



SCARBORO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
1727 – 14 Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T3C 0W8

March 23, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Urban Development
Office of the Councillors
700 Macleod Trail SE,
Calgary, AB T2G 2M3

RE: Heritage Policy Tools & Financial Incentives Report



Dear Madam Chair & Members of the Standing Policy Committee for Planning and Urban Development.

The neighbourhood of Scarboro is a designed district from 1909-10. At the turn of the century, CP Rail's land commissioner worked with **the Olmsted firm**: a renowned landscape architecture firm known for its design of Central Park in New York City, the US Capitol Grounds and Niagara Falls. **Scarboro is ONE of three fully executed Olmsted residential parklands in Canada.** Preservation of Olmsted designs in Canada began in 2018 with the **federal designation of Uplands in Victoria, BC.** Now, Scarboro seeks protections to help celebrate Calgary's history and to support its future growth.

We commend the direction to consider heritage area policies and protections in Calgary. However, the **Heritage Area policy required to protect the historic integrity of Scarboro is NOT included in the report** being considered. The Scarboro Planning Committee requests Councillors to direct Administration to consider protections for **BOTH cultural landscapes and privately owned assets** in Heritage Areas that meet the following criteria:

- **A Heritage Area** unified by a common theme or design principle is eligible for designation.
- A Heritage Area assessed on the basis of **a collection of historic buildings and/or landscapes** that may not qualify for designation as individual historic resources. Heritage significance is attributed to a geographic concentration of historic sites.
- The presence of **25% historic sites in an AREA including parks, streetscapes & buildings** will make it eligible for guidelines that affect **discretionary uses of private property.** The presence of **landscapes** that lend historic significance to the area **will be eligible for designation.** A Master Landscape Plan will be created with The City of Calgary for the Heritage Area in relation to these public spaces.
- The presence of **50% of historic sites in an AREA including parks, streetscapes & buildings** will make it eligible to be regulated as a **direct control district.** The presence of **landscapes** that lend historic significance to the area **will be eligible for designation.** A Master Landscape Plan will be created with The City of Calgary for the Heritage Area as this relates to public spaces.



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The example of Scarborough calls for a policy that regulates **areas** including **both private and public lands** that span parks, streetscapes, and properties united by a particular design or theme, which represent a unique achievement in the history of Calgary.

Scarboro's **public green spaces** are integral to John Charles Olmsted's design, and to the future designation of Scarborough as a **Provincial Heritage Area**. The escarpment on the hilltop of Scarborough defines its natural borders. Original lot lines drawn on the topographic map show the design for a residential suburb that remains sensitive to context, **protecting and enhancing natural scenery**. Curvilinear streets carve triangular parklets throughout the neighbourhood. The proximity of the Bow River also lends significance to Scarborough. **The Bow River drew nomadic peoples to its water's edge**: people who followed the migratory patterns of the buffalo. Writings from the turn of the century document **the presence of migratory encampments in Scarborough during the summer months, when indigenous peoples came to collect treaty money**.

In the beginning of the 1910s, City Council had absolute confidence in Calgary's future as a western metropolis: "**Park development was seen as integral to the city's success, not optional.**"¹ During **William Reader's** tenure as Parks Superintendent, **he worked in Scarborough from 1913 to 1942**, to oversee the construction of **playgrounds, plan boulevards and recommend species of trees, perennials and shrubs** on streetscapes and in parks. **Over 1,000 trees** lie on Scarborough public lands today, with an **estimated value of \$4,566,093** in 2020. This evaluation is based on data collected by Urban Forest Management to calculate estimated replacement cost. Individual mature trees or "**heritage trees**" (**predating 1945**) are very valuable. Within Scarborough, an American Elm carries a value of approximately \$61,000, a Northwest Poplar \$52,000, a Paper Birch \$40,000, and a Manitoba Maple is valued at \$37,000. This Olmsted residential parkland was designed to be a **natural retreat from the metropolis for all Calgarians to enjoy**. Triangle Park (popular for families & dogs) and the island on Shelbourne Street (a perennial garden maintained by residents), have led to numerous community events. These parks are amongst the **18 sites appearing on Calgary's historic inventory of resources**, along with **three heritage streetscapes**.

Following Dr. Nancy Pollock-Ellwand's recommendations (foremost expert of Olmsted designs in Canada), the Scarborough Planning Committee will be seeking to apply for **federal designation** of Scarborough at the same time as it seeks **municipal and provincial protections**. A **provincial designation** can be used to effectively establish **area boundaries** in relation to Alberta's heritage values and the neighbourhood's character-defining elements. The next step would be to use **municipal heritage area policies** (not yet approved), which could help **regulate parks, streetscape and neighbourhood character**. Many residences in Scarborough display original vernacular design and detailing from the 1910s and 1920s, and more recent buildings are of sympathetic design. The George Anderson caveat (part of the 1911 contract of sale) remains intact on almost all land titles in Scarborough, so that development is limited to single-family homes with generous front setbacks.

¹ City of Calgary Parks Dept, *Calgary Celebrating 100 Years of Parks*, Calgary: City of Calgary, 2010: 37.



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Neighbourhoods that merit heritage designation are **cultural landscapes** comprised of **both natural and human-made resources**. Please consider this example of “heritage area” as one that can inform the protections needed for other **heritage areas** in Calgary that **include historic green spaces and streetscapes, as well as private property**.

If Councillors wish to protect areas like Scarboro, then Administration must be directed to consider **BOTH public and privately owned historic resources** in defining Heritage Areas. As itemized above, a heritage area defined by a common theme or design principle could be given appropriate protections on the basis of its **historic parks, streetscapes and buildings**. Sites such as streetscapes and parks are **ALREADY** included on the Inventory for Historic Resources. **These public spaces SHOULD BE included in the CRITERIA to assess the heritage value of an area**. In order to preserve the integrity of heritage areas, there is need to recognize both public and private realms.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tarra Drevet". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized.

Tarra Drevet
Chair of Planning & Development
Scarboro Community Association

SCARBORO Community Statistics:

Number of Trees: **1,083**

Estimated Value of trees in this community: **\$4,566,093**

Number of Trees per square km: **2,38**

