



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

Safety Audit Report Card

Date: April 9th, 2008

Area Audited: Weston Road and Eglinton Ave W. (Bartonville Ave. East - Lambton Ave.)
Ward 11 York South Weston

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 pathways and side streets, buildings and the overall maintenance of the area. These features are so common that people usually don't notice them. But the design of alleyways and buildings and the overall care and maintenance of the neighborhood 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 Councillor Frances Nunziata's office in the Weston Road and Eglinton Avenue West area in partnership with the Mount Dennis Community Association. Approximately 30 individuals, ranging in age from 18-60 years participated in the safety audit walkabout on April 9th, 2008. The annual audit was conducted as part of an on-going effort to engage the community and evaluate both the physical and the social conditions of the area. Councillor Nunziata's office and the Mount Dennis Community Association are committed to working with the local residents to build a safer community in the Mount Dennis area.

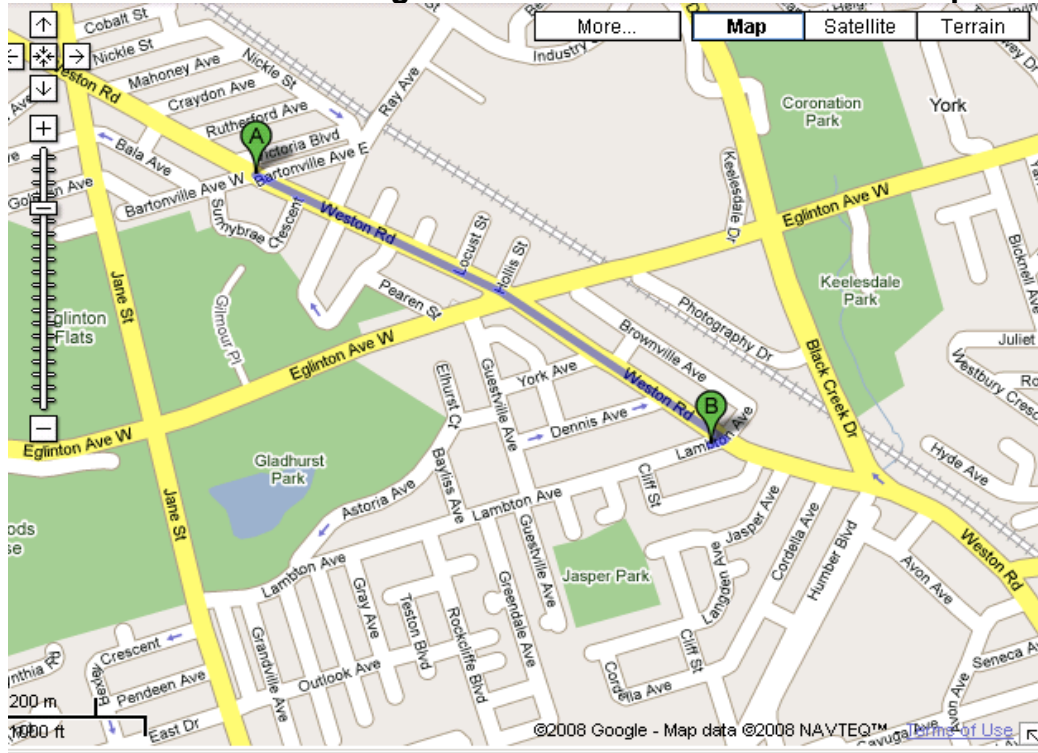
The area of Weston/Mount Dennis has been designated by the City of Toronto and the United Way as one of 13 priority neighborhoods. These neighbourhoods are deemed under-resourced and under-served, and in need of additional programming and investments due to growing levels of poverty¹. The Weston/Mount Dennis neighbourhood is also one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods in the Greater Toronto Area, representing over 30 ethnic groups. Ward 11 Weston South York is home to over 60,000 people, primarily working class. One quarter of residents live below the poverty line and the largest segment of the population is between the ages of 25 and 54². It offers a rich mix of business and pleasure seeking activities³.

¹ <http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/Mt%20Dennis/ANC%20Flyer.pdf>

² <http://www.cbc.ca/toronto/features/torontovotes2006/wards/11.html>

³ www.toronto.ca/bia/mount_dennis.htm

Weston Road and Eglinton Avenue West 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.	2.4			
LIGHTING – the ability to see and be seen clearly.	2.0			
SIGNS AND MAPS - knowing where you are reduces fear of being attacked or getting lost.	2.7			
ISOLATION - people tend to feel safer when others are around.	2.8			
SIGHTLINES - clear views ahead and all around, not blocked by bushes, walls or fences.	3.3			
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.	2.5			
SECURITY – presence of security systems in place that work and security staff treat everyone the same way.	1.8			

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

Excessive Amount of Litter on both Public and Private Property

- Garbage overflowing from receptacles on main streets
- Homeowners not removing garbage that blows onto their property
- Overall appearance and upkeep of area is limited

Number of People Loitering Around Local Businesses (Nancy's Bar and Grill, 7-11)

- Residents frequently verbally harassed by people standing outside businesses, especially after hours and on weekends
- Number of youth loitering in front of 7-11 limiting entrance to business
- Residents frequently encounter physical and verbal altercations on streets and in local businesses

Darkened Sidewalks and Alleyways

- Residents fear walking alone after dark
- Alleyways used for illegal activities pose danger to residents
- Lack of adequate lighting and/or damaged lighting increases opportunity for violence

Overall Lack of Sense of Community between Residents

- Lack of communication between residents contributes to assumptions and stereotypes which further limits people from gathering to share common concerns
- Limited activities in community bringing individuals from various groups together
- People are fearful and suspicious of one another which limits their feeling of community

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:

Incidents of discrimination and harassment have occurred in the area – on the streets, on public transit, and in and around local businesses.

While **71%** of participants have not witnessed or heard about incidents of violence and or harassment in their communities, **71%** 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. The acts of discrimination/harassment experienced were in the following forms: verbal comments, threats of physical violence, graffiti in the area and glances and staring. The most common form of harassment reported was verbal comments and threats of physical violence.

Of the **71%** of participants who told of their personal experience of harassment/discrimination, **48%** told either family/friends. It is important to note the discrepancy

between the number of people who are reporting experiences of harassment and violence and the number of individuals who are reporting to family and friends. This number decreases further when you look at how many individuals are reporting to police or other authorities (11% reported to the police). Audit participants noted that there is a need in the area for recreation programs, health care facilities, and youth services.

C. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Comments from participants:

- *“Strangers intimidate me”*
- *“I was attacked once in the afternoon”*

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 neighbourhood 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.

Concern over both the physical and social environment in the area has impacted people's feeling of safety in the overall area. The physical layout and overall maintenance of the area, combined with the presence of people on the streets has increased people's fear and feelings of isolation. In this specific area, there is an overall lack of community which causes people to fear strangers and contributes to an environment where there is lack of trust and communication around commonly shared safety concerns. This lack of community cohesion leads to incidents of violence, like the physical assault of a resident in the daytime, and lack of trust, which leads to situations between neighbors where one resident was accused of stealing another person's laundry from a common space. Acts of violence and intimidation contribute to the overall feeling of fear in the area and serve to justify why neighbours do not come together for collective change. This is an area that must be addressed in order to increase people's sense of safety in the Weston/Mount Dennis area and help to build community cohesion.

Experiences of racism and discrimination were commonplace for those speaking with an accent, people of particular race and ethnicity, and those of lower economic status (class, welfare recipients, and homeless populations).

Possible means to address these issues include:

*Safety Audit Report Card –Weston Rd. (Bartonville Ave East-Lambton Ave) Ward 11
Audit conducted on 9th of April 2008*

1. Contacting social service agencies in the area to discuss possible resolutions:
 - Mount Dennis Community Association
 - Community Action Resource Centre
 - Northwood Neighbourhood Services
 - York Community Services
2. 24 hour social services in the immediate area:
 - Horizons for Youth
3. Homeless drop-in with food (coffee, snack packs, vitamins, etc.), basic items (tampons, toothpaste, etc.), showers, laundry, clothing:
 - Weston King Neighbourhood Centre
4. Youth Services and Recreational Activities:
 - Urban Arts Community Council
 - For Youth Initiative
5. Harm Reduction services need extended hours:
 - Weston King Neighbourhood Services

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for enhancing the safety features of the area based on the safety audit results include the top 4 priority concerns expressed by the participants:

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Priority 1: Excessive Amount of Litter on both Public and Private Property		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garbage overflowing from receptacles on main streets Homeowners not removing garbage that blows onto their property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact City of Toronto Solid Waste Management Services to advise about the excessive amount of garbage on the streets 	City of Toronto Solid Waste Management Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report a "litter hot spot" - e.g. an overflowing bin or basket, or an unusually dirty street or sidewalk by either calling 416-39-CLEAN (392-5326) or sending an email cleanandbeautiful@toronto.ca
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall appearance and upkeep of area limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Mount Dennis Community Association and brainstorm ways to make residents accountable to clean up their private property and to develop plans to include a wide variety of community member in a neighborhood cleanup strategy. 	Mount Dennis Community Association Phone: 416-884-4791 Email: mountdennisra@hotmail.com
Priority 2: Number of People Loitering Around Local Businesses (Nancy's Bar and Grill and 7-11)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents frequently verbally harassed by people standing outside businesses, especially after hours and on weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Weston Village BIA to work with local businesses to discourage loitering and help eliminate harassment 	Weston Village Business Improvement Area Phone: 416.249.0691 Fax: 416.241.2124 Email: admin@westonvillagebia.com Website: www.westonvillagebia.com
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of youth loitering in front of 7-11 limiting entrance to business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact 7-11 Canada to discuss express concern over loitering and inquire about possible solutions at local level Contact social service providers and city officials to discuss possible programming for youth that offer skill building and social opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7-11 Canada Consumer Hotline Phone: 1-800-255-0711 Email: Sandy Dane, Communications Department, sdane@7-11.com City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Phone: 416- 392-8565 Email: parks@toronto.ca Social Services in Area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Arts Community Council

TOP SAFETY CONCERNS	IDEAS FOR CHANGE/ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Youth Initiative • Weston King Neighborhood Centre • Mount Dennis Community Hall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents frequently encounter physical and verbal altercations on streets and in local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local police and Community Relations and Prevention officer to increase presence in area, especially after 2:00am when local restaurants and bars are closing 	Community Relations Officer/ Crime Prevention Officer Constable Jim Lambe Phone: 416- 808-1208
Priority 3: Darkened Sidewalks and Alleyways		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents fear walking alone after dark • Alleyways used for illegal activities and pose danger to residents • Lack of adequate lighting and/or damaged lighting increases opportunity for violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase lighting in alleyways and on side streets, in between local businesses and on main streets to discourage space to be used for illegal activities and to make space safer for pedestrian traffic • Repair any streetlights that may be burnt out or smashed in area 	Toronto Hydro Phone: 416-542-3195 Website: www.theenergyservices.com/streetlighting/street_light_outages/index.cfm Weston Village Business Improvement Area Phone: 416.249.0691 Fax: 416.241.2124 Email: admin@westonvillagebia.com Website: www.westonvillagebia.com
Priority 4: Overall Lack of Sense of Community between Residents		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication between residents contributes to assumptions and stereotypes which further limits people from sharing safety concerns • Limited activities in community to bring individuals from various groups together • People are fearful and suspicious of one another which limits their feeling of community and increases incidents of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Mount Dennis Community Association to organize community building activities/Neighbor's Night Out and other community activities • Organize community forums where community members are encouraged to express their safety concerns 	Mount Dennis Community Association Phone: 416-884-4791 Email: mountdennisra@hotmail.com Councillor Francis Nunziata's Office Phone: 416-392-4091 Email: councillor_nunziata@toronto.ca

CONTACT INFORMATION

Appendix A lists other contact information for city repairs.

1. City Contacts

City Councillor Name: Frances Nunziata

Address: 100 Queen Street West, C49 Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Phone: 416-392-4091

Fax: 416-392-4118

Email: councillor_nunziata@toronto.ca

Toronto Police Services 12 Division

Address: 200 Trethewey Drive Toronto ON M6M 5E6

Phone: 416-808-1200

Fax: 416-808-1202

Email: 12division@torontopolice.on.ca

Community Relations Officer: Constable Jim Lambe 416-808-1208

City of Toronto Parks and Recreation

Address: 8th Floor 100 Queen St. West. Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Phone: (416) 392-8565

Email: parks@toronto.ca

City of Toronto Transportation Services

Phone: (416) 338-9999

Website: www.toronto.ca/transportation

City of Toronto Solid Waste Management

Customer Service 416-338-2010

Email: accesstoronto@toronto.ca

Community Clean Up Program 416-338-0338

2. Local Community Services:

Mount Dennis Community Association

Address: 4 Hollis Street, Toronto, Ontario M6M 4M9

Phone: 416-884-4791

Email: mountdennisra@hotmail.com

Website: www.mountdennis.ca

The Mount Dennis Community Association is committed to making the community a safe and better place. Throughout the year we take part in various community activities such as garbage cleanup, community street sales and celebrations. We have meetings once a month to discuss how to make Mount Dennis that much better. We are also involved with other community groups in hopes of making all of Toronto a safe and better place.

Weston Village Business Improvement Area

Address: 4 John Street, Weston, ON, M9N 1J3

Phone: 416.249.0691

Email: admin@westonvillagebia.com

Website: www.westonvillagebia.com

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses. By working collectively as a BIA, local business have the organizational and funding capacity to be catalysts for civic improvement, enhancing the quality of life in their local neighborhood and the City as a whole. The Weston Village BIA was incorporated in 1979 and currently has 164 member businesses, including restaurants, retailers and professional offices.

Weston King Neighborhood Centre

Address: 2017 Weston Rd. York, ON, M9N 1X2

Phone: 416) 241-9898

Website: <http://www.wknc.ca/Info/MainFrame.asp>

Weston King Neighborhood Centre provides essential support for some of the most marginalized and vulnerable people of this community, by providing a safe and comfortable space where the maximum value of each person is recognized, acknowledged and encouraged, and where people can be empowered to make the changes and seek the supports that they feel are most necessary. We address practical needs. Snacks, breakfast and lunch, clothing, personal hygiene items, showers and laundry facilities are offered free of charge. We provide harm reduction/health promotion services. Service users meet with harm reduction outreach workers, housing and health support workers and get assistance with a wide variety of social needs. HIV/AIDS prevention services, needle exchange, safe sex and safe crack use kits are regularly

available. Workshops are held for sex workers and people who use drugs to encourage harm reduction practices.

Urban Arts Community Council

Address: 19 John Street, Weston ON M9N 1J2

Phone: 416-241-5124

Email: info@urbanartstoronto.com

Website: www.urbanartstoronto.com

The Urban Arts Council invites 300+ youth from age 8 to 26 to attend activities each year at Y-Arts, a storefront arts centre in Weston offering after-school arts programs for children and youth, summer camps, art exhibits and other activities. Y-Arts offers and holds gallery exhibitions, and is a studio space for emerging and professional artists, to work and/or rehearse in.

For Youth Initiative

Address: 1652 Keele St, Toronto, ON, M6M 3W3

Phone: 416-653-3311

Email: fyi@foryouth.ca

Website: www.foryouth.ca

By youth for youth agency focused on increasing access to social service, education, recreation, economic and cultural opportunities for youth, particularly ethno cultural youth. Creates opportunities for youth to voice needs in community decision-making processes. Program areas include life skills, recreation, community development, mentorship, and cultural and artistic productions.

Horizons for Youth

Address: 422 Gilbert Ave, Toronto, ON, M6E 4X3

Phone: 416-781-9898

Email: info@horizonsforyouth.org

Website: www.horizonsforyouth.org

Horizons for Youth is dedicated to helping homeless and at-risk youth achieve personal responsibility, make positive choices and become empowered for their future. Horizons for Youth sets the standard for physical and emotional shelter where youth can access professional services with dignity. Horizons help youth to make positive life choices by providing life skills training, supportive counseling, case management, crisis intervention, referrals to clinics, youth employment agencies, mental health and addiction counseling.

Community Action Resource Centre

Address: 1652 Keele St, Toronto, ON, M6M 3W3

Phone: 416-652-2273

Email: info-keele@communityarc.ca

Website: www.communityarc.ca

Our organization works to build the capacity of our communities by mobilizing resources and providing supportive social services, for the empowerment of individuals and groups. We focus on serving the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We offer a variety of services including information and referral, form filling, informal supportive counselling, crisis counselling, settlement services, children's drop-in recreation club, free internet access and help finding subsidized housing.

Northwood Neighborhood Services

Address: 2625D Weston Rd, 2nd Fl, Unit 27, Toronto, ON, M9N 3V8

Phone: 416-748-0788

Email: info@northw.ca

Website: www.northw.ca

Northwood Neighborhood Services is an organization that provides programs and services within the community that will empower individuals, families and groups to achieve maintain and enhance a state of physical, mental and social well being. Northwood Neighborhood Services offers the following programs & services: Intercultural Services, Youth Engagement, Child / Parenting programs, Income Tax Clinic, Dress for Success and English Conversation Classes (ECC)

York Community Services

Address: 1651 Keele St, Toronto, ON, M6M 3W2

Phone: 416-653-5400

York Community Services provides integrated health, legal, counselling and community services to residents of the former City of York in Central West Toronto. Established in 1973, they serve people of all ages and cultures, with a special focus on low-income families and individuals, seniors, immigrants and people with disabilities. Staff and volunteers offer special programs for immigrants and newcomers from the Caribbean, Latin America, Vietnam and Africa. Programs are offered in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, and Portuguese

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** – 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.

2. **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:
 - Mount Dennis Community Association
 - Weston King Neighborhood Centre
 - Urban Arts Community Council
 - For Youth Initiative
 - Community Action Resource Centre
 - Northwood Neighborhood Services
 - York Community Services

3. **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
 - Starting a violence prevention group in your neighborhood
 - Conducting letter writing campaigns
 - Town Hall Meetings
 - Contacting the media
 - Holding community forums & events
 - Organizing workshops in the community
 - Holding community events
 - Surveys and opinion polls

APPENDIX A: 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