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# **CENTRAL ETOBICOKE HUB FEASIBILITY STUDY**

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#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Using multiple sources of data, the Central Etobicoke Hub Feasibility Study provides an in-depth understanding of the current deficits in community services and community spaces in Central Etobicoke and accesses the feasibility of a community hub as an important step to addressing some of these deficits. The report identifies, assesses, and prioritizes community needs; identifies community assets and resources; identifies walkability and transit issues that affect access; outlines demographic information; captures the unique needs of the area; identifies accessible locations for community space; records specific areas of interest and programming needs; establishes potential partnerships and identifies potential governance models. The study builds on the preliminary work of various community groups, with members who have been raising awareness around the lack of services and the deficits in community spaces in Central Etobicoke since the 1990s.

Specifically, this study sheds light on community demographics such as the multiple concentrated pockets of poverty, where low-income rates are as high as 26.7%<sup>1</sup> and child poverty rates reach 39.5%<sup>2</sup> in Central Etobicoke. In addition to these pockets of poverty, Central Etobicoke is

home to a large population of seniors, who make up one in five of all residents. Children under age 15 and youth, aged 15-24, also comprise large proportions of the Central Etobicoke population, representing 15.3% and 12.3% of all residents, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Central Etobicoke also supports a new population of Syrian government-assisted refugees.<sup>4</sup> These demographics underscore the urgent need for renewed investment in community resources and infrastructure to support residents in this evolving community. However, Wards 3 and 4 combined lack the necessary quantity of community services and community spaces.

To better understand the needs of the community, this research engaged a broad range of stakeholders, including residents, service providers, community leaders, community workers, elected officials and their staff. Based on the 206 surveys, 17 focus groups and 14 key-informant interviews, participants identified the following direct service needs:

- Increased recreational services for seniors
- Access to community-based health care services for seniors and other marginalized populations
- More youth programming, specifically drop-in youth spaces
- Services which centralize community

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017a

<sup>2</sup> ibid.

<sup>3</sup> ibid.

<sup>4</sup> City of Toronto, Social Policy, Analysis & Research, 2017

information, such as wraparound referrals

In addition, in response to the severe shortage of community space in Central Etobicoke, residents and other stakeholders identified spatial needs that would act as the first step in beginning to address this deficit in the area. These include:

- Space to provide a range of programs and services
- Common space for residents to meet, socialize and connect
- Track and gymnasium facilities
- Surrounding green space for community gardening and active recreation

Participants also identified a suitable governance model which would allow for a balance between community-based and City-sourced governance similar to the City/ community model. In addition, from the research it was concluded that the hub should be located somewhere accessible via the main transit route and close to Central Etobicoke communities with the greatest needs. Potential locations include spaces around the intersections of Dixon Road and Kipling Avenue, Dixon Road and Martin Grove Road, Eglinton Avenue and Islington Avenue to Eglinton Avenue and Martin Grove Road, Rathburn Road and Highway 427 to Rathburn Road and Renforth Road, and finally, from Burnhamthorpe Road and The East Mall to Burnhamthorpe Road and

Renforth Road.

The study finds that a community hub would address long-standing deficits including local space needs and service gaps in Central Etobicoke. This essential access point will support youth, seniors, newcomers, individuals living alone, and families, enabling them to interact and become fully engaged, healthy, socially included, and active residents. A community hub would support collaboration, provide opportunities for referral and coordination, and work to improve collective impact by breaking down service silos and creating integrated supports to address the needs of the community.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Central Etobicoke is a large geographic area composed primarily of Wards 3 and 4, located in the west-end of Toronto. Figure 1 shows a map of the area used for this study. The boundaries stretch north to Highway 401, south to Burnhamthorpe Road (with some parts reaching Dundas Street), west to include Centennial Park and east just beyond Royal York Road. The area includes the following neighbourhoods: The West Mall, The East Mall, Markland Wood, Eatonville, Richview, Kingsview Village, Mabelle, Scarlettwood Court, Willowridge, and Capri.

5 A few of the census tracts included in the map extend beyond the geographic boundaries of the Central Etobicoke area. We chose to use these geographies, despite this limitation, as they allow us to access the best available data for producing a sociodemographic profile of the area.

#### HISTORY OF CENTRAL ETOBICOKE

The community is one of the oldest in Toronto, with neighbourhoods including Eatonville, Islington Village, and Richview that have existed as early as 1865, when the community made up its own township.<sup>6</sup> In its early years, Central Etobicoke was an Anglo-Saxon, bedroom community. Many of the homes were located on large plots of lands, and the population was made up of working-class families.

In 1998, Etobicoke was amalgamated into the new City of Toronto. In addition to the change of governance, the demographics of the community have changed quite significantly since the area's formation. In addition to these historical communities, new neighbourhoods have formed, and there have been various waves of immigration in the community, including migrants from Eastern Europe and Somalia. In addition, the demographics of the population have shifted with population growth, the aging of the population, and a recent influx of Syrian refugees. The housing mix has also changed with the development of social housing units and high-rise towers, as well as an increase in urban sprawl.

#### **CONTEXT FOR A COMMUNITY HUB**

Despite population growth and demographic change in Central Etobicoke, the community infrastructure has not been expanded or enhanced to serve the needs of this evolving area. As a result, community groups have long been fighting for more access to community services and spaces.

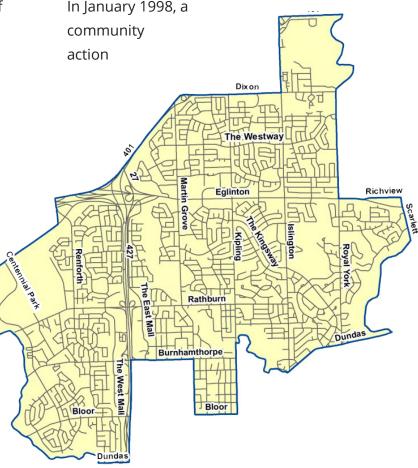


Figure 1 Boundaries of Central Etobicoke

group called the B427 Community Project (sometimes known as Central Etobicoke

6

Multicultural Association/CEMA) was formed to address this gap in existing community services and spaces. The B427 Community Project/CEMA wrote several reports which used census data to validate the need for more community spaces in the area. One report cited demographics such as the community's large population of loneparent families, large youth population, and areas with a high concentration of low-income families. Its work successfully led to the development of the Rathburn Area Youth (R.A.Y.) Project space, which is currently located on The East Mall. The B427 Community Project/CEMA continued its work until 2009 when it dissolved.

Other community groups have continued this work based on shared concerns surrounding the lack of community services, facilities, and programming in the Central Etobicoke area. For example, in 2007 the Etobicoke Youth Network (EYN) formed in response to the summer of 2005, notoriously named the "Summer of the Gun" because of 25 gun-related homicides that occurred between June and September. The EYN is made up of youth-serving agencies and resident leaders. It aims to provide opportunities, resources, and supports to youth (age 15-29) in Central Etobicoke. In its preliminary stages, the group consulted with youth, identifying a need for more diverse programming and greater access to community spaces. Though the R.A.Y.

Project space was available and provided after-school programs on weekdays, the consultation found that a single space could not sufficiently meet the demands of youth in both wards. Furthermore, the R.A.Y. Project space is located on Toronto District School Board (TDSB) property and is only accessible after school hours on weekdays. As well, with its location on The East Mall, the space is not accessible to many youth in Central Etobicoke. As a result, the EYN continued to seek more appropriate spaces, starting the conversation on the development of a hub dedicated to youth programs and services in Central Etobicoke.

Additional community residents and groups who serve diverse populations including seniors and newcomers were also feeling the gap in community spaces, programs and services. They soon joined the discussion with the EYN. In response to this growing interest, the EYN formed the Central Etobicoke Community Hub Working Group (CECHWG) in August 2016. The CECHWG expanded on the EYN's mandate to advocate for a community hub in Central Etobicoke which included space, services and programs for seniors, parents, newcomers, residents' groups, service clubs and more.

The group connected with urban planning students from York University who produced a report, *The Recreation Gap: A Case for Resource Investment in Etobicoke* 

Centre, released in the winter of 2016.7 The report compared the community infrastructure in Central Etobicoke to that of Beaches-East York (Wards 31 & 32), examining demographic makeup, accessibility, equitable access to community facilities, and the quality of community facilities. The report identified significant inequities in access to recreational services and quality of City-run facilities between the two communities. The findings showed that Beaches-East York was extremely wellresourced with eight community centres, and two recreation centres which included amenities like gymnasiums, indoor pools, kitchens, fitness/weight rooms, auditoriums, and multipurpose rooms. In comparison, Central Etobicoke only has four community centres, less than half of the community facilities in Beaches-East York.

In addition, to the inequity based on the quantity of community spaces, the authors also found a disparity between the wards with respect to the quality of facilities using the City of Toronto's facility ratings. Central Etobicoke, for example, had a much higher percentage of facilities with the lowest facility ranking (Rank C), while Beaches-East York had higher percentages of centres with medium and high facility rankings (Rank A and B). Central Etobicoke was found to have a serious deficit in community facilities of high quality in comparison to Beaches-East

The release of *The Recreation Gap*, in tandem with advocacy work by the EYN and CECHWG, drew the attention of various stakeholders. The City of Toronto became aware of residents' concerns over the lack of available resources in Central Etobicoke. and residents drew on provincial initiatives to conclude that a community hub would help address the deficit in community spaces and community services in the area.

### PROVINCIAL POLICY

In 2015, Premier Kathleen Wynne launched the Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan that detailed the provincial government's commitment to community hubs in an effort to integrate services for Ontarians.8 According to the Premier's Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group, a community hub is described as the following:

When people think of community hubs, they think of places where people come together to get services, meet one another and plan together. We've heard that community hubs are gathering places that help communities live, build and grow together. No community hub is like another, as each brings together a variety of different services, programs and/or social and cultural activities to reflect local community needs. It is this diversity of activity that allows community hubs to play a critical role in building economic and

York.

<sup>7</sup> Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016 8 Pitre, 2015

social cohesion in the community.9

The provincial government has identified multiple benefits of hubs including enhanced learning opportunities through school-community partnerships, increased access to efficient and sustainable services, wraparound services which broaden the range of services provided and social return on investments.<sup>10</sup> Community hubs have been cited in additional reports including the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence conducted by former Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry and former Ontario Legislature Speaker Alvin Curling for the Government of Ontario in 2008. This report noted that community hubs "provide space for community activities, including for meetings, recreation and the arts, and service providers". 11 United Way Toronto (now known as United Way Toronto & York Region) also supported the concept of community hubs in its Building Strong *Neighbourhoods Strategy* which advocated that hubs build stronger more cohesive communities.12

In response, numerous community hubs have been developed in Toronto. To date, there are 27 community hubs in the City of Toronto including Rexdale Community Hub, Dorset Park Hub, Victoria Park Hub and others. <sup>13</sup> These hubs function as gathering spaces and centralized spaces for services and resources. The demand for community

hubs in Ontario has continued to grow as more communities learn the value of these multifunctional spaces.

#### 3. RESEARCH PLAN

In response to concerns about the availability of community infrastructure in Central Etobicoke, Toronto City Council directed that a feasibility study be undertaken. In October 2016 the City of Toronto granted Social Planning Toronto funds to conduct a feasibility study in collaboration with the CECHWG.

The aim of this report is to build on the preliminary work of the EYN and CECHWG to assess the viability of building a community hub in Central Etobicoke. Using multiple sources of data, this report analyzes:

- Demographic information on Central Etobicoke
- Community assets and resources
- Specific community needs
- Specific areas of demand and programming priorities
- Walkability and transit issues that affect access
- Potential partnerships for the proposed hub
- Potential governance models for a new facility
- Accessible locations in the community

9 ibid.

10 ibid.

<sup>11</sup> McMurtry & Curling, 2008

<sup>12</sup> United Way Toronto & York Region, n.d.

<sup>13</sup> Communityhubsontario.ca

#### **DATA COLLECTION**

This report adopts a mixed-methods approach. Multiple forms of data and various research tools were used to develop a better understanding of local needs and ways to address those needs. For example, statistical data sources were used to develop a demographic profile; findings from interviews, focus groups and surveys were used to consider community needs and possible hub locations; GIS mapping was conducted to visualize spatial relationships and display disaggregated data to provide a more detailed assessment of the community.

The report draws on quantitative data from a variety of sources including the 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census, the City of Toronto's Wellbeing Toronto, Toronto Public Health, COSTI Immigrant Services, the City of Toronto's Social Policy, Analysis & Research section, the Martin Prosperity Institute, and the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital (now known as the Centre for Urban Health Solutions).

A consultation using a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was held with residents and representatives from community agencies in January 2017. The SWOT analysis provided insights on the context of the community and current gaps, assets, arising opportunities, and potential vulnerabilities stakeholders were facing. This feedback was used for a preliminary report that was

submitted to the City of Toronto in February 2017. The insights from the SWOT were also used to inform the development of questions for the interviews, focus groups, and surveys conducted for this report.

Additional data was gathered through qualitative and quantitative research. Two hundred and six individuals participated in a survey conducted online and in-person with residents in the community. The survey respondents represent a sample of convenience, a common sampling technique based on available respondents. Some figures do not total to 100% as some participants requested that their information not be disclosed. A total of 56% of respondents lived in Central Etobicoke for more than 15 years; 20.5% lived in the community for 6-15 years, and 13.6% lived in the community for less than 5 years.

Among survey respondents, 70.9% were born in Canada; 26.4% immigrated to Canada more than 10 years ago, and two immigrated to Canada within the past 6-10 years. No newcomers (individuals who immigrated to Canada in the past 5 years) participated in the survey. As a consequence, demand for services reflected in the survey results likely under-estimates the full degree of need as newcomers, recent immigrants and minority linguistic groups typically use more services than other populations.

Three-quarters of respondents identified as white/Caucasian; 5.6% identified as

South Asian (from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or Bangladesh); 3.9% identified as Black/ African Canadian or Caribbean Canadian; 2.2% as Hispanic/Latino/Latina; 2.8% as East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino); 1.1% as Middle Eastern. Again, because the sample does not fully correspond to the racial makeup of the community, and racial minorities make up a smaller portion of respondents, it can be assumed that the demand for services reflected in the survey under-estimates the actual level of need.

In terms of age makeup, 5% of survey respondents were between the ages of 16-29, 40.7% of respondents were aged 30-55, 21.2% were between 56-64 years of age, and 30.1% were aged 65 and older.

One hundred and twenty-five respondents were female and 47 were male. Nine percent of respondents identified as a person living with a disability, and three survey respondents identified as LGBTQ.

A total of 17 focus groups were conducted with diverse populations including five sessions with seniors, four sessions with youth, and two sessions with newcomers. Focus groups were held with interfaith leaders, staff of youth-serving agencies, community leaders, cultural groups and homeowners. Fourteen key-informant interviews were held with stakeholders, including long-time community residents, youth leaders, long-time community workers, elected officials, and the staff of elected officials. Key-informant interview subjects included:

- Borys Wrzesnewskyj Member of Parliament, Etobicoke Centre
- Chris Glover TDSB Trustee of Ward 2, Etobicoke Centre
- Stephen Holyday City of Toronto Councillor, Ward 3
- John F. Campbell City of Toronto Councillor, Ward 4
- Dr. Colin Mang Community Advocate
- Amber Morley Constituency Assistant to Ward 4 Toronto City Councillor John F. Campbell
- Donna Cansfield Resident, former Trustee of the Etobicoke School Board, former Member of Provincial Parliament for Etobicoke Centre
- Michael Burgess Crime Prevention Officer for 22 Division (Toronto Police Service)
- Huda Bukhari Executive Director of the Arab Community Centre of Toronto
- Vera Dodic Manager, City of Toronto Newcomer Office
- Amanda Simmon Former Property Administrator at 44 Willowridge Rd., 7 Capri Rd.
- **Leah Houston** Artistic Director, MABELLEarts
- Omer Ainanshe Youth leader and member of The East Mall Steering Committee
- Errol Oduro Youth leader and volunteer at Rathburn Area Youth Project

Finally, partnership surveys where distributed to nonprofit, grassroots and charitable organizations city-wide to get a sense of which groups and organizations would be intersted in partnering in the proposed hub. A total of 24 surveys were completed and returned. From the 24, there were 12 organizations that expressed interest in being an anchor agency in the hub (agencies who make a long-term commitment to renting or purchasing space in the hub), 6 surveys were completed by organizations and group who indicated they would like to be an itinerant partner in the hub (partners who rent space out on an intermittent basis), and 6 organizations and groups indicated that they were community groups and organizations that were looking for shared free or low-cost office, meeting and program space. From the surveys, a space diagram was developed to showcase the spatial needs for the hub.

#### **ANALYSIS**

A thematic analysis was conducted using transcripts from interviews and focus groups to identify emerging themes and patterns. Open coding was used to organize the data into relevant categories. Once the coding categories were created, the data was aggregated into themes. Themes were identified through the identification of reoccurring codes of specific words and sentences. In addition, quotes, which are used in the discussion section of this paper, were selected based on their clarity and ability to convey major themes in a manner which ensured that the voices of all participants were represented.

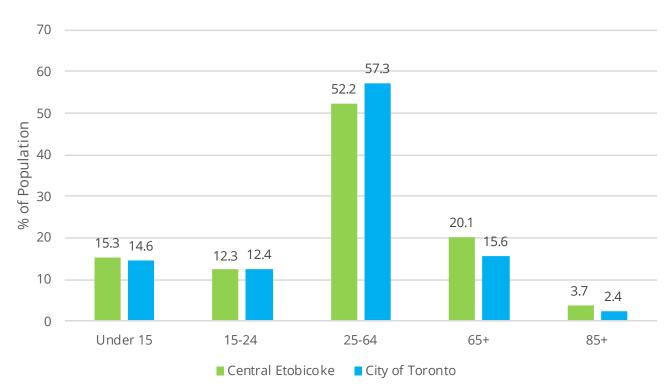


Figure 2 Population by Age Group in Central Etobicoke and the City of Toronto, 2016 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

#### 4. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## **POPULATION GROWTH**

In 2016, Central Etobicoke had a total population of 110,256, a 1.9% population growth since 2011.<sup>14</sup> Over the past 10 years, the area's population increased by 4.2%.<sup>15</sup> In comparison, the City of Toronto's population increased by a higher rate, 4.5% over the past 5 years and 9.1% over the past 10 years.<sup>16,17</sup>

has a slightly larger proportion of children (0-14 years), a larger proportion of seniors (65 and over) and older seniors (85 and over), a similar proportion of youth (15-24 years), and a smaller proportion of workingage adults (25-64) compared to the City of Toronto overall.

#### AGE BREAKDOWN

As shown in Figure 2, Central Etobicoke

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017a

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada, 2007

<sup>16</sup> City of Toronto, 2017

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada, 2007

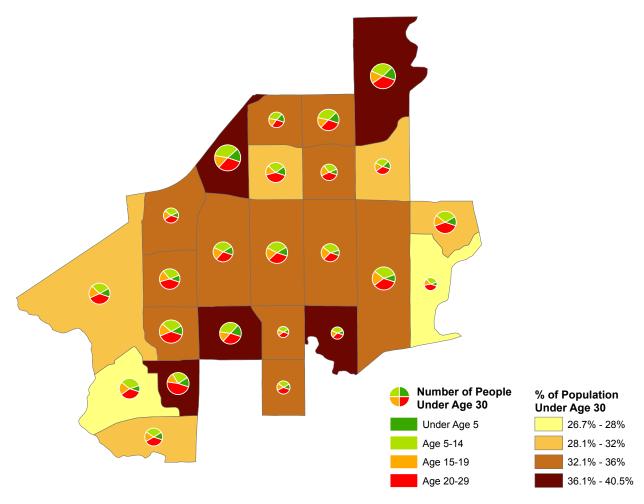


Figure 3 Population Under Age 30 in Central Etobicoke, 2016 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Figure 3 shows the number and percentage of the population under age 30 for four different age categories in Central Etobicoke by census tract. Areas in the north and south ends of the catchment are home to higher concentrations of children and young people.

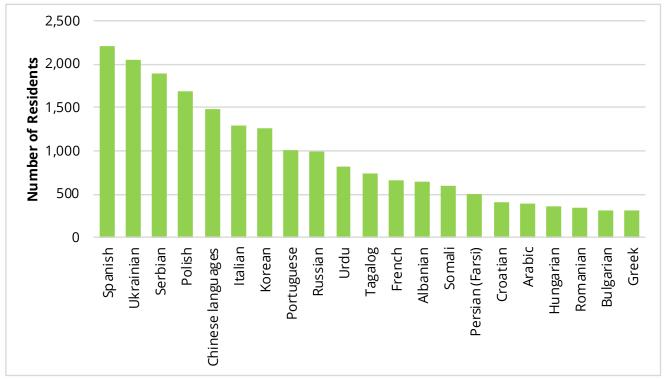


Figure 4 Top Non-English Languages Most Often Spoken at Home in Central Etobicoke, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

#### LANGUAGE COMPOSITION

There is a wide range of languages spoken at home in Central Etobicoke. A total of 91.9% of the population speaks a single language most often at home. Among single home language speakers, 23.9% of the population speak a language other than English. As shown in Figure 4, Spanish, Ukrainian, Serbian, Polish and Chinese languages<sup>18</sup> are the top five non-English languages most often spoken at home in Central Etobicoke. Among Chinese language home speakers, 880 people report

speaking Mandarin and 510 report speaking Cantonese.<sup>19</sup>

However, this linguistic diversity may not be a major barrier for residents to make connections in the community and access community services, as only 2.6% of the population have no fluency in English or French according to the 2016 Census.<sup>20</sup>

#### **IMMIGRANT POPULATION**

A large proportion of residents in Central Etobicoke were born outside of Canada.

<sup>18</sup> Chinese languages spoken in Central Etobicoke include Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Min Nan (Chaochow, Teochow, Fukien, Taiwanese), Wu (Shanghainese) and Chinese languages not otherwise specified.

<sup>19</sup> In the Census, residents may simply report speaking Chinese as their home language without referring to a specific Chinese language. For this reason, the number of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers recorded in the Census may underestimate the actual number of people speaking these languages most often at home.

20 Statistics Canada, 2017a

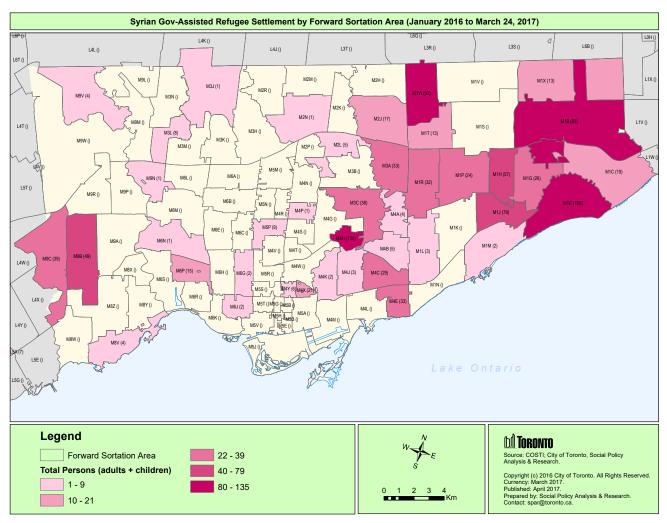


Figure 5 Syrian Government-Assisted Refugee Settlement by Forward Sortation Area (January 2016 to March 24, 2017) Map provided by the City of Toronto Social Policy, Analysis & Research, 2017. Source: COSTI, City of Toronto Social Policy, Analysis & Research, 2017

Immigrants comprise 42.1% of residents in the community.<sup>21,22</sup> Among the area's immigrant population, one in ten is a recent immigrant, having received their landed status between 2011-2016, and another 10% arrived between 2006-2010.<sup>23</sup>

The 2016 Census data may not fully reflect the influx of refugees settling in Canada <u>in response to</u> the Syrian crisis. Figure 5 shows the areas of Toronto where Syrian government-sponsored refugees have settled between January 2016 and March 2017. The number of residents in the area with no fluency in English or French may have increased since Census Day (May 10, 2016) as Central Etobicoke has been a landing place for Syrian government-assisted refugee settlement.

<sup>22</sup> Immigrant as defined by Statistics Canada refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.
23 Statistics Canada, 2017a

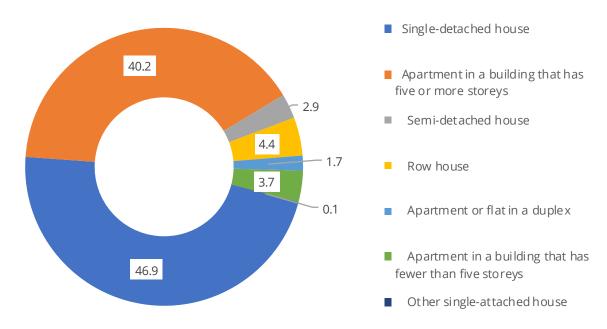


Figure 6 Occupied Private Dwellings by Housing Type in Central Etobicoke, 2016 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

#### **HOUSING TYPES**

As shown in Figure 6, units in high-rise buildings with more than five storeys make up a sizeable proportion of dwellings in Central Etobicoke, almost equal to single-detached homes.

Over one-third of households in Central Etobicoke are tenant households.<sup>24</sup> Many tenants in the area struggle with a lack of affordable housing. Among tenant households in Central Etobicoke, 43.5% spend 30% or more of their income on shelter costs compared to 19.3% of owner households in the area.<sup>25</sup>

## **FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD TYPES**

Central Etobicoke is home to a variety of family and household types. Almost half of the households in Central Etobicoke are households with children; nearly one-quarter are one-person households; the remainder include couples without children, households with more than one census family<sup>26</sup>, and non-census family households with two or more people.<sup>27,28</sup>

A total of 73% of households are considered census families.<sup>29</sup> These include couples with and without children and lone-parent families. Among census families, nearly half

<sup>24</sup> ibid.

<sup>25</sup> ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Census family includes a married couple with or without children, or a couple living common-law with or without children, or a lone parent living with one or more children (lone-parent family).

<sup>27</sup> Non-census family households are households that do not constitute a census family, as described above.

<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017a

<sup>29</sup> ibid.

are couples with children, about one-third are couples without children, and one in five are lone-parent families (where more than four out of five are mother-led lone-parent families). A total of 27% of households in Central Etobicoke are considered noncensus family households. Almost nine out of ten of these households are oneperson households. The remainder include individuals living with others who do not constitute a census family.

#### **INCOME**

Household income levels vary by family type. The 2016 Census includes average incomes for different economic family types and for individuals who are not in economic families. An economic family is a broader definition of family than a census family. According to Statistics Canada, "economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption or a foster relationship".30

According to the 2016 Census, economic families without children or other relatives in Central Etobicoke have an average annual income of \$108,515; those with children have an average annual income

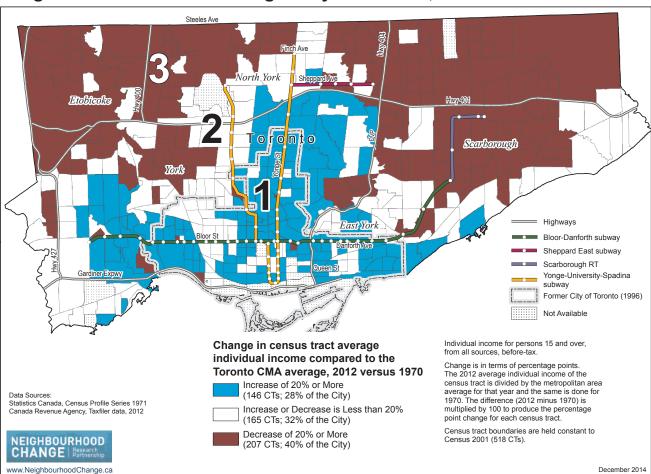
of \$146,014.31 In contrast, lone-parent economic families and individuals not in economic families in Central Etobicoke have much lower average annual incomes at \$64,016 and \$40,099, respectively.

Average incomes can be misleading because averages are sensitive to extreme values, such as very high incomes. These statistics can mask the reality for individuals with low and modest incomes. Despite some of the relatively high average incomes, almost oneguarter of households in Central Etobicoke have after-tax annual incomes below \$40,000. Low income rates presented in the next section reveal the hidden pockets of poverty affecting many Central Etobicoke residents.

#### **HIDDEN POVERTY**

Central Etobicoke has several areas of affluence, including Markland Wood and Kingsway. As a result, looking at average or median incomes at the ward level provides a broad overview of community demographics but not a sufficiently detailed account of the community's makeup. This is especially true now when the City of Toronto is seeing major changes in its socio-economic geography. According to University of Toronto Professor David

<sup>30 2016</sup> Census Dictionary defines economic family as "group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption or a foster relationship. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. By definition, all persons who are members of a census family are also members of an economic family. Examples of the broader concept of economic family include the following: two co-resident census families who are related to one another are considered one economic family; co-resident siblings who are not members of a census family are considered as one economic family; and, nieces or nephews living with aunts or uncles are considered one economic family." 31 Statistics Canada, 2017a



# Neighbourhood Income Change: City of Toronto, 2012 vs. 1970

Figure 7 Toronto's Three Cities

Map provided by Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership.

Source: Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, 2014

Hulchanski's 2010 study, *The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization Among Toronto's Neighbourhoods*, this transformation entails high levels of wealth emerging increasingly in the downtown core and increasing pockets of low income in the surrounding inner suburbs.<sup>32</sup> Dr. Hulchanski states that many smaller communities in the inner suburbs have become parts of

"City #3" — areas where income levels have decreased 20% or more since the 1970s.<sup>33</sup>

Though historically Central Etobicoke has been perceived as a well-to-do middle-class area, as illustrated in Figure 7, the most recent data shows that some areas are part of Dr. Hulchanski's City #3.

32 Hulchanski, 2010

33 ibid.

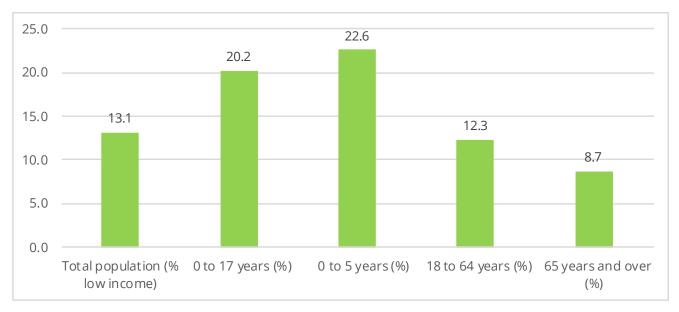


Figure 8 Poverty Rates by Age Group in Central Etobicoke, 2015 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

As shown in Figure 8, 13.1% of residents in Central Etobicoke live below the poverty line according to the 2016 Census (and based on the After-Tax Low Income Measure).<sup>34</sup> Child poverty rates are considerably higher with one in five children aged 0-17 and over one in five young children under the age of 6 in Central Etobicoke living in a low-income family. Poverty rates are lower for workingage adults and seniors in the community.

Child poverty rates for lone-parent families for small geographic areas, such as census tracts, are not yet publicly available from the 2016 Census; however, data sources consistently demonstrate high rates of poverty among lone-parent families in general, and especially high rates for female-led lone parent families. Based

on 2016 Census data that has been made public, 37.8% of lone-parent families in the Toronto region live in poverty.<sup>35</sup> A substantial number of Central Etobicoke's nearly 6,500 lone-parent families are likely living with low incomes.

Similarly, poverty rates for non-census family persons have not been publicly released for small geographic areas such as census tracts. However, in the Toronto region, one in four non-census family persons and nearly one-third of individuals living alone have low incomes.<sup>36</sup> In Central Etobicoke, there are over 11,000 non-census family households, including nearly 10,000 one-person households.<sup>37</sup> Many of these individuals and households are likely to be affected by low income as well.

<sup>34</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017a

<sup>35</sup> Polanyi, Wilson, Mustachi, Ekra & kerr, 2017

<sup>36</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017b

<sup>37</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017a

While the overall poverty rate for Central Etobicoke is only 13.1%, Figure 9 shows how poverty is geographically concentrated in the area. As shown, poverty rates are as high as 26.7% in areas of Central Etobicoke. In parts of the north and south areas of the community, between one in four and one in five residents are living with low incomes.

Similarly, the overall child poverty rate in Central Etobicoke is 20.2%. However, some areas of the community have child poverty rates as high as 39.5%. Figure 10 echoes the findings shown in the previous map with high rates of child poverty

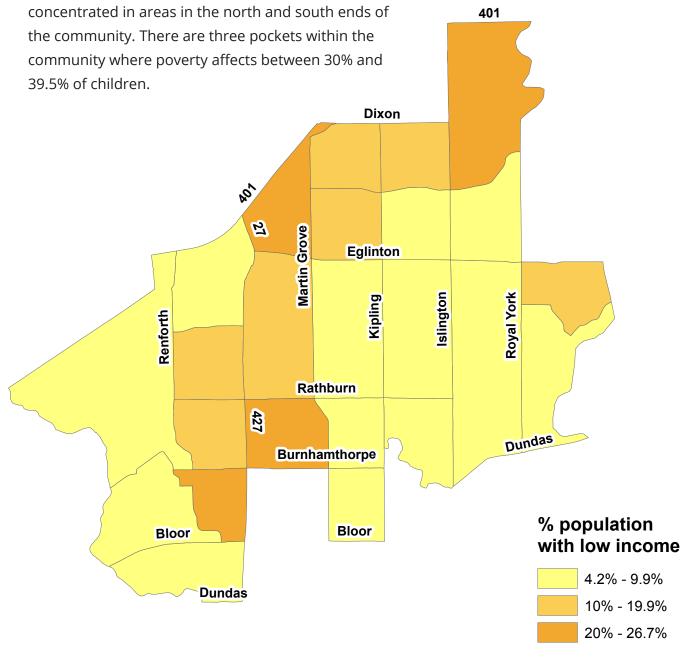


Figure 9 Percentage of Population with Low Income by Census Tract in Central Etobicoke, 2015 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

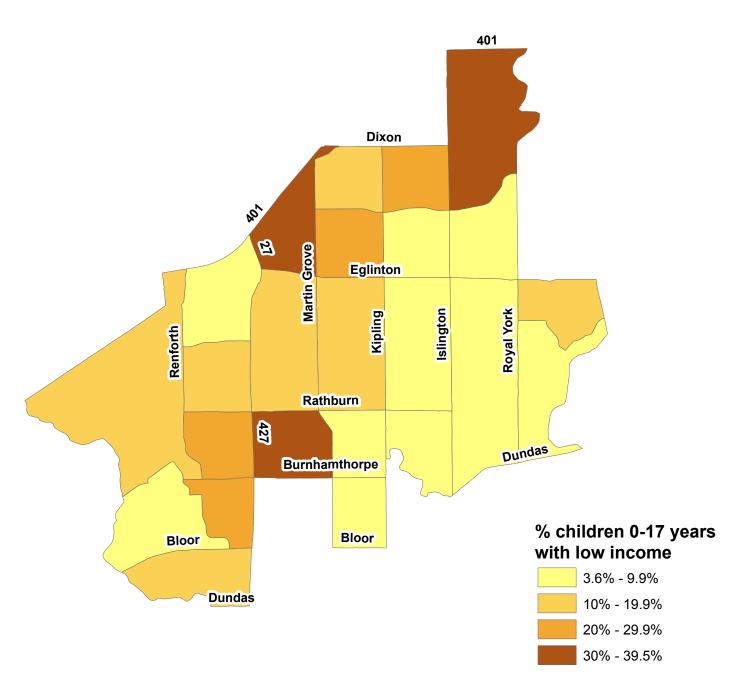


Figure 10 Percentage of Children 0-17 Years Living in Families with Low Incomes by Census Tract in Central Etobicoke, 2015 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

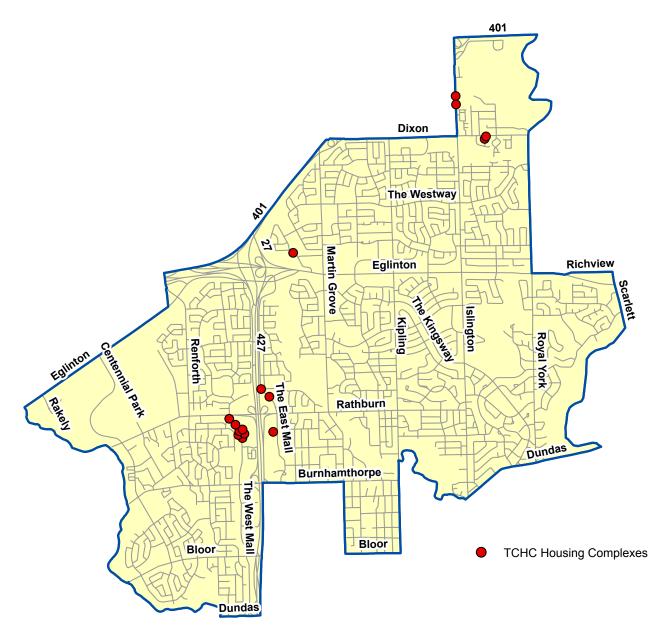


Figure 11 Toronto Community Housing Complexes in Central Etobicoke Source: Toronto Community Housing Corporation

## **IMPACTS OF HIDDEN POVERTY**

The common perception of Central Etobicoke as a middle-class community has traditionally glossed over the reality – that within this area, there are pockets of poverty which include areas with several

Toronto Community Housing complexes. Figure 11 shows the locations of several Toronto Community Housing complexes in Central Etobicoke which are home to low and modest income residents. These areas are often overlooked because of the surrounding communities of wealth.

As a result of the lack of visibility of local need, there are fewer services and resources geared to these low-income populations. There have been few additional investments to increase access to services to better accommodate community needs and limited research which explores the realities of the "spatial mismatch" faced by these groups. This deficit in infrastructure and physical presence of community programs and services is a problem community groups like B427 Community Project/CEMA have been advocating to address since the 1990s.

In fact, the deficit in infrastructure and physical presence of programs and services was a prominent theme which came out in conversations during the SWOT analysis held by Social Planning Toronto in January 2017. Those in attendance, including residents, youth, seniors, representatives from faith communities, and community workers noted that the community needs greater access to services, programs and public gathering spaces. During the consultation, many stated that the minimal access to community services is problematic because of the large population of youth and seniors and areas of concentrated poverty in the area.

Participants also discussed the barriers related to service access when services are only available outside of the community which results in long travel times, or limited service provision. Both processes pose

barriers to accessing services and programs, especially for marginalized populations like youth, seniors, newcomers, or those with low incomes.

Participants also commented on the problem of service providers moving their offices outside of the community for various reasons, leaving gaps in services in the community. For example, reports from the 1990s detail the loss of East Mall Neighbourhood Services, the breakfast club which was once located at 7 Capri, and more recently, the loss of George Hull Centre.

Stakeholders noted several services that were essential, but not available in the community. These included health services, as the community has limited access to hospitals, medical/psychological clinics, and no access to a community health centre in the area. Public libraries were too few and far apart as Richview Library is the only major branch in the two wards. The other libraries: Eatonville and Elmbrook are smaller and have restrictive and inconsistent hours of operation. For the large population of seniors, there are few long-term care homes and little sustainable community supports. Finally, the participants in the SWOT analysis felt that within the community there are few recreational spaces, which echoed the findings in *The Recreation Gap* report.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016



Figure 12 Location of Community Services in Toronto

Source: Wellbeing Toronto

Note: Peach/white coloured area represents Central Etobicoke

Though the group acknowledged that one of the community's assets was the recently revitalized infrastructure in Centennial Park, they also noted that the park was not accessible for those using transit and often booked well in advance by groups who obtain permits to use the space.

The overall consensus in the room was that the community had a severe lack of infrastructure, too few agencies located in the area, and minimal levels of service. This is further demonstrated in Figure 12 which shows the locations of community services across Toronto. This map shows

the inequitable distribution of community services, with few resources available in Central Etobicoke compared to other parts of the city and particularly, in the downtown core.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

In addition to the limited number of services and resources in the area, data also show that mobility is a major concern in the community. According to *The Recreation Gap* report, four of the least walkable neighbourhoods in Toronto are located in Central Etobicoke.<sup>39</sup>

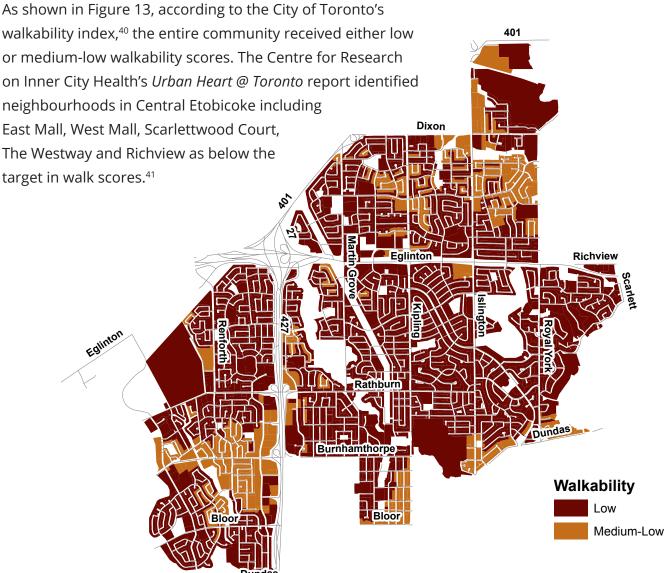


Figure 13 Walkability Scores in Central Etobicoke Source: City of Toronto walkability shapefile

<sup>39</sup> Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016

<sup>40</sup> The Walkability Index takes into consideration residential density (residents per hectare of land), retail ratio (how much land is dedicated to retail use), land use mix (how varied the land uses are in area) and density (indicates if roads are built on a connected grid with short blocks, or on long blocks /cul-de-sacs)

<sup>41</sup> St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Research on Inner City Health, 2010

The community's transit assessment was also poor. The Martin Prosperity Institute conducted an assessment which measured the number of stops within 500 metres of the middle of a census block and how often a bus, subway or streetcar stops at that block within an hour. Similar to the community's walkability score, Central Etobicoke's transit connectivity score, as shown in Figure 14, was one of the lowest in the city with the community receiving low and medium-low scores.<sup>42</sup> With limited services in the community, the lack of mobility to get to the existing services underscores one of the significant barriers that residents face in accessing services.

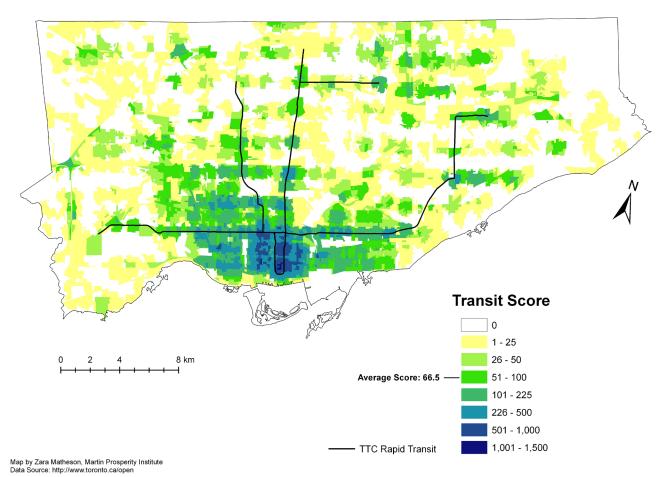


Figure 14 Toronto's Transit Deserts

Map provided by Martin Prosperity Institute.

Source: Martin Prosperity Institute, n.d.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Prosperity Institute, n.d.

## **5. SURVEY FINDINGS**

For this report, multiple forms of data collection were used. A total of 206 surveys were gathered from March 2017 to June 2017 in both online and paper formats. The 33-item survey included questions that assessed current and desired use of community services and programs. Figure 15 shows the frequency of community service use at present among respondents. Survey participants varied greatly in their frequency of current service access with about one quarter accessing services a few times a week, a quarter accessing services a few times a month, and over one-quarter accessing services a few time years. A small number of respondents used services daily. Most concerning, over 15% of respondents reported that they currently had no access to programs at all.

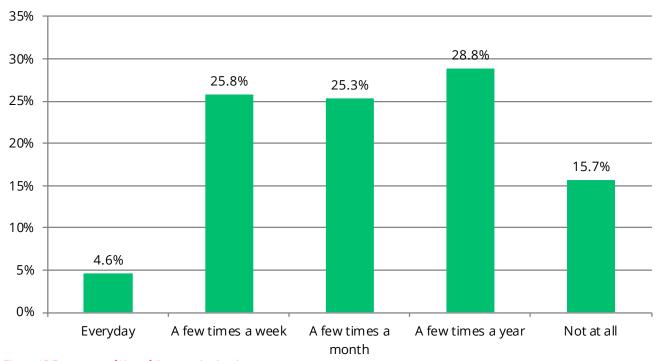


Figure 15 Frequency of Use of Community Services
Source: Central Etobicoke community hub feasibility survey

Figure 16 shows the desired frequency of service access reported by survey respondents. Responses indicated a high level of unmet demand for programs and services. Over half wanted access to programs and services at least a few times a week compared to the 30% of respondents who currently have this level of access. Over 80% indicated that they would like access to programs and services at least a few times a month compared to the 55% of respondents who currently have this level of access.

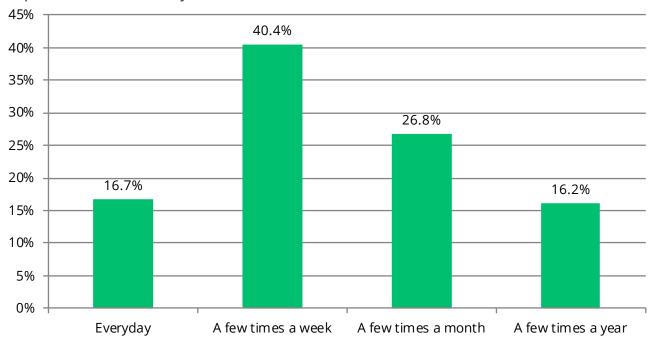


Figure 16 Desired Frequency of Use of Community Services Source: Central Etobicoke community hub feasibility survey

Almost two-thirds of respondents disagreed to some degree with the statement "I think there are enough services/programs in the community to address the community's needs". Over half of respondents felt that it was not easy to access services in the community, and about 60% reported having to travel outside of the community to access services that were not available in Central Etobicoke. Over three-quarters of respondents identified the need for more community spaces in Central Etobicoke, including community centres, meeting rooms, and public event space.

More than half of respondents were dissatisfied with the current amount of community spaces they could access in the area; over one in five were satisfied to some degree; almost one-quarter were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Almost four out of five respondents felt that there was a demand for a shared space (i.e. a space that is used by more than one group of individuals or organizations for a range of activities). Over 90% of respondents reported that a shared space would benefit the community, and nearly 60% reported that they or someone they know would use the space in the

community. About 60% also agreed that a shared space would help them learn about community events, projects, groups, programs and services in the area.

Respondents were also asked about possible governance models for the community hub. Almost two-thirds wanted the community space to be owned by the City of Toronto, while less than 5% disagreed. A total of 85% believed that community residents should have a say in the coordination and management of the space.

## **6. FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW FINDINGS**

A total of 17 focus groups were conducted with diverse populations including five sessions with seniors, four sessions with youth, and two sessions with newcomers. Fourteen key-informant interviews were also held with stakeholders including longtime community residents and community workers, youth leaders, elected officials and staff of elected officials. From the research, several clusters of themes emerged including service needs and services gaps in the community, space needs and access in the community, a community vision for the Central Etobicoke hub, characteristics of space, outcomes of space, effective governance models, and accessible locations for the hub. The findings are described below.

Participants identified several services that are missing or available with limited access in Central Etobicoke. The following section looks at the limitations and gaps of the current services in Central Etobicoke and makes several recommendations for services needed in the community.

#### SENIORS' RECREATION

Based on the five focus groups with seniors, it was clear that Central Etoicoke suffers from a shortage of recreational services as a consequence of the lack recreational facilities and seniors-specific recreational spaces. While there are seniors-specific recreational facilities in other areas, such as Fairfield Seniors Centre and Islington Seniors Centre in South Etobicoke, there are no seniors-specific recreational facilities in either Ward 3 or 4 - even though Central Etobicoke is home to a larger number of seniors and a higher proportion of the population is age 65 and older compared to the population in South Etobicoke.<sup>43</sup> Many of the seniors in the focus groups spoke about travelling outside of Central Etobicoke to the centres noted above to access programs. These participants also mentioned that they were able to do this because they had access to a vehicle, and noted that they would not have the same access if they relied on public transit.

SERVICE NEEDS AND GAPS IN THE **COMMUNITY** 

<sup>43</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017c

Senior participants in the focus group emphasized the need for more access to recreational services and spaces. Many cited the need for indoor courts that would permit badminton and other sports. Seniors wanted facilities and programs that would help them stay active and mentioned that seniors were often pigeon-holed into activities that involved no physical activity, such as playing cards. This is significant as recreational services are essential, especially in a community with a higher than average population of seniors. Access to recreation can significantly improve seniors' health. In turn, this can result in a return on investment, as research demonstrates that for every \$1 invested in physical activity, \$11 is saved in health care costs.44

## **HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

Throughout the engagement process, residents emphasized the deficit in accessibly located health care services. During the senior's focus group, many mentioned having to travel to Trillium Health Partners Hospital in Mississauga to access basic health services, a barrier for seniors and residents who don't drive, as this commute requires long trips on public transit and two regional fares. In one focus group, seniors spoke about the now-closed Etobicoke Medical Centre that had been located on The East Mall and Rathburn Road. The centre moved to South Etobicoke, leaving gaps in access to health care as many participants find the new location hard to access both on public transit and when driving.

Participants also spoke about the gap in health services due to the lack of a community health centre in Central Etobicoke. Community health centres are nonprofit organizations that provide community-specific programming to targeted populations. They contribute to the development of healthy communities by providing primary health care and health promotion programs. Often community health centres provide free care to people without public health insurance including those without immigration status in the country. Community health centres are specifically geared toward low-income and marginalized communities. Despite the increase in populations that would benefit from a community health centre, such as seniors, newcomers and people living with low incomes, Central Etobicoke does not have a community health centre.

#### YOUTH SERVICES

Within the City of Toronto, youth face multiple barriers to healthy development and future success. This particularly affects racialized youth living in low-income areas. In addition to barriers like racism and poverty, youth face high rates of unemployment - all occurring at a time

when they are experiencing cognitive, emotional, social and physical changes. Our study finds that Central Etobicoke is home to a large youth population, many of whom live in low-income families.

Following the release of the *Review of The Roots of Youth Violence*<sup>45</sup>, the Government of Ontario put a significant focus on recommendations to address the systematic causes of youth violence. The City of Toronto also developed several initiatives including the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, which employs strategies to support youth well-being. More work needs to be done to support the full implementation of these initiatives and facilitate the healthy development of youth both locally and across the city.

In our study, youth, like seniors, reported a deficit in programming and services in Central Etobicoke. Typically, youth participants could identify no more than three resources for youth in the community: R.A.Y., Toronto Community Housing spaces, and Mabelle Arts. Although youth talked about the current spaces they do use, like R.A.Y. or the court on the ground floor of 49 Mabelle Avenue (a local Toronto Community Housing Corporation building), they also commented on the limited access they have to these spaces. R.A.Y., for example, has restrictive hours because it is located on TDSB property. The recreation room in

Mabelle Arts is available to the youth in the local buildings only and has limited hours (as there needs to be a TCHC staff member present to supervise).

During the focus groups and key-informant interviews with youth leaders, youth identified a large gap in services, the limited nature of current services, and the specific service needs of youth in the community. One of the largest needs for youth in Central Etobicoke is the need for unstructured community space dedicated to youth.

## **ENHANCED YOUTH SPACES**

Youth identified the need for safe indoor space where they could hang out. This concept of safe unstructured spaces for youth to drop in gained popularity in 2013, when the City of Toronto committed to opening 10 enhanced youth spaces ("youth lounges"). These spaces are intended to provide safe spaces for young people to engage with caring adults and also work to reduce the risk of youth engaging in behaviours which are detrimental to their well-being. The concept behind enhanced youth spaces is based on the idea that "while children in their early and middle years may be inclined to register in formal after-school programs, teenagers would rather participate in self-directed activities with their friends and for this reason, require comfortable and safe spaces".46

<sup>45</sup> McMurtry & Curling, 2008

<sup>46</sup> Queiser, 2016

Both youth and those who work with them consistently stressed the need for youth drop-in spaces in Central Etobicoke. During a key-informant interview with Community Officer Michael Burgess, who works at the local police division (22 Division), Officer Burgess mentioned that he frequently receives complaints from local Tim Horton's coffee shops related to large groups of youth using the space after school. According to Burgess, youth look for safe spaces to gather and often go to Tim Horton's because of the Wi-Fi access. Retail spaces also cannot accommodate them, which results in police officers getting called as well.

Chris Glover, TDSB Trustee for Etobicoke Centre, spoke about this issue as well:

"One of the problems in the community is a lack of safe spaces for students to go [after school]. A young person described his day to me, and he said his mom drives him to school and picks him up from school because she's afraid that he'll get attacked by a gang or get recruited into one and then he's home and he's just staring at four walls...The biggest thing I find with the students I meet is that they don't really have a safe place to go after school. We have Parks [Forestry] & Recreation programs running in schools, but that's not a place to hang out, that's a place where your parent signs you up, and you go and have that program delivered."

Amber Morley, a key informant experienced in youth work in South Etobicoke and the constituency assistant for Councillor John Campbell, described drop-in programs as:

"Safe spaces where young people can just drop in and network in a positive environment among positive influences, as opposed to going home, or hanging out on the block, or going to the one friend's house whose mom lets everyone in...When people have a safe and nurturing environment to go drop in at – even if there is no structured program – that is often a powerful influence and can ensure someone goes on the right path. You're exposed to healthy positive nurturing environments, and just having access to those in more neighbourhoods is the key...and then those neighbourhoods/ participants can inform what they need specifically in terms of programming and what is meaningful to them and what they'd like to see."

A Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) staff person noted that in her experience many of the youth in the TCHC complexes just want places to hang out – and often find themselves hanging out in the staircase or at the local basketball court. Similar to the experience of youth at Tim Horton's, they were often criminalized for doing so.

Youth emphasized the need for more access to unstructured safe public space. They

repeatedly noted the importance of having spaces they could go to, hang out in, feel safe, and build relationships with caring adults.

### **Centralized Sources of Information**

Participants felt that there was a lack of awareness about community initiatives in Central Etobicoke because there is no centralized source for information sharing, a consequence of having little community space. During the focus groups, participants including long-time residents reported feeling out of the loop when it came to community services, events, and programs. In fact, participants learned about services and programs during the focus groups, when others spoke about current services they access in the community. After many focus groups, participants stayed to share information about resources they currently access. Many participants mentioned that it was hard to get connected to organizations, physical spaces, community services and events because there was no centralized source of information, and there were few opportunities for residents to gather and engage in information sharing. Many participants believed that a community hub could help alleviate this problem by functioning as a hub of information, as well as a physical hub.

This theme arose during the SWOT session as well. Participants had a long dialogue

about the lack of communication, social cohesion and information channels in the community. Attendees commented that many service providers work in silos, contributing to the problem of lack of awareness of programs and services. The need for greater coordination to support referral plans and facilitate wraparound care was identified, as even service providers are unaware of other services in the community. Participants envisioned a hub that would provide integrated service referrals, a mechanism whereby community organizations work together to provide wraparound services to residents and increase awareness of community services.

# SPACE NEEDS AND ACCESS IN THE **COMMUNITY**

In addition to the existing service gaps, participants spoke about the limitations of existing community spaces and recommended several physical spaces which would alleviate these deficits.

# **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

Participants in the focus groups and interviews raised serious concerns regarding the lack of existing infrastructure and facilities. Many community members' concerns are corroborated by other data sources. For example, the Urban Heart @ Toronto report shows that most parts of Central Etobicoke scored low on access

to community meeting spaces.<sup>47</sup> Community members concerns regarding space access are further demonstrated by the fact that Central Etobicoke has only one City-owned recreation centre, the Etobicoke Olympium and Arena.<sup>48</sup> There are no community hubs in the wards. Although Silver Creek Public School was recently acquired by the provincial government and named a hub, the location only provides two services: supports for children's mental health and autism and a licensed child care centre. There have been no plans for additional services nor is there capacity in the facility to provide additional services.

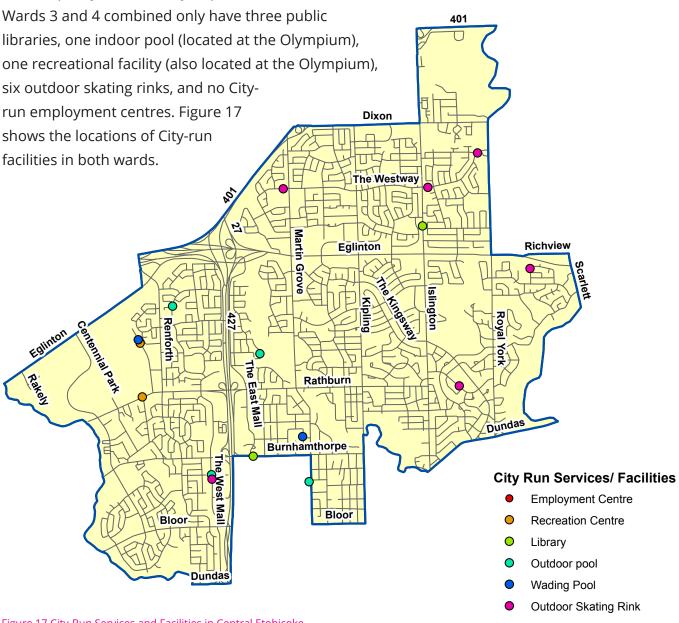


Figure 17 City-Run Services and Facilities in Central Etobicoke Source: City of Toronto Open Data

<sup>47</sup> St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Research on Inner City Health, 2010 48 Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016

Rather than investing in standalone community centres in Central Etobicoke, the City of Toronto has used cheaper alternatives to provide recreation services through the community schools model. Under this model, the City's Parks, Forestry & Recreation division provides recreation programs in schools after school hours. Figure 18 shows the locations of community schools which provide community spaces after school hours. A list of the schools and their respective wards is provided.

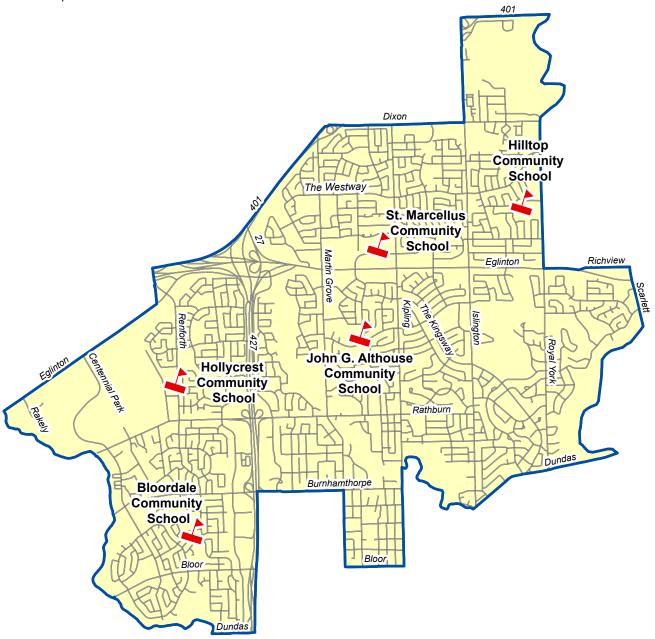


Figure 18 Community Schools in Central Etobicoke

<sup>49</sup> Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016

Community School	Ward
Bloordale Community School	3
Hollycrest Community School	3
John G. Althouse Community School	3
St. Marcellus Community School	4
Hilltop Community School	4

During the SWOT analysis, stakeholders were asked to create a map of community services. The information gathered from the meeting was combined with information from Wellbeing Toronto and 211 Toronto to create a map of community resources. Figure 19 shows the locations of various community organizations and services in Central Etobicoke. As demonstrated, there is an overall deficit in services

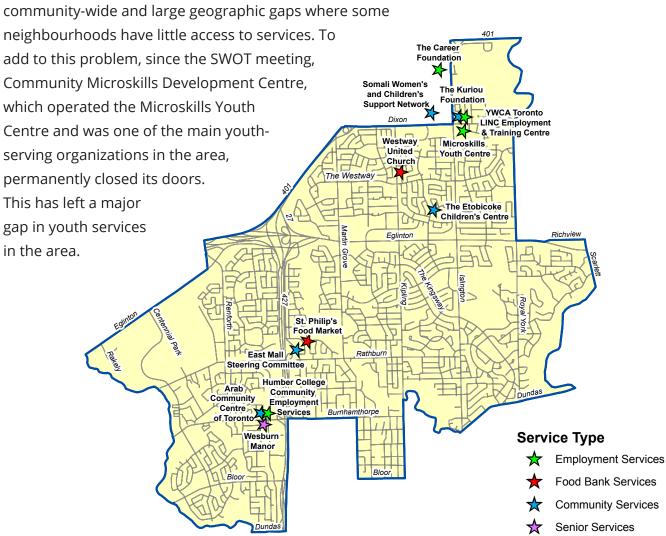


Figure 19 Community Services Identified by Participants in SWOT Analysis

Focus group participants, key informants and survey respondents were also asked to identify community spaces that they access. In addition to the spaces shown in the map above, focus group participants also named: The East Mall community space, Mabelle Arts, Etobicoke Services for Seniors, Edgehill House, Neilson Park Creative Centre, and the Mabelle Food Bank.

# THE NEED FOR SPACES DEDICATED FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Participants noted that the Etobicoke
Olympium is the only standalone
community centre in Central Etobicoke.
While the Olympium contains a state of
the art indoor pool and fitness centre
and provides recreational programming,
participants noted that its location on
the edge of Ward 3 on Rathburn Road is
not readily accessible by public transit,
especially for those in high needs areas.

Residents also noted that the Olympium was often unavailable as space was programmed and permitted out frequently. For example, participants mentioned that the indoor pool was often fully booked by professional teams who hold permits for the use of the Olympium, and many of them are not residents from Central Etobicoke. While the Etobicoke Olympium is an excellent facility and heavily utilized, it is frequently not accessible to residents and serves as a regional facility rather than a local resource.

As previously stated, the lack of standalone community centres within Central Etobicoke is a result of the community schools model used by Parks, Forestry & Recreation to provide programs and community space. One theme arising from the key-informant interviews is that the community schools model is no longer sufficiently meeting the needs of the community. Residents want and need dedicated community centres.

For many, a barrier to accessing the existing spaces in community schools (specifically, Parks, Forest & Recreation programming) was the limited hours in which space was open to the community – only after school hours. In contrast, community centres generally provide much better access. For example, York Recreation Centre, a new City-owned centre located in the Weston-Mount Dennis community, is open from 7 am to 10 pm from Monday to Friday, and from 7 am to 8 pm on weekends for public use. In contrast, community schools are only open for registered participants from 6 pm to 10 pm on weekdays, from 9 am to 6 pm on weekends, and during summer break.

Many residents spoke about the importance of having community space and programs available during the day. For example, seniors mentioned that day programs were important as many didn't feel safe driving, walking, or taking public transit after dark. In addition, other residents reported that greater access would help parents of young

children, who want to access programming while their children are in school, or for parents who are at home with their child or children and want to attend programs with them.

The community schools model is also a barrier because programs offered in schools are only for registered participants. From the research, residents felt that the process of signing up for Parks, Forestry & Recreation programs is not accessible. Several participants reported that the process currently leaves out many people, including those who are not aware of programs or who face barriers to registration. For example, many of the newcomers who participated in focus groups were not aware of the programs despite the Welcome Policy, a City program that subsidizes the cost of recreation for low-income individuals. In addition, seniors reported not being able to register because many had little access to computers. Parents also mentioned facing barriers registering for programming, as often it meant taking days off work or going into work late, in order to line up to register for programs for their children. For low-income families, this can pose a serious barrier, especially because there are no centres where programs are free (formerly known as priority centres) in Central Etobicoke, and all registered programs come with fees. This problem is amplified in Central Etobicoke as there is only one community

centre, the Etobicoke Olympium, where people can drop in. If residents are unable to register for a program in the community schools, there is little access to community programs.

Residents also believed that the community schools model is no longer sufficient as the space is frequently permitted by long-standing organizations. As a result, these spaces are not accessible for new resident groups or organizations that are not familiar with the permit process or may not have the funds to pay the permit fees.

#### SPACE TO CONNECT NEWCOMERS

Two focus groups were conducted with newcomers with the support of the Arab Community Centre of Toronto and Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, both organizations which serve newcomers. During the newcomer focus groups, newcomers spoke about feeling isolated and having inadequate community engagement. Many newcomers talked about the tendency for newcomers to only engage with their own cultural communities. The participants wanted to be more engaged in the community and to build relationships with diverse populations but had trouble doing so because there is no community space which would facilitate these connections. Newcomers hoped that having a centralized community space would help them become more fully engaged citizens

by increasing their awareness of programs, services, events, and spaces available to them in the community.

Newcomers also mentioned wanting to have more conversations with diverse people, as a mechanism to practice their English skills. They wanted to use unstructured dialogues with other residents, to help learn English, rather than strictly in ESL classes, but did not have opportunities to practice outside of the classroom. While all the newcomers we spoke with were currently attending ESL classes, the participants felt they needed more experiential learning to practice their English skills in real life conversations with other residents.

# **COMBATTING SENIORS'** SOCIAL ISOLATION THROUGH UNSTRUCTURED COMMUNITY SPACE

Another key theme was the need for physical space that residents could access to socialize. Because there is no physical community centre in the wards except for the Etobicoke Olympium, seniors, youth, and residents, in general, did not have community spaces where they could meet with other residents. Normally, with Cityrun community centres, residents can walk in without being registered in a program. Many congregate in the shared spaces of community centres. It is quite common to see residents, seniors, in particular, sitting on benches or seats in the lobbies or other shared areas. The community schools model in Central Etobicoke does not provide these kinds of informal meeting spaces for residents. In this way, community schools do not function like community centres that provide common spaces for residents to congregate and socialize.

Many seniors in the focus groups spoke about the importance of space to socialize and build relationships and the lack of such space in Central Etobicoke. This is particularly a concern for seniors who face greater risk of social isolation, which occurs when seniors stay isolated in their homes usually after retirement and/or the loss of a partner. Social isolation has an adverse impact on the social, emotional and physical well-being of individuals. Figure 20 shows the areas in Central Etobicoke where seniors, aged 65 and over, live alone. Access to informal community meeting space is important to help seniors maintain social connections, access social support, and create new friendships.

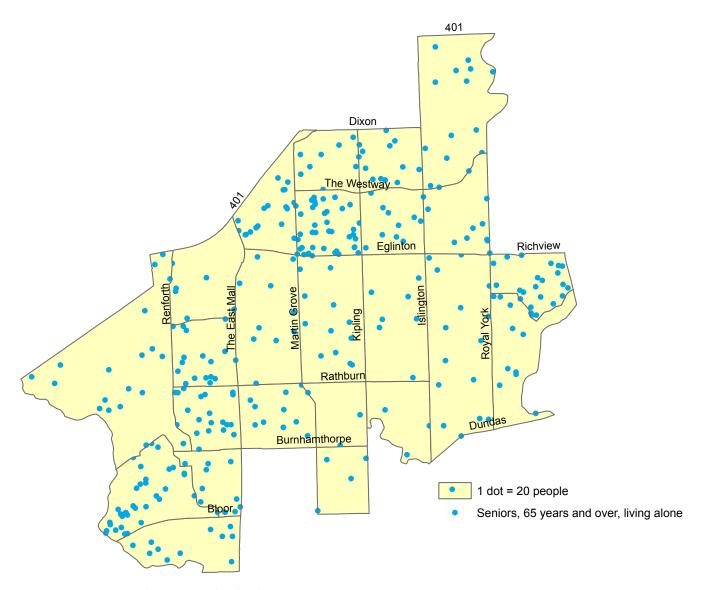


Figure 20 Seniors Living Alone in Central Etobicoke, 2016

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

To combat social isolation, participants identified the need for more community spaces that facilitate social interactions for seniors. One focus group participant commented:

"We're social humans, and when we're social it makes us feel good, and feel better, taking [seniors] from the isolation. I was in a meeting a couple weeks ago, and they were talking about the elderly in the community and literally just bringing them out to feel like they have a place where they can hang out, get to know others, and get out of the house where they're isolated".

Participants spoke about the need for more open community space that seniors could congregate in, and engage in conversations with other community members which would prevent social isolation. Participants noted that seniors currently rely on retail spaces like Cloverdale Mall for this social interaction. However, this space is not reliable and is not accessible to everyone.

# RETAIL SPACE AS COMMUNITY SPACE

When asked about current accessible spaces, participants frequently mentioned retail spaces. For example, for seniors, when asked about public spaces that they currently use, Cloverdale Mall was mentioned repeatedly even though the mall is located outside of the borders of Central Etobicoke. In fact, Cloverdale Mall was

referred to by participants as a community hub because it supplements the gaps in community spaces. It is a space where seniors go to socialize, build relationships, and participate in walking groups. Seniors also mentioned other retail spaces that they use as community spaces including Humbertown Plaza, Thorncrest Plaza on Rathburn Road and Islington Avenue, Java Joe's, and several Second Cup Coffee Co. locations.

During the focus groups with youth, a similar theme arose, but instead of Cloverdale Mall, youth congregate at various Tim Horton's locations. During the focus group discussions and keyinformant interviews, youth noted that they wanted a place to go after school, particularly to hang out with their friends. However, they felt that the only option currently available is the local Tim Horton's. Youth and stakeholders who work with youth mentioned that a problem with this approach is that youth are being kicked out of these spaces for loitering. As was noted previously, coffee shop staff are contacting police when groups of youth are using these spaces after school.

Seniors are facing issues in retail spaces, as well. During the focus groups, seniors mentioned that originally Cadillac Fairview (CF) Sherway Gardens, a mall located at The West Mall and The Queensway, was utilized as a hub for the senior population. Seniors

felt that with the rebrand of CF Sherway Gardens Mall, walking groups were banned in an attempt to make CF Sherway more attractive to wealthier shoppers. As a result, seniors found themselves forced to move to Cloverdale Mall

Both seniors and youth use retail spaces due to a lack of public spaces available for residents to access. In both cases, these populations reported issues with this approach because of the instability of access that comes with utilizing retail space.

In addition, retail space does not support community integration, demonstrated by the practices of seniors going to Cloverdale Mall and Second Cup coffee shops and youth going to Tim Horton's. This maintains separation between youth and seniors and minimizes community collaboration. Residents reported that there is a need for purpose-built community spaces where diverse community members can gather and feel safe.

#### **GYMNASIUM ACCESS**

Seniors and youth were particularly passionate about getting an indoor gymnasium. Seniors commented on the need for an indoor gymnasium for sports like badminton and other recreation activities for seniors, an identified service gap in the research. During many focus groups, seniors spoke about the lack of

gymnasium space in the community and the restrictive nature of spaces that did exist. Many of the senior participants, who were currently on community sports teams, spoke about losing access to gymnasiums during the summer, as summer camps for children requested the space. This speaks to the limited supply of community spaces in the area compared to the high demand.

Youth also wanted a gymnasium they could use for sports and mentioned that currently they only have access to outdoor basketball courts. Similar to seniors' experiences with space access, youth also found restrictions in access to these outdoor spaces which are not available after dark. As well, youth were asked to leave spaces to prevent loitering. Spaces like the court at 49 Mabelle Avenue, which is frequently used by youth in the area, has limited hours. R.A.Y. which also offers access to the basketball court located in Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute only offers access to this space once a week.

#### TRACK FACILITIES

Many residents also identified the need for an outdoor walking/running track. Participants spoke about the low walkability<sup>50</sup> in Central Etobicoke; some commenting that they did not feel safe walking in the neighbourhood. Many participants mentioned having to cross major highway exits and on-ramps, when they were walking around the community.

50 St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Inner City Health, 2010

These barriers inhibited residents from walking in the area. Specifically, seniors spoke about the damaged sidewalks; some shared stories of tripping while walking. Currently, seniors do their walking in Cloverdale Mall, where walking clubs are held. However, given past experiences with loss of access to mall facilities, participants want to have access to a permanent outdoor track that they can use to walk and run.

# **BUILDING EXISTING ASSETS INTO** THE HUB

During the interviews and focus groups, there were several community assets that were mentioned by participants. The first of these assets was the abundance of green space including parks, creeks and walking trails within Central Etobicoke. Yet participants reported that many of the parks in Central Etobicoke were attractive places that beautified the area but did not adequately support public use of these green spaces. Participants stated that current green spaces are not utilized to their full capacity. Some residents referred to the parks as "idle" with minimal activities occurring. Residents reported that the parks were currently empty green space and mentioned programming hopes for the parks similar to parks in other areas of the city such as movie nights in High Park, yoga programs in Trinity Bellwoods, and youth programming in Christie Pits.

Although the green spaces in the community are not fully utilized, participants considered them assets, and many sought to ensure there was green space included in the proposed hub. During the focus groups and interviews, participants made many recommendations on how to integrate green space with the proposed hub. Many considered using parts of a park as a space to build a hub. Richview Park and West Grove Park were both mentioned as spaces to build a community hub. Though some residents discussed the sensitivity of using a park, they maintained that the green space would be more beneficial to the community if it allowed for more community access and engagement. Many participants maintained that the assets of a community hub outweighed the deficits of losing minimal green space. Other participants mentioned that regardless of the location of the hub, active green space needed to be available around it, such as green space that can be used for community gardening and/or outdoor programming.

In addition to green space, civic engagement and community involvement was also repeatedly identified as a community asset in Central Etobicoke. This was also a prominent theme in the SWOT analysis, where the group mentioned the various social clubs, faith groups, resident associations and many other groups in the community that had a strong history of volunteerism. During the focus groups and

interviews, many referred to the Central Etobicoke Community Hub Working Group, which has over 20 active members, as an example of community engagement in Central Etobicoke. Respondents described residents in the community as engaged and dedicated, participating in activities to support community well-being. Participants identified the active participation of many local volunteers and resident-led community groups that work to improve the conditions of the community.

While there is a strong sense of civic engagement and community identity, participants remarked that many groups work in silos and only in certain geographical areas. For example, youth in The East Mall and Capri communities identified strongly with their communities but noted that there was little collaboration. between neighbourhoods - even in neighbourhoods as close as The West Mall and The East Mall. Residents agreed that many of the community groups and resident leaders are only connected to small geographic locations, resulting in little collaboration. As a consequence, the broader Central Etobicoke community did not have the same sense of identity as the smaller sub-districts did.

Residents stated that there was a need for a community space that would allow these community groups to come together, get to know each other and work together

across diverse populations. During the interviews and focus groups, residents said having a shared space would help facilitate connections between these groups and encourage collaboration. During the SWOT analysis, participants commented that the community is experiencing a growing divide due to issues of inequality, resulting in disconnection, a weakened sense of community, and declining local pride. A community hub was seen as a space that can bring together diverse communities to bridge those divides and foster mutual understanding and connection.

## COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR THE **CENTRAL ETOBICOKE HUB**

During the research, participants shared a vision for a Central Etobicoke community hub. The hub should provide space for a variety of programs and services, including recreational services for seniors, access to a community health centre and a youth lounge to provide a safe accessible space for young people, a track facility, and gymnasium. Participants also made clear the need for a dedicated space for community programs and services which included a centralized, common space where residents can congregate, socialize, and share information and access to green space.

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND **SERVICES**

In addition to these essential services, spaces and facilities to include in the hub, participants also raised a variety of issues to inform the development of the hub. Participants requested that Parks, Forestry & Recreation relocate the programming currently offered in the community schools to the community hub. Residents valued the programs offered in the Fun Guide, and stressed that with an enhanced facility Parks, Forestry & Recreation should expand to deliver more diverse programming, and provide more access to programs as the space would have longer hours of operation.

Participants in the focus groups, surveys and interviews emphasized the need for increased programming for children ages 0-6. Councillor John Campbell and others commented on the shortage in affordable child care providers to meet the demand in Central Etobicoke. He, along with many other residents, saw a need for a licensed child care provider in the hub, which would work in tandem with the Children's Services subsidy office to provide subsidized spaces for families with children that require financial assistance.

Other participants mentioned the need for more after-school programs for children. Many parents and newcomers in the focus groups mentioned the need for more extracurricular activities for children, including tutoring and homework help.

Participants mentioned that access is limited to costly private programs at present. They envisioned a community program that could provide after-school programs for children within the hub.

Participants also recommended joint programming that parents could take part in with their children. Mom and tots groups were used as an example of the type of programming that residents wanted in the hub. Similarly, participants also stated that programs for new parents would be beneficial to the community, as families with children make up the largest household type in Central Etobicoke. Many felt that this type of programming was important to new parents, single parents, newcomer parents, young parents, and parents who were home on maternal/paternal leave. Participants also mentioned that this would help build community, as it would bring together diverse parents.

For many, especially during the research with youth, youth workers and parents, employment access was identified as a need. In a focus group with mothers, all of the participants spoke about the importance of providing more employment for their children through nonprofit employment agencies which offer services to help equip their older children with employable skills, and help them gain employment.

Residents felt that satellite support workers

from a variety of services in the hub would be beneficial to the community. For example, participants talked about having a satellite legal clinic where lowincome families or those on a fixed income could get legal support. Currently, the only community legal clinics are located outside of Central Etobicoke, in both North Etobicoke, and South Etobicoke. Participants hoped that organizations, even if they were located outside the community, could send workers to the hub on a regular basis.

Many also felt it was important to have satellite settlement workers located in the hub, especially because of the struggles that Syrian refugees are facing in accessing services in Central Etobicoke. Participants hoped that the hub would help alleviate barriers newcomers face in accessing services by having a centralized space for service delivery. They also noted that having a settlement agency in the hub would bring newcomers in, and would help them meet other community residents in the space as well.

#### **ADDITIONAL AMENITIES**

Participants of all backgrounds and age ranges in the focus groups and keyinformant interviews mentioned the benefits of an additional indoor pool in Central Etobicoke. During nearly all of the focus groups, an indoor pool was prominent in resident visions for a

community centre. The only indoor pool in the two wards is the Etobicoke Olympium (residents also have access to four outdoor pools in the community opened on a limited basis). Participants stressed the desire for another indoor pool that is better situated geographically than the Olympium. They requested that the indoor pool have dedicated time for open swim and population-specific programming, for example, dedicated pool time for women'sonly swimming. Unlike the Olympium, a strong priority should be placed on making the pool in the hub accessible to the local community and to meet its diverse needs.

A fitness and weight room was also identified as a priority for the hub. Participants wanted a space they could go to exercise with the appropriate equipment. During one focus group, comparisons were made to the York Recreation Centre, located on Eglinton Avenue West, which has a fitness studio and weight room. Youth expressed the need for this room to be open to the community regularly, and on a drop-in basis along with flexible hours. Participants contended that this type of space would help the community get more physically active. At present, paid gym memberships are the only option for residents, creating a barrier for a large portion of the population who cannot afford a private membership. Like the pool, residents want the fitness and weight room to have dedicated drop-in time but also

dedicated time for seniors-only workout, and women's-only fitness programs to make programming more accessible.

There was a desire for a theatre where arts-based groups could perform and host shows. Several participants mentioned an art performance historically done in Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute. They spoke about the production's ability to bring together diverse residents and create a shared sense of identity and community. The show was created collaboratively with residents who helped organize it, performed in it and watched it. Participants noted that the community currently has no accessible space that could facilitate arts-based performances and hoped that a theatre could be included in the hub.

Residents also commented on the importance of public libraries. It was suggested that the hub should include a satellite library location with access to computers and the internet, so residents could drop in and use the computers for things like looking for a job, doing homework, and learning about other community events/programs.

Finally, participants also hoped to build on the already existing assets of green space by ensuring there was a community garden in the space for the hub. They spoke about using the garden to bring residents together and grow food for a local food bank.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPACE **NEEDS**

The research demonstrates that a singleuse space like a recreation centre, or a standalone community health centre without other services was less desirable than a multipurpose collaborative space. For participants, a multipurpose space would provide opportunities for diverse services and programs which could address the various space and program limitations in the community. Community members believed that a shared space, like a community hub would encourage collaboration, opportunities for referral and coordination, and provide avenues to improve collective impact by breaking down service silos and creating integrated supports to address the needs of the community.

Participants identified the need for multiple rooms in the hub that could be used by residents or community groups for a variety of purposes. Space is needed to host community events, forums and meetings. Participants stated that the community hub would be the most suitable place to do this. Members of community agencies who participated in focus groups and keyinformant interviews spoke about the importance of this type of space given the absence of multifunctional space in the community. Many key informants who work at community agencies spoke about the way the lack of community spaces affect their ability to provide programming, including larger community events. Currently, many agencies in Central Etobicoke have office space for their staff, but lack program space. As a result, organizations often have to book space months in advance with only a handful of space options available in the community. Organizations rely heavily on the Etobicoke Civic Centre and local churches for space. Service providers and residents both hoped that they would be able to access space more readily through the hub.

In addition participants want the community hub to have more accessible hours than those provided in existing community spaces. As mentioned previously, programs in community schools have very restrictive hours. Residents hoped that with the creation of a community hub, the hours would be more accessible to accommodate diverse groups in the community. For example, seniors spoke about accessing programs during the day; youth and working parents want to access services in the evenings and after school and/or work. Opening hours on weekends is also critical.

Residents also wanted to ensure that a single hub facility/site would not be the only long-term community infrastructure investment for the Central Etobicoke community. Participants envision that the proposed hub would be part of a long-

term plan to make community services and spaces more accessible to residents who have historically faced gaps in services in Central Etobicoke.

Most of the residents who participated in the study felt that a single standalone hub would not be sufficient to meet the needs of the entire community because of the large geographic area that comprises Central Etobicoke and the scattered location of low-income communities. As mentioned previously (and shown in Figure 9), Central Etobicoke has pockets of concentrated poverty in the north and south ends of the area. Multiple sites are needed to serve these geographically-dispersed communities.

Participants envisioned that along with the hub, additional service locations would open around the community as well. Based on the research, community members saw the hub as a centralized location for multiple services, and the first step to increasing access to programs, services and space to better serve the community.

# THE COMMUNITY'S EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF SHARED SPACE

Participants commented on their expectations about the hub and how it would affect the community. They saw the hub as a place that would provide support for education, medical, settlement, legal, and social services, while simultaneously

bringing the community together to create space for intergenerational learning and bridge the gap between newcomers/ immigrants and long-time residents. Residents hoped that bringing youth and seniors to a shared space would lead to seniors mentoring youth and helping them build capacity, especially as the community has a large population of retired professionals. In addition, many seniors wanted more interaction with youth. They also saw the hub as a means to build technological skills, while simultaneously helping to combat the overarching issues of social isolation that many seniors face.

The hub was also envisioned as a space that would create a shared sense of identity by uniting people from various communities in Central Etobicoke. It would be a gathering space, where people could come together, interact, learn and collaborate with each other, and in turn, this would create a shared identity and a strong sense of community. Participants mentioned that they expected this space would transform how residents from diverse backgrounds saw each other while encouraging the community to support each other.

#### 7. HUB PARTNERSHIPS

Upon completing the research and identifying key service gaps, partnership surveys where distributed to nonprofit and charitable organizations city-wide. Some surveys were targeted to organizations

that had existing relationships in Central Etobicoke and could fill the identified service gaps. In addition to this targeted outreach, surveys were distributed widely through listserves, including a City of Toronto citywide list of organizations that were looking for community space.

A total of 24 surveys were completed. From the 24 respondents, 12 organizations expressed interest in being an anchor agency in the hub. Anchor agencies are those that would make a long-term commitment to renting or purchasing space in the hub. The 12 interested organizations included: The Alzheimer Society of Toronto, Ministères Avance Pour Les Nations/Pressing on for the Nations Ministries, Canadian Human Rights International Organization, Career Foundation, CultureLink, Dixon Community Services, Etobicoke Services for Seniors, George Hull Centre, Midyanta Community Services, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, Stonegate Community Health Centre, and Youth Without Shelter. Organizations identified their spatial requirements including the need for dedicated space (space that would be dedicated to their organization) and shared space (space that could be accessed regularly, but shared with other organizations). Figure 21 shows a space needs chart which details the space needs of the 12 agencies who expressed interest in becoming an anchor agency in the Central Etobicoke community hub.

# SPACE NEEDS CHART - COMMUNITY HUB

		Offices	Shared Offices	Reception Desk	Cubicles	Shared Cubicles	Rooms Shared Interview	Rooms Meeting Rooms	for 15 people Meeting Rooms	for 30 people Meeting Rooms for 100 people	Program Rooms for 25	Program Rooms for 50	Program Rooms for 75	Commercial Kitchen	Staff Kitchen	Storage	Special Equipment	Other space
			4	18		_			4	4	ų,			9	7			6
	ORGANIZATION																	
	1 Alzheimer Society of Toronto	_						_	_			2		>	^	-		
	2 Ministères Avance Pour les Nations/Pressing on for the Nations Ministries	2			7			2		2		4		>	>	_	_	
	3 Canadian Human Rights International Organization	4				7				_		2		>		_	_	
'	4 Career Foundations		က									_			>			
	5 CultureLink	2													>			
	6 Dixon Community Services		7	_		2	_		_			က		>	>	_		
	7 Etobicoke Services for Seniors (ESS Support Services)	2				2		_			_			>	>	_		
	8 George Hull Centre	ω					4			2		_	_		>	-		>
	9 Midaynta Community Services		2			4		2		_				>	>	_	_	
=	10 Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services	2						_		_		_		>	>	_		
-	11 Stonegate Community Health Centre	12						2		1		2	0.1	^	/	1	1	
~	12 Youth Without Shelter (YWS)		_			_		_										
	Total Dedicated	36		-	7		2			2		9 9	1			6	4	
	Total Shared		9			1		0	<del>-</del>	-	<del>-</del>			_	_			
	Net Area Dedicated (m <sup>2</sup> )	120		100	40	1	120		9	040	200	008 C	1100			80	200	
	Net Area Shared (m²)		120			40	1	20 4	425 6	640 1200	0 500	008		500	200			
	Net Area Totals 4	4320	720	100	280	40	009	0	425 19	1920 1200	0 3500	2600	1100	200	200	720	800	
				•						•						•		
	NOTES	_	1A	18	2	2A 3	3A	4	4A	4B	2	2A	5B	9	7	8	8A	6

*OFFICES* (120 m²)

privat10'X12' offices dedicated to an organization

1A Offices shared with other organizations; also used as interview rooms

CUBICLES  $(40 \text{ m}^2)$ 

6' X 6' cubicles

2A Cubicles hared with other organizations

INTERVIEW ROOMS (120 m<sup>2</sup>)

3 #6 & #8 have interview rooms dedicated to their organizations

3A Shared offices used as interview rooms

 $MEETING\ ROOMS\ (425\ m^2,\ 640\ m^2,\ 1200m^2)$ 

4 15 people

A 30 people - #9 & #11 have dedicated meeting rooms

4C 100 people

PROGRAM ROOMS (500 m2, 800 m2, 1100m2,)

5 25 people - #1, #6, #8 have dedicated program rooms

54 50 people - #2, #8, #9 have dedicated program rooms

5B 75 people - #9 has a dedicated program room

6 COMMERCIAL KITCHEN shared by all

OTHER

7 STAFF KITCHEN shared by all

8 STORAGE - 8' X 10' dedicated storage for each organization

8A STORAGE - 200 SF large locker storage

OTHER - #9 needs laundry facilities

10 ADDITIONAL SHARED SPACE - Youth Lounge, Weight Room, Gym

Indicates spaces shared with other organizations Indicates spaces dedicated to the organization

Figure 21 Community Space Needs in Central Etobicoke

In addition to these 12 agencies, six organizations who completed the survey indicated that they would like to be an *itinerant partner* in the hub. Itinerant partners are those that would rent space on an intermittent basis. These organizations included Community Living Toronto, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere (FAME), Job Start, Neilson Park Creative Centre, and Turtle House. Similar to the anchor agencies, these organizations identified the types of shared spaces they would like to occupy in the hub, and how regularly they would need these spaces.

Six respondents were resident-led groups and organizations that are looking for shared free or low-cost office, meeting and program space. These groups have been categorized as community organizations and groups. They include community groups which run out of the Arab Community Centre of Toronto, The East Mall Steering Committee, Etobicoke Ringette Association, Etobicoke 55+ sports and games committee, Somali Women and Children, and St. Philip's Lutheran Church.

Based on the results of the partnership survey, a space diagram was developed which visualizes the current spatial requirements for the proposed hub. This diagram, shown in Figure 22, includes the dedicated spaces for organizations, as well as a common area which includes offices, program rooms and meeting rooms to be shared by different organizations in the hub, as well as community members or groups who are looking for space.

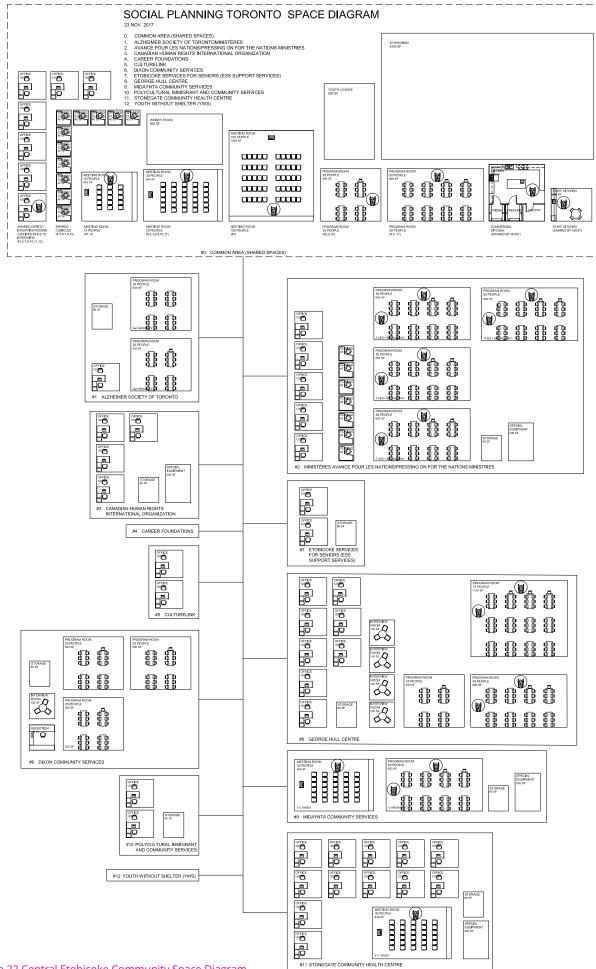


Figure 22 Central Etobicoke Community Space Diagram

#### 8. GOVERNANCE

In tandem with the feasibility study, the Central Etobicoke Community Hub Working Group formed a Hub Vision subcommittee tasked to study and identify hub governance models that exist in Toronto. The group identified four different governance models that could be suitable for the proposed community hub in Central Etobicoke. These different models were then used to inform the interviews, focus group and survey guides to allow the subcommittee to gauge resident and stakeholder perspectives on the different models. By the end of the research process, the goal was to share these perspectives and recommend a governance structure that residents thought would be most appropriate in Central Etobicoke. The subcommittee identified the following governance models:

- 1. Community Centre Model
- Association of Community Centres (AOCC) Model
- 3. Not-for-Profit Model
- 4. City/Community Partnership Model

The Community Centre model refers to community centres owned, operated, funded and governed by the Parks, Forestry & Recreation division, which provides a sense of financial security that other hub models don't necessarily have. The ownership structure in these facilities entails having programs and hours of operation determined by Parks, Forestry & Recreation with limited community input into operations, although space can be leased to external organizations with their own services and programs. These spaces provide recreational programming, meeting spaces, and sometimes community services.

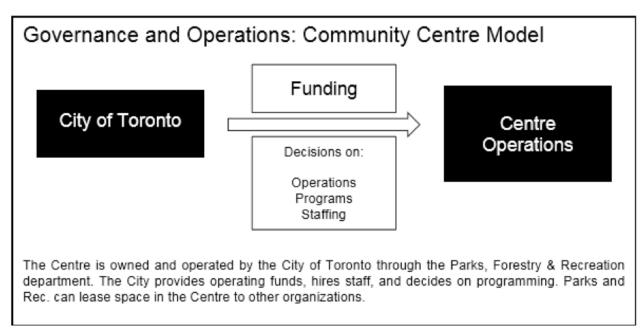


Figure 23 Governance Model I

The second model reviewed by the Hub Vision subcommittee is the Association of Community Centres model (AOCC). These centres are owned and funded by the City; however, operating decisions are the responsibility of a board of community members and typically, one or more City Councillors from the area served by the AOCC facility. There are no staff members from the City involved in an AOCC member centre's governance, and the centre has almost full community control over operating decisions. The board, comprised of community members, sets the centre's programming and decides on staffing.

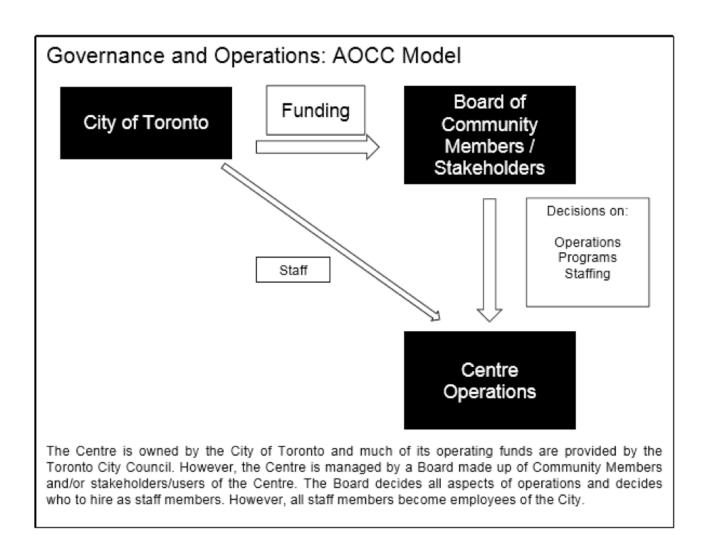


Figure 24 Governance Model II

The third model reviewed is the Not-For-Profit model, whereby the hub is leased from the City or a private sector landlord and run by a not-for-profit board. With this model, the board can be made up of stakeholders, including community members and representatives of the groups who use the facility. An example of this model is Daniels Spectrum, operated by Artscape, a not-for-profit organization with nine facilities in Toronto. Operating funds for these hubs can come from a variety of sources including municipal, provincial and federal agencies; local or national charities, such as the United Way Toronto & York Region; rents paid by tenants; and user fees.

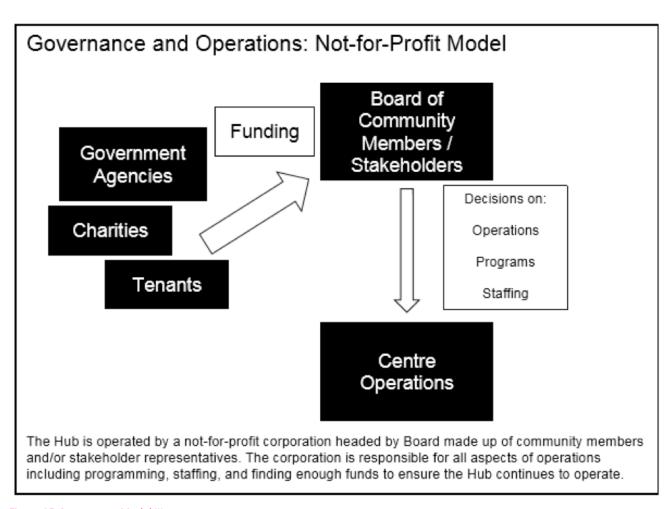
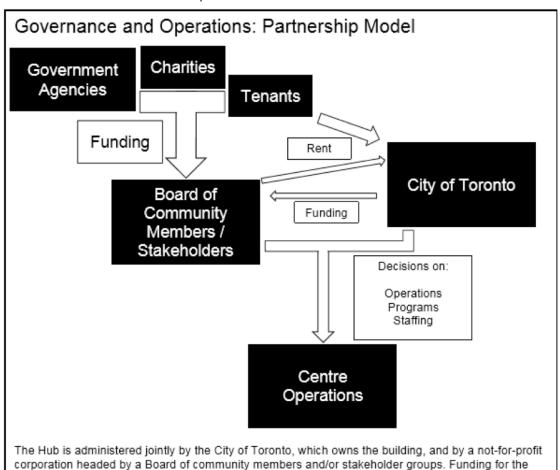


Figure 25 Governance Model III

The final model explored is the City/Community Partnership model, whereby the City and a not-for-profit community group each take some responsibility for the centre's operation. This type of model mixes elements of the three previous models. The Rexdale Community Hub and Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre are examples of this type of model. At both hubs, the buildings are owned by the City. In some cases, where the City partners with community organizations, the City acts as a landlord, leasing space in the building to external service organizations and providing maintenance services for the building. At Rexdale Community Hub, most operational decisions are the responsibility of a not-for-profit corporation with a board comprised of community members and representatives from the organizations who rent space in the facility. However, City staff are members of the board's subcommittee on finance and operations. At Birchmount Bluffs, some operational decisions are the responsibility of the board which is comprised of community members, and some operational decisions are made by the Parks, Forestry & Recreation division. With this model, typically compromise is needed over operational decisions like hours of operations.



Hub comes from a variety of sources and varies from Hub to Hub. Some decisions about the Hub's operations are made by the City and some decisions are made by the Board. The way that decisions

Figure 26 Governance Model IV

are made varies from Hub to Hub.

From the research in this study, the governance model that residents from Central Etobicoke found most suitable is the City/Community Partnership model. Residents emphasized that for this model to be successful there needs to be equitable representation of residents on the governance board. A constant theme that came up during the research was the need for a City/community balance. Residents indicated that they wanted the City of Toronto, or other nonprofit organizations, to have some responsibility in the community hub.

Youth leader Errol Oduro explained:

"I would say a model where at least half and half (residents/City staff). As a community you want your voice to be heard, but you need guidance. Not everyone is an expert in running a community hub. You have to go with people who have experience. You make sure that community voices are heard and incorporated but also have these City of Toronto divisions who are able to pull strings and make things happen. So I see it as a collective."

Participants emphasized the need for residents on the board. For example, TDSB Trustee Chris Glover described the governance structure as a model where community members are on the board because they know the needs of the community, and City of Toronto divisions collaborate because they know what can be done on the side of municipal government. There was an acknowledgement that the weight and responsibility of operating a hub should not be put on community residents alone, and would need City of Toronto staff and divisions to provide some input and help build residents' capacity.

## 9. LOCATIONS

Through the data analysis, several potential locations for the community hub were identified. These spaces included both existing physical spaces and geographic areas where residents felt the hub should be located. Some areas were identified based on geographic accessibility and community need. The following locations were identified:

•	Martin Grove Road and The Westway	•	The West Mall and Burnhamthorpe Road	•	Land behind Kipling Collegiate
•	Martin Grove Road and Eglinton Ave. West	•	The East Mall and Burnhamthorpe Road	•	Islington Avenue and Dundas Street West
•	Kipling Avenue and Eglinton Ave. West	•	Bloor Avenue and The West Mall	•	Islington Avenue and Eglinton Avenue West
•	Eglinton Ave. West and Wincott Drive	•	The West Mall and Wellesworth Drive	•	Eglinton Ave. West and Renforth Drive
•	Eglinton Ave. West and Royal York Road	•	Rathburn Road and The West Mall	•	Dundas Street West and Kipling Avenue
•	Kipling Avenue and The Westway	•	Rathburn Road and The East Mall	•	Rathburn Drive and Renforth Drive
•	Land behind Richview Library	•	Field in front of 25 Mabelle (owned by TDSB)		
•	Renforth Drive and Burnhamthorpe Road	•	Dixon Road and Kipling Avenue		

In addition, participants identified existing spaces that would be accessible, near areas of need, and make good hub locations. The following sites were identified: These locations will need to be

Etobicoke Civic Centre	Old George Hull location
West Grove Park	Burnhamthorpe Colligate Institute
West Deane Park	Kipling Collegiate Institute
Neilson Creative Centre	Islington School
Silver Creek Park	Central Etobicoke High School
65 Hartsdale Drive	Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial
	Academy
Bloordale United Church	

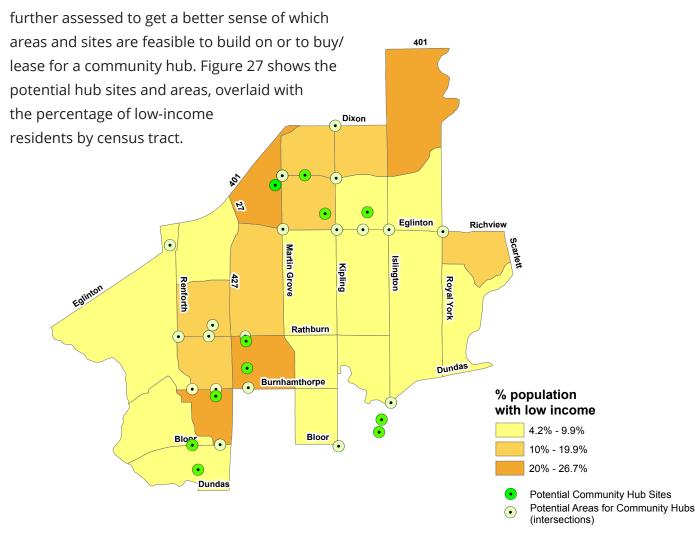


Figure 27 Potential Community Hub Sites and Areas and Population of Low Income in Central Etobicoke Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census; Central Etobicoke Community Hub Feasibility Study

#### 10. CONCLUSION

The data presented in this report reveals characteristics of Central Etobicoke that have historically been overlooked. The community, though typically seen as well-off, has multiple concentrated pockets of poverty, where poverty levels reach up to 26.7% for the population and 39.5% for children. In addition, Central Etobicoke is home to a large population of seniors which make up 20.1% of the overall population; youth, aged 15-24 comprising 12.3% of the population, as well as a new population of Syrian government-assisted refugees who have settled in the area.

Demographic shifts in the area underscore the urgent need for renewed investment in community resources and infrastructure to support residents in this evolving community. However, Wards 3 and 4 combined only have three public libraries, one indoor pool, one recreational facility, and no City-run employment centres. *The Recreation Gap* report concluded that the community has inequitable access to recreational programs, few publicly owned spaces, and a lack of access to community spaces for meeting.<sup>51</sup>

The Central Etobicoke Community Hub
Feasibility Study was developed to better
understand the community service and
space needs of residents and stakeholders
in Central Etobicoke and to assess the
51 Bahen, Austini, Hummel, Alagarajah & Kakamousias, 2016

feasibility of a community hub, as one important means to address community space and service deficits in the area. This research engaged a broad range of stakeholders, including residents, service providers, community leaders, community workers, elected officials and their staff. The research team used multiple forms of primary research, including a SWOT analysis, focus groups with diverse populations, community-wide surveys, keyinformant interviews, and a partnership survey. The study also drew on a variety of statistical data sources including the 2016 Census.

Through the research, participants identified the following direct service needs:

- Increased recreational services for seniors, especially considering the large seniors population in Central Etobicoke
- Community-based health care services for seniors and other marginalized populations
- More youth programming, specifically greater access to open drop-in youth spaces
- Services which centralize community information, such as wraparound referrals

A lack of community space is also central to the challenges that the community faces in accessing these and other vital services. These concerns were echoed by study participants in all aspects of the research process. Due to a lack of community centres in Central Etobicoke, Parks, Forestry & Recreation provides recreational programs in local community schools. Through the research, participants emphasized the serious limitations to the community schools model, including limited hours of operation, no drop-in or community meeting spaces, and restricted access to programs for registered participants only. Community schools simply do not take the place of a dedicated community centre. In the absence of appropriate community infrastructure, seniors and youth are turning to retail spaces, including coffee shops, to act as de facto community meeting spaces. The research also documents multiple problems with these arrangements.

In response to the severe shortage of community space in Central Etobicoke, residents and other stakeholders envision a community hub that would act as the first step in beginning to address this deficit in the area. Study participants identified key elements of the hub including:

- Space to provide a range of programs and services
- Common space for residents to meet, socialize and connect
- A community health centre
- A youth lounge to provide a safe, accessible space for young people
- A track and gymnasium facility

Surrounding green space for community gardening and active recreation

Participants were clear that the community hub needs to have a variety of spaces to support a range of activities for diverse groups. Accessible hours, including availability during the day, evening and weekends, is essential to the success of the hub.

Participants identified various potential locations for a community hub, including both existing physical space and geographic areas, which would have the most community impact. The locations are clustered around the intersections of Dixon Road and Kipling Avenue, Dixon Road and Martin Grove Road, Eglinton Avenue and Islington Avenue to Eglinton Avenue and Martin Grove Road, Rathburn Road and Highway 427 to Rathburn Road and Renforth Road, and finally, from Burnhamthorpe Road and Renforth Road.

To best meet the needs of the local community, residents and other stakeholders favour a City/Community Partnership model of governance to operate the hub. Under this model, the hub would be administered jointly by the City of Toronto and a not-for-profit partner headed by a board of community members and/or stakeholder groups. This model of shared decision-making and responsibility would ensure the long-term stability of

the hub and meet the diverse needs of the community.

This feasibility study has centred the perspectives of local residents and stakeholders in exploring community space and service needs and creating a vision for a community hub in Central Etobicoke. Residents recognize the potential of a community hub to provide a place for community members that facilitates community engagement, supports social cohesion, and builds connections between residents across diverse backgrounds and experience. This essential access point will support youth, seniors, newcomers,

individuals living alone, and families, enabling them to interact and become fully engaged, healthy, socially included, and active residents. A community hub would support collaboration, provide opportunities for referral and coordination, and work to improve collective impact by breaking down service silos and creating integrated supports to address the needs of the community. This type of multifunctional space is critically needed in Central Etobicoke. The time is long overdue to move forward to respond to this long-standing deficit to realize the community's vision for a Central Etobicoke hub.

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