant houses, garden suites) being layered on communities without sufficient consultation, creating a sense of continuous instability.

On behalf of Scarborough RAs, Thank you for what we feel was a meaningful engagement and in good faith. We also anticipate we will have the opportunity to see how the proposal has been revised before it goes to PHC...a minimum of two weeks in advance will afford us the time we would need to ensure our members and residents are aware.

**If WE Don't Speak Up Now, WE Won't Be Heard...**

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**Ron Parkinson, Spokesperson**

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