



# NORTH ETOBICOKE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN 2003

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Human Resources  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Many individuals and groups contributed to the preparation of the Community Revitalization Plan, in particular, the more than 50 members of the Reference Group (RG) and working groups (listed on pages 5 and 6). Consultants, Informa Market Research and Webb & Associates conducted the research, organized the public consultation and wrote the report. The students of North Albion Collegiate Institute (NACI) provided hundreds of hours of volunteer time, working alongside the members of RG, working groups and city staff during the public consultation. The management of the RioCan Albion Centre provided space, staff, publicity and signage for the public consultation. The merchants of the RioCan Albion Centre provided more than one hundred incentive prizes. The City of Toronto and Human Resources Development Canada provided financial support for the overall project.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Etobicoke is located in the far north-west quadrant of the City of Toronto. Its attributes include a large immigrant population, most of whom are recent arrivals, and who contribute a diversity of languages, cultures and skill sets to the area. Most importantly, youth form 30% to 40% of the total population. The quality of life has been undermined as a result of the uneven distribution of settlement services, barriers to employment of foreign trained professionals and the gap between a strong, if unorganized business sector and a community that itself lacks cohesiveness. There is a high number of low income families in the area. Many of these families consist of single parent with more than one child. North Etobicoke has a reputation as being unsafe and receives considerable media attention for violent crimes that are committed in the community.

The North Etobicoke Revitalization Project (NERP) has worked over the past three years, led by a Reference Group (RG) made up of community agencies, business representatives and citizens, to develop a Community Revitalization Plan (CRP). Studies completed for this report surveyed more than 120 businesses in the retail, commercial and industrial sectors. An eight-day public consultation was held in the RioCan Albion Centre where more

than 1000 residents recorded their views on the goals of the CRP. The conclusions from these surveys point to a strong consensus among the population and businesses about what should be done to improve North Etobicoke. However, it is equally apparent that the community as a collective is unaware of this consensus. In the absence of effective grassroots community organization, business organization and capacity on the part of social service organizations (with a few notable exceptions), a large effort is required to improve the situation by providing services that are required by youth, parents and seniors and to build more social capital. Through the NERP process, and the CRP, groups of citizens, business leaders and agencies have been working to address the issues that affect the community and have started a number of pilot projects.

This document contains a Community Revitalization Plan to guide the community, including citizens, business and agency leaders, to build on the strengths of North Etobicoke and to address its challenges. The Plan is based on eight themes of: Community Engagement and Empowerment; Economic Development and Employment; Youth; Arts, Culture & Recreation; Environment; Community Well-Being; Safety; and Marketing and Identity. It provides goals, objectives and more than 80 short-term actions.

## NERP COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY CONTACTS

- Mary Abballe, Toronto Dominion - Canada Trust
- Regina Ansah, Pan African Canadian
- Dada Amos, Christ Apostolic Church (Bethel) Toronto
- Thelma Amos, City of Toronto, Culture Division
- Yamo Apea, City of Toronto, Chief Administrator's Office
- John Bagnall, Housing Help Centre, Albion Neighbourhood Services
- Italica Battiston, Rexdale Community Legal Clinic
- Rosemary Bell, City of Toronto, Community Resources Unit
- Ekua Asabea Blair, Rexdale Community Health Centre
- Donata Calitri-Bellus, Community Police Liaison Committee, 23 Division
- Frank Camarda, Human Resources Development Canada
- Daniel Camellato, MP Etobicoke North, Roy Cullen's Office
- David Cavaco, Ward 1, Councillor Suzan Hall's Office
- Kanu Chopra, Central & Northern Etobicoke Home Support Services, Resident
- P.C. Barry Clarke, 23 Division Toronto Police
- Peter Code, City of Toronto, Culture Division
- David Coffin-Beach, TorPharm
- Priscilla Cranley, City of Toronto, Chief Administrator's Office
- David Cuddemi, MP Etobicoke North, Roy Cullen's Office
- Roy Cullen, MP Etobicoke North
- Teresa Damaso, Human Resources Development Canada
- Vince D'Elia, Toronto Regional Conservation Authority
- Dominic DiMambro, YMCA Employment and Community Services
- Mary-Eileen Donovan, Toronto Catholic District School Board, West District
- O'Neil Edwards, Consultant
- Barbara Finlay, City of Toronto, Chief Administrator's Office
- David Firang, City of Toronto, Chief Administrator's Office
- Bill Gourski, former Executive Director of Etobicoke Social Planning Council
- Hans Gupta, Resident
- Suzan Hall, Councillor Ward 1
- John Hastings, MPP Etobicoke Rexdale
- David Hessels, City of Toronto, Economic Development
- Doug Hum, Children's Aid Society
- Karen Keskull, City of Toronto, Economic Development
- Larry King, City of Toronto, Community Planning
- John Kiru, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas
- Robert Koil, Sri Lanken Tamil Association
- Mae Lee, City of Toronto, Works & Emergency Services
- Mike Lipowski, Montgomery's Inn
- Tammy MacKinnon, Toronto Public Health
- Luciano Martin, Action to Restore a Clean Humber (ARCH)
- Augusto Mathias, City of Toronto, Chief Administrator's Office

## NERP COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY CONTACTS (CONTINUED)

- Angela McCormack, City of Toronto, Parks & Recreation
- Marlene McKintosh, Microskills
- Dr. John McIlraith, Franklin Carmichael Art Group
- Erica Mercer, City of Toronto, Public Health
- Carole Milroy, Resident
- Miriam Mittermaier, Resident
- Marvin Morgan, The Albion Centre
- Doreen Morrison, Resident
- Michelle Munroe, Resident
- Stan Nemiroff, Toronto District School Board Trustee
- Barry Nicholas, BASF Canada
- Terri Noseworthy, Albion Neighbourhood Services
- David Oikawa, City of Toronto, Planning West District
- Priti Patel, William Osler Health Centre
- Ugo Piscitelli, Fraser College (Islington)
- Mustapha Raji, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
- Clare Ramalho, Resident
- Carol Ray, Humber Arboretum
- Curtis Sealock, City of Toronto, Municipal Licensing Services
- Christine Sevigny, Albion Neighbourhood Services
- John Silcock, City of Toronto, Parks & Recreation
- Richard Sims, MPP Etobicoke Rexdale, John Hastings' Office
- Karl Sprogis, North Albion Collegiate Institute
- Mark Stefanini, Toronto Catholic School Board Trustee
- Bill Steiss, City of Toronto, Economic Development
- Cheryl Skovronek, Toronto Public Library
- Sheila Tait, Toronto District School Board
- Superintendent Ron Taverner, 23 Division Toronto Police
- Joanna Twitchin, Thistletown Ratepayers Association
- Perry Voulgaris, Arts Etobicoke
- Carol Williams, City of Toronto, Social Services
- Ian Wilson, City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services
- Lois Wilson, Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Dan Yashinsky, Toronto Arts Council

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

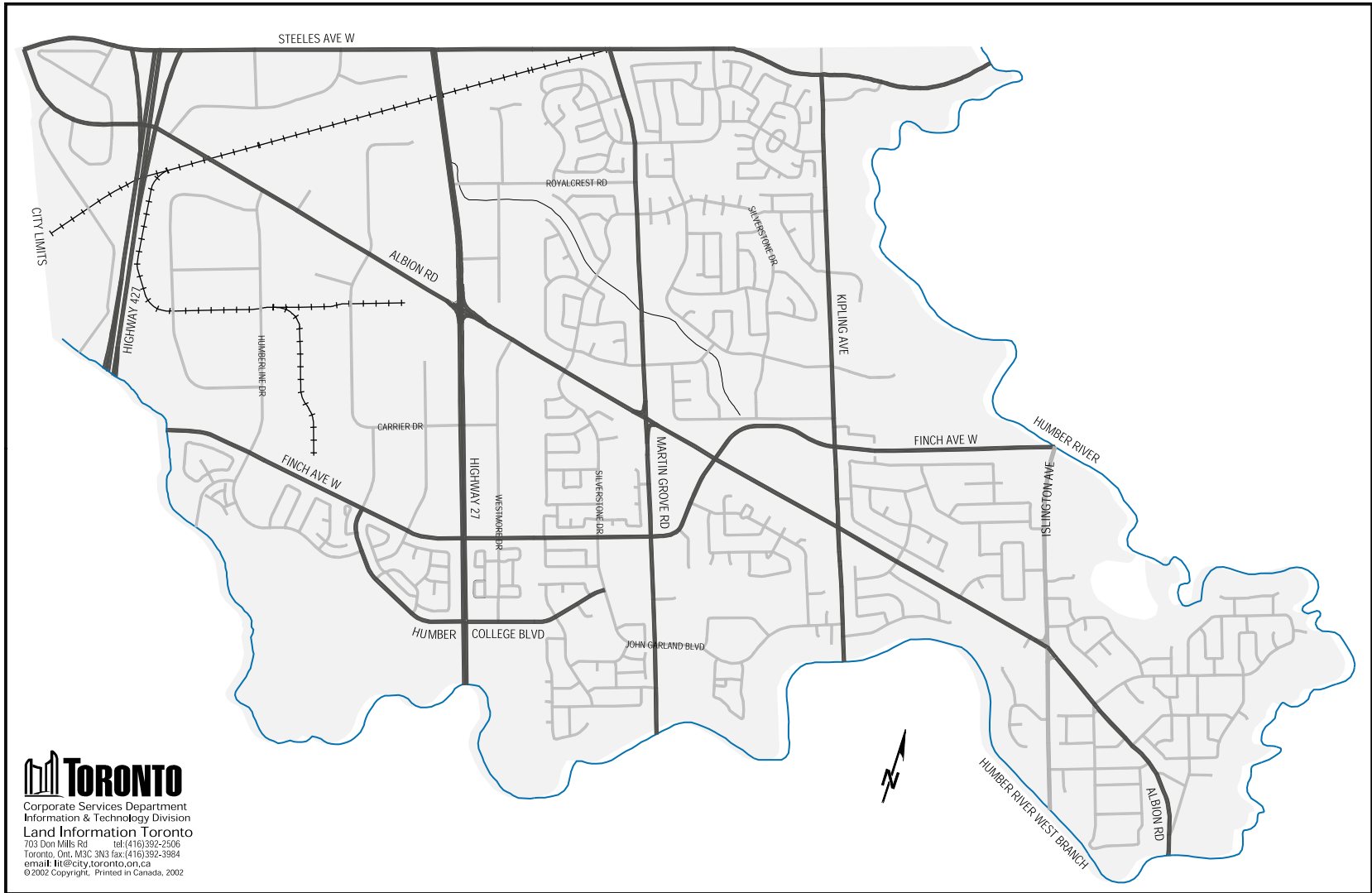
In 2001, stakeholders met for the first time to form a revitalization committee for Ward 1, North Etobicoke. Formerly Rexdale, this Ward is an inner suburb\* of the amalgamated City of Toronto. The North Etobicoke Revitalization Project (NERP) consists of a Reference Group (RG) made up of a diverse group of partners that includes a number of City and Federal departments, community agencies, Humber College, Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Police Service, business leaders, health sector representatives and community groups. The RG acts as a steering committee with working groups to focus on four issues: Employment and Economic Development; Environment; Arts, Culture & Recreation, and; Housing. Each working group began by selecting a set of key actions that could be accomplished quickly and that would motivate ongoing community involvement.

In the summer of 2002, NERP embarked on a Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) with the support of the City of Toronto's Economic Revitalization program with assistance from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Surveys were conducted in the winter of 2003 to gain a better understanding of the interests of stakeholders, including businesses and citizens, with the "intent...to initiate a process that will generate an economic strategy to lead to the revitalization of the North Etobicoke (Ward 1) community".

This report sets out the CRP developed over the past three years. It includes conclusions and recommendations based on both primary and secondary data gathered from studies commissioned by the RG, focus groups conducted with members of the working groups of NERP, from an eight-day public consultation and from a review of a large number of reports including agency reviews specific to Ward 1, and more general material published by the City of Toronto and the United Way.

\* inner suburb - the former suburbs of the pre-amalgamated City of Toronto have become the inner suburbs now that the boundary of the City extends to Steeles Avenue.

# North Etobicoke Revitalization Project Area





## MAJOR FINDINGS FOR NORTH ETOBICOKE

Based on the work of NERP and the surveys conducted among businesses and residents, there were five major findings that formed the basis for the Community Revitalization Plan.

■ **1.** There is a healthy consensus among all sectors of the community as to what should be done in North Etobicoke to make it a better place to live and work.

Surveys of the three main business sectors - industry, commercial and retail- and citizens of all ages and ethno-cultural backgrounds - confirmed that there is agreement on the community's needs. Safety, litter free streets, employment for all, proper housing and an enhanced natural environment all figured as important.

Both residents and businesses showed an unexpected strong commitment to the area in terms of investment and/or intention to remain in the area for the next 5 years.

### COMMENT:

The people of North Etobicoke share a strong consensus and common ground in spite of social, economic or ethno-cultural diversity; however, the population is unaware that such a consensus exists.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The residents and businesses of the area need opportunities to express this vision and plan measures that would improve their community.

■ **2.** There is the potential for creating business organizations and enhancing business involvement in the community.

Despite the apparent lack of organization among business in the form of BAs (Business Associations) or BIAs (Business Improvement Areas), there are a critical number of business leaders who have indicated willingness to participate to form such groups.

### COMMENT:

There are pockets of leadership among industry CEOs, managers of larger enterprises and influential entrepreneurs in the community. The industrial sector that is the least involved with the community is also most likely to be heavily invested in and committed to staying in the area. Greater participation and knowledge of the community exists among the commercial and retail sectors.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Encourage the development of BAs and BIAs. To anchor them in the community, encourage businesses to become involved in mentoring programs and to provide internships for local residents, including youth, and foreign trained professionals. Opportunities should be explored to create stronger partnerships between businesses and local social service agencies and schools. Encourage more business leaders to become involved in NERP committees. Identify business-community connections that could be promoted through a local heroes program.

■ **3.** Quality of life and recreational amenities are abundant and their potential is about to be developed according to the new Parks Plan recently adopted by the City.

**COMMENT:**

The new Parks Plan provides an opportunity to build pride and ownership in the area as well as creating additional amenities that are tourism related e.g. interpretive walks, environmental education and nutritional options e.g. community gardens.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Encourage local residents and outside groups already working in North Etobicoke to build on current initiatives and introduce projects consistent with the expressed needs of the community.

■ **4.** Developing youth potential is a key success factor. With the large youth population both the need and the potential to build community cohesiveness is enhanced.

**COMMENT:**

The urgent case for enhanced youth services has been made by the United Way and others and North Etobicoke is a priority area for implementation of these recommendations. In addition, youth volunteer potential must be tapped through providing opportunities and training in order to build community commitment, belonging and pride, increase the confidence and extend the networks of youth.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Youth programming should be enhanced, including more opportunities for youth to volunteer in the community. Youth should be encouraged and empowered to continue to make their own case for issues in the community (as they did concerning the zero tolerance policy in schools).

■ **5.** The potential for new partnerships is high provided that NERP reaches out to position and market the area as a microcosm of the New Toronto that needs to be supported with innovative and appropriate projects.

**COMMENT:**

Recent articles and action by the Toronto City Summit Alliance point to a recognition that the problems that exist in North Etobicoke must be recognized as matters for the whole community and for all levels of government if they are to be adequately addressed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Hold a familiarization/networking workshop or ‘Open House’ to introduce groups to one another within the community and invite outside groups whose projects are congruent with the goals of NERP and the Community Revitalization Plan (CRP).

## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The North Etobicoke Revitalization Project (NERP) is a community driven social and economic renewal process that takes an holistic approach to strengthening and enhancing the area bounded by Steeles Avenue in the North, Highway 427 to the West, the Main Humber River to the East and the West Humber River to the South. It takes into account economic, social, community, public, private and voluntary sectors in its effort to implement sustainable improvements. NERP's vision includes the creation of a healthy, inclusive, safe and vibrant community.

The driving force is the NERP Reference Group (RG) originated in 2001 from the combined efforts of Rexdale Partners, an association of social service agencies, and the local city councillor's office. It includes more than 50 stakeholders. Its original aim was to develop short-term actions and pilot projects that would illustrate that the community could take steps on its own to begin a turnaround process.

For North Etobicoke to prosper, the community must begin to increase its social and economic development capacity. NERP has begun this process. Ongoing outreach and communication, along with the pilot projects that are underway, will set the stage for further improvements.

### NERP ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Brought together stakeholders from all sectors of the community. Put in place a formal structure to revitalize Ward 1.
2. Articulated principles, aims.
3. Created an inventory of community resources, successes and achievements to date.
4. Consulted the broad, multicultural population with an extended public consultation held in an accessible location.
5. Surveyed the business community including retail, commercial and industrial sectors.
6. Created the Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) by mining information from those who live, work and have an interest in the area.
7. Developed operational plans, based on the CRP for each of five working groups. (Note the RG has become a Steering Committee for the CRP)

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES, SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS...

### ■ *IN ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION*

- Albion Public Library has established a Teen Zone, a Youth Advisory Group (YAG), and offers Children's cultural and recreational programming, Adult/Seniors computer literacy programming
- Community Enrichment Project at Highfield Public School - with funding from three provincial Ministries, involves a research project to improve the lives of low income children
- Food Policy Group of the City of Toronto - North Etobicoke is a target for community gardens
- North Etobicoke Youth Theatre Project - has recently received Trillium funding
- City of Toronto provided a sound system to upgrade the Thistletown Multi-Service Centre stage

### ■ *IN EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

- Key employers are involved in NERP
- Employers are being educated about the available services
- Advocated for entrepreneurship program to be set up and run at Smithfield, NACI (North Albion Collegiate Institute) and TCI (Thistletown Collegiate Institute)
- Self-employment discovery workshops with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
- NERP's outreach is leading to jobs
- Created self-employment workshops for youth including mentorship component
- Entrepreneurship Day is planned

### ■ *IN HOUSING*

- Profiled North Etobicoke's needs for safe and affordable housing
- Pulled together individuals/groups interested in improving housing conditions
- Profiled needs for safe affordable housing in North Etobicoke
- Identified high rise buildings in poor condition
- Developed a partnership to promote safe second-suite housing in the community
- Actively supported an affordable housing project for Bergamot Avenue
- Sponsored a workshop presenting affordable housing funding opportunities
- Supporting the development of a youth transitional housing project
- Recruited a university placement student to carry out research on Kipling Avenue high-rise living conditions
- Prepared and submitted a Heritage Canada proposal to support a housing research project

### ■ *IN ENVIRONMENT*

- Mobilized volunteers, including youth and schools
- Shared expertise with groups across the GTA
- Provided leadership in watershed management
- Nurtured partnerships with institutions and grass roots organizations
- Held cleanups twice each year
- Participated in spring and fall tree plantings

## NERP PRINCIPLES

1. **C**ommunity revitalization requires the participation and involvement of all stakeholders and partnership with all levels of government and the business sector;
2. Social and economic challenges must be addressed collectively; and
3. The community has the capacity, assets and skills to improve its situation once the appropriate consultation, resources and supports are provided.

## NERP AIMS

1. **T**o create a future of growth for all who live and work in the area.
2. To increase the chances of local employment opportunities for local residents.
3. To improve housing, education, training, transportation and safety.
4. To improve the environment and the cultural landscape of the area.
5. To encourage enhanced participation of the private sector in community initiatives.

## **NORTH ETOBICOKE: AN 'INNER SUBURB' IN NEED OF URBANIZATION**

Following amalgamation with the City of Toronto, North Etobicoke's economic positioning has been fundamentally changed. No longer is the low-cost, sprawl model of development applicable. Costs are much lower in the outer suburbs. Just across Steeles Avenue is the City of Vaughan in York Region and across Highway 427 is the City of Brampton in Peel Region. These regions are where commercial and residential development is exploding. The inner suburbs, including North Etobicoke, will need to stake their future on urbanizing in the sense of creating a positive atmosphere for business, urban amenities and providing a high quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

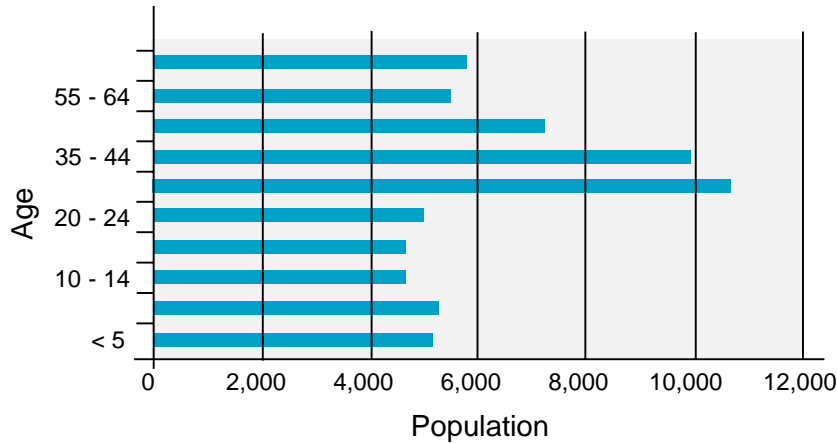
## **NORTH ETOBICOKE: A PLACE OF CONTRASTS**

- High unemployment in the midst of a large and healthy industrial sector.
- High needs in terms of family and youth support yet there is insufficient infrastructure to deliver needed programs.
- The children of immigrants are viewed as the future of Toronto economy (Globe and Mail, June 7, 2003); however, North Etobicoke's youth, some 20,000 individuals under the age of 20, lack recreational facilities and mentorship programs. Youth unemployment is high and high school drop-out rates are above average.
- Undeveloped natural features including parks and green areas, yet the quality of life is the attractor for businesses, and importantly, their highly trained employees who may locate anywhere.
- Perception that low income families are transient while the reality is that three quarters of residents surveyed indicated their desire to stay in the area.
- Local employment seen as below optimal, however, more than half of those surveyed, in particular, youth, work in the area.
- Despite the diversity of language and culture there is a strong convergence of opinion on what should be done to improve the community.

# A PROFILE OF NORTH ETOBICOKE

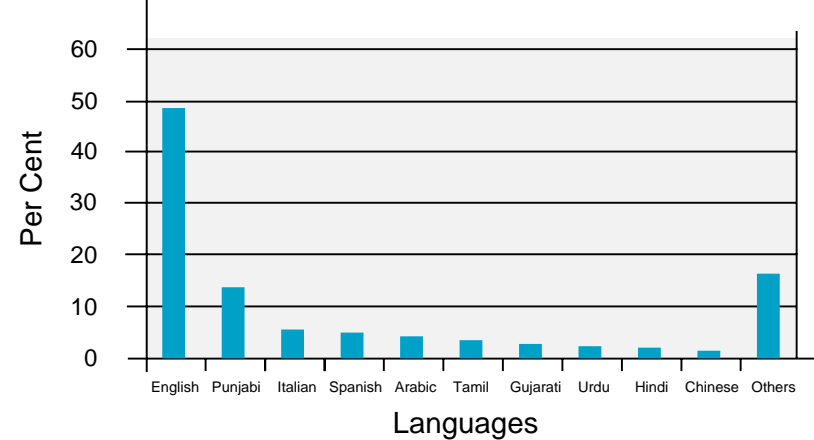
## POPULATION

POPULATION BY AGE (2001)



- According to the 2001 census, the population of Ward 1 is about 63,300, an increase of 2.5% since 1996.
- The population is quite young compared with the rest of Toronto with almost one-third under the age of 20 and almost 40% under the age of 25.
- A review of the 2001 census shows that of the population of 63,000, a total of 37,845 have arrived since 1961 with more than half of those having arrived since 1991. The nineties coincided with a recession followed by government cutbacks to social services, including severe cutbacks after 1995. The fallout for the community has been fewer supports to newcomers and families. In terms of family structure, more than one-quarter of all couples in the Ward

NORTH ETOBICOKE - MOTHER TONGUE



have more than three children, while about 40% have two children and the remaining 35% have one child.

- Lone parent families make up about one quarter of all families with around 50% having one child, 27% having two children and 23% having more than three children.

## ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

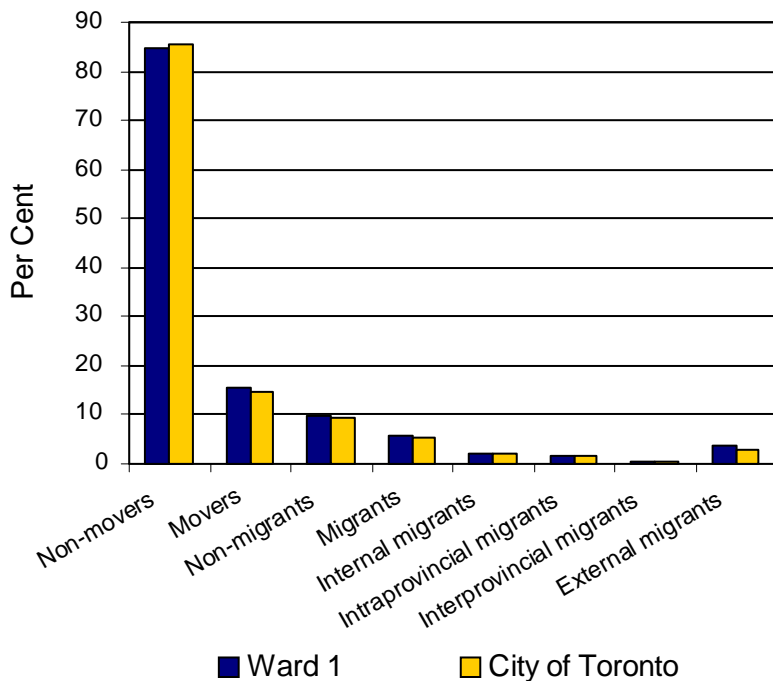
The area is ethnoculturally diverse, with English as the mother tongue for only 49% of the population, followed predominately by Punjabi (13.5%), Italian, Spanish, Arabic and Tamil.

## HOUSING MIX

- Of the total of 18,045 dwellings, about 40% are single detached houses and about the same percentage consist of apartment buildings with 5 or more storeys.

## MOBILITY

PER CENT OVER 1 YEAR

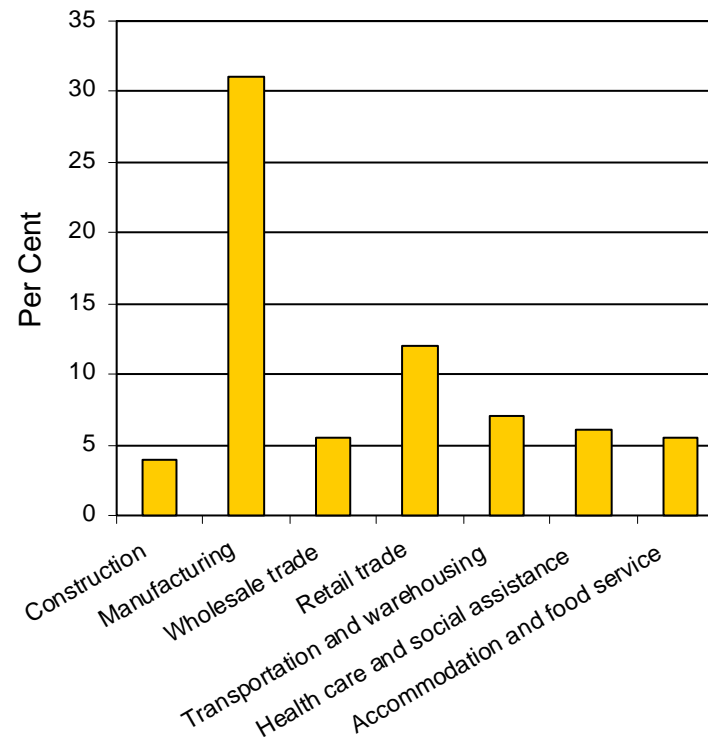


Over the past 5 years, the reduction in the number of movers, in general, and among migrants, shows an increasing stability of the population in North Etobicoke and parallels a similar change throughout the City of Toronto. (See City of Toronto website, profile of Ward 1, for additional details.)

## EMPLOYMENT COMPOSITION

- Of the 48,000 residents aged 15 and over, about 31,000 are in the labour force with 28.5 thousand employed and 2.4 thousand unemployed.
- A much larger per cent of people in North Etobicoke (Ward 1) work in processing, manufacturing and utilities compared with the City of Toronto (21.9% vs 8.3%). Fewer, however, are employed in the social science, education and government category and very few in the arts, culture, recreation and sport.

LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY





· Just over 30% of the labour force is employed in manufacturing, whereas, the second highest employer is the retail trade followed by transportation and warehousing, and the wholesale trade.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

### TOTAL POPULATION 15 TO 24 YEARS BY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Ward 1	No.	%
Not attending school	3,325	35.3
Attending School full time	5,420	57.5
Attending School part time	675	7.2
TOTAL	9,420	100

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada

Prepared by City of Toronto, Urban Development Services,  
Policy and Research, April 2003.

## EDUCATION LEVELS

### TOTAL POPULATION 20 YEARS AND OVER BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOLING

Ward 1	%
Less than grade 9	14.7
Grades 9 to 13	36.3
Without high school graduation certificate	20.4
With high school graduation certificate	15.9
Trades certificate or diploma	8.9
College	20.1
Without certificate or diploma	7.4
With certificate or diploma	12.7
University	20.0
Without degree	7.2
Without certificate or diploma	4.8
With certificate or diploma	2.4
With bachelor's degree or higher	12.7
Total	100

## THE BUSINESS SECTOR

### *INTRODUCTION*

The following is based on 120 structured interviews conducted, in the first quarter of 2003, among business owners or senior management representing three sectors equally: retail, commercial and industrial.

### *PROFILE OF AREA BUSINESSES*

The four leading types of retail are: fashion/clothing, food/groceries, restaurant/café and variety/convenience. The commercial sector has three major sectors: business/professional services, personal grooming services, and tourism/entertainment. This pattern was evident also for the industrial sector – furniture and fixtures, electrical and electronic products, and chemical products, represented almost 60% of the total.

On average, businesses have been operating in the area for 8.5 years. Yet most owners/managers live elsewhere - only 35% of those who run businesses in the area live in North Etobicoke.

North Etobicoke's businesses currently employ on average 18.1 full time employees and 3.0 part time workers. Commercial and industrial sectors are the major employers, averaging 30.6 and 8.1 full time employees respectively, in contrast to 5.0 for retailers. While part time work serves the needs of some people, only 45% of local businesses are hiring non-full time employees. Retailers are most likely to hire part time (55% do) while industrial companies are least likely (30%). Employment numbers have edged up slightly over last year.

Sales expectations for the year are mixed, with 44% anticipating increases, 31% expecting no movement and 19% foreseeing a decline. However, the picture for next year's sales is less optimistic: only 31% predict growth, while 34% expect a decline.

See Appendix 1 for Key Conclusions and Recommendations. A copy of the full report on the Business Survey is available from the City of Toronto Economic Development Division.

## RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

### *THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY*

#### *INTRODUCTION*

A total of 1094 people completed the North Etobicoke Revitalization feedback form or questionnaire. Participants included representatives from all age and language groups. The consultation took the form of an eight-day event at the Albion Centre. Tables were set up and on each table was a detailed map of Ward 1 that was used as a reference in conversations with members of the public to locate specific areas of interest. Individuals were approached by volunteers and invited to complete a questionnaire. Additional motivation was provided through a draw for prizes donated by merchants from the Albion Centre and by local organizations. Each person completing a survey filled in a ballot for the draw. On the last day of the consultation, the Councillor drew around one-hundred names, each of whom was contacted to receive his or her prize. The volunteers from various NERP working groups were supplemented by a contingent of more than 25 students

from North Albion Collegiate Institute who had been recruited and trained before participating in the consultation. The main reason for involving the students was to expand the capability of the City to reach a large number of language groups. The incentive for the students was that their hours of volunteer work contributed to their forty hours requirement for High School graduation. Questionnaires were provided in six languages, however, this was augmented by the students' knowledge of 17 languages.

**RESPONSE TO NERP GOALS**

A list of ten goals was presented for evaluation. Participants were asked to indicate whether each one was Important or Not Important? At least three quarters of participants indicated that each of the goals was Important to them. The relevance of these goals is listed in order of priority.

Clean, litter-free streets, community safety and safe and affordable housing were important goals for at least 90% of participants.

Goals: Base: 1094	Important %
1. The streets and public areas are free of litter.	94
2. The community is safe for young and old alike.	94
3. Housing is safe and affordable.	90
4. Parks are welcoming spaces for families, youth and seniors. West Humber ravines and trails are accessible with clear signage.	86
5. Residents are aware of the wide range of services that are available.	86
6. The community takes ownership and pride in North Etobicoke.	85
7. Arts and culture are plentiful and reflect the cultural diversity of North Etobicoke. The local history is known and appreciated.	83
8. The community is cohesive, diversity is seen as a strength.	82
9. Leaders are drawn from all segments of North Etobicoke, including women and youth.	80
10. The skills and aptitudes of North Etobicoke residents are known and appreciated by employers. Local hiring by local businesses benefits both employers and employees.	75

### ***RANKING GOALS***

The task of selecting five out of the ten goals that were most important was not easy for many participants given the perceived relevance of the entire list. However, three goals emerged with at least half indicating that these were the most important goals / items that should be addressed:

- The community is safe for young and old alike.
- The streets and public areas are free of litter.
- Housing is safe and affordable.

While a wide range of different segments of the North Etobicoke population agreed on the problems that needed to be addressed, differences were noteworthy between age groups, household composition and length of time living in the community. For instance, youth and young adults were more focussed on elements such as arts and culture and community building while older people and long term residents were particularly concerned about the community's safety and appearance. (See Appendix 2) A copy of the full report on the community consultation is available from the Economic Development Division.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### CHALLENGES

#### 1. *NEGATIVE IMAGE ARISING FROM CRIME AND LOW INCOME.*

Businesses and citizens alike share the negative perceptions of a poorly maintained area with a high rate of crime and conclude that more policing and general cleanup are the solutions. The high proportion of low income households, large number of single parent families, high unemployment and high youth unemployment contribute to social ills.

#### 2. *LIMITED RECREATION AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND SHORTAGE OF SPACE FOR YOUTH AND SENIORS, IN PARTICULAR.*

As is generally the case in the City of Toronto, North Etobicoke has seen a trend towards higher costs and reduced community access to public buildings such as schools and city owned facilities for community based programs. This issue was the subject of a United Way Task Force (Opening the Doors, December 2002). The higher cost of space reduces access to programs for low-income families, including recreational programs, summer camps and after school homework clubs for children and youth. Finding alternative spaces such as retail/commercial locations have been only partially successful with landlords reluctant to rent to groups and agencies providing programs for youth.

#### 3. *WEAK LOCAL ORGANIZATION*

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the community is to increase its level of social and business organization.

At the neighbourhood level, there are few influential, cohesive residents' associations and no strong settlement facility to orient newcomers. There are a number of small social service agencies that cannot attract adequate funding to address the community's needs individually, and that need assistance with capacity building in order to begin to work together. The area is in a catch-22 in terms of social service/settlement improvements. There is insufficient capacity within existing organizations to be eligible for significant funding. Without additional funding, it is unlikely that the capacity of local organizations can be increased.

There are no Business Associations (BAs) or Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). Businesses have not come together formally to address their common needs and to network into the community or connect with larger professional associations or institutions to address labour market issues and municipal improvements such as public transportation.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### **1. GOOD POTENTIAL FOR MORE BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS**

Some progress is being made through discussions between the City of Toronto and members of the North India Market, a group of retailers at the intersection of Islington Avenue and Albion Road. There is sufficient interest to make a start at organizing in additional locations, based on the proportion of business owners who stated that they were interested in forming a BA or BIA.

### **2. STRONG INDUSTRIAL SECTOR; RETAIL SECTOR CONNECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY**

The area has a robust industrial sector with the industrial parks of Wards 1 and 2 together contributing a large proportion of Toronto's total GDP.

The businesses of Ward 1 are composed of three types: industrial/manufacturing, commercial and retail, with some overlap between retail and commercial. Our survey indicated that the retail and commercial businesses in the area have a better understanding of the community and their dependence on community members. This is reflected in their greater tendency to live in the area, hire locally and participate in community activities, most notably sponsoring soccer and other sports teams.

### **3. INDUSTRY-COMMUNITY INTERACTION NEEDS CULTIVATING**

Businesses in both Ward 1 and 2, located in the industrial parks, have minimal interaction with elected officials and are not organized for this purpose, although our survey indicated that some business leaders in the area are interested in changing the situation.

The Employment and Economic Development working group of NERP is working with the YMCA/HRDC Employment Resource Centre to connect businesses with local, qualified residents. Businesses surveyed showed that they were largely unaware of the incentives available for hiring either adults or youth, nor were they aware of the pool of foreign trained professionals available for hire. Although most businesses were seeking the same skill sets in their hiring, they were about evenly split in saying that these skill sets were readily available or could not be found.

The industrial sector needs to strengthen local linkages to meet its needs in a competitive marketplace, for example, attracting and integrating foreign trained professionals into the labour market.

### **4. SUPPORT FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION**

The recent Parks Plan is a good example of the City's leadership in the area. Four new parks are being planned as priorities. Additional recreational facilities have been installed. The Albion Public Library is an oasis for youth and is promoting consideration of a theatre to coincide with the extensive renovation planned for the library. The ability of Franklin Carmichael Art Centre to fund raise for its future attests to the strength and potential of the arts community in North Etobicoke.

### **5. STRONG COMMUNITY CONSENSUS**

One of the most positive elements identified by the surveys and the public consultation is the strength of the consensus that exists about what should be done in North Etobicoke to improve the situation. This is reflected by the top three NERP goals having a very high level of concurrence. More than 90% of respondents

stated that in their vision for the future of the area, they would like to see:

1. The streets and public areas are free of litter - 94%
2. The community is safe for young and old alike - 94%
3. Housing is safe and affordable - 90%

Another seven goals were agreed to be important by no less than 75% of those polled. (See Appendix 2)

### **6. BUILDING ON DIVERSITY AS A STRENGTH**

With such a high level of consensus, combined with the strong commitment to the community, the area is poised to develop through inter-cultural and inter-institutional interaction. However, there is no forum to communicate this positive news and few resources to implement such an agenda.

### **7. POCKETS OF LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCES**

Creativity in the area of community commitment and resources was discovered on the part of the corporate sector. The management of RioCan's Albion Centre provided generous in kind and cash support to the Public Consultation that took place over the week of May 3-10, 2003. The merchants of the Albion Centre provided incentive prizes that were awarded on the basis of a draw for anyone who completed the residents' survey. RioCan's mission includes community involvement and the ability of its management to implement this mandate has been ably demonstrated. TorPharm is another corporation whose leadership on the RG and the Employment and Economic Development working group shows commitment to the local area. A number of businesses were attracted to the networking breakfasts held by NERP to share

information about local resources and initiatives and to provide business input into the Plan.

## THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR NORTH ETOBICOKE

Based on the knowledge of the community’s residents, stakeholders and volunteers, along with new information gained through business surveys and the public consultation, NERP has developed a Community Revitalization Plan to assist the community of North Etobicoke to improve its social and economic opportunities.

### NERP HAS ADOPTED A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN WITH EIGHT THEMES.

1. Community Engagement and Empowerment
2. Economic Development and Employment
3. Youth
4. Arts, Culture and Recreation
5. Environment
6. Community Well-Being
7. Safety
8. Marketing and Identity

### 1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

#### GOALS:

- Create awareness of NERP and link it with the community

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Engage the community in dialogue about its future on an ongoing basis
- Actively engage employers within the broader community
- Encourage effective involvement and leadership of women and youth
- Engage and train additional volunteers for NERP

#### SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- Provide feedback ASAP on this project to the community
- Develop a communications strategy to reach target groups in North Etobicoke
- Link any and all initiatives coming from the community e.g. churches to NERP
- Encourage linkage to existing grassroots groups
- Institute capacity building among community group leaders
- Continue and strengthen relations with Albion Centre and Humber College
- Network with local businesses and United Way re: fundraising
- Encourage youth leaders to make the case for their communities in a variety of forums
- Link idea people from many backgrounds
- Become one of pilot projects under new United Way strategy



## ■ 2. EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOALS:

- Increase local hiring by local businesses to benefit both employers and employees
- Achieve higher youth employment (reduce 15% youth unemployment to 5-8%)
- Motivate businesses to work together for economic and community well-being
- Promote knowledge and appreciation of the skills and aptitudes of North Etobicoke residents on the part of employers

### OBJECTIVES:

- Promote the skilled local population to North Etobicoke business
- Conduct research to fill the gaps in knowledge with respect to the employment potential in sectors that have not been surveyed e.g. government, non-profit sector such as social and health services and education
- Facilitate the formation of BIA's and BA's to strengthen the businesses and the community

### SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- Identify gaps in support requirements for small, medium and large businesses
- Conduct surveys of: real estate needs of business; employment provided by non-profit and government sectors
- Deepen relationship with Albion Centre management e.g.

- by inviting AC manager to sit as the retail representative on the Employment and Economic Development working group
- Encourage the development of BA's/BIA's with retailers and commercial enterprise owners based on geography
- Strengthen relationships with selected trades
- Advocate for the training of candidates in skills employers want
- Create a data base on skills-employer needs, capacity and training
- Develop a website for employers ; feature employers on website
- Assist with networking motivated business managers with others within and outside the community
- Strengthen business linkages with one another through Roundtables and existing associations e.g. Chamber of Commerce; Human Resources Professional Association of Ontario (HRPAO)

### LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

- Link businesses to local organizations and schools e.g. mentoring opportunities for youth
- Encourage BIA development with industries in industrial parks
- Network Albion Centre management to similar retail situations in Toronto e.g. Dufferin Mall
- Develop fundraising/community involvement strategies with industries

### ■ 3. YOUTH

#### GOALS:

- Ensure that youth are well-served through arts and recreation; supported in entering the workforce and are connected to networks that will help them as they start their careers

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance youth programming
- Promote Library resources for youth : Youth/teen centre, Youth advisory group, Toastmasters, Children's culture and recreation programming

#### SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- City address need for space for youth programming e.g. work with TDSB
- Expand services preparing youth for the workforce
- Identify transferable elements of HCEP (Highfield Community Enrichment Program) to other schools
- City - access Ontario Works funds over next 2 years - '04-'05 for Youth at Risk

### ■ 4. ARTS, CULTURE & RECREATION

#### GOALS:

- Promote a cohesive community by bringing the community's diverse arts, recreation and cultural activities to the forefront

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Capture and make available the local history
- Expand arts, performing arts and cultural programs reflecting Ward 1's cultural diversity
- Investigate a building complex, including a theatre, for community use

#### SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- Investigate ideas for a Street Fair
- Hold a WinterFest
- Support the Franklin Carmichael Centre Capital Improvement Plan and its Youth Involvement Initiative
- Support the Arts Etobicoke Youth Theatre Production Initiative
- Provide art gallery space for the community (Franklin Carmichael)
- Advocate for a Multi-Cultural Centre for Toronto located in North Etobicoke
- Promote coordinated Arts Funding

#### LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

- Advocate for the expansion of the Albion Public Library with more space e.g. theatre, youth group, running programs

### ■ 5. ENVIRONMENT

#### GOALS:

- Promote a clean, green and accessible community.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Promote actions that will create parks that are welcoming spaces for families, youth and seniors
- Ensure that Humber ravines and trails are accessible with clear signage
- Increase outreach to community and youth on environment
- Support and involve local environment groups

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS**

- Support Councillor Clean up days
- Institute a Clean Street Award
- Promote "Adopt-A-Yard", Road etc programs
- Urban art (remove graffiti, anti-litter street performance)
- Public education campaign on what to do with garbage/anti-littering:
  - Involve schools
  - Work with business areas on waste issues
- Work with City Departments to:
  - Advocate enforcing new anti-littering by-laws
  - Install signage for ravine and trail access; signage for restoration and clean-up projects
  - Place garbage cans and benches along walking trails
  - Provide washroom facilities close to trails
  - Involve community in implementing priority parks
- Work with the City's Food Policy Group and other non profits to install community gardens
- Conduct organized hikes/bike tours in the ravines as part of local appreciation campaign
- Develop a self-guided Humber Walk for the area
- Establish a work group to develop a positive poster image of NE

**LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES**

- Plan and integrate facilities at Humber Arboretum to meet the needs of youth and engage the public in environmental stewardship.

**6. COMMUNITY WELL-BEING****GOALS:**

- Promote a safe and stable community where people take pride in the natural and built environment
- Develop a community that is cohesive, where diversity is seen as a strength
- Advocate for affordable housing in North Etobicoke

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Empower people to take ownership of their housing environment
- Identify and support private and public affordable building initiatives
- Encourage safe and affordable second-suite housing
- Connect people with services to eliminate moving/evictions that result in a transient population
- Advocate for positive legislative/policy changes
- Build on the affinity of various groups for the area
- Link NE with city-wide initiatives
- Link NE with solutions that have worked in similar communities

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS**

- Encourage diversity training for residents and businesses
- Educate landlords about tenant rights and landlord responsibilities
- Support changes to the municipal Shelter By-Law
- Support YWCA and Legion in initiatives for more affordable housing
- Support initiatives that lead to safe and healthy housing conditions
- Identify and work with government staff, police and residents to ensure that housing is safe
- Identify and gain potential space for community housing related services
- Identify gaps in services
- Make the case for core funding of social services
- Lobby the federal government to adequately support settlement services in areas of need
- Advocate federal government for urban infrastructure needs
- Encourage holding community courses on “How things work in Canada” for youth and newcomers of all ages to appreciate democratic institutions

**7. SAFETY****GOALS:**

- A safe community so that everyone can enjoy public and private spaces

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Ensure that residents feel safe in their homes, schools, in their parks and on the street

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS**

- Link with Jane-Finch and Parkdale solutions to achieving community safety
- Conduct safety audits checking lighting, abandoned areas; involve residents associations, city works, Councillor’s office in follow up
- Conduct ‘Community Walks’ to familiarize communities with area
- Invite agency or higher education institution to locate in one of the apartment buildings which is known for high crime
- Make the case for additional community policing
- Encourage police to reach out to youth through recreation/mentoring programs

**8. MARKETING & IDENTITY****GOALS:**

- Promote a positive image of life in North Etobicoke (Ward 1)
- Improve aesthetics - streets visually interesting; public art; urban art
- Develop NERP infrastructure with a secretariat/coordinator

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Commit to the process of ‘urbanizing’ the area thereby increasing its attractiveness and quality of life

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS**

- Promote the North India Market as a regional tourist destination

- Institute a local heroes program
- Promote the Albion Centre as a regional destination and 'Main Street' of NE
- Evaluate advertising signage impacts on the community
- Capture collective memory through exhibits, including oral history of the area
- City planners identify significant corners and what should be built as properties turn over (develop secondary plans)

### IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

A framework for strategy implementation demonstrates how the Steering Committee (replacing the original Reference Group) and the four working groups should proceed. Each working group has its own goals and objectives followed by actions under the headings of :

1. Marketing, promotion and building pride
2. Resource Identification and Development
3. Partnerships to be developed or enhanced
4. Research
5. Training and capacity building

Detailed operations plans are available in Appendix 3.

***Now this is not the end. It is not the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps, the end of the beginning.***

**- Sir Winston Churchill**

## APPENDIX 1- BUSINESS SURVEY

### - KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is based on 120 structured interviews conducted among business owners or senior management representing three sectors equally: retail, commercial and industrial.

#### ■ 1. DOING BUSINESS IN NORTH ETOBICOKE

North Etobicoke's businesses have mixed feelings about the area as a place to do business and its future prospects. The commercial sector, in particular is more positive about the area as a good place to do business because of the support service infrastructure. Also, those with larger workforces tend to be more positive. This may be due to their size, which attracts more potential service providers. However, the needs of smaller companies also have to be met better than currently.

*Further research should be conducted to determine support requirements for small, medium and large size businesses and then identify gaps. The question is: Are required support services available in North Etobicoke, since local companies aren't aware of these options? And, with these services in place, what new business opportunities would result? Also, more promotion of business support services could be required.*

*Focused initiatives are required to stimulate business growth where there is already considerable local vibrancy, i.e., the North India market at Albion and Islington, which appears to have considerable potential in attracting more visitors from across the*

*Greater Toronto Region and points in the northern United States.*

*Prospects for North Etobicoke's business community could probably be improved by providing a more supportive framework. Players in this would include new business associations, City of Toronto, HRDC.*

#### ■ 2. NORTH ETOBICOKE NEEDS...

North Etobicoke businesses, regardless of the sector they operate in, believe that the City should take a more pro-active stance in the area; they appear to be interested in establishing working links with the City of Toronto.

*The City of Toronto's Economic Development Division should consider additional programming for North Etobicoke to show their commitment to the area's economic prosperity. The City of Toronto's Economic Development Division has the expertise to assist budding business associations (retail and industrial) in establishing organizational frameworks and in planning initiatives. Activities should include engaging in dialogue with North Etobicoke businesses regarding business associations that may be created in the area. Outreach initiatives should include business development workshops, seminars and meet and greet events.*

#### ■ 3. EMPLOYEES

About two thirds of people employed by North Etobicoke businesses live outside of the community. Further, owners or

managers who reside locally tend to hire locally, but most aren't engaged in the community in any meaningful way.

*Links need to be developed between local employment offices and area businesses to promote the availability of North Etobicoke's resident labour pool. City of Toronto's outreach could also assist in this networking opportunity. Using the NERP website, the community should promote the benefits of locating employees in close proximity to their place of work.*

*In order to make headway on this issue, attention should be paid to learning more about the hiring practices of medium and larger size employers and to seek out opportunities within existing practices that can lead to hiring locally.*

#### ■ 4. PERCEPTION OF NORTH ETOBICOKE LABOUR POOL

Survey findings suggest that North Etobicoke's resident labour population can satisfy the varied skilled needs of local businesses, but perceptual barriers and sheer lack of awareness of local availabilities are getting in the way.

*As previously noted, local employment agencies and City of Toronto's Economic Development Division need to establish working relationships with local businesses and determine the most effective ways of communicating key messages and needed business support information. This might include translation of brochures into the languages spoken by Ward 1 residents.*

#### ■ 5. HIRING POLICY

Employee recruitment among larger companies is driven primarily by the need to fill the position, while smaller scale employers (retail) tend to turn to the local market first. It is noteworthy that those who do endorse hiring locally do so because they understand that there are benefits – punctuality, lower absenteeism and the retention of earnings in the local economy.

*Business cases need to be developed and communicated demonstrating the productivity and economic rewards of hiring locally. This initiative could also help bring local businesses together with employment agencies and the City of Toronto's Economic Development Division.*

#### ■ 6. AWARENESS OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Overall, about two thirds of North Etobicoke businesses are not aware of the youth and adult wage subsidy programs, the availability of free access to a job-ready pool of employees or foreign-trained professionals available to them.

*HRDC and City of Toronto's Economic Development Division are advised to reach out to North Etobicoke businesses and promote the service and wage subsidy options. New business associations and the Etobicoke Chamber of Commerce are ideal venues to promote these programs and services.*



## ■ 7. RATING NORTH ETOBICOKE'S AMENITIES

The North Etobicoke setting is good from some perspectives (mass transit, street appearance, customer parking, quality businesses) but has limiting aspects too (litter, lack of distinct identity, inferior landscaping).

*Revitalizing North Etobicoke's economy involves improving both appearances of public spaces and the creation of tangible elements that identify the community as a distinct place. The community would benefit from visible, distinctive signage, landscaping and softening features, and signals that people care about the community (litter-free roads and verges, well-positioned and maintained recycling and garbage bins, no litter signage/evidence of enforcing by-laws and street adoption clean-up programs). Partners in a "branding" program for North Etobicoke could include private and public sector players: Albion Centre (Rio Can), Albion Library, Franklin Carmichael, Humber Arboretum, lead industries, new business associations, etc.*

## ■ 8. RATING CITY SERVICES

Business owner opinions were mixed on the quality of City services.

*Results should be communicated to the particular City service departments including Works, Parks, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and Police. Specific concerns included state of repair of main roads, condition of parks, litter problems, public transit and safety. Problem areas need to be identified and solutions planned and*

*then communicated to affected businesses. New business associations could serve as contact points to reach and interact with North Etobicoke business owners.*

## ■ 9. PROPERTY AVAILABILITY

The availability of adequate commercial, industrial and retail space varies depending on the sector, with retail having the greatest need.

*A property survey needs to be taken to determine the current and future space requirements for the three sectors of businesses. Both public and private sector organizations could be effective in measuring and addressing business real estate needs. The relative stability and commitment to the area of North Etobicoke's business sector suggests that this exercise could have positive short and longer term impacts. It could also mean increasing retention of existing businesses that are in growth mode and attracting new enterprises.*

## ■ 10. A BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Business owners and managers are necessarily focused on their operations, not on the surrounding community. Yet, they aren't divorced from North Etobicoke, and feel that the area deserves and needs help – effective police, enforcement of litter by-laws, clean-up campaigns and supports from the City government. It is significant that there are "burning" issues that concern all sectors. And, a sizable minority of those surveyed was interested in forming



business-to-business associations to work on addressing these issues.

*Given the remarkable convergence of opinion on what needs to be done and the core of business owners that want to work together, the time is right to form business associations. Separate sector groups are already in early development and should be assisted by BA and BIA expertise from the City of Toronto's Economic Development Division.*

## ■ 11. NORTH ETOBICOKE AS A PLACE TO LIVE / WORK

The majority of business representatives have strong negative perceptions about North Etobicoke, even though most of them don't live in the area and have little local involvement. There also are major awareness gaps about the community as a place to live.

*Increasing the local hiring practices could help promote the assets of North Etobicoke as a community with desirable neighbourhoods. However, concerted effort is needed to alter perceptions about the viability of North Etobicoke as a safe and cohesive community that can effectively address problems.*

## ■ 12. BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Business contribution to local charities and worthy causes varies considerably depending somewhat on the sector. Commercial enterprises are much more likely to provide funding in sharp contrast to their industrial counterpart. Generally, however, all sectors are not engaging in other ways, such as sponsorship of sports teams, attending local meeting, doing volunteer work or participating in mentoring program.

*Clearly, North Etobicoke's charitable and not for profit organizations need to build networks with the area's business community. Then, strategies must be developed that are targeted to the different business sectors, providing appropriate opportunities for enhancing their monetary and non-monetary contributions to North Etobicoke. There is considerable evidence indicating that both investors and consumers favour those companies that are community-minded and invest in their communities. It is good business to invest in community capital.*

## ■ 13. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

North Etobicoke businesses agree on their aspirations for the area – address the crime problems, clean-up the streets and public spaces and establish closer links with government business development divisions and departments. Business representatives believe that the City of Toronto has a dominant role to play in enhancing North Etobicoke's robust business sector.

*The City of Toronto must continue to take a leadership role in helping to establish the necessary framework that will address North Etobicoke's business needs for accessing local employees, improving public transportation, creating business associations and BIA's, providing business development seminars and business retention initiatives.*

## ■ 14. PERCEPTIONS & ATTITUDES TOWARDS NORTH ETOBICOKE

North Etobicoke is a viable place to do business, despite the strong belief that the community is not a safe place and the perception that the appearance of the area's streets and commercial infrastructure require investment and upgrading.

*North Etobicoke is home to many established businesses who have prospered despite local problems and deficiencies. Now it is the time to pull together to create pro-active business associations that will work in conjunction with City departments and other groups. Goals need to be set and plans developed that will deal with these problems, piece by piece, and send signals to the community at large that positive changes can be made.*

## APPENDIX 2 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION - COMMUNITY INPUT

### SUGGESTIONS .... MAKING NORTH ETOBICOKE A BETTER PLACE

Two thirds of respondents offered suggestions for improving North Etobicoke as a place to live and work. Three factors lead the list, echoing NERP's ten goals, and they were: community safety/strengthening police presence, esthetic improvements/zero tolerance for garbage and litter and community activities, including more local programs and events. It is noteworthy in this instance, that young and old alike called for stepped-up policing to address concerns about crime and violence on the streets of North Etobicoke.

### WHAT WE HEARD...

- Many participants were surprised and delighted to have the opportunity to provide their opinion and ideas about North Etobicoke. This was the first time they had invited to comment on their community by the City of Toronto.

- Awareness of the North Etobicoke Revitalization Project was extremely low, nonetheless residents agreed that this was a much needed, worthy initiative.

- Most of the initial reservations about the intent of the survey

were overcome when participants were informed that it was being conducted by the City of Toronto.

- Most North Etobicoke residents have a strong affinity with their neighbourhood and count it as their home and a desirable place to live. Indeed, three quarters (75%) overall intend to remain in the community – this figure increases with age. Also, one third of visitors to North Etobicoke who took part in the survey hope that they might move into the area in the near future.

- North Etobicoke is home to a diverse cultural and linguistic population – at least one third of the questionnaires were completed in a language other than English. Further, in order to interact with the community's diverse population it is essential to provide translators and printed materials in a number of languages including: Italian, Punjabi, Tamil, Spanish, and Arabic.

- Youth and pre-teens were as eager to give their opinions about the neighbourhood as were adults and seniors. About one quarter (28%) of participants were under 21 years of age.

- North Etobicoke's residential population is a melding of new comers and long term residents. Over one third (36%) of the participants had lived in the area for no longer than two years, while three in ten (29%) had lived there more than 10 years. The former segment skews young, while the latter is mainly over 50 years.

- Half (51%) of the participants are currently employed – this figure increases to 60% among those living outside of North

Etobicoke. And, more than half (56%) of North Etobicoke workers are employed in their community. This figure increases to 73% among young adults 16 to 20 years.

- The size of households measured by the number of occupants tends to skew large with only 15% having one or two members and 40% having five or more.

- North Etobicoke is a neighbourhood populated by children. In fact, three quarters of all households have at least one child and 23% have three or more children.

The majority of North Etobicoke's residential population either live in houses (45%) or condominiums (39%). Long term residents are much more likely to live in houses, while more recent arrivals tend to live in condominiums or apartments, to a lesser extent.

## APPENDIX 3 - OPERATIONS PLANS FOR EACH WORKING GROUP

The four working groups will take responsibility for overseeing actions to be taken relating to their own areas. It is strongly urged that each working group participate in actions relating to the cross-cutting issues of safety, building community connections, youth and marketing/identity as they pertain to their strategic directions. The Steering Committee should oversee and co-ordinate areas of cross-cutting issues to ensure efficient use of resources.

The following provides the road map for each working group's Goals, Objectives and Actions around several strategic directions.

### ■ NERP STEERING COMMITTEE - OPERATIONS PLAN

#### GOAL:

To provide direction, coordination and support for NERP.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Create awareness of NERP and link it with the community
- Develop NERP infrastructure with a secretariat/ coordinator
- Advocate for positive legislative/ policy changes
- Link NE with city-wide initiatives
- Link NE with solutions that have worked in similar communities
- Promote a positive image of life in North Etobicoke (Ward 1)
- Commit to process of 'urbanizing' the area thereby

- increasing its attractiveness and quality of life
- Make safety and crime prevention in North Etobicoke a priority for all levels of government
- Engage the community in dialogue about its future on an ongoing basis
- Encourage effective women's and youth involvement and leadership
- Engage and train additional volunteers for NERP

#### ACTIONS - MARKETING, PROMOTION AND BUILDING PRIDE

- Promote the North India Market as a regional tourist destination
- Institute a local heroes program
- Promote the Albion Centre as a regional destination and Main Street of NE
- Capture collective memory through exhibits, including oral history of the area
- Identify significant corners and what should be built as properties turn over; develop secondary plans
- Improve aesthetics - streets visually interesting; public art; urban art
- Provide feedback ASAP on this project
- Develop a communications strategy to reach target groups in North Etobicoke
- Link relevant initiatives coming from the community e.g. churches, to NERP
- Encourage linkage to existing grassroots groups
- Build on the affinity and interest of 'outside' groups for the area

### ***ACTIONS - RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT***

- Access 2004-'05 Ontario Works funding
- Investigate ongoing/additional funding from National Crime Prevention
- Keep Toronto Community Foundation (TCF) in the loop re youth and community funding
- Advertise on TCF website re: 'grants needed'
- Investigate Industry Canada as a source of funds e.g. computer access
- Work with local businesses and United Way re: fundraising and target the funds for community projects
- Apply as a United Way pilot project under their new strategy

### ***ACTIONS - TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING***

- Start diversity training for residents and businesses
- Institute capacity building among community group leaders
- Link 'idea people' from many backgrounds
- Encourage youth leaders to make the case for their communities in a variety of forums

### ***ACTIONS - RESEARCH***

- Coordinate research projects for NERP

### ***ACTIONS - PARTNERSHIPS TO BE DEVELOPED OR ENHANCED***

- Build on work to date with Albion Centre management
- Strengthen linkages with Humber College/University of Guelph
- Link with Jane-Finch and Parkdale on solutions to achieving community safety
- Build on relationship with police to maintain additional staffing within the Ward

- Build relationship with TCF
- Build relationship with faith leaders
- Keep United Way informed; follow up on United Way consultations

## **■ ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION - OPERATIONS PLAN**

### ***GOAL:***

- Arts, culture and recreation programs and services that reflect the cultural diversity and youthful energy of North Etobicoke that are sustainable and well resourced.

### ***OBJECTIVES:***

- To serve youth well, through arts and recreation
- To have the public take ownership of their community and their futures
- To develop leadership from within the community
- To ensure that there are public places to gather, create and appreciate cultural diversity
- To document and make available the local history
- To expand arts, performing arts and cultural programs reflecting Ward 1's cultural diversity

### ***ACTIONS - MARKETING, PROMOTION AND BUILDING PRIDE***

- Promote a cohesive community by bringing the community's diverse arts, recreation and cultural activities to the forefront
- Support the Arts Etobicoke Youth Theatre Production Initiative
- Investigate possibilities for a Street Fair

- Hold a WinterFest
- Improve aesthetics - streets visually interesting; public art; urban art
- Capture collective memory through exhibits, including oral history of the area
- Recognize local champions
- Expand the Albion Public Library programs for youth e.g. create a Youth Advisory Group, provide volunteer opportunities

#### **ACTIONS - RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Support the provision of coordinated Arts Funding
- Support the Franklin Carmichael Centre Capital Improvement Plan and its Youth Involvement Initiative
- City -access OW (Ontario Works) funds - 2004-'05 for Youth at Risk to implement projects such as increased library study space, Kids @ Computers, Video/film Project
- Parks and Recreation focus - monitor implementation of the Parks Plan
- Fundraise for capital items e.g. basketball pads
- Engage businesses in fundraising for recreational facilities

#### **ACTIONS - TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

- Provide art gallery space for the community (Franklin Carmichael)
- Encourage life-long recreation for all ages
- Provide leadership training for children, youth and adults, including women
- Expand programs for children e.g. Highfield model

#### **ACTIONS - RESEARCH**

- Benchmark recreation facilities for Ward 1 based on a well-served, similar ward within the City of Toronto
- Investigate building an arts complex, including a theatre, for community use
- Explore tracking and linking arts, culture and recreation programs in North Etobicoke to create networks
- Consider a long term artists in residence program for North Etobicoke through the Toronto Arts Council
- Establish a permanent cultural animator for North Etobicoke e.g. Arts Starts

### **■ ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP - OPERATIONS PLAN**

#### **GOAL:**

- Strive to have all members of the community take ownership for their local environment in order to enhance, protect and promote a safe, clean and healthy environment in which to live, work and play.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Create parks that are welcoming spaces for families, youth and seniors
- Establish Humber ravines and trails as accessible with clear signage
- Increase outreach to community and youth on environment
- Support and involve local environment groups
- Plan and integrate facilities at the Humber Arboretum to meet the needs of youth and engage the public in environmental stewardship

### ***ACTIONS - MARKETING, PROMOTION AND BUILDING PRIDE***

- Establish work group to develop a positive poster image of NE
- Support clean up days
- Institute a Clean Street Award
- Promote Adopt-A-Yard, Stream or Street programs
- Promote urban art (remove graffiti, anti-litter street performance)
- Work to ensure anti-littering by-laws are effective and enforced
- Involve schools in public education campaigns on how to reduce, reuse, recycle and anti-littering
- Work with businesses and business areas on waste issues
- Involve community in implementing improvements in identified priority parks
- Improve accessibility and signage for ravines and trails; for restoration projects and historic sites
- Encourage installing signage to educate people about natural areas
- Promote efforts to conserve and clean up water and to lower air pollution
- Conduct organized hikes/bike tours in the ravines as part of local appreciation campaign
- Develop self-guided Humber Walks for the area
- Encourage installing garbage and recycle bins and benches along walking trails
- Promote adequate washroom facilities close to trails
- City-Food Policy Group target NE re: community gardens

### ***ACTIONS - RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT***

- Seek funding from sources such as EcoAction, TD-Canada Trust Friends of the Environment

### ***ACTIONS - TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING***

- Develop Environmental Education and Restoration programs to build common ground among diverse groups

### ***ACTIONS - RESEARCH***

- Work with ethno-cultural communities to determine needs/interests re: the environment and environmental stewardship

### ***ACTIONS - PARTNERSHIPS TO BE DEVELOPED***

- Liaise with schools/environment clubs
- Encourage environmental groups to continue to work in the community e.g. TRCA (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority), Humber Arboretum, FutureWatch EDEP, ARCH, other Humber groups
- Explore linkages with the City-Food Policy Group; FoodShare; Greenest City; EEON (Environmental Education Ontario)

## **■ HOUSING WORKING GROUP - OPERATIONS PLAN**

### ***GOAL:***

- Ensure that the community has a stock of affordable housing.



**OBJECTIVES:**

- Empower people to take ownership of their housing environment
- Identify and support private and public affordable building initiatives
- Encourage safe and affordable second-suite housing
- Connect people with services to eliminate moving/evictions that result in a transient population
- Work to ensure that residents feel safe in their homes, schools, parks and on the street

**ACTIONS - OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY**

- Support changes to the municipal Shelter By-Law
- Support initiatives that lead to safe and healthy housing conditions
- Lobby the federal government to provide adequate support settlement services in areas of need
- Advocate federal government for urban infrastructure needs

**ACTIONS - RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Identify and gain potential space for community housing related services

**ACTIONS - CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING**

- Encourage diversity training for residents and businesses
- Educate landlords
- Initiate community courses on “How things work in Canada” to introduce youth and newcomers of all ages to democratic institutions

**ACTIONS - RESEARCH**

- Make the case for core funding of social services
- Make the case for additional community policing
- Identify gaps in services

**ACTIONS - PARTNERSHIPS TO BE DEVELOPED AND/OR ENHANCED**

- Support YWCA and Legion in initiatives for more affordable housing
- Work with government staff, police and residents to ensure that housing is safe

## ■ EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - OPERATIONS PLAN

**GOAL:**

- To develop a vibrant employment and economic development sector in North Etobicoke that maximizes the strengths and assets of its resident, businesses, environment and external partners.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- To strengthen and enhance NERP’s working relations/ partnerships with local employers (retail, industrial, commercial etc.)
- To identify and promote the skills /abilities (labour pool) of NE to local employers
- To promote the benefits and gains of local hiring; and
- To engage local businesses in community economic revitalization initiatives

**ACTIONS - OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY**

- Organize roundtables with small, medium and large employers across sectors
- Organize a City & NERP Employer Forum to improve access to city services
- Develop and promote an employers NE hiring package
- Develop an employer/employee web portal that will feature employers, potential employees and available training programs & employment services
- Organize employer road shows (take NERP to associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Western Region Human Resources Professional Association etc. )
- Develop e-networks /bulletins or newsletter for employers
- Secure the services of a part-time corporate community investment strategist to assist in reaching out to employers
- Facilitate and support the development of Business Association(s) in NE

**ACTIONS - RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Identify resources and strategies to carry out the research
- Link with United Way
- Apply to HRDC

**ACTIONS - TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

- Identify, develop and promote training and skill development opportunities
- Strengthen and enhance a skilled labour pool in North Etobicoke (NE)
- Enhance the employment rates, particularly for youth, to reflect that of the City of Toronto

**ACTIONS - RESEARCH**

- Explore employment opportunities in NE's voluntary/non-profit service sector (hospitals, Colleges, organizations, etc.)
- Identify NE's employable population skills /abilities for the development of a database on skills and training requirements

**ACTIONS - PARTNERSHIPS TO BE DEVELOPED**

- Partner with local agencies/businesses/colleges/trades/high schools to establish a Training Centre in North Etobicoke
- Explore possible training and job creation partnering opportunities with appropriate associations etc.
- Link youth with trade and apprenticeship opportunities
- Support and advocate for youth mentorship and entrepreneurial services and programs
- Partner with local employment agencies/programs and schools to organize a trades day in North Etobicoke
- Organize meetings with post secondary institutions (Humber, George Brown, Ryerson, York, etc.) to explore partnership opportunities

## NORTH ETOBICOKE REVITALIZATION PROJECT (NERP)

The North Etobicoke Revitalization Project is a community-driven project to guide the development of North Etobicoke. The project will bring people together to find ways to improve North Etobicoke's economic, social, cultural, physical and environmental well-being. A series of small and large community meetings will be held in the spring of 2003. Consultants, Informa Market Research and Webb & Associates, have been engaged to coordinate the input of the community into a revitalization strategy.

### What is NERP?

Through its Employment and Youth, Housing and Arts and Culture working groups, NERP has begun the work of revitalizing Rexdale to a healthy, safe and vibrant community for all who live work and play there.

### Objectives:

- Improve local employment levels by matching employees with employers.
- Enhance safety in the area by building a sense of community.
- Strive for a clean and healthy environment by encouraging all residents to take ownership of our community.
- Enhance arts, culture and recreational activities and amenities.
- Achieve a sustainable organization.
- To address housing issues



## Have Your Say on North Etobicoke's Future!

You are invited to provide your ideas for North Etobicoke during the week of May 3-10, 2003, at the Albion Centre mall, located at 1530 Albion Road.

**Events and Booth Will be Open All Week!**

North Etobicoke has many opportunities:

- A youthful workforce
- Highly skilled professionals
- Quality environment



*To get involved and receive more information about NERP, please contact the City of Toronto Economic Development Division, tel: (416) 392-1820, fax: (416) 392-1380, or e-mail: [areavev@toronto.ca](mailto:areavev@toronto.ca) or Councillor Suzan Hall, tel: (416) 392-0205, or e-mail: [councillor\\_hall@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_hall@toronto.ca)*

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