

# **SCARBOROUGH CENTRE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT**



**Cover Photo: Scarborough Town Centre and Civic Centre, 1985, Toronto Public Library**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Scarborough Centre Historic Context Statement (SC Context Statement) describes the existing condition of Scarborough Centre through an understanding of its historic evolution, land use, and building types.

The Scarborough Centre study area can be understood as a result of the unique historic events and conditions that have shaped it. This is thus largely a story about a planned town centre for a growing postwar suburb. This uncommon history accounts for much of the area's contemporary built form and character.

Five distinct periods of development or change can be described in the study area. The first, Indigenous history, has no associated built form, though all land in Toronto has associations with the history of Indigenous people. However, many landscape features within the study area pre-dating Euro-Canadian settlement, including Highland Creek and the Frank Faubert Wood Lot, may have stronger associations with pre-colonial, Indigenous history. Indigenous history is also associated with the areas of archaeological potential within the City of Toronto's Archaeological Management Plan.

Following the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation in 1787/1805, the British colonial government partitioned the land into parcels for agricultural use by Euro-Canadian settlers. Representative of the second period, the land remained in agricultural use from the nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Today, the Scott House (1841) and Frank Faubert Wood Lot remain from this period. The Scott House is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The third period describes the development of low-rise, industrial uses in the 1960s and early 1970s, following the study area's designation for use as the "Progress Industrial District," one of a number of industrial areas identified in the Township of Scarborough Official Plan of 1957.

The fourth period describes the development of the area following the Borough of Scarborough's designation of an area for "Town Centre Uses" in 1967. A vision and master plan for the area as a new urban centre for Scarborough emerged in this period, and resulted in the construction of the Scarborough Town Centre mall and Scarborough Civic Centre municipal district (both completed in 1973), a number of office buildings in the late-1970s and 1980s, and the RT (light rail rapid transit) line in 1985.

The fifth period describes the years between 1990-2020, when a residential tower typology emerged, along with "big box" retail and other new uses.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Scarborough Centre Historic Context Statement (SC Context Statement) was initiated in response to the “Our Scarborough Centre” planning study, and shares the same study boundary as the planning study (Fig. 1). The SC Historic Context Statement was initiated by City of Toronto’s City Planning department in 2019.

This SC Context Statement describes the condition of Scarborough Centre through an understanding of its themes and periods of development, land use and building types. The SC Context Statement will also assist staff in evaluating resources within the study area (buildings, structures, areas, landscapes) for potential heritage value.

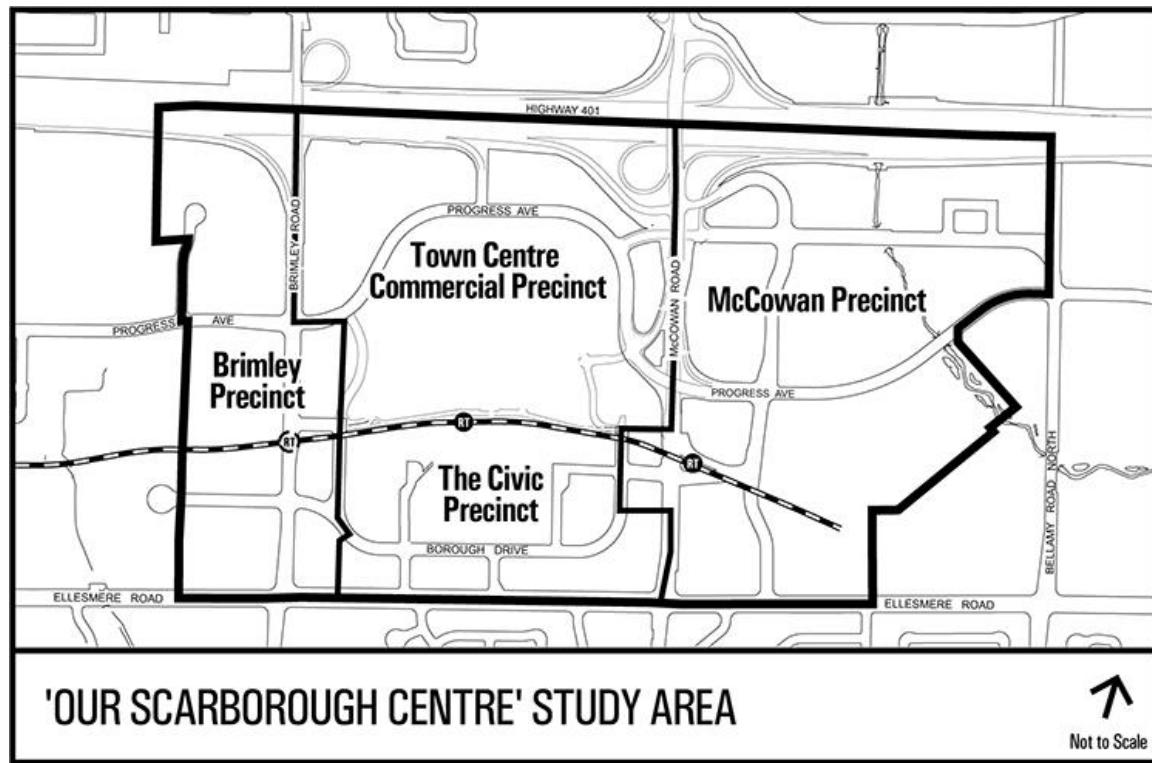


Fig. 1 – Scarborough Centre study area

### PROPERTIES ON THE HERITAGE REGISTER:

Properties within the study area included on the City’s Heritage Register:

- 520 Progress Avenue – Part IV (the Scott House)
- 140-150 Borough Drive – Part IV (Scarborough Civic Centre)

### **3. SCARBOROUGH CENTRE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT**

#### **INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES:**

Since time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Following the retreat of glaciers 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved across this land, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. At the eastern and western edges of the Scarborough Centre study area, the Highland Creek and its tributary the West Highland Creek meander through glacial ravines formed after the last Ice Age.<sup>1</sup>

After corn was introduced to Southern Ontario, possibly as early as 2,300 years ago, horticulture began to supplement food sources. Between 1,300-1,450 years ago, agriculturally-based villages appeared in the Toronto area and became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge, and Humber Rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay.

Indigenous archaeological sites located near the Scarborough Centre study area include Tabor Hill, an ancestral Huron-Wendat Nation ossuary estimated to date from the fourteenth century,<sup>2</sup> located roughly 2.5 km to the southeast of the study area, and the Alexandria Site, a former ancestral Huron-Wendat Nation village estimated to date from the fourteenth century, located roughly 5 km to the north of the study area.<sup>3</sup> Beads made out of sea shells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1,000 people in approximately 1350.<sup>4</sup>

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s,

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<sup>1</sup> Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. "State of the Watershed Report: Highland Creek Watershed." August, 1999. Accessed online at: TRCA State of Watershed Report Link (<http://trca.on.ca/dotAsset/91720.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. "Tabor Hill Ossuary in Scarborough – 60 Years After it was Almost Flattened." August 18, 2016. Accessed online at: TRCA Tabour Hill Link (<https://trca.ca/news/tabor-hill-ossuary-scarborough-60-years-after-almost-flattened/>)

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Plummer. "Historicist: Unearthing the Alexandria Site's Pre-Contact Past." *Torontoist*. November 22, 2008. Accessed online at: Unearthing Alexandria Site Link ([https://torontoist.com/2008/11/historicist\\_unearthing\\_the\\_alexandr/](https://torontoist.com/2008/11/historicist_unearthing_the_alexandr/))

<sup>4</sup> Information drawn from various Archaeology reports, including: ASI. "Stage 1 Archaeological Resource Assessment of the Frank Faubert Woodlot Park Improvements, 165 Borough Drive." May 17, 2021.

European diseases decimated many First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors,<sup>5</sup> contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Seneca Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy left Southern Ontario after Anishinaabe peoples of the Upper Great Lakes joined in the Three Fires Confederacy and defeated them.<sup>6</sup> A part of the Three Fires, the Mississaugas moved after 1690 into the vast vacated territory which included the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Mississaugas continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.<sup>7</sup>

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island). While the Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold or owned exclusively by individuals, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold to, or granted to settlers for private ownership. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gary Warrick. "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson & Jamieson (eds.), *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013. Chapter 5. Accessed online at: Before Ontario Chapter 5 Link (<https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east;>)

<sup>6</sup> Gary, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." Accessed online at: MCFN Link (<http://mncfn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-History-of-MNCFN-FINAL.pdf>)

<sup>8</sup> Sarah Isabel Wallace. "Williams Treaties." *Canadian Encyclopedia*. April 11, 2018. Accessed online at: Williams Treaties Link (<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/williams-treaties>)

The City of Toronto remains the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Toronto is also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

Within the study area, landscape features pre-dating Euro-Canadian settlement, including Highland Creek, have strong associations with Indigenous history. When Euro-Canadian settlers cleared the land in the study area for agricultural use in the nineteenth century, a wooded area was kept to provide fire wood, and remains today, known as the Frank Faubert Wood Lot. The Wood Lot's condition as a forested area likely predates colonization, and could be associated with pre-colonial history, as well as early Euro-Canadian history. Indigenous history is also associated with the areas of archaeological potential described in the City of Toronto's Archaeological Management Plan.



**Fig. 2 – Frank Faubert Wood Lot**



City of Toronto Archives, Series 1762, File 466, Item 3

**Fig. 3 – Soaring Eagle dance group performing at Scarborough Civic Centre, February 1979**

*Table 1: Themes and Existing Physical Features of the Study Area relating to the Indigenous Communities section.*

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<b>Themes:</b> Indigenous Practices
<b>Sub-themes:</b>
<i>Indigenous Practices</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Environment</li> <li>• Water Courses (Highland Creek)</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to Existing Physical Features:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape features pre-dating settlement, including the Highland Creek and Frank Faubert Wood Lot, are associated with Indigenous practices.</li> </ul>

#### **EURO-CANADIAN SETTLEMENT & AGRICULTURAL USE (1800-1950):**

Scarborough was initially surveyed and subdivided in 1796 with a series of concession roads approximately two kilometres apart that ran east-west, and side roads running perpendicular to the concession roads that were approximately 1,200 metres apart. The land between the concession roads was subdivided into long, narrow, 200-acre lots. Patents for these lots were issued starting in the late eighteenth century, and the township was opened to new settlement. The name "Scarborough" was given to the new township

by Elizabeth Posthuma Simcoe, the wife of the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, as the dramatic cliffs overlooking Lake Ontario reminded her of the chalky cliff coast of Scarborough, England – a small seaside town in Yorkshire.<sup>9</sup>

While the poor condition of roads resulted in the initially slow settlement of Scarborough, by the 1820s-1840s immigration from Ireland and Scotland contributed to its growth. By 1850, Scarborough was a prosperous farming community of 3,800 inhabitants, and the township was incorporated with a local municipal Council in that same year.<sup>10</sup>

The Scott House, today located at 520 Progress Avenue, is an example of the early Euro-Canadian agricultural use that characterized the study area from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries (Fig. 5). George Scott, one of Scarborough's early settlers, was born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland in 1795. In 1829, he purchased a 200-acre lot extending from present-day Ellesmere Road to Sheppard Avenue, on which he developed one of the area's most prosperous farms.<sup>11</sup> In 1841, after clearing the land, he built a two-storey house with stones gathered from surrounding fields.<sup>12</sup> The Scott House was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by Scarborough City Council in 1977.

When clearing the land, Scott conserved a wooded area north of Ellesmere Road to provide firewood. This wood lot, today known as the Frank Faubert Wood Lot, remains at the Northwest corner of McCowan Road and Ellesmere Road (Fig. 2). The wood lot has faced a number of threats over the twentieth century including a development application in the 1980s that proposed to redevelop it. However, the local community successfully rallied to conserve the natural area.<sup>13</sup>

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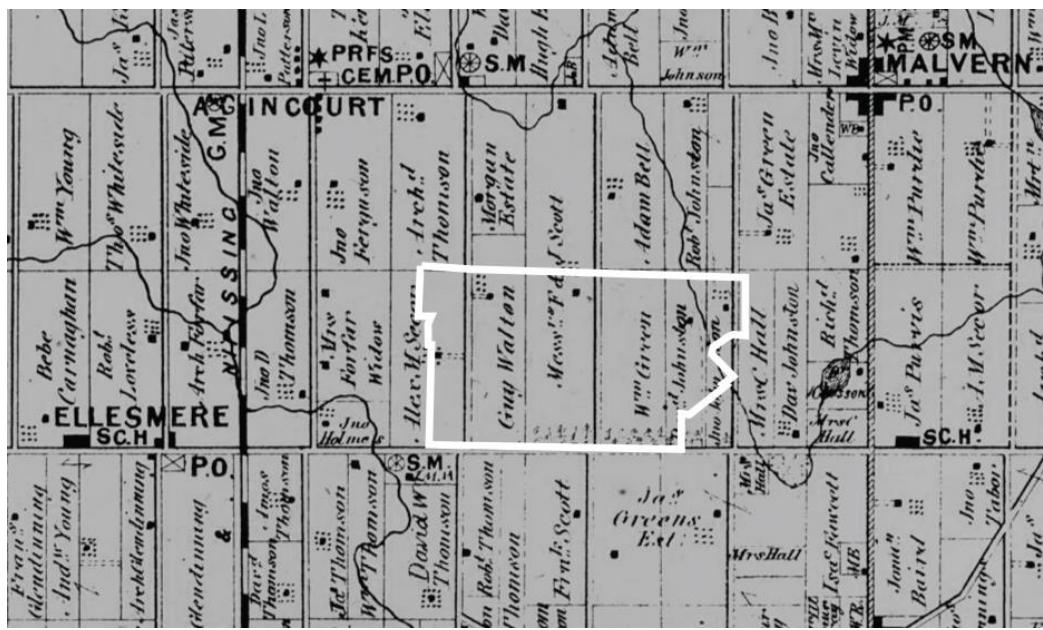
<sup>9</sup> Ron Brown. *Toronto's Lost Villages*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997, 115.

<sup>10</sup> Scarborough Historical Society. "The Naming of Scarborough." Accessed online at: Naming Scarborough Link: <http://scarboroughhistorical.ca/local-history/naming-of-scarborough/>

<sup>11</sup> City of Toronto, "Heritage Designation File, Scott House."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Anders Mashall. "Why a Woodlot Could Add Millions to the Cost of the Scarborough Subway Extension." *Torontoist*. July 27, 2016. Accessed online at: Woodlot Scarborough Subway Link: <https://torontoist.com/2016/07/frank-flaubert-woodlot-scarborough-subway-expropriation/>



**Fig. 4 – Land Ownership in study area, 1878. From York County Atlas, Ontario, Published by Miles & Co. 1878**



**Fig. 5 – Scott House, n.d., Scarborough Archives**



Fig. 6 – Aerial Photo 1956, City of Toronto Archives

Other prominent physical features in the Scarborough Centre study area dating from the Euro-Canadian agricultural period are the early, rural concession road (now Ellesmere Road) and side roads (now Brimley Road, McGowan Road and Bellamy Road North). Over the second half of the twentieth century, these rural roads were converted to wide arterial roads to serve the increasingly automobile-dependent population.

One other feature in the Scarborough Centre study area relates to the latter years of this second period: the former Bick's Pickle manufacturing facility at 333 Progress Avenue. In 1939, Walter and Jeanny Bick (Fig. 7) immigrated to Canada from Amsterdam and established a farm north of Ellesmere Road, west of Brimley Road.<sup>14</sup> The Jewish couple were fleeing Europe during the onset of the Second World War. In the mid-1940s the Bick's planted 10 acres of cucumbers to supply Rose Brand pickles, however the contract was cancelled and a surplus of cucumbers led them to establish a family pickle operation.<sup>15</sup> In a 1964 CBC Radio clip, Walter Bick explains: "Well, as we went along we hit the odd season where cucumbers were too plentiful and the market was kind of weak and we couldn't get rid of our cucumbers, so we started an old family recipe and started to put our pickles in barrels. At that time the barrels were cured out in the field and we sold them in the wintertime to the restaurants."<sup>16</sup> By 1951, the pickles were packed into glass jars and by 1960, the company was turning out 12 million jars of pickles per year.<sup>17</sup> The Bick's production facilities expanded on the site and a factory

<sup>14</sup> Cavanagh, Ken. "Walter Bick gets out of a pickle." *CBC Radio*. August 24, 1964. Accessed online at: Walter Bick Link: <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/walter-bick-gets-out-of-a-pickle>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

remains today at 333 Progress Avenue, currently in use by Atlantic Packaging Products. Bick's Pickles was purchased by the J.M. Smucker Company in 2004. According to the Smucker's website, "Bick's is the #1 brand of pickles in Canada."



**Fig. 7 – Frank and Jeannie Bick, founders of Bick's Pickles**

*Table 2: Themes and Existing Physical Features Related to Euro-Canadian Settlement and Agricultural Use (1800-1950)*

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<b>Themes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Building</li><li>• Transportation and Infrastructure</li><li>• Governance and Public Services</li><li>• Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</li></ul>
<b>Sub-themes:</b> <i>Community Building</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mapping and Surveying</li><li>• Land Division and Subdivision</li><li>• Early Euro-Canadian Settlement</li></ul>
<i>Transportation and Infrastructure</i>

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Roads</li> </ul>
<i>Governance and Public Services</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of Scarborough as a Township (1850)</li> </ul>
<i>Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Food manufacturing</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to Existing Physical Features:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original surveying and division of the land into large lots for agricultural use.</li> <li>• Creation of the original network of concession roads (east-west) and side roads (north-south), including Ellesmere Road, Brimley Road, McCowan Road, and Bellamy Road North.</li> <li>• Notable remnants of this period include the Scott House at 520 Progress Avenue, and the Frank Faubert Wood Lot at the northwest corner of Ellesmere Road and McCowan Road.</li> </ul>

### **HIGHWAY 401 AND PROGRESS AVE. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (1950-1972):**

In the postwar period, the Township of Scarborough quickly transformed from a largely rural, agricultural area into a rapidly growing urban area. Between 1951 and 1971 the population of Scarborough increased from approximately 250,000 to 400,000.

The growth of Scarborough following the Second World War was planned in a way which the growth of the older urban centres was not – almost every land use and street in the inner suburbs can be seen as the result of urban planning.<sup>18</sup> The enactment of the Planning Act in Ontario in 1946 gave municipalities the power to create binding official plans for their jurisdictions, leading several in the Toronto Metropolitan Area to immediately prepare and pass their own official plans, as exemplified by the Township of Etobicoke's Official Plan of 1946.<sup>19</sup> The Township of Scarborough was resistant at first, but eventually engaged a permanent Planning Commissioner in the mid-1950s, and adopted the first Township of Scarborough Official Plan in 1957.<sup>20</sup>

The upper-tier municipality Metropolitan Toronto was created by the Province of Ontario in 1954, partially amalgamating Scarborough with Toronto, the Township of North York, the Township of Etobicoke, and a number of other municipalities. Planning responsibilities were shared between the upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities. The Metropolitan Toronto urban planners directed metropolitan-wide infrastructure and

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<sup>18</sup> Richard White. "Toronto's Inner Suburbs Through the Lens of History." *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*. 38 (2018), 25-46. Accessed online at: Toronto Inner Suburbs Link: [http://www.kanada-studien.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ZKS\\_2018-68\\_2\\_White.pdf](http://www.kanada-studien.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ZKS_2018-68_2_White.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

services and high level land use, leaving the detailed land use planning of individual parcels – local roads and services and site-specific land use – to local municipal planners.<sup>21</sup> Metropolitan Toronto planners completed a draft official Plan in 1959, which was never approved, however, according to urban planning historian Richard White, “its planning principles served as an unofficial guide for the urbanization of the metropolitan area, especially for the inner suburbs,” including Scarborough.<sup>22</sup>

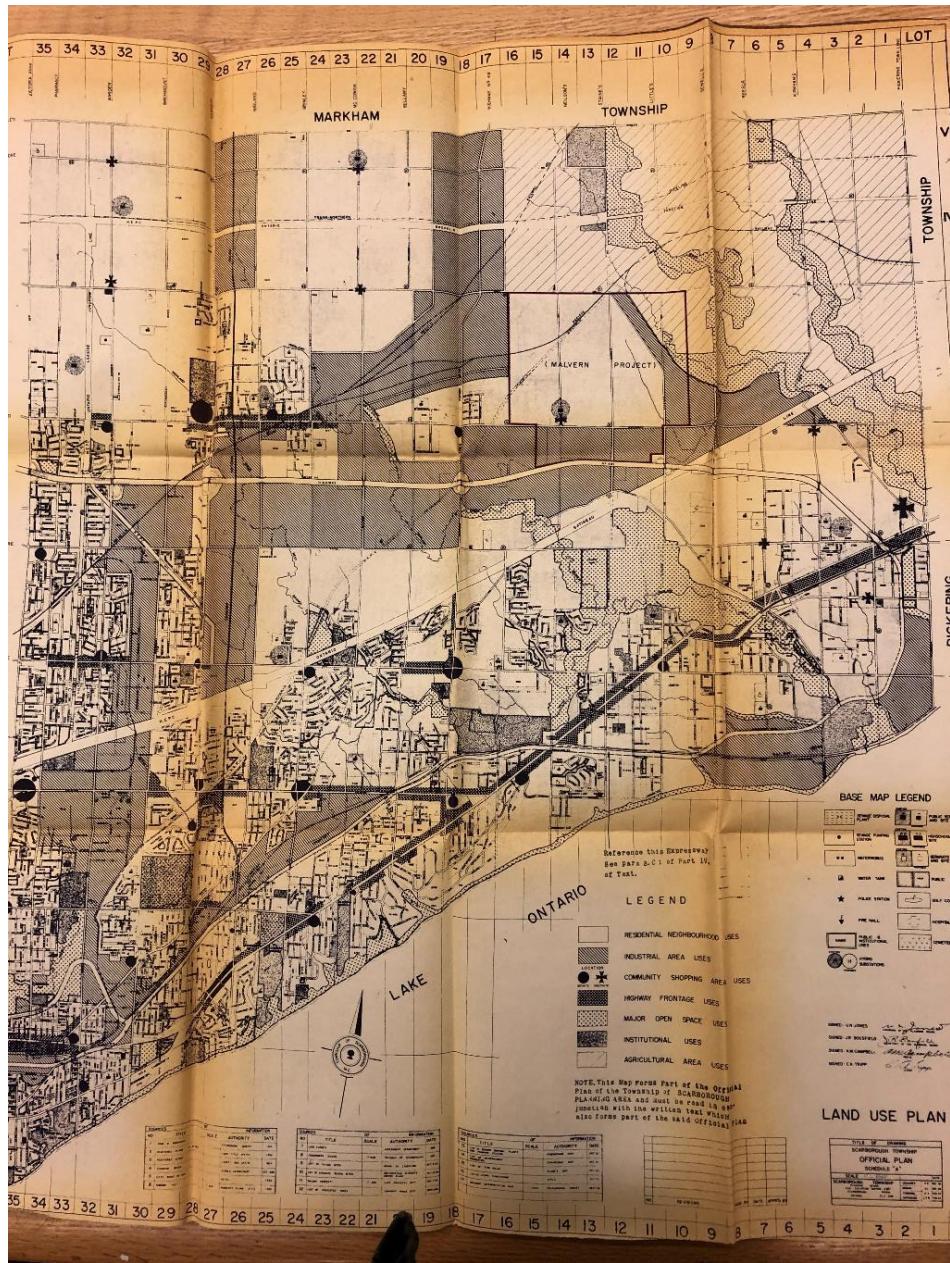
During the 1950s, Scarborough developed rapidly with industrial, commercial, and residential uses. A section of Eglinton Avenue became famously known as Scarborough’s “Golden Mile of Industry” – which was both a hub of large-scale manufacturing and a symbol of Scarborough’s postwar prosperity. The conversion of farm land to industrial land in the Scarborough Centre study area followed shortly thereafter.

The 1957 Official Plan designated numerous areas across Scarborough for industrial uses, including what would become the Scarborough Centre study area.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



**Fig. 8 – Township of Scarborough Official Plan 1957, Land Use Plan**

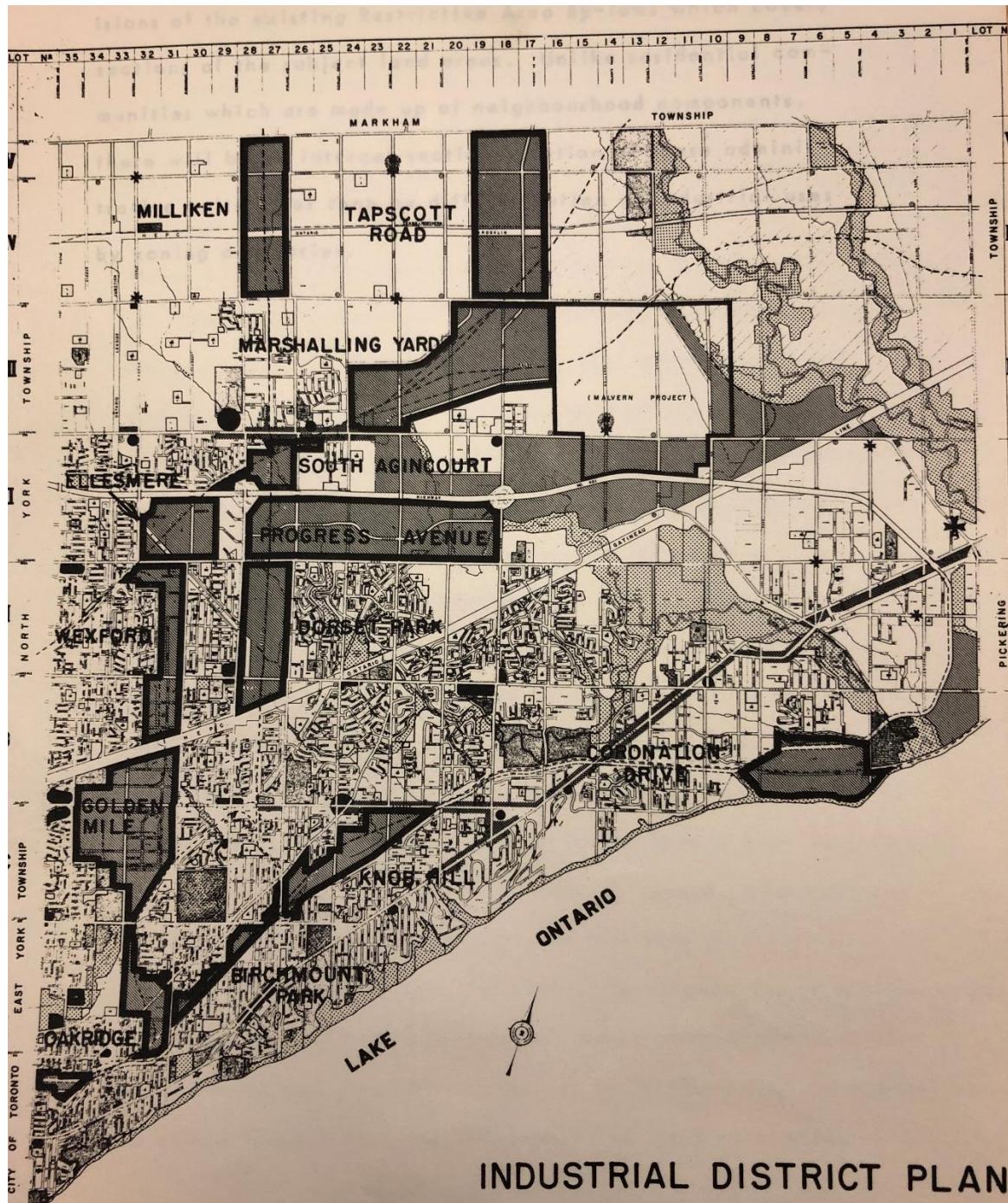


Fig. 9 – Township of Scarborough, Industrial Zoning Study 1961

A number of planning principles explain why areas were selected for industrial use in the 1957 Official Plan. Most importantly, industrial areas were "to be located where good transportation facilities and an adequate labour force may be made available most readily."<sup>23</sup> The Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan of 1959 established a similar planning

<sup>23</sup> Scarborough, Township of. "Official Plan." 1957.

principle, stating that substantial land should be designated for industry along major highways as well as railway corridors throughout newer suburban areas.<sup>24</sup> Such industrial designations would provide higher property tax revenues than could be obtained from residential properties, and proximity to transit corridors would reduce travel time for goods and industrial workers.<sup>25</sup>

Critical to the designation of the lands in and beyond the Scarborough Centre study area was the construction of Highway 401. Built between 1952 and 1956, Highway 401 was constructed as a Toronto by-pass, allowing traffic to avoid the former route of Highway 2 and thus move quickly through the then largely rural areas north of the city centre. One year after its completion, the 1957 Official Plan designated numerous industrial areas adjacent to it (Figs. 8 & 9). One of those, stretching from Kennedy Road to the west, Markham Road to the east, became known as the Progress Avenue Industrial District.<sup>26</sup>

New roads and development followed. By 1960, the neighbourhoods now known as Bendale/North Bendale, were built south of Ellesmere Road and the Scarborough Centre study area. Between 1960 and 1970, new streets emerged, augmenting the rural, rectilinear concession and side roads with the curvilinear Progress Avenue and the “lollipop” Golden Gate Court (Fig. 10). In the same decade, industrial and commercial buildings were constructed on Golden Gate Court, Brimley Road, Progress Avenue, and Ellesmere Road (Fig. 11). Similarly, the section of Highland Creek running through the eastern edge of the study area was channeled into an open concrete culvert (Fig. 11).



Fig. 10 – Aerial Photo, 1964, City of Toronto Archives

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> White, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> <sup>26</sup> Scarborough, Township of. "Official Plan."



**Fig. 11 – Aerial Photo, 1967, City of Toronto Archives**

Industrial buildings constructed between 1960 and 1972 are mostly one-storey, flat-roof buildings, and are utilitarian in design. Many of these remain today (Figs. 12 & 14).

The property at 333 Progress Avenue is exceptional in the study area for its size. Constructed by Bick's Pickles on the former Bick's farm between the 1950s and 1970s, the manufacturing facility remained used by Bick's Pickles until the 2000s. It is now occupied by Atlantic Packaging, which expanded from its location at 111 Progress Avenue – which it had occupied since the 1960s – to include the former Bick's facility.



Fig. 12 – 333 Progress Avenue

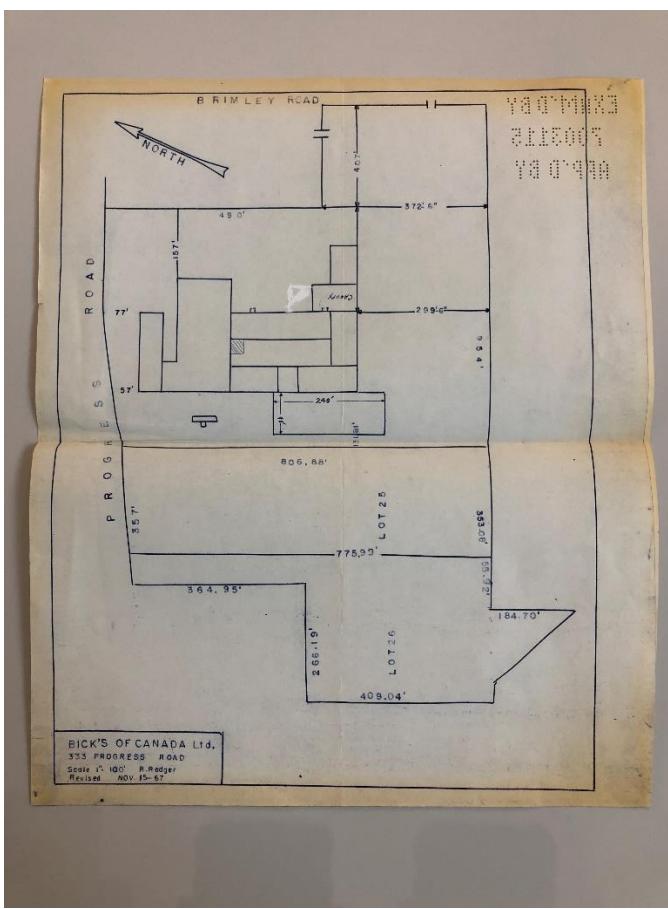


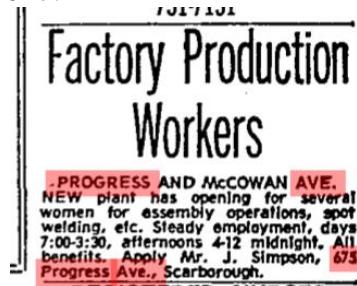
Fig. 13 – 333 Progress Avenue Site Plan 1970 (City of Toronto Building Records)



**Fig. 14 – 18 Golden Gate Court**

18 Golden Gate Court (Fig. 14) is a representative example of the 1960s industrial buildings that line Golden Gate Court in the study area. J & K Dye Casting Ltd have operated from this location since 1964, and were likely the first occupants of the building.

East of McGowan Avenue, A.G. Simpson Co., located at 675 Progress Avenue, operated from the 1960s to the 2010s as a heavy metal stamping plant (Figs. 15 & 16). The building was demolished in 2017.



**Fig. 15 - The Globe and Mail, 17 Oct 1969: 39**



**Fig. 16 – 675 Progress Avenue, 2014 Google Street View**

An atypical building and use within the “Progress Avenue Industrial District” period, 1710 Ellesmere Road was built circa 1964 as the “School & Residence for Metropolitan Association for Retarded Children,” later known as the “Harold R. Lawson School” (Fig. 17). The building was designed by Weir, Cripps & Associates. Notable buildings in Toronto designed by this firm include the Commercial Travellers’ Association of Canada Building at 17 Dundonald Street (1956) – which was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, but later demolished and partially reconstructed – and St. Luke’s Lutheran Church at 3203 Bayview Avenue (1959). The Harold R. Lawson School was operated by the Metropolitan Toronto Association for the Mentally Retarded and served children age 6-12 years.<sup>27</sup> The building operated as a school until 2001, and is currently operated by Community Living, an organization supporting those with intellectual disabilities.

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<sup>27</sup> Chris Bateman. "A brief history of the Scarborough RT." *blogTO*. July 20, 2013. Accessed online at: [https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/a\\_brief\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_scarborough\\_rt/](https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/a_brief_history_of_the_scarborough_rt/)



**Fig. 17 – 1710-1712 Ellesmere Road**

The construction of industrial buildings in the study area ended in the early 1970s, with a number of large, one-storey buildings built on the north side of Progress Avenue, east of McCowan Road. In 1967, a new plan for the central section of the study area set the stage for it to develop as a new urban centre for the rapidly growing City of Scarborough.

*Table 3: Themes and Existing Physical Features of Highway 401 and Progress Ave. Industrial District (1950-1972)*

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<b>Themes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transportation and Infrastructure</li><li>• Governance and Public Services</li><li>• Community Building</li><li>• Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</li></ul>
<b>Sub-themes:</b> <p><i>Transportation and Infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Major Highways and Expressways</li><li>• Road Widening and Expansion of Road Network</li></ul>
<p><i>Governance and Public Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enactment of the Planning Act in Ontario (1946)</li></ul>

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of Metropolitan Toronto (1954)</li> </ul>
<i>Community Building</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official Plans and Master Planning</li> <li>• Separation of Land Uses</li> <li>• Channelization of the West Highland Creek</li> </ul>
<i>Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned Industrial District</li> <li>• Postwar Industry and Manufacturing</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to Existing Physical Features:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway 401 was created in the 1950s, which today forms the northern boundary of the study area.</li> <li>• The creation of the Scarborough Township Official Plan in 1957 and the subsequent creation of the Progress Avenue Industrial District led to the construction of many extant industrial and commercial buildings within the study area constructed during this period. These buildings are typified by their one-storey, flat roofed, utilitarian designs, and include the former Bick's Pickles complex at 333 Progress Avenue (late 1950s-1970s).</li> <li>• Master-planned roads served the Progress Avenue Industrial District, including the curvilinear Progress Avenue and the "lollipop" Golden Gate Court.</li> </ul>

## **SCARBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE AND CIVIC CENTRE (1967-1990):**

The fourth period of development was shaped by the designation of land within the study area for “Town Centre Uses” in 1967, and by the subsequent development of the Scarborough Town Centre and adjacent Scarborough Civic Centre (both completed in 1973). These were followed by a number of additional office buildings in the late-1970s and 1980s, and the completion of the RT (light rail rapid transit) line in 1985.

A clear sign of its rapid urbanization, the Township of Scarborough became the Borough of Scarborough in 1966. Two years later, the new Borough government passed Amendment No. 196 to the Borough's Official Plan to designate approximately 170 acres of land in the Progress Avenue Industrial District for “Town Centre Uses.” These were defined as “land uses appropriate to a major business sub-centre within Metropolitan Toronto which would eventually become the central area for the Borough – a focal point for business, cultural, social, recreational and governmental uses.”<sup>28</sup> The intent was primarily to create both a new Town (commercial) and Civic (municipal) Centre as an important commercial, cultural, and institutional hub for Scarborough.

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<sup>28</sup> Scarborough, Borough of. "Amendment No .196 to Official Plan." 1968.

Prior to the construction of the new Scarborough Town and Civic Centre, the Borough of Scarborough's municipal offices were located along the "Golden Mile" section of Eglinton Avenue. Former Scarborough mayor Paul Cosgrove told the *Toronto Star* that the Borough was likely the only municipality in the world with its offices "squeezed in between a fish-and-chips stand and a used car lot."<sup>29</sup> The accompanying photo (Fig. 18) shows the surroundings of the former Civic Centre on Eglinton Avenue.



Fig. 18 – Eglinton Avenue west of Midland Avenue, 1973

The Scarborough Town Centre Master Plan – including the Town Centre shopping and commercial district and Civic Centre municipal offices and services – were first introduced to the public in January, 1968. The master plan's development involved a joint venture between the private sector and the Borough, which selected its location in the geographic centre of Scarborough. Bregman & Hamann Architects drafted the original plans for the Town Centre, which from the start envisioned a "Y"-shaped shopping centre, connected Civic Centre, and a town square. These plans were released in October 1968 by David Philpott, president of Triton Centres Ltd., which had also built the Yorkdale Centre mall. The Scarborough Town Centre mall was to include an Eaton's and Simpson's department store, and a large number of smaller retailers. Plans for the adjacent Civic Centre and Square included administrative headquarters for the school board, an art gallery, auditorium, theatres, office buildings, a hotel, and a rec centre.

<sup>29</sup> John Sewell. *Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Combined, the Town Centre and Civic Centre components of the Scarborough Town Centre Master Plan constitute an early example of a mid-twentieth-century "superblock."

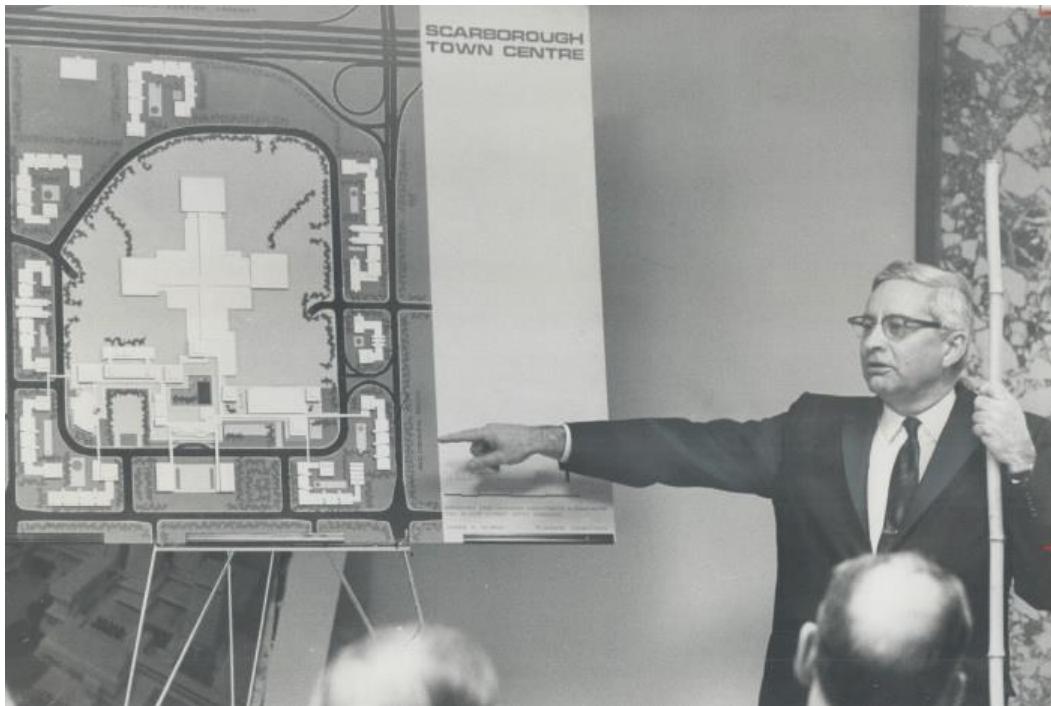


Fig. 19 – Scarborough Town Centre plan being presented at City Council (Mayor Albert Campbell shown), 1968, Toronto Public Library

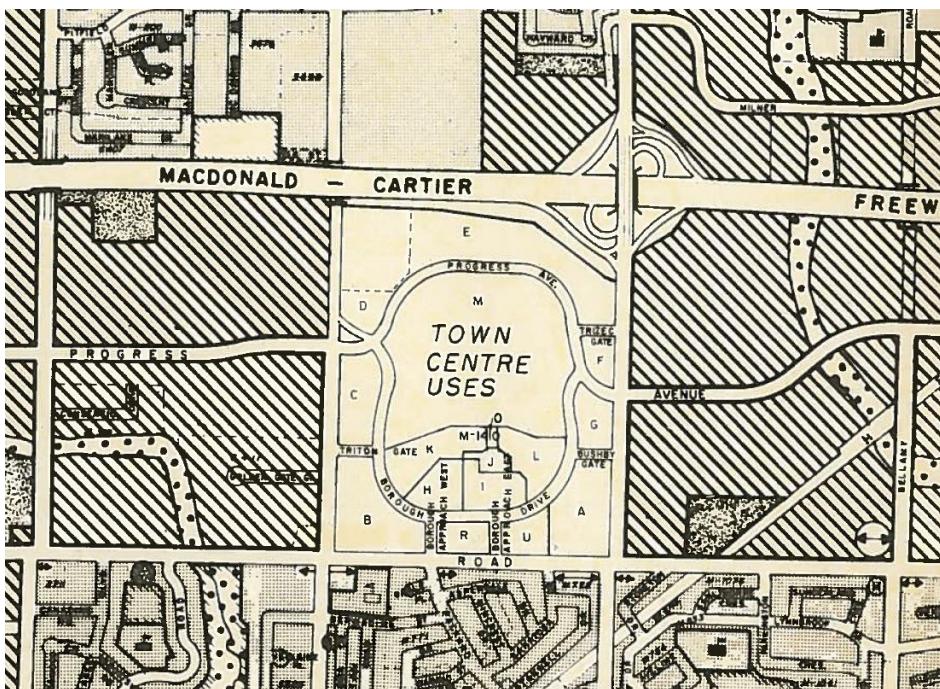


Fig. 20 - 1971 Borough of Scarborough Official Plan

By 1971, the road layout of the Scarborough Town Centre superblock was planned, as can be seen in the 1971 Borough of Scarborough Official Plan. The interior ring road remained from the earliest proposals by Triton Centres Ltd – ring roads being a typical feature of suburban shopping centres, including the Square One Mall in Mississauga (completed 1973) (Fig. 21). Despite certain similarities, the Scarborough Town Centre remains unusual owing to its adoption of a typical postwar suburban shopping centre road typology within a development that also featured a prominent civic use.



Fig. 21 – Square One Mall, Mississauga, 1973



Fig. 22 – Aerial Photo, 1977, City of Toronto Archives

Bregman & Hamann Architects' design for the Scarborough Town Centre mall featured a prominent "Y" footprint (Fig 23), with the stem pointing towards the adjacent Civic Centre and Albert Campbell Square. Typical of the era, the Town Centre was surrounded by large expanse of parking. In 1979, a large Hudson's Bay department store was added to the north end, along with two smaller retail additions and a new parking garage on the other side. Further additions to the mall were carried out in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, while interior alterations have materialized over the last several decades.



**Fig. 23 – Aerial Photo, 1981, City of Toronto**



**Fig. 24 – Scarborough Town Centre Mall**

South of the Scarborough Town Centre, and connected by a pedestrian walkway, the Scarborough Civic Centre and Albert Campbell Square were also completed in 1973. The Civic Centre and Square were designed by Moriyama & Teshima Architects, a firm known for other important, local, civic landmarks, including the Ontario Science Centre (1969), the Toronto Reference Library (1977), and the North York Civic Centre (1979).

The grand opening of the Scarborough Town Centre and Civic Centre was a watershed moment in the Borough of Scarborough's early history, the occasion marked by an honourary visit by Queen Elizabeth II on June 6, 1973.<sup>30</sup> Joined by numerous local politicians and officials, including Mayor Paul Cosgrove, the opening ceremony was attended by 15,000 members of the public (Fig. 25), the event well-noted by the press.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> TPL: Digital Archive. Photo & Caption. "Scarborough's new civic centre gets off to a royal start as the Queen opens it to cheers of 15,000 onlookers." *Toronto Star*. June 6, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



**Fig 25 – Mayor Cosgrove and Queen Elizabeth II attend the grand opening of the Scarborough Civic Centre in 1973, *Toronto Star* archives**



**Fig. 26 – Scarborough Civic Centre, 1973, Toronto Public Library**

Following the completion of the Scarborough Civic Centre and Albert Campbell Square, Moriyama & Teshima Architects continued to have a significant impact on the Scarborough Town Centre study area, designing several additional structures, including the Canada Centre at 200 Town Centre Court (1983-85) and acting as a consultant to the Borough of Scarborough for a number of local studies in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, owing in large part to its central place within Scarborough (geographically, culturally, and historically,) the Scarborough Civic Centre at 140-150 Borough Drive (Fig. 26) was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council in 2002.

In 1973, Moriyama & Teshima were engaged by Scarborough Council to propose appropriate land uses for the vacant lands within the area designated for “Town Centre Uses.” In the Scarborough Centre Land Use Study (1974), the firm defined eight high-level Town Centre Objectives, which were formally adopted by Scarborough Council in October 1974. The 1974 study also presented a number of potential land use concepts, including a recommended concept. The renderings illustrating the firm's preferred land use concept are remarkable, although the vision appears to have had little influence on the subsequent development of the study area. The renderings show the intensification of the area, including residential mega-structures flanking the mall, alongside a mix of low- and-high-density office buildings and commercial developments dotted throughout. In the preferred concept, the lots fronting Ellesmere Road remain forested parkland.

Further research is required to understand the influence of Moriyama & Teshima's 1974 Scarborough Centre Land Use Study on the area.<sup>32</sup> Although the conservation of the Frank Faubert Wood Lot cannot be solely attributed to the firm's influence or the 1974 Land Use Study, it is one of the few aspects of the firm's visionary rendering that is recognizable today. In their designs for the Scarborough Civic Centre, Moriyama & Teshima proposed retaining the prominent forested areas on the southern edge of the site, and designed the Civic Centre complex accordingly.<sup>33</sup> The firm continued to advocate for the conservation of the wooded area in the 1974 study.

"Cooperation and agreement will...be required with respect to the wooded area on the south side of the Town Centre site," Moriyama & Teshima explained:

There is strong public support for preservation of this natural asset, and the team also feels that the opportunity to incorporate mature woodland into an urban core is so rare that it must not be missed. There are precedents in the preservation of historic landmarks where redevelopment rights have been transferred to another site within a defined sector. This is what we are proposing with respect to the woodland on Ellesmere and McGowan. Fortunately, in this case the Town Centre site is in one ownership, and this will simplify any transfers of development potential. In our development plan we have shown more intensive development over most of the site in order that one section, the woodland, may be saved. There must be mutual benefits to the developers and to the public. The benefits in this case will become more valuable and more appreciated as the years pass. And in the short term the Borough will be setting an example in the art of building cities.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Raymond Moriyama & Ted Teshima. "Scarborough Centre Land Use Study." Moriyama & Teshima. 1974.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



**Fig. 27 – Frank Faubert Wood Lot**

In 1976, the Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan identified Scarborough Centre, along with North York Centre, as major sub-centres in a decentralized, polycentric plan for the growth of the Metropolitan Toronto region,<sup>35</sup> further reinforcing the status assigned to it by the Borough of Scarborough. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Scarborough Centre study area was further shaped by new office towers and the completion of the RT light rail transit line in 1985. Thus, in the intervening years, a host of new developments were constructed in line with the long-term plans for the study area.

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<sup>35</sup> Sewell, 2009.



Fig. 28 – Metro Toronto Official Plan 1981

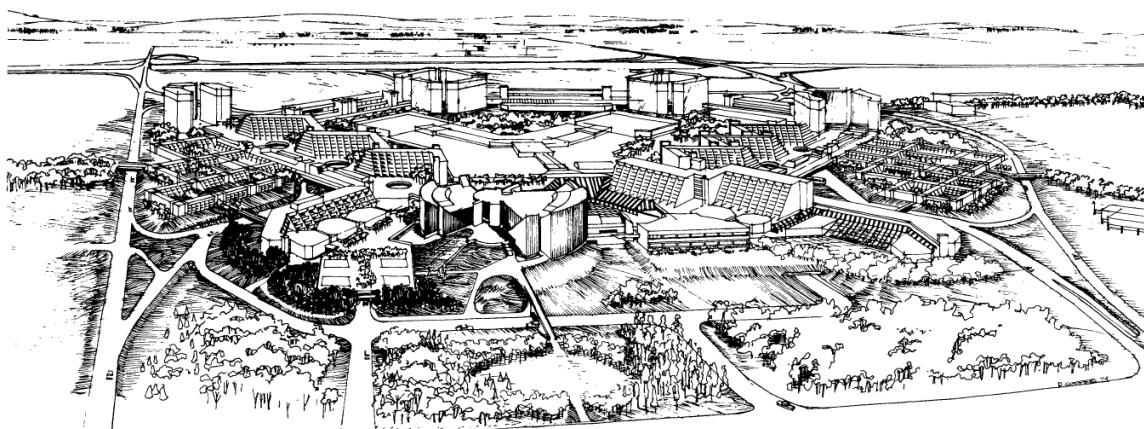
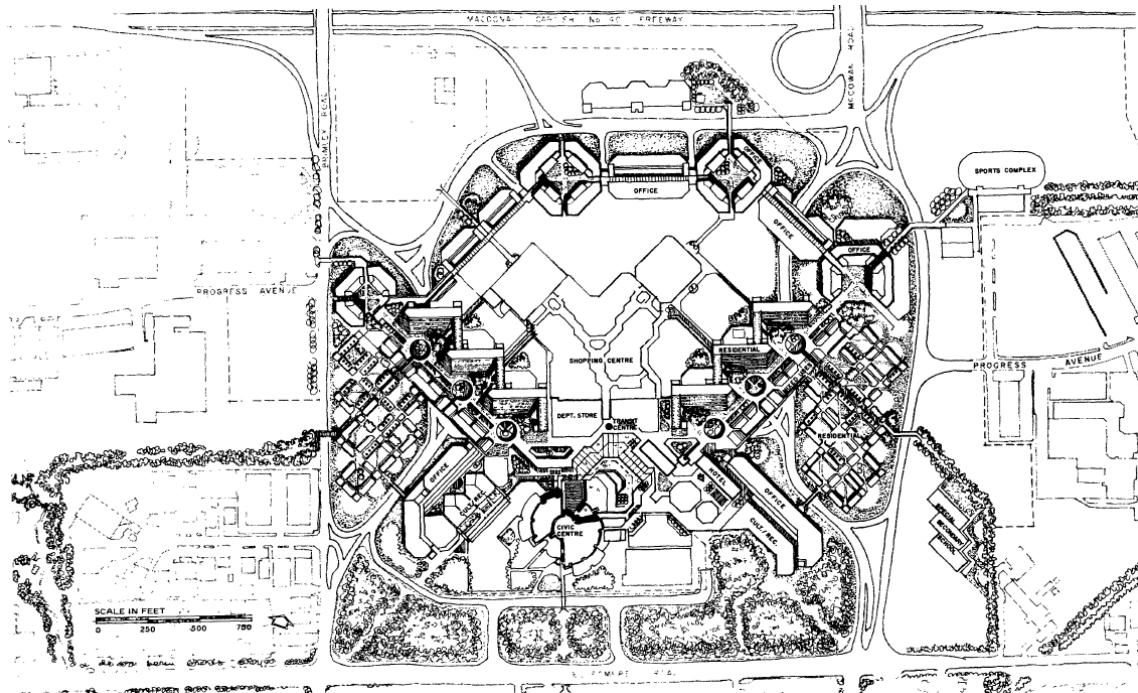
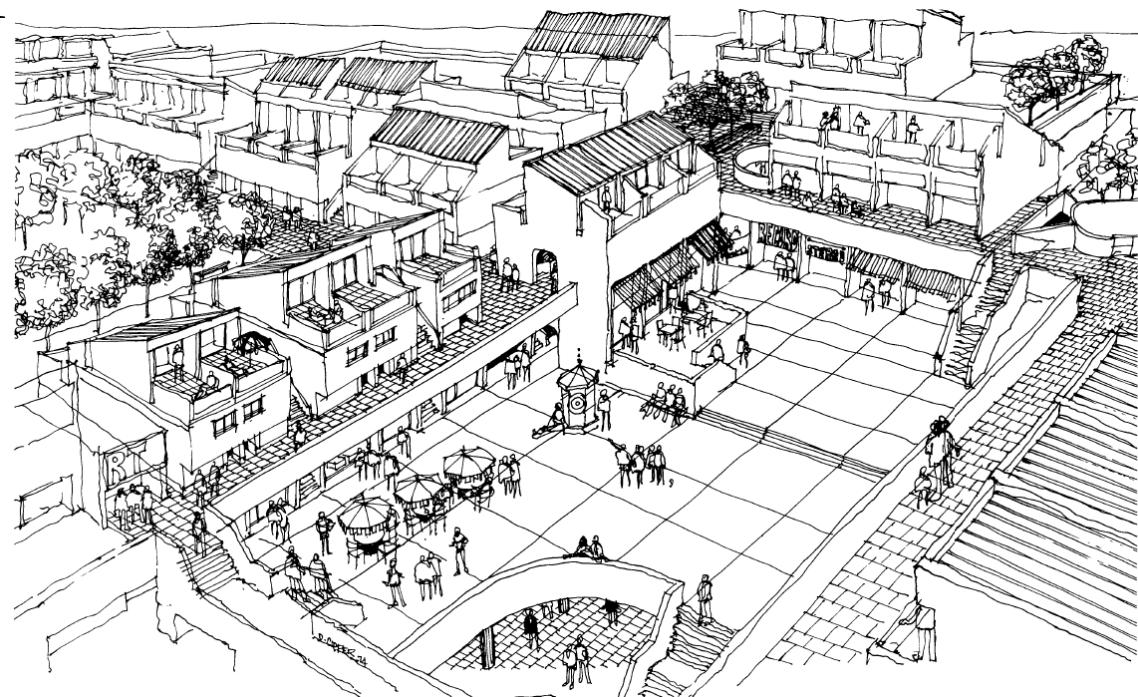


Fig. 29 – Scarborough Town Centre Land Use Study, 1974, land use concept



**Fig. 30 – Scarborough Town Centre Land Use Study, 1974, land use concept**



**Fig. 31 – Scarborough Town Centre Land Use Study, 1974, land use concept**

Built in 1978, the Bell Building, designed by Shore Tilbe Henschel Irwin Peters Architects, is adjacent to the Civic Centre (Fig. 32). This was the second of a new building typology emerging in the study area with the construction of the Civic Centre:

the office building. Constructed as a regional office centre for a major corporation, the Bell Building's six-storey scale and design responded to the adjacent Civic Centre.



Fig. 32 – Bell Building, 100 Borough Drive

Planning policy continued to shape the study area in the 1970s and 1980s. Scarborough's Official Plan "provided for the development of an integrated pedestrian system linking major destination points to the Centre... Walkways... to be weather protected and grade separated at major road crossings to ensure that the system is both safe and comfortable."<sup>36</sup> Several examples of these covered walkways can be found in the study area, including the blue-frame galleria structure adjacent to the Canada Centre (1983) and the covered pedestrian walkway at McCowan Road (c. 1983). Official Plan Design policies provided for the control of building height, siting, and design to achieve a "strong, consistent, identifiable image of the Town Centre," and directed that a "recognizable skyline for the Town Centre, as it is viewed from a distance, will be a priority."<sup>37</sup> The buildings hailing from this time demonstrate a strong consistency in design and an effort to create a distinct skyline for the growing urban centre.

Between 1981 and 1985, three more office buildings were constructed in the study area. In 1981, 55 Town Centre Court, an 8-storey office building, was built by developer Tancoos Yarmon to designs by Clarke Darling Downey Architects. Moriyama &

<sup>36</sup> Scarborough, Borough of. "Amendment No .196 to Official Plan." 1968.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Teshima Architects again left their mark with the Canada Centre twelve-storey office building at 200 Town Centre Court (1983-85).

The construction of the twelve-storey Canada Centre, a Government of Canada building providing services for Scarborough and Central Ontario, was a significant moment for the growing urban centre. The form of the Canada Centre's distinct roofline is repeated in the structure of the adjacent pergola, which functions as a galleria between Scarborough Town Centre Station and Albert Campbell Square (Figs. 33 & 34). The galleria's steel framework was funded and constructed by the Federal Government in concert with the first phase of the office building. The design was intended to create a recognizable reference point in the Town Centre, to aid in orientation, and to provide a "sense of arrival" for expected future transit users.<sup>38</sup> Glass panels were to be added later, providing a covered pedestrian walkway, however this was never carried out.<sup>39</sup>



**Fig. 33 – View from Scarborough Civic Centre looking east, 1987, Toronto Public Library.** The majority of the structures seen in this photo, aside from the building furthest in the background (55 Town Centre Court), was designed by Moriyama & Teshima Architects.

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<sup>38</sup> Moriyama & Teshima, 1974.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



**Fig. 34 – The Canada Centre and Galleria, 200 Town Centre Court**

The complex of office buildings at 100-300 Consilium Place were also constructed during this period of office growth in Scarborough Centre. Designed by Bregman & Hamann Architects, the three office buildings were built in stages between 1984 and 1989. Consistent with the firm's tendency to design multi-phased, master-planned projects, the identical 17-storey towers at 100-200 Consilium Place were constructed in 1984 and 1985 respectively. These twin buildings were later joined by a third office tower, also designed by Bregman & Hamann, at 300 Consilium Place in 1989.

New office buildings in this period may have anticipated the construction of Scarborough's "RT," Toronto's first elevated rapid transit rail line, which connected Kennedy subway station to the Town Centre (Fig. 35). Approved by Metropolitan Toronto in 1977, the six-station line was completed in 1985, with its major hub at Scarborough Town Centre station also including a bus terminal. It was a significant moment in Scarborough's history. The RT technology, developed by a Provincial transportation group, was state-of-the-art.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the technology soon became the model for the Vancouver SkyTrain following its proof-of-concept debut at Expo '86.

In the study area, the RT occupies an elevated track that runs from west of Brimley Road to Grangeway Avenue in the east, terminating at a service yard. The elevated track

<sup>40</sup> Chris Bateman. "A brief history of the Scarborough RT." *blogTO*. July 20, 2013. Accessed online at: [https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/a\\_brief\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_scarborough\\_rt/](https://www.blogto.com/city/2013/07/a_brief_history_of_the_scarborough_rt/)

features precast, "V"-shaped pylons supporting a concrete track. Two RT stations are located within the study area: Scarborough Town Centre Station and McCowan Station.



**Fig. 35 – View of Scarborough RT, looking northeast towards 100-200 Consilium Place towers, n.d.,  
BlogTO**



Fig. 36 – McCowan Station, architect Jim Strasford, built 1985



Fig. 37 – RT Elevated Tracks looking west towards Brimley Road

Following the completion of the RT line, another large two more large office buildings were constructed, the aforementioned Bregman & Hamann tower at 300 Consilium Place, and 740 Progress Avenue. Designed by NORR Partnership Ltd. Architects and Engineers, 740 Progress Avenue was constructed in 1986, and maintains its original use as a TD Computer Centre (data centre).



**Fig. 38 – TD Computer Centre, 740 Progress Avenue**



**Fig. 39 – Aerial Photo, 1991, City of Toronto**

*Table 4: Themes and Existing Physical Features of Scarborough Town Centre and Civic Centre (1967-1990)*

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<b>Themes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and Public Services</li> <li>• Community Building</li> <li>• Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</li> <li>• Transportation and Infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-themes:</b>
<i>Governance and Public Service</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Township of Scarborough Becomes a Borough of Metropolitan Toronto (1966)</li> <li>• Scarborough Civic Centre</li> </ul>
<i>Community Building</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official Plans &amp; Master Planning</li> <li>• Designation of land in the study area for "Town Centre Uses"</li> </ul>
<i>Industry, Manufacturing and Economic Activity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scarborough Town Centre Mall as Business Hub</li> </ul>

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Buildings</li> </ul>
<i>Transportation and Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automobile-Dependent Transportation</li> <li>• Ring Road</li> <li>• Surface Parking</li> <li>• Public Transit (Light Rail)</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to Existing Physical Features:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of the Scarborough Centre area through master planning in 1968, when 170 acres of land in the former Progress Industrial District were designated for "Town Centre Uses."</li> <li>• Notable remnants from this period include the Scarborough Town Centre, Scarborough Civic Centre, and Albert Campbell Square.</li> <li>• The overall structure of the Scarborough Centre "superblock" (comprised of the Scarborough Town Centre and Scarborough Civic Centre), surrounded by a ring road (Progress Avenue at the north, and Borough Drive at the south).</li> <li>• Extensive surface parking surrounding the Town Centre and Civic Centre.</li> <li>• Notable office buildings from this period include the Bell Buildings at 100 Borough Drive (1978), the Canada Centre at 200 Town Centre Court (1983-1985), 100-300 Consilium Place (1984-1989), and the TD Computer Centre at 740 Progress Avenue (1986).</li> <li>• The Scarborough RT line and transit infrastructure, which consists of an elevated track featuring precast pylons supporting a concrete track, and two RT stations, Scarborough Town Centre Station and McCowan Station.</li> </ul>

### **EVOLVING GROWTH CENTRE – RESIDENTIAL TOWERS (1990-2020):**

The first residential buildings were constructed in the study area in the early 1990s, when two residential towers were built adjacent to Highway 401 on Corporate Drive. A cluster of residential buildings has accumulated within this area since, alongside numerous towers built to the west and east of the Civic Centre, adding to that area's pre-existing cluster of taller buildings (Fig. 40). Closely related to the emergence of this high density residential typology, the Scarborough YMCA at 230 Town Centre Court opened in March 1990,<sup>41</sup> to support the anticipated population and employment growth for the area. Since the 1990s, big-box store type developments, chain restaurants and a large scale movie theatre have also emerged at the periphery of the mall's surface parking lots.

Over the last decade, several new residential high-rise typologies have appeared within the study area (Figs. 42 & 43), as the Scarborough Town Centre continues to grow.

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<sup>41</sup> YMCA. "YMCA of Greater Toronto: History." Accessed online at: YMCA Link: <https://ymcagta.org/about-us/history>



Fig. 40 – Aerial View, Sep 9, 2020, Google

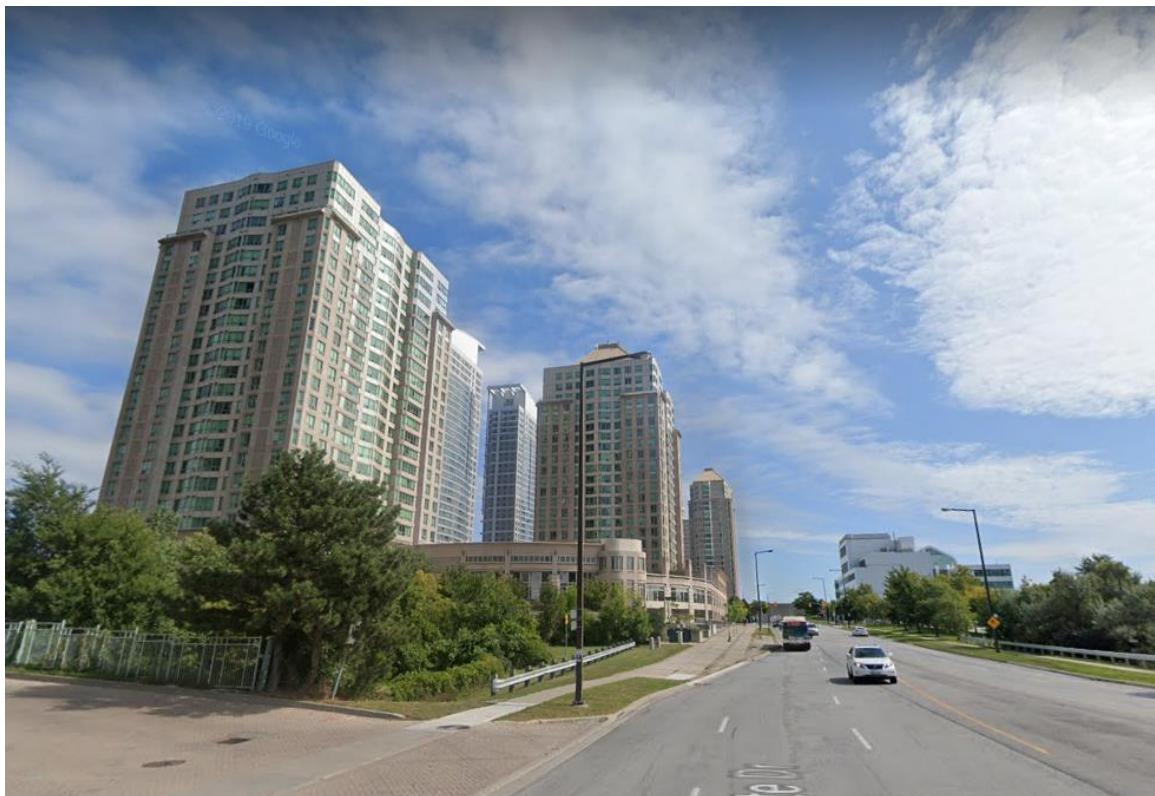


Fig. 41 – Street View, Sep 9, 2020, Google



Fig. 42 – Street View, Sep 9, 2020, Google



Fig. 43 – Street View, Sep 9, 2020, Google

*Table 5: Themes and Existing Physical Features of Evolving Growth Centre - Residential Towers (1990-2020)*

<b>Themes and Existing Physical Features</b>
<b>Themes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Building</li><li>• Industry, Manufacturing, and Economic Activity</li></ul>
<b>Sub-themes:</b>
<i>Community Building</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High Density Residential</li><li>• Community Centre</li><li>• Immigration and Community Diversification</li></ul>
<i>Industry, Manufacturing and Economic Activity</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Big Box Retail/Commercial</li></ul>
<b>Contribution to Existing Physical Features:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High-density residential development throughout the study area, along with supporting community services, including the Scarborough YMCA (1990).</li><li>• The construction of big box and chain retail buildings in the study area.</li></ul>

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