



**Metropolitan Action Committee on
Violence Against Women and Children**

Safety Audit Report Card

Date: April 22nd, 2008

Area Audited: King Street West and Jameson Avenue
(Parkdale-High Park South Ward 14)

A.OVERVIEW OF SAFETY AUDIT RESULTS – Physical Environment

METRAC's Safety Audit looks at how social and physical environments can make an area safe or unsafe. METRAC defines safety as *'freedom from the threat, fear, and experience of all kinds of violence, oppression, and discrimination.'* The physical environment includes lighting, security and the physical design of spaces. These features are so common that people usually don't notice them. But the design of buildings and the overall commitment to security in an area can impact how safe people feel. Small changes in the physical environment can increase peoples' sense of safety.

The Community Safety Audit was organized by the South Asian Women's Centre in the Parkdale community, as a way for their Tibetan Community Group to evaluate the neighborhood and express their specific safety concerns. A small group of men and women participated in the safety audit walkabout on April 22nd, 2008 from 7-9pm.

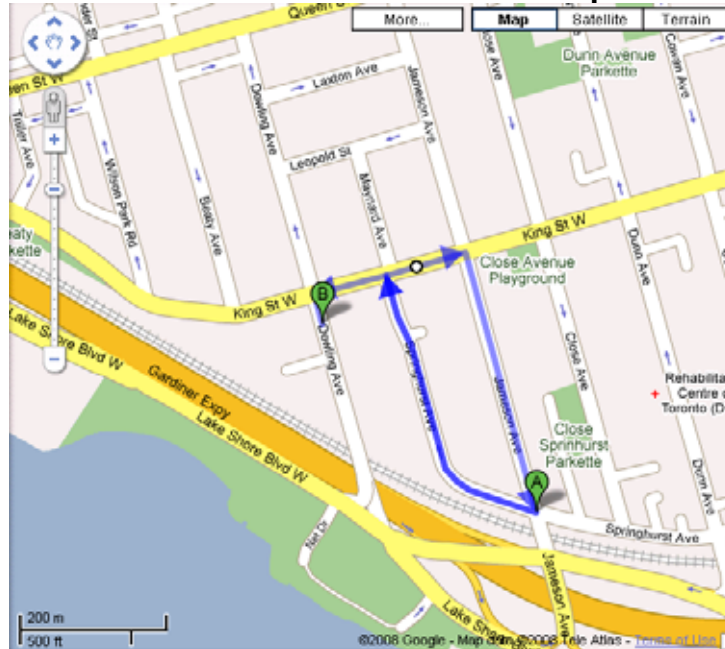
The Parkdale community is unique in the sense that there is a mix of old traditional and new urban. It is also a community that is deeply influenced by its long history. For example, it is estimated that 90% of the residents are tenants and that it continues to be a place for newcomers to settle, though the reasons for doing so now relate more to economics than they did a century ago. Parkdale is no longer an enclave of the wealthy and the population is mostly transient, with people moving in and out ¹. It is estimated that there are about 3,000 Tibetans in Toronto, and about 2,000 reside in the Parkdale area². The neighborhood – bound by Queen St. W. to the north, the Gardiner Expressway to the west and south, and Atlantic Ave. to the east – is rapidly becoming Little Tibet, with Tibetan shops and restaurants catering to a booming immigrant population³.

¹ <http://www.parkdalevillagebia.com/history>

² <http://waltjarsky.net/cycling-with-john-sewell>

³ <http://waltjarsky.net/cycling-with-john-sewell>

South Parkdale Audit Route Map



The average rating for each area of the audit is in the table below.

1. Poor	2. Substandard	3. Ok	4. Good	5. Very good
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Safety Audit Report Card	Scale			
OVERVIEW – overall sense of safety in the area.			3.2	
LIGHTING – the ability to see and be seen clearly.		2.5		
SIGNS AND MAPS - knowing where you are reduces fear of being attacked or getting lost.			3.4	
ISOLATION - people tend to feel safer when others are around.			3.0	
SIGHTLINES - clear views ahead and all around, not blocked by bushes, walls or fences.		2.9		
MAINTENANCE - dirty and untidy areas make people feel no one cares and no one will come if they need help.		2.9		
ACCESSIBILITY - it is easy to move around the area.		2.9		
SECURITY – presence of security systems in place that work and security staff treat everyone the same way.		2.6		

The area was generally seen as okay in terms of safety; however there were several areas in need of improvement. The participants noted the following safety concerns:

1. Limited Lighting & Sightlines (Apartment Buildings/Side Streets)

- General lighting is inadequate
- Some lights in the area are not in good working condition
- Overall ability to see around objects is limited

2. Overall Poor Maintenance of Common Areas and Main Streets

- The area is not clean/maintained
- There are no signs to show who to call for maintenance
- There is some garbage/litter in the area

3. Accessibility Issues

- No evidence of automatic doors/ramps in buildings
- It is not easy to move around if you are using a wheelchair/stroller
- There are limited parking spaces for people with disabilities

4. Security Issues

- There are limited working security and fire alarms in area
- No security guards observed in area
- No security features observed (mirrors, intercoms)

B. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

As the second component of the safety audit, participants filled out the Social Environment Survey. Here are the results:

All of the participants indicated that they have not witnessed or heard about incidents of violence and/or harassment occurring in their communities (**100%**); however **22%** of participants disclosed personal experiences of discrimination and or harassment.

All of the participants live and/or work in the immediate area and are frequent users of the space. It is interesting to note that none of the participants would disclose either the type of violence/harassment experienced or where or when such incidents occurred. The participants would not indicate any information about whether they disclosed the events to others or whether they felt that informing others was a positive experience.

Audit participants noted that there is a need in the area for more culturally specific services and more diverse and affordable housing options.

C. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Comments from participants:

- *"I was chased once"*
- *"There are cameras, not sure if they are being used or not"*
- *"I don't feel safe in this area..."*

In public spaces, the safety needs of different groups sometimes overlap and can seem to conflict. For example, youth using a park next to a community centre see it as a safe place to hang out. But homeowners may think the park is unsafe because the youth go there. Dog owners may see the park as a safe area where their pets can run free and get exercise. Parents with young children might not want to go to the park because of potential dog poop and the fear that their kids might get bitten.

But it is important to examine these different safety concerns and see where they are coming from. It's important to remember that all the groups using the park are a part of the neighborhood and should feel free and safe to use the space. The Safety Audit is a tool that can help people communicate amongst their differences to come to a common place of understanding where everybody's voices are heard and everybody feels safe. A space should not be made 'safer' for some at the expense of others, and safety for the most vulnerable, marginalized people is just as important as safety for the more powerful people.

Concerns about both the physical and social environment in the area have impacted people's feelings of safety. The physical layout and overall maintenance of the area, combined with the lack of security features has increased people's fear and feelings of isolation. In this specific area, there are an overwhelming number of newcomers of similar ethnic backgrounds, which helps contribute to the strong sense of community that they experience. In order to increase people's sense of safety in the Parkdale community, members must come together to share their common experiences and work for collective change. This can best be accomplished by working with the local representatives and the numerous community groups and agencies in the area.

Possible means to address the issues include:

1. Contacting social service agencies in the area to discuss possible resolutions:

- South Asian Women's Centre
- The Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario
- CultureLink
- St. Christopher's House

2. Homeless drop-in centres with food (coffee, snack packs, vitamins, etc.), basic items (tampons, toothpaste, etc.), showers, laundry, clothing:

- Parkdale Community Health Centre
- Salvation Army Maxwell Meighen Centre

3. Youth Services and Recreational Activities:

- Holy Family Community Centre
- Masaryk-Cowan Community Centre
- Parkdale Community Centre
- Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)

4. Harm Reduction services need extended hours:

- Sistering- A Woman's Place
- St. Christopher's House

CONTACT INFORMATION

Appendix A lists other contact information for city repairs.

1. City Contacts

City Councillor Name: Gord Perks

Address: 100 Queen Street West, A14 Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Phone: 416-392-7919

Fax: 416-392-0398

Email: councilor_perks@toronto.ca

Website: www.gordperks.ca

Toronto Police Services 14 Division

Address: 150 Harrison Street Toronto ON M6J 2A4

Phone: 416-808-1400

Fax: 416-808-1402

Email: 14division@torontopolice.on.ca

Community Relations Officer: Constable Jim McFedries 416-808-1508

Crime Prevention Officer: Constable Gordon Reid 416-808-1529

City of Toronto Solid Waste Management

Customer Service 416-338-2010

Email: acesstoronto@toronto.ca

Community Clean Up Program 416-338-0338

2. Local Community Services

South Asian Women's Centre

Address: 800 Lansdowne Avenue

Phone: 416-537-2276

Website: www.sawc.org

This organization offers settlement services, information and referral, translation and interpretation, advocacy, guidance related to family violence, social assistance, crisis intervention, immigration, citizenship, health education and promotion, and wellness support groups for Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Tamil women, seniors group for all South Asian women, youth group for girls, homework club for children, and tutoring for grades 3-9.

The Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario

Address: 40 Titan Road Toronto ON M8Z 2J8

Phone (416) 410-5606

Website <http://ctao.org>, www.tcccgc.org

As a community based, not for profit organization, the mission of the CTAO is to promote the rights of all individuals, in particular, those of Tibetan Canadians and encourage their full and equal participation in Canadian society. The goal of the CTAO is to promote cross-cultural understanding and friendships between the Tibetan community and other cultural groups in Canada. This will be achieved through education and awareness projects; networking to build friendships; shared community ethnic/heritage events and festivals; and participation with other ethnic groups in recreation and sporting activities. The CTAO will not only help Tibetan immigrants adjust to the culture, heritage, and lifestyle in Canada, but we will also promote and nurture Tibetan culture and arts within the Tibetan community and with other cultural individuals and groups.

Holy Family Community Centre

Address: 141 Close Avenue

Phone: 416-392-6695

Website: www.tdsb.org/schools/holyfamily.asp

Masaryk-Cowan Community Centre

Address: 220 Close Avenue

Phone: 416-392-6928

Parkdale Community Centre

Address: 75 Lansdowne Avenue

Phone: 416-392-6696

Website: www.parkdalehealth.ca

High Park Library

Address: 228 Roncesvalles Avenue

Phone: 416-393-7671

Parkdale Public Library

Address: 1303 Queen Street West

Phone: 416-393-7686

Facilities include internet access and word-processing stations and programs for children, teens and adults. Toronto Public Libraries have regular programs for children, youth and adults. For more information regarding programs that are offered throughout the school, call the library closest to you or visit the websites www.torontopubliclibrary.ca.

CultureLink

Address: 160 Springhurst Avenue

Phone: 416-588-6288

Website: www.culturelink.net

Provides programs which assist newcomers to settle in Toronto. Services include settlement counseling, information, referrals, orientation and support in settlement related matters including assistance for students in school and job search.

Parkdale Intercultural Association

Address: 1257 Queen Street West

Phone: 416-536-4420

Website: www.piaparkdale.com

This organization provides settlement programs and services to refugees and new immigrants, and engages in a community development process to nurture a healthy, equitable and sustainable community that builds on the rich diversity of Parkdale.

Sistering- A Woman's Place

Address: 220 Cowan Road (@ Masaryk Community Centre)

Phone: 416-588-3939

Website: www.sistering.org

This organization provides social/recreational day programs for women who are socially isolated and/or living in poverty and in the Parkdale area. Information and referral to housing and housing workers, education classes, health care, therapists, legal services, practical help, and transportation services are also provided.

Parkdale Community Health Centre

Address: 1229 Queen Street West

Phone: 416-537-2455

Website: www.parkdalehealth.ca

Provides a range of health services including appointments for routine medical care, diagnosis and treatment of chronic illnesses, counseling, case management, health promotion group activities on topics related to parenting, diabetes, smoking cessation, and addictions, etc., foot care, wound care, home visits for housebound seniors with disabilities, and much more. Outreach programs include counseling, community kitchen, social recreational programs, etc.

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)

Address: 1499 Queen Street West

Phone: 416-588-0173 (Drop In); 416-537-262 (Office); 416-537-2591 (Administration)

Programming areas include drop in, emergency housing, crisis intervention, healing groups, primary health care services, and employment programs.

St Christopher House Parkdale Focus

Address: 1497 Queen Street West Unit 103

Phone: 416-536-1234

The Parkdale FOCUS Community builds on existing health promotion, prevention, and early intervention programs with the support of many community players in order to reduce alcohol and other drug misuse in this part of Toronto. It aims to empower its residents and ensure community participation in youth programs; Drug Awareness Week; outreach to high-risk groups; and educational workshops.

Housing Connection

Address: 176 Elm Street

Phone: 416-981-6111

Website: www.housingconnections.ca

Housing Connections is the point of access to apply for rent-geared-to-income housing in Toronto. We determine eligibility and maintain a centralized waiting list for all rent-geared-to-income housing in the city. Housing Connections also manages the Rent Supplement Program.

Parkdale Community Information Centre

Address: 1303 Queen Street West

Phone: 416-393-7689

Website: www.pcic.ca

The Centre helps people living in Parkdale to access community and government resources and services. Internet and telephone access is provided

E. STRATEGIES FOR FOLLOWING UP ON RESULTS

Here is a list of possible follow-up actions in response to the Safety Audit results:

1. **Local Politician-** Because the audit was done on public property, following up with the Local City Councillor should be done. A copy of this report card will be sent to Councillor Gord Perk's office, but it may be a good idea to hold a meeting and invite them to discuss the results. Let them know what needs to be done to make the area safe for everyone.
2. **Municipal Services** – If your group has identified things that need fixing in your neighbourhood, try contacting your municipal office:
 - Lights and litter in park: contact Parks, Forestry and Recreation at 416-392-1111.
 - For streetlights, contact Toronto Hydro at 416-542-3195.
 - Toronto Municipal office: 416-338-0338
 - City of Toronto Solid Waste Management 416-392-CLEAN
 - If your complaints go unheard, then you can consider contacting the Toronto Star's The Fixer Column. They are interested in hearing about what's broken and damaged in your neighbourhood. Go to www.thestar.com/thefixer, and click on the Submit a Problem link. Or call them at 416-869-4823.
3. **Community Services-** If your group has identified social concerns in the immediate area, the group should attempt to connect with community services in the area to build partnerships to increase the overall sense of community that is lacking. Here are some possible connections:
 - South Asian Women's Centre
 - The Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario
 - Parkdale Community Centre
 - Parkdale Intercultural Centre
 - St Christopher's House
4. **Other Strategies** – if the safety issues are important enough, then the community group may have to take matters into their own hands. The group may have to do whatever it takes to make sure that their safety issues are heard. Here are some possible actions:
 - Starting a safety committee in your area
 - Conducting letter writing campaigns
 - Town Hall Meetings
 - Contacting the media
 - Holding community forums & events
 - Organizing workshops in the community

APPENDIX: City of Toronto Contact Information for Community Repairs

http://www.toronto.ca/services/pdf/whose_job_is_it.pdf

Whose Job Is It?

To report:

- Litter and debris
- A-frame signs and portable signs
- Abandoned appliances
- Property in general disrepair or hazardous condition

→ **call the local Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S) Office:**

- North York District: 416-395-7011
- Toronto and East York District: 416-338-0338
- Scarborough District: 416-396-7071
- Etobicoke District: 416-394-2535

- Traffic signals broken 416-397-8723
- Broken or missing traffic signs 416-338-8999
- Street lights out 416-542-3195
- Decorative lighting Contact Local BIA*
- Broken Phone booth 6-1-1
- Hanging baskets Contact Local BIA*
- Damage to bus shelter 416-338-8999
- Remove A-frame and portable signs See ML&S box
- Sidewalk Repairs 416-338-8999
- Leaking fire hydrant 416-338-8888
- Graffiti 416-39-CLEAN (416-392-5326)
- Broken/damaged street light 416-542-3195
- Street banner Contact Local BIA*
- Broken/damaged mail box 1-800-267-1177
- Broken parking meter 416-393-7275
- Broken/damaged newspaper boxes 416-338-8999
- Litter on street/sidewalk or overflowing garbage bin 416-39-CLEAN (416-392-5326)
- Request new bike posts, report damaged posts or abandoned bikes 416-392-9253
- Damaged Eco-Media 416-259-3200
- Water main breaks 416-338-8888

TORONTO **Clean City Beautiful City** **tabia** Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas

*For the Business Improvement Area (BIA) in your community, visit www.toronto-bia.com