

From: [GVCA President Jeff Garrah](#)
To: [Scarborough Community Council](#)
Cc: [Councillor Ainslie](#); [Councillor Kandavel](#); [Councillor Mantas](#); [Councillor Myers](#); [Councillor Shan](#); [Councillor Thompson](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2026.SC32.5 on May 28, 2026 Scarborough Community Council
Date: May 25, 2026 2:37:02 PM

Dear Chair and Members of Scarborough Community Council,

As president of the Guildwood Village Community Association, one of the largest, oldest, and highly engaged residents associations in the GTA, I get to hear a lot of perspectives, ideas, and commentary about issues affecting our community, Scarborough, and the city as a whole.

As part of listening and engaging with the community some recurring themes surfaced that warranted us creating a dedicated housing subcommittee. Residents are increasingly concerned about the pace and nature of change occurring in neighbourhoods across Toronto, but an alarming number of occurrences within Scarborough, and our own village boundaries. Residents expressed concerns regarding illegal rooming houses, absentee-owner redevelopment, evolving and conflicting provincial and municipal housing policies, and the difficulty of navigating an increasingly complex planning and appeals framework. Many felt disconnected from decision-making processes that directly affect their community. While we recognize the importance of providing new housing and supporting growth, residents are seeking a more balanced approach—one that preserves appropriate safeguards, respects neighbourhood character, protects environmental assets, and ensures local voices remain an integral part of shaping complete, livable communities.

Guildwood residents understand that Toronto is growing and that new housing will be required to meet the needs of future generations. We are not opposed to development, nor are we advocating that our neighbourhood remain frozen in time. Quite the opposite. Healthy communities evolve, welcome new residents, and adapt to changing needs.

What residents are asking for is growth that is thoughtful, contextual, and respectful of the qualities that made people choose Guildwood in the first place.

Too often, the discussion is framed as a choice between housing and neighbourhood character. In reality, these goals can and should coexist. Good planning recognizes that additional housing can be delivered while respecting established streetscapes, preserving mature tree canopies, protecting green space, and incorporating architectural elements that reflect the unique identity of a community.

Development does not have to mean oversized, box-like structures that maximize every available square foot at the expense of aesthetics, livability, and environmental sustainability. Well-designed housing can achieve density while incorporating varied rooflines, quality materials, human-scale design, generous landscaping, and setbacks that contribute positively to the public realm. These are not obstacles to growth; they are hallmarks of successful city-building.

Guildwood is not simply a collection of lots and buildings. It is one of Toronto's most distinctive planned communities—a neighbourhood where art, architecture, nature, and community have been intentionally woven together for generations. The community's

mature tree canopy, extensive gardens, generous green spaces, winding streets, and proximity to the Scarborough Bluffs create a sense of place that is increasingly rare in urban environments, and worth protecting.

These features provide benefits that extend far beyond aesthetics. Trees reduce urban heat, improve air quality, absorb stormwater, support biodiversity, and contribute to residents' physical and mental well-being. Green space fosters community interaction, recreation, and a sense of belonging. Architectural diversity and design quality strengthen civic pride and reinforce the identity that makes Toronto's neighbourhoods unique.

As Toronto grows, preserving these qualities becomes even more important—not less. New residents deserve the opportunity to experience the same sense of community, connection to nature, and quality of life that current residents value. Development should therefore be measured not only by the number of units it creates, or headcount it absorbs, but also by how effectively it contributes to complete, sustainable, and welcoming communities.

The Guildwood Village Neighbourhood Character Guidelines provide a practical framework for achieving that balance. They do not prevent development. They encourage better development—development that respects context, protects environmental assets, and contributes positively to the long-term health, identity, vibrancy and connectedness of the neighbourhood. They establish clear expectations for applicants while providing guidance that helps ensure future projects complement rather than diminish the character of Guildwood.

In many ways, these Guidelines represent what good planning should aspire to: accommodating growth while preserving the very qualities that make a neighbourhood worth investing in, living in, and passing on to future generations.

The question before us is not whether Guildwood should grow. It is whether that growth should strengthen the qualities that make Guildwood truly special or gradually erode them. The Neighbourhood Character Guidelines provide a roadmap for achieving growth that respects both existing residents and future generations. For that, we need your help and support.

Sincerely,

Jeff Garrah,

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Jeff Garrah
President, Guildwood Village Community Association
Website: www.guildwood.ca
Email: president@guildwood.ca

