



## Safety Audit Report Card

**Date:** June 16, 2007, from 8-9:30pm

**Area Audited:** Flemington Park (Don Mills Road & Gateway 1 Blvd.) – Ward 26

### **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 streets, lighting, signs, and parks. These features are so common that people usually don't notice them. But the design of streets, parks, and buildings can impact how safe people feel in their neighbourhoods. Small changes in the physical environment can increase peoples' sense of safety.

Jennifer Lafontaine organized a group of local residents to conduct a safety audit of Flemington Park neighborhood. Approximately 4 people participated in the safety audit walkabout on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The group consisted of women and youth from the area along with a community agency representative.

Flemington Park is a multicultural neighbourhood that has traditionally served as the first home for many new Canadians seeking affordable housing in the City of Toronto. A recent Flemington Park Public Library study places the total population of this neighbourhood at approximately twenty thousand people with over eighty different languages being spoken within the community. The incidence of low income was 22.6%.<sup>1</sup>

The Flemington neighbourhood is served by two community centres. The Flemington Resource Centre at 29 St. Dennis Drive is a multi-faceted facility that includes an indoor pool, a gymnasium, a day care centre and a busy public library.

The Flemington Community Centre at 150 Grenoble Drive features the only municipally funded indoor children's playground in Canada. This "Playground Paradise" features a two storey play structure, a huge spiral slide, a track ride, cargo elevator, talk tube, crawl tubes, construction zone, and ball pool with 8,000 balls all set in a meadow-like atmosphere. There is also a party room in this centre that can accommodate up to thirty-five people.

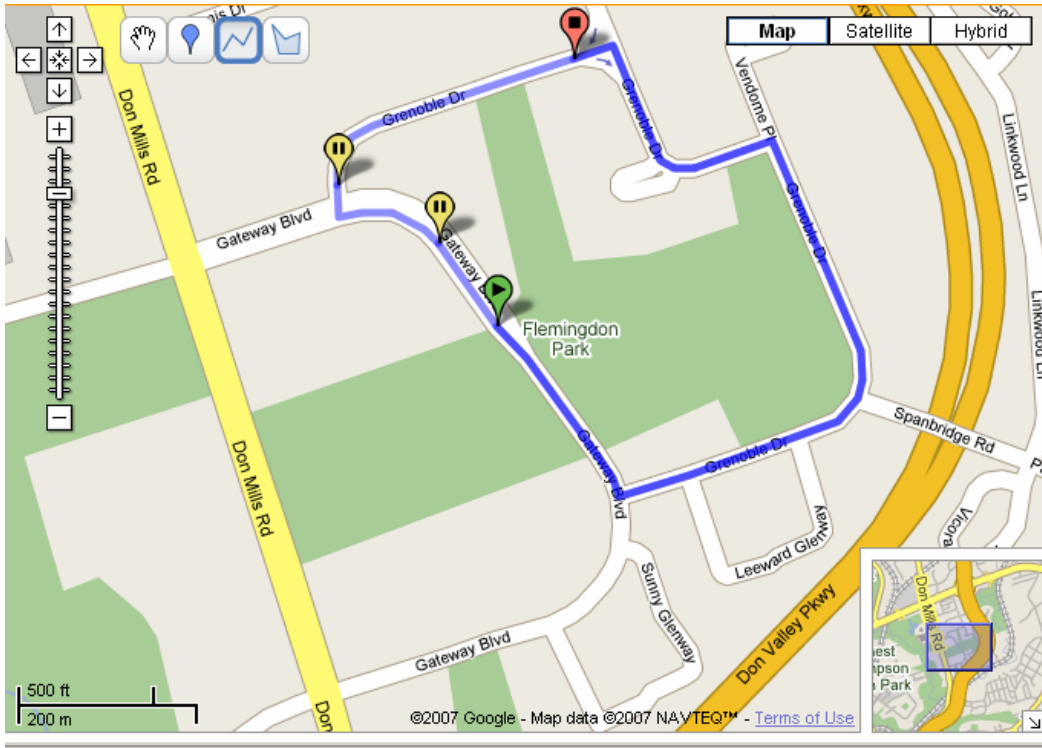
Across the street from the Flemington Community Centre is the Flemington Ice Arena which offers organized hockey league programs and pleasure skating. Adjacent to the arena and community centre is Flemington Park a long linear park that spans almost the entire length of the neighbourhood. This park has soccer fields, a baseball diamond, and a large basketball court. On the east side of the neighbourhood is another large park known as Linkwood Lane Park. This park features a children's playground, a soccer field and a baseball diamond.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 2001 Census data from Statistics Canada

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.torontoneighbourhoods.net/regions/northyork/106\\_overview.html](http://www.torontoneighbourhoods.net/regions/northyork/106_overview.html)

The audit route is below.



The average rating for each physical area of the audit is in the table below. Generally, the Flemingdon Park neighborhood was seen as below average in terms of safety; there were several key areas in need of improvement. The main concerns were possible entrapment sites, lack of lighting on walking paths and in stairwells, a lack of public telephones in accessible areas, and isolation at nighttime. The majority of these concerns centered on the local Food Basic grocery store.

1. Poor	2. Substandard	3. Ok	4. Good	5. Very good
---------	----------------	-------	---------	--------------

	1. Poor	2. Substandard	3. Ok	4. Good	5. Very good
<b>OVERVIEW</b> – overall sense of safety in the area.			3.2		
<b>LIGHTING</b> – the ability to see and be seen clearly.		2.7			
<b>SIGNS AND MAPS</b> - knowing where you are reduces fear of being attacked or getting lost.		2.1			
<b>ISOLATION</b> - people tend to feel safer when others are around.		2.9			
<b>SIGHTLINES</b> - clear views ahead and all around, not blocked by bushes, walls or fences.			3.1		
<b>MAINTENANCE</b> - dirty and untidy areas make people feel no one cares and no one will come if they need help.		2.5			
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b> - it is easy to move around the area.			3.6		
<b>SECURITY</b> – there are security systems in place that work and security staff treats everyone the same way.			3.1		

There were several areas for safety enhancements with regards to physical features, which are:

### **OVERVIEW**

- Lack of fencing around school – anyone can enter
- Lack of maps and signage, with emergency instructions
- Some stairwells in residential apartments lead to locked doors

### **LIGHTING**

Numerous locations with insufficient or no lighting:

- Food Basics parking lot, by garbage bins, and on south-west side of building
- Various parks in the area – lighting is sparse and many bulbs are broken
- Apartment building stairwells

### **PUBLIC TELEPHONE ACCESS**

- Various parks in the area
- The existing public telephones in the parks are on darkly lit paths that are far removed from regular pedestrian/automobile traffic

## **B. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT SURVEY**

---

Incidents of discrimination and harassment have occurred in the area –on the streets, in parks and at retail stores. They are targeted towards **people of colour, newcomers with accents, women, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and class background.**

Over **50%** of respondents have witnessed or heard about incidents of discrimination and/or harassment.

Over **50%** disclosed personal experiences of discrimination and/or harassment.

The acts of discrimination/harassment were in the following forms: ignoring, body gestures and postures, verbal comments, discriminated against in retail stores, and subtle forms. The most frequent forms experienced were glances or stares and verbal comments.

Of those that told someone about their personal experience of harassment/ discrimination, 60% told family or friends, 20% told a colleague and 20% told a neighbour.

There are a number of services in the area that are either lacking or needed. They include: increased knowledge of availability of recreation centres, clothing banks and food banks. The most needed services identified are: recreation centre services, health care centre, police or security guards, youth services, library and ethno-lingual services.

The places the majority of participants felt uncomfortable entering were parks and shops and businesses in the area, as well as on the street.

## C. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

---

### *Comments from participants:*

- ⇒ **lack of knowledge of area community centres, food bank, and clothing bank**
- ⇒ **feelings that area is unsafe to walk with children**
- ⇒ **children unsafe while at public school, which lacks proper fencing from surrounding parkland**
- ⇒ **severe lack of public telephones in well-lit areas**
- ⇒ **lack of proper signage indicating where stairwells lead in apartment buildings**
- ⇒ **concern about Food Basics parking lot being isolated after dark, as well as sanitation issues near dumpsters and loud noise of machinery prevents screams for help being heard by passersby**
- ⇒ **Parks have paths leading to dead ends, no signs, and many broken lights**

Past incidents of gun violence, murders and sexual assaults have impacted everyone's sense of safety in the area, particularly areas where crimes have been committed. Lack of community space and services for youth and ethno-lingual communities are in great need.

The main physical design safety issues raised were: lack of lighting around the local Food Basics and in various parks; lack of working pay phones. People's sense of safety in parks is very low.

Audits in apartment building in the neighborhood need to be conducted. Tenants expressed a number of issues relating to safety where they live. There is a need to address safety and maintenance issues in apartment buildings.

Experiences of racism and discrimination are common place for newcomers and youth. Some residents have reacted with their own strategies to deal with these situations but others remember incidents from years ago.

## D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for enhancing the physical safety features of the Flemingdon Park neighborhood based on the safety audit results include the top 3 priority concerns expressed by the participants:

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
<p><b>Priority 1:</b> Food Basics grocery store (747 Don Mills Road)</p> <p>1) Public health</p> <p>2) Discrimination at Food Basics</p> <p>3) Lighting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Health &amp; Building Code violations: repair the leaky drains, which are creating mold/fungus growth around building</li> <li>✓ Repair water leakage &amp; move big trash bin so there is no room for entrapment behind it</li> <li>✓ Fix fencing and lock property at night/after hours, replace current A/C with newer model that does not leak and is not so loud, so that people can hear each other in the area</li> <li>✓ Complaints procedure on discrimination</li> <li>✓ Enhanced lighting on south-west side of building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Councillor John Parker's office</li> <li>✓ Property Manager of Food Basics</li> <li>✓ Silverman Helps (City TV)</li> <li>✓ Toronto Star's The Fixer Column- <a href="http://www.thestar.com/thefixer">www.thestar.com/thefixer</a> or 416-869-4823</li> <li>✓ Access Toronto 416-338-0338</li> <li>✓ Councillor John Parker's office</li> <li>✓ Manager of Food Basics</li> <li>✓ Councillor John Parker's office</li> <li>✓ Local BIA (Business Improvement Area) – <a href="http://www.toronto-bia.com">www.toronto-bia.com</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 2:</b> Locked stairwells or dead-end stairwells in residential buildings, with possible areas for entrapment (48 Grenoble Drive &amp; 10 Deauville Lane)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enhanced lighting</li> <li>✓ Enhanced signage - indicating what people should do in case of emergency, including contact information and exit-plans</li> <li>✓ Install security cameras</li> <li>✓ Security guard patrols of stairwells</li> <li>✓ Unlocked doors to each floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Building Superintendent</li> <li>✓ Property Manager – ask for signs that clearly indicate action to take in emergency</li> <li>✓ Councillor John Parker's office – find out fire safety protocol re: locked stairwells</li> </ul>

<p><b>Priority 3:</b> Lack of information - Community recreation centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Publicity of what programs are offered at community centres, with fees, hours and location/directions</li> <li>✓ Increase types of recreation services to serve a broad range of individuals in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Community Centre outreach staff</li> <li>✓ City of Toronto – Parks and Recreation</li> <li>✓ <a href="http://www.211toronto.ca">www.211toronto.ca</a></li> <li>✓ <a href="http://www.torontoneighbourhoods.net/regions/northyork/106_recreation.html">http://www.torontoneighbourhoods.net/regions/northyork/106_recreation.html</a></li> <li>✓ Councillor John Parker's office</li> </ul>
--	--	---

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Appendix A lists other contact information for city repairs.*

Councillor Name: John Parker

Address: Neighbourhood Office - 150 Laird Dr., Suite 101, Toronto, ON M4G 3V7

Phone: 416-423-1434

Email: [councillor\\_parker@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_parker@toronto.ca)

**MPP Name:** MPP Kathleen Wynne

**Address:** 150A Laird Drive, Toronto, ON, M4G 3V9

**Phone:** 416-425-5999

**Email:** [kathleen@kathleenwynne.ca](mailto:kathleen@kathleenwynne.ca)

**Local Police Branch: 54 Division**

**Address:** 41 Cranfield Rd., Toronto, ON, M4B 3H6

**Phone:** 416-808-5400

**Fax:** 416-808-5402

**Email:** [54division@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:54division@torontopolice.on.ca)

Community Relations Officer: Constable Austin Ferguson, (416) 808-5408

**Community Services:**

**Local Child Care Centre: Flemingdon Child Care Centre**

Address: 29 St. Dennis Drive (Don Mills & Eglinton)

Phone: (416) 392-3170

Parks, Forestry and Recreation: Customer Service 416-392-1111

## E. STRATEGIES FOR FOLLOWING UP ON RESULTS

---

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

- **Local Politician** – Because some of 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 John Parker'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.
- **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.
  - Contact your local City Councillor to advocate on your behalf.
  - Toronto Municipal office: 416-338-0338
  - 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](http://www.thestar.com/thefixer), and click on the *Submit a Problem* link. Or call them at 416-869-4823.
- **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
  - Contacting the media
  - Making presentations at governments-initiated consultations
  - Holding community forums
  - Organizing workshops in the community
  - Holding community events
  - Surveys and opinion polls
  - Town hall meetings
- Suggested Reading:
  - <http://www.toronto.ca/children/wardreport/pdf/ward26fp.pdf> - Lists key political contacts for Ward 26, as well as listings of programs and services for children and families.
  - <http://www.toronto.ca/children/gcmap26.htm> - Child care centres in Ward 26
  - <http://www.toronto.ca/children/subsidy.htm> - Info on how to apply for child care subsidy (age 0-9 years)
  - <http://www.toronto.ca/parks/torontofun/index.htm> - list of all services offered at City of Toronto recreation centres

# 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  
416-338-9999

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  
416-338-9999

Remove A-frame and portable signs  
See ML&S box

Sidewalk Repairs  
416-338-9999

Leaking fire hydrant  
416-338-8888

Graffiti  
416-39-CLEAN (416-392-5326)

Broken/damaged streetlight  
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  
416-338-9999

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

\*For the Business Improvement Area (BIA) in your community, visit [www.toronto-bia.com](http://www.toronto-bia.com)