



Safety Audit Report Card

Date: August 18- 31, 2009, 7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Area Audited: R.J. Smith Apartment Buildings (Kendelton Drive and John Garland Boulevard)

Ward 1, Etobicoke North

Neighbourhood 3, Thistletown-Beaumont Heights

The Community Safety Audit was organized by the Rexdale Women's Centre in the Kendelton Road and Kipling Ave area with residents, mostly consisting of seniors from the R.J Smith Apartments, which are TCHC buildings. Seven women and five men aged 16 years to 60+ participated in the safety audit walkabout and completed the surveys. The participants represented members of the neighbourhood and were mainly low-income. This audit was led by the Rexdale Women's Centre staff members, Rani Tahlan, Suman Chaudhary, and Semran Tabasum. In addition, each adult resident was paired with a youth resident to conduct the audit. The group conducted the safety audit of their neighbourhood because they would like to see changes in their community so all individuals can feel safe. This is the first time residents of the area conducted a METRAC safety audit. Furthermore, METRAC was invited by the residents to discuss the Community Safety Audit and to participate in the audit walkabout. Residents plan to continue to address safety concerns of the community, and expressed interest in continuing to work with METRAC.

The Thistletown-Beaumont Heights Neighbourhood predominantly consists of working age people (ages 25-64) and children¹. The neighbourhood is diverse, with 53.8%² of the population identifying as visible minorities; however there has not been an increase in diversity since 2006. Approximately 1/5 of the neighbourhood's population has a household or individual income above \$100,000 but, more significantly, there is a lot of poverty in the neighbourhood. 35.6% of individuals and almost-20% of families are living with low-incomes.³ This area is family oriented.

(See Appendix B for more statistics on the neighbourhood's demographics)

¹ http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/cns_profiles/2006/pdf1/cpa03.pdf

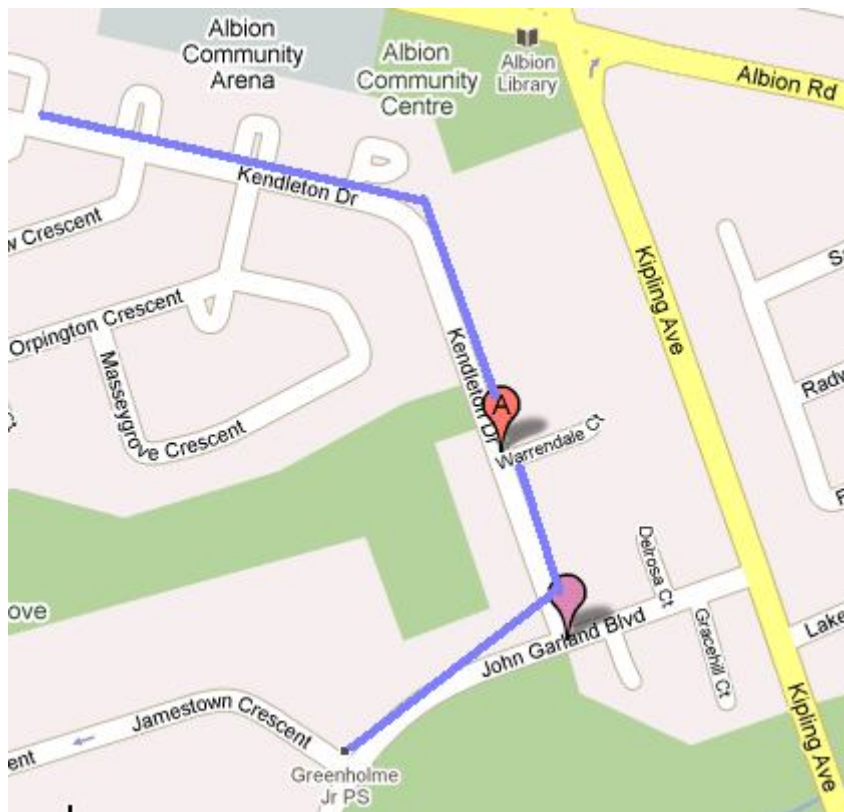
² http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/cns_profiles/2006/pdf2/cpa3.pdf

³ http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/cns_profiles/2006/pdf4/cpa3.pdf

A.OVERVIEW OF SAFETY AUDIT RESULTS – Physical Environment

METRAC's Safety Audit examines 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, signs, sightlines and the isolation of an area. These features are so common that people usually do not notice them. The design of alleyways and buildings and the overall care and maintenance of a neighborhood can impact how safe people feel. Small changes in the physical environment can increase peoples' sense of safety.

Audit Route Map



represents the 121 Kendelton Drive (One of the buildings audited)

The average rating for each area considered in the audit is reported 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.			3.4	
LIGHTING – the ability to see and be seen clearly.			3.4	
SIGNS AND MAPS - knowing where you are reduces fear of being attacked or getting lost.			3.0	
ISOLATION - people tend to feel safer when others are around.			3.3	
SIGHTLINES - clear views ahead and all around, not blocked by bushes, walls or fences.			3.6	
MAINTENANCE - dirty and untidy areas make people feel no one cares and no one will come if they need help.			3.6	
ACCESSIBILITY - it is easy to move around the area.			3.7	
SECURITY - the security systems works and security staff treat everyone the same way.			3.5	

The area was generally considered to be safe but some areas need improvement. Even though specifics were not given as to what the concerns were, the participants generally stated their safety needs. The participants noted the following safety concerns:

i. LACK OF LIGHTING

- More lighting is needed in the apartments.
- Need white lighting, so it is easier to see outside at night.
- Add lights at the front and back of the building.
- Lighting is needed near the benches.

ii. SIGNAGE

There is a significant need for increased signage throughout the entire area. Specific signs are needed:

- The participants thought there is enough signage but these are not visible.
- To view apartment numbers.
- To indicate where people can and cannot park.

iii. MAINTENANCE

There have been issues with poor general maintenance within the area. An issue identified is:

- The fire alarm needs fixing.

iv. ACCESSIBILITY

There are issues with accessing the building. An issue identified is:

- Washroom entrances are too narrow. This may be troublesome for older adults who use assistance such as canes or walkers to access the washrooms.

v. SECURITY

There are many concerns about the security guards and the residents identified these issues:

- There are no security guards in the building or in the surrounding area.
- Residents stated that there is a need for tighter security in the area.
- Need security cameras in the buildings, especially in the elevators.
- Unsure if security cameras are monitored and if they are working.

B.OVERVIEW OF SAFETY AUDIT RESULTS – Social Environment

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

Incidents of racism and discrimination have occurred in the area on the street, in parks, on public transit, and in stores. They are targeted towards people's age, people with disabilities, speaking with an accent, race/ethnicity, and a person's economic status.

While 88% of the participants heard or witnessed incidents of discrimination, 9% of the participants who responded to this question stated that they personally experienced discrimination and/or harassment. These results show that the participants generally feel safe around the area. However, those who personally experienced discrimination and/or harassment stated the following forms: physical assault or injury, glances/stares, phone calls, graffiti in the area, written and verbal comments, and being chased or followed. Some participants have experienced crimes, where they have been robbed of their belongings; it was not clear if these crimes were based on discrimination.

Even though the adults were paired with youth to conduct the audit, there seemed to be a contradiction in the trust adults had with the youth. Many of the adults reported being afraid of youth, stating that the youth and adults should not live in the same building. When the youth are drunk, many of the adults are afraid to go out at night. In addition, people who live in the buildings come in and out at all hours and walk up and down the staircases.

Persons reported that a number of services are needed in the area. These include: health care centres, libraries, police, and food banks.

C. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

In public spaces, the safety needs of different groups sometimes overlap and can seem to conflict. For example, youth hang around stairwells and hallways in buildings, as they see it as a safe place to be but this causes older residents to feel unsafe as they use these areas on a regular basis.

It is important, however, to examine these different and sometimes conflicting safety concerns and see where they are coming from. ***It's important to remember that all the residents living in the area are a part of the neighbourhood and should feel free and safe to use the space.*** The Safety Audit is a tool that can help people communicate across their differences to come to a common place of understanding where everybody's voices are heard and everyone feels safe. A space should not be made 'safer' for some at the expense of others, and safety for the most vulnerable, marginalized persons is just as important as safety for the more powerful people.

Two issues stood out in the audit as being of great importance. They are listed below along with possible means to address these issues:

1. Mixing of Seniors and Youth

During a discussion, the seniors stated that the youth should not live in the building with them. The seniors stated that they are afraid of the youth and are afraid to go outside at night because the youth and their friends are loitering in the common areas. Seniors stated that they feel unsafe because the youth and their friends are drinking alcohol and/or smoking illegal drugs in the common areas. The seniors stated that they are unable to sleep at night due to youth who are use pieces of firewood to prop open the back door and thus the door stays open. Since the door is usually open, there is a constant beeping sound, which is not allowing the seniors to sleep at night. The seniors stated that youth and their friends constantly run up and down the hallways preventing the seniors to sleep at night, Due to this, the seniors are afraid that the youth will enter their home.

Even though, the seniors do not wish to live in the same building as the youth, this is not going to happen because the apartment buildings provide a space for both seniors and youth to live. In order to feel safe and live comfortably in the buildings, it is important for the seniors and youth to dialogue and develop a consensus with each other to discuss what they would like out of the livable space.

Recommendations:

- Residents can meet at the Rexdale Women's Centre to discuss their concerns within the buildings.

2. Adequate Security Services

The current security guards do not meet the needs of residents; either their services need to be strengthened or a new company should be hired to provide security for the area. Due to the lack of security, seniors are scared to go out at night, use the common areas, the back door and catwalk at night. Seniors have been verbally and physically assaulted. It would be good if property management would meet with seniors to discuss and understand their needs with regards to security services.

Recommendations:

- Set up a meeting with the TCHC Community Safety Officer to discuss security's role and presence in the building.
- Ensure security cameras are working and mirrors are in place.
- Install emergency phones or public telephones in underground parking and common areas.

It is important to connect with the municipal government to address the physical changes and the general public around the social safety of the area. Some ideas on how to do so can be found in *Section E: Strategies for Following-up on Results*.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Priority 1: Poor Lighting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lights in the apartments and common areas. Install lights in the bedrooms and common areas as needed. Install brighter and bigger lights in the common areas. Install light poles in the semi circle. Install lights where the benches are in the common areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may contact TCHC Community Safety Unit Officer to address the lighting needs. Report burnt out streetlights to Toronto Hydro. Ask your local Business Improvement Area to install additional lighting in any commercial areas. Write the BIA a letter or set up a meeting. Ask TCHC Operations Unit Manager to address the issue of install lights in the bedrooms and in the common areas. 	<p>Toronto Hydro Phone: 416-542-3195 Website: www.torontohydroenergy.com/street_form.asp</p> <p>Albion-Islington Square Business Improvement Area 925 Albion Road, Suite 100, Etobicoke, Ontario M9V 1A6 Phone & Fax: 416-743-3267 Email: albion.islington.bia@gmail.com Website: www.albionislingtonsquare.com</p> <p>TCHC Operations Unit Manager Barry Thomas 2765 Islington Ave, Toronto, ON M9V 1A0 Phone: (416) 981-5500</p>

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Priority 2: Security		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a minimum of one security guard per building. • Would prefer if security guards would be on duty for 24hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Community Safety Office or Operations Unit Manager about hiring security guards for all three buildings. 	<p>TCHC Operations Unit Manager (See above for contacts)</p>

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Priority 3: Public Telephones		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no public phones in the common areas or in all three buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install phones in front of all buildings and in common areas. Contact your City Councillor's office about adding payphones or installing public phones in the apartment buildings and common areas. Check out or call Canada Payphone Corporation. Contact Property Management and/or Operations Unit Manager for installing emergency phones in the underground parking and common areas that has connection to security or police. 	<p>City Councillor Suzan Hall 100 Queen Street West, Suite C54, Toronto ON, M5H 2N2 Phone: 416-392-0205 Fax: 416-696-4207</p> <p>Canada Payphone Canada Payphone Corporation A Brand of Globalive Communications, Corp. Company 48 Yonge St, 12th Floor Toronto, ON M5E 1G6 1-877-445-8606 or Email sales@canadapayphone.com.</p> <p>TCHC Operations Unit Manager (See above for contacts)</p>

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Priority 4: Seniors and Youth living in the same buildings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors want to live separately from the youth. Seniors are afraid and feel unsafe when youth are around consuming drugs and alcohol. Seniors feel unsafe as youth are running down the hallway; afraid the youth will break and enter their homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This change is impossible because the buildings are open to individuals of every age and it is important that all residents of the buildings feel safe and welcome. Therefore, it is important for both seniors and youth to discuss changes they would like in all three buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a facilitated discussion between seniors and youth to talk about these issues. This should be done in a safe and respectful environment where youth are not blamed but where both seniors and youth can openly talk about how they feel as members of their community. Explore opportunities for youth and seniors to work together in order to build a positive rapport and trust, e.g., games night, mentoring program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Appendix A lists other contact information for city repairs.

1. City Contacts

City Councillor Suzan Hall

100 Queen Street West, Suite C54, Toronto ON, M5H 2N2

Phone: 416-392-0205 | Fax: 416-696-4207

E-mail: councillor_hall@toronto.ca

Toronto 3-1-1 (formerly Access Toronto)

Phone: 311 | If outside Toronto: 416-392-CITY (2489) | TTY customers: 416-338-0889

Email: 311@toronto.ca | Website: www.toronto.ca/311/

- Provides information on who to contact for any services in the city government

Toronto Hydro (for streetlights)

Phone: 416-542-3195 | Website: www.torontohydroenergy.com/street_form.asp

Toronto Hydro Electric System

14 Carleton Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1K5

Phone: 416-542-3100

Customer Care Phone Line: 416-542-8000

Fax: 416-542-3452 or 416-542-3429

2. Toronto Community Housing

TCHC Operations Unit Manager

Barry Thomas

2765 Islington Ave, Toronto, ON M9V 1A0

Phone: (416) 981-5500

3. Local Community Services

Albion-Islington Square Business Improvement Area

925 Albion Road, Suite 100, Etobicoke, Ontario M9V 1A6

Phone & Fax: 416-743-3267

Email: albion.islington.bia@gmail.com | Website: www.albionislingtonsquare.com/

Braeburn Neighbourhood Place

75 Tandridge Cres, Unit 108, Toronto, ON, M9W 2N9

Phone: 416-745-3113 | Fax: (416) 745-9108

Email: sadore@braeburn.net

*Social, recreation, education and health programs * parent and child programs * parenting resource library * toy library * community garden * Braeburn Boys and Girls Club -- includes homework club. **Food Bank** -- by appointment only, identification required * member of Daily Bread Food Bank. **Children** -- children's breakfast club * nutritious snack program * after school recreation programs * day camp * licenced child care. **Youth** -- arts and crafts * gym and movie nights * workshops and seminars * leadership development program.*

Dejinta Beesha

8 Taber Rd, Toronto, ON, M9W 3A4

Phone: 416-743-1286 | Fax: 416-743-1233

Email: info@dejinta.org | Website: www.dejinta.org

Somali Multi-Service Centre -- settlement, integration, orientation * form filling * counselling * information and referral -- employment, immigration, housing, legal aid, education, children's aid, social assistance * translation and interpretation * accompaniment to court, correctional services, landing interview, social services * after school program * advocacy * community development * mental health program * seniors program * participates in CAP (Community Access Program) -- free Internet access.

Highfield Community Enrichment Project

Highfield Junior School, 85 Mount Olive Dr, Toronto, ON, M9V 2C9

Phone: 416-394-4635 | Fax: 416-394-6151

*Language Services: English ; Gujarati ; Hindi ; Punjabi ; Tamil ; Urdu ; West Indian dialects. Programs that promote healthy child development * school-based nutrition programs * parent/caregiver and preschool child drop-in at the Family Resource Centre (same address) * toy and book library * kindergarten readiness program * student enrichment program with family visits * parenting skills workshops * adult-based educational sessions * volunteer program * all programs held at Highfield Junior School*

Rexdale Community Health Centre

8 Taber Rd, Toronto, ON, M9W 3A4

Phone: 416-744-0066 | Fax: 416-744-1881

Email: reception@rexdalechc.com | Website: www.rexdalechc.com

Language of Service: English ; Hindi ; Italian ; Punjabi ; Somali ; Spanish ; Twi ; Urdu ; cultural interpreters available for other languages. Community health centre * primary health care including well women services * 24 hour on-call service for registered clients * health education workshops * health promotion * nutrition counselling * prenatal and postnatal care * prenatal nutrition program * chiropodist * youth HIV/AIDS preventive education * anonymous HIV testing * sexual health clinic including family planning, sexuality * speech and language programs and services for preschool children * multicultural seniors program * parent and child program * parenting workshops * diabetes support group * women's support groups * youth drop-in and leadership

*programs * dental clinic for seniors and children * advocacy * community development * client information, assessment and referral * no Ontario Health Insurance required for general services.*

Rexdale Community Legal Clinic- Woodbine Centre

500 Rexdale Boulevard, Suite 100, Toronto, ON, M9W 6K5

Phone: 416-741-5201 | Fax: 416- 741- 6540

Website: <http://www.rexdalecommunitylegalclinic.ca/>

Provide legal service to low-income communities to the northern end of Etobicoke. This work is done by lawyers and community legal workers. They provide assistance to housing problems and tenant rights. Employment Insurance, welfare/Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Disability, Workers Compensation, and Immigration and refugee law.

Salvation Army: Community and Family Services: Etobicoke Family Services

2152 Kipling Ave, Toronto, ON, M9W 4K9

Phone: 416-743-1282 | Fax: 416-743-3144

Website: torontosalvationarmy.ca

*Emergency material assistance including food, clothing, household effects as available * counselling and referrals * support program for newcomers * moms support group * Christmas assistance program * residential summer camp for children.*

Toronto Public Library: Albion Branch: Adult Literacy Program

1515 Albion Rd, Toronto, ON, M9V 1B2

Phone: 416-394-5173 | TTY: 416-395-5596 | Fax: 416-394-5185

Adult Literacy Coordinator: Deborah Cox

*One-on-one tutoring in basic reading, writing and number skills * volunteer tutors work with learners to help them reach their literacy goals * service available at 9 locations.*

Thistletown Community Services Unit

246 Jamestown Cres, Toronto, ON, M9V 3M8

Phone: 416-745-2822 | Fax: 416-744-1622

Email: thistletown2008@hotmail.com

*Drop-in * information and referral * counselling * family support program includes **Moms and Tots**, parent empowerment workshops, parent relief * nutrition program * food recovery * community garden * literacy program * support for families * housing help including form filling and applications for subsidized housing * job postings * participates in CAP (Community Access Program) -- free Internet access * sewing and stitching classes * small business development * youth leadership development * workshops * outreach * volunteer training. **Food Bank** -- Wednesday 11 am-3 pm, Thursday 10 am-3 pm * by appointment only, identification required * member of North York Harvest Food Bank.*

E. STRATEGIES FOR FOLLOWING UP ON RESULTS

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

1. **Municipal Services:** Contact your municipal offices to report any public infrastructure that need repairs. (See the City Contacts information above)
 - For example: set up a meeting with the Parks Supervisor to discuss concerns and share ideas for changes to make the park safer.
2. **Community Services:** If your group has identified social concerns (*i.e. discrimination*), connect with community services & organizations in the area to build partnerships to increase the overall sense of community that is lacking. Organize a public meeting with representatives from various groups and talk about how you can work together to address the local safety issues. See the contact information above to find some possible connections.

Sometimes the formal systems are not adequate enough to address our concerns and protect our right to safety & equity. When these avenues fail to solve the problem, it is important for communities to organize together to use their collective political, economic and social power.

3. **Media:** If your complaints to the city go unheard, consider taking your story to the media. You can get the media involved for an event or simply if the conditions in your neighbourhood are exceptionally dangerous. This would work especially well if it is used with a demonstration or picket or any visual display of community organizing.
 - Send a **press release** and call your local newspapers and TV & Radio news stations. The press release should be simple, accurate and brief. On the top of the page write: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or PRESS RELEASE, the headline of the event, and the date. Then give a brief description of what you want a reporter to cover; include who, what, where, when, why, and how. Make sure to do a follow-up call after you send out the press release. Editors see hundreds of press releases and you want to make sure that yours is memorable.
 - **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.
4. **Petition:** A simple way to show that your community is organized and cares about the issues at hand is to present the city with a signed petition of all the problems and demands stating what you would like the city to do (*i.e.* build more shelters & affordable housing so people don't have to sleep in parks)

5. Other Strategies

- Starting a violence prevention group in the neighbourhood
- Starting a safety committee in your area
- Having community events
- Hold Townhall Meetings
- Conducting letter and writing campaigns

Resources for Community Organizing

United Way, Action for Neighbourhood Change Resources

<http://unitedwaytoronto.com/whoWeHelp/neighbourhoodStrategy/resources.php>

The Citizen's Handbook: A Guide to Building Community, published by the Vancouver Citizen's Committee

<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/>

APPENDIX A: City of Toronto Contact Information for Community Repairs

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

How can we help?

Call the local Municipal Licensing & Standards Office (ML&S):

- North York District: 416-395-7011
- Toronto and East York District: 416-397-9200
- Scarborough District: 416-396-7071
- Etobicoke York District: 416-394-2535

To report:

- A-frame/portable signs
- Abandoned appliances
- Property in general disrepair or hazardous condition

City of Toronto
www.toronto.ca
access.toronto@toronto.ca
416-338-0338

tabia
Toronto Association of
Business Improvement Areas
* Business Improvement Areas (BIA)
www.toronto-bia.com
416-889-4111

- Broken traffic signals
416-397-8723
- Broken/missing street signs
416-397-8723
- Decorative lighting
Contact your local BIA*
- Broken phone booth
6-1-1
- Hanging baskets
Contact your local BIA*
- Damaged bus shelter
1-866-827-8725
- Remove A-frame/
portable signs
See ML&S box
- Sidewalk repairs
416-338-9999
- Leaking fire hydrant
416-338-8888
- Graffiti
416-338-0338
- Repair street light
416-542-3195
- Street banner
Contact your local BIA*
- Repair mail box
1-800-267-1177
- Repair parking meter
416-393-7275
- Repair newspaper boxes
416-338-9999
- Litter on street/sidewalk/garbage bin full
416-338-0338
- Request new bike posts, report
damaged posts/abandoned bikes
416-392-9253
- Damaged recycling bin
416-259-3200
- Fix a water main
416-338-8888

APPENDIX B: Demographics of Thistletown-Beaumont Heights

According to Statistics Canada, the demographics for Thistletown-Beaumont Heights Neighbourhood are as follows:

Age:

- Children 0-14, 19%
- Youth 15-24, 13%
- Working Age, 25-64, 51%
- Seniors, 65+, 17%

Language:

- 58% of this population speaks English as their “home language”
- Punjabi, Italian, Spanish, Tamil, and Gujarati are the top 5 home languages after English and French

Social Identity:

- Same rate of recent immigration as the city average; the largest recent immigrants populations are from Southern Asia and West Asia and The Middle East
- 53.8% of the people in the area identify as visible minorities (the rate is higher than the city average)

Housing

- 34% of dwellings are rentals, 66% of dwellings are owned

Family Status

- 31% of adults are single (never been married)
- 51% are legally married
- 96% are in a common-law relationship

Income

- Average household income- \$87, 791
- Median household income- \$ 63,552
- 2.2% of people have a household income of less than \$10, 000
- 8.5% of the population have a household income of less than \$50,000
- 23.5% of the population have a household income of 100,000 and up

Source: The City of Toronto. 2006 City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles: Thistletown-Beaumont Heights: Neighbourhood 3. Retrieved from http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/cns_profiles/cns3.htm.

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Audit conducted on 18-31st August 2009