

Food-Friendly Neighbourhood Plan: North Etobicoke

Neighbourhood profile

Population: |20,625

Area: 6.0 km²

% low-income after tax: 24.1%



Community Food Vision

To develop a centralized food centre that will support and strengthen the capacity of the community through the sharing of resources, infrastructure, human resources, and ideas. Special thanks to the Rexdale Food Access Committee, the Rexdale Community Health Centre, Thistleton Community Services Unit, City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Food Strategy and North Etobicoke residents who participated in neighbourhood

Opportunity:

There are a number of initiatives underway to explore the establishment of an affordable produce market in the community. For example, a Community Market has been discussed by local partners that could be held in various locations. Support from organizations in North Etobicoke for markets should be explored by encouraging local organizations to direct some of their food budget toward purchasing from local markets.

Who should be involved:

- Rexdale Food Access Committee
- Local politicians
- Albion Islington Square Business Improvement Association
- Food Share
- Local gardeners and farmers
- Residents
- Other interested community agencies

Opportunity:

There are many food banks that serve hundreds of local community members in the neighbourhood every year. These programs are primarily volunteer run with limited capacity to provide additional support beyond direct food assistance. Catchment areas in the neighbourhood for these programs are separate and often overlapping, creating confusion for community members. An “open catchment” area should be explored for food banks in the wider North Etobicoke neighbourhood with similar intake procedures created, such as the absence of income screening, to ensure dignified food assistance and improved food access. Local food banks would also benefit from enhanced connections to broader social service agencies and community kitchen and garden programs to create more meaningful connections for community members. Potential models to replicate include the Rexdale Community Health Centre (CHC) link with a local food bank, where CHC staff offer services from Diabetes and Mental Health teams.

Who should be involved:

- Local food banks
- Rexdale Community Health Centre
- North York Harvest
- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Rexdale Food Access Committee
- Rexdale Community Garden Network

Retail



Findings

There are seven large chain grocery stores in the neighbourhood, including four discount chains and three large cultural grocers. In addition, there are many small cultural grocers. Many residents shop based on price-matching initiatives by stores, which are very popular. As an example, Wal-Mart is outside of the neighbourhood but frequently accessed by residents due to discount prices. Residents noted that they would like more access to cultural foods through discount chains. The No Frills at Islington and Albion closed a few years ago, an absence that is felt by residents. There is also a need for new affordable grocers in the Elms-Old Rexdale neighbourhood and on the strip of Kipling between Panorama Court and Steeles.

Grade

B

Produce markets



The closest produce markets are located several kilometres away, for example Weston Road and Lawrence, highlighting the potential for a produce market in the neighbourhood. There are some private operators selling fresh produce out of trucks and a Mobile Good Food Market used to operate in the neighbourhood, but is no longer functioning due to lack of staffing capacity at local organizations. Most residents access their produce from discount chains or local cultural grocers. Better access to fresh produce is a priority for residents to help create a more food-friendly neighbourhood.

F

Food assistance



There are eight food banks, a seniors’ drop-in meal program, and three other food assistance programs that serve the neighbourhood. However, these programs have limited capacity for outreach, engagement and connections to other service providers, resulting in a lack of awareness among residents of how to access available food assistance options. Congregate dining at faith-based institutions, as part of many community members faith practice, contributes to addressing a neighbourhood need for food assistance and building a sense of community. Many residents expressed concern with the quality and freshness of food at food banks.

C

Food skills and growing



There are over ten community gardens and five community kitchens and cooking programs located in and around North Etobicoke. Programs cater to a range of participants highlighting the diverse population of the neighbourhood. The Rexdale Community Garden Network is strengthening and connecting the neighbourhoods’ community gardeners. Improved access to community garden and kitchen programs was listed as a top priority for residents.

C

Opportunity:

Many residents and representatives from community organizations highlighted the need for more social enterprise opportunities in the community. There is a wealth of knowledge and skills around food and cooking and a desire for community catering and processing that could be harnessed and developed into small business opportunities. However, the lack of appropriate infrastructure to support these small food businesses is a challenge. In order to support social enterprise development, the creation of a commercial kitchen could be explored. Similarly, in the meantime, an evaluation of existing kitchen space in the area highlighting availability and barriers to accessibility would be useful.

Who should be involved:

- Local food banks
- Residents interested in developing food business
- Daily Bread Catering Kitchen
- Toronto Employment and Social Services
- MicroSkills

North Etobicoke Food-Friendly Highlights



Rexdale Food Access Committee Foodie Fest

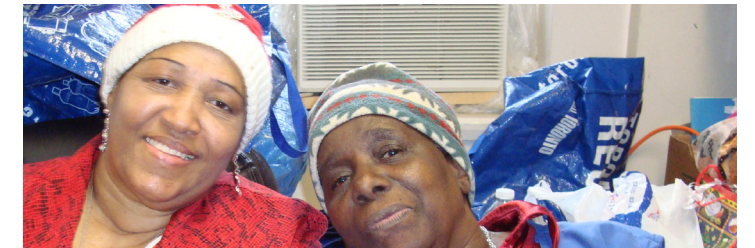
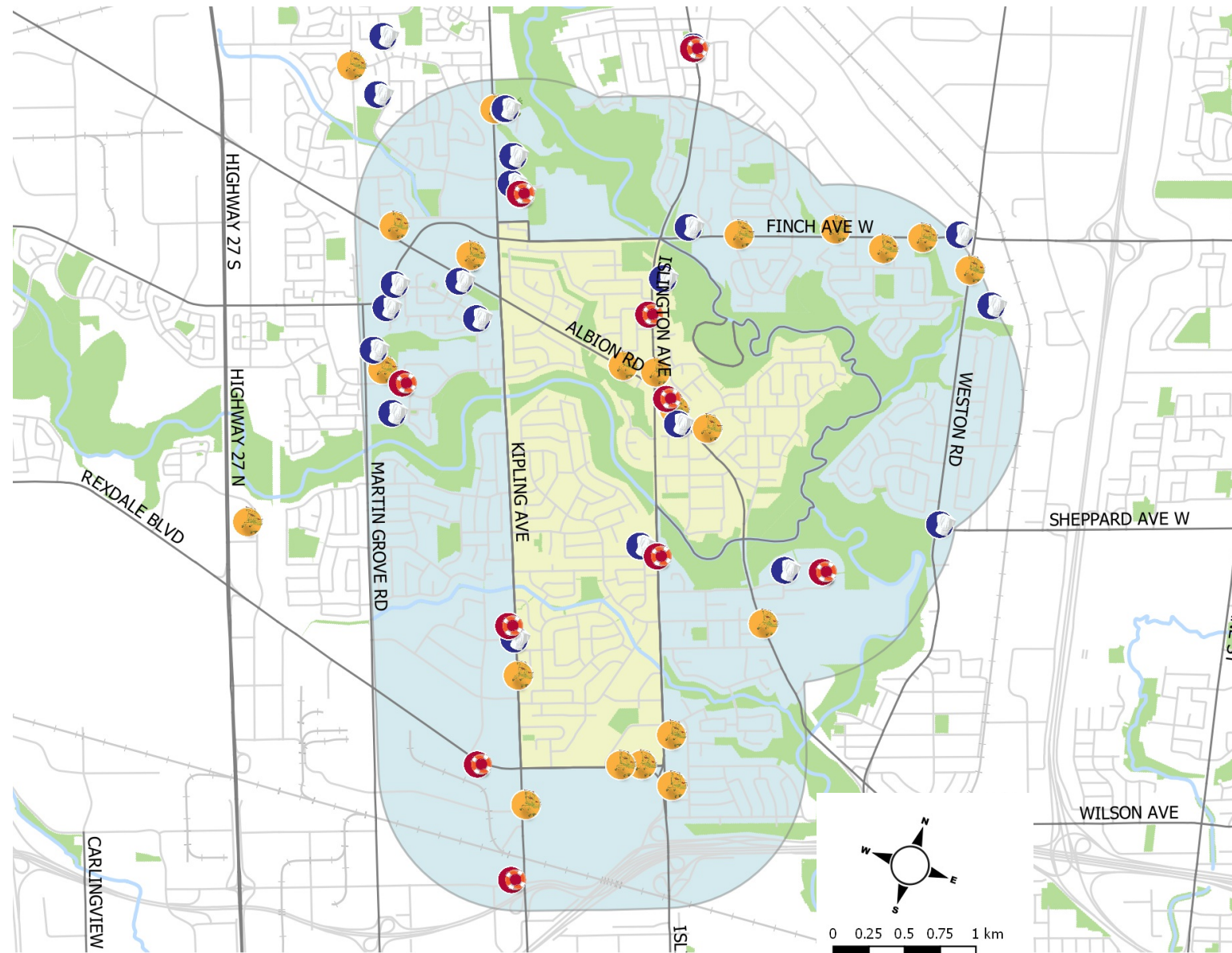
Held in May, 2014 this second annual community food event was incredibly successful, attracting over 1500 community members. The event provided community members with access to free produce from a mobile Good Food Market, container gardening workshops, food samples and Zumba lessons! The event is organized by the Rexdale Food Access Committee, a coalition of local organizations and stakeholders, who are advocating for improved food access for the Rexdale community.

About this document

This Food-Friendly Neighbourhood Food Plan is the product of a year-long consultation process with City of Toronto research departments, community organizations and local residents.

Legend

- Retail
- Produce Market
- Food Assistance
- Food Skills and Growing
- Major Arterial Street
- Priority Area
- 1 km Buffer (15 minute walk)
- Park or Greenspace



Thistleton Community Services Unit

Established in 1980, Thistleton Community Services Unit (TCSU), has been serving the Rexdale area for over 30 years and is one of the busiest programs in northern Toronto. The food bank is run by a team of dedicated volunteers and through support from North York Harvest, Second Harvest and Toronto Community Housing, provides food assistance to over 300 households a month. TCSU has recently embarked on a three year pilot project with North York Harvest to enhance their services, create closer connections to other social service agencies and to promote civic engagement opportunities for community members to come together and organize around poverty and food security issues.

TCSU is equipped with a community kitchen, has connections to local community gardens that provide fresh produce donations and strong links with the local community. TCSU is also currently running a 'World Foods Cooking Club' project with the goal to harness and share the food knowledge and skills held by community members through a mutual learning exchange. TCSU is keen to establish partnerships with local community partners and agencies in Rexdale.

Published by



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Catalogue of primary food assets

For information about food assistance programs please call 211 or visit <http://www.211toronto.ca/>

Retail

Al-Fateh Grocers & Halal Meat	10 Rexdale Blvd
Alfah Grocery & Halal Meat	973 Albion Rd
Apna Bazaart	2450 Finch Ave W
Best In Town	1530 Albion Rd
Bestco Food Mart	1701 Martin Grove Rd
Caribbean Island Food Market	3432 Weston Rd
Centra Food Market	2592 Finch Ave W
Charlie's Meat	1530 Albion Rd
Dar Halal Meat Market	969 Albion Rd
Etobicoke Danforth Food Market	301 Silverstone Dr
Food Basics	900 Albion Rd
Fortino's	330 Queens Plate Dr
Fresh Value Market	2267 Islington Ave
G. Prasad Caribbean & Oriental Speciality Foods Inc	1176 Albion Rd
Long Hui Supermarket	2437 Finch Ave W
M & B Tropical Grocery	351 Albion Rd
M.K. Meats And West Indian Grocery	2391 Finch Ave W

Macelleria Potenza	2635 Islington Ave
Rexdale Asian Supermarket	34A Rexdale Blvd
Rowntree Meats	2687 Kipling Ave
Salaama Halal Meat & Grocery	1987 Kipling Ave
Sheriff's No Frills	1530 Albion Rd
Sunny Foodmart	1620 Albion Rd
Tre Rose Bakery	2098 Kipling Ave
Wal-Mart	2245 Islington Ave
Westland Supermarket	963 Albion Rd

Produce Markets

North Kipling/Mount Olive	2 Rowntree Rd
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Food Assistance

Albion Neighbourhood Services Boys and Girls Club	21 Panorama Crt
Apostles Continuation Church Food Bank	10 Belfield Rd
Braeburn Neighbourhood Place Boys & Girls Club	
Delta Family Resource Centre Food Pantry	2972 Islington Ave
Etobicoke Community and Family Services Salvation Army	2152 Kipling Ave
Humber Summit Middle School Student Nutrition Program	60 Pearldale Ave
Mount Olive Food Bank	1030 Albion Rd

North Kipling Jr. Middle School Breakfast Program	2 Rowntree Rd
Our Saviour Lutheran Church Food Bank	2705 Islington Ave
Redeemed Christian Church of God Victoria House Food Bank	175 Rexdale Blvd
Rexdale Alliance Church Foodbank & Kitchen	2459 Islington Ave
The Elms Public School Snack Program	45 Golfdown Dr
Thistleton Community Services Food Bank	246 Jamestown Cres

Food Skills and Growing

2667/2677 Tower Resident Garden, Tower Renewal Program	2667 Kipling Ave
Delta Family Resource Centre Community Kitchen	2972 Islington Ave
Delta Family Resource Centre Greener Futures Project Community Garden	2973 Islington Ave
Elmbank Community Centre	10 Rampart Rd
Elmbank Junior Middle Garden (PACT Grow-to-learn garden)	10 Pittsboro Dr
Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women Food & Nutrition Community Kitchen	2350 Finch Ave W
Emery Collegiate Institute Garden (PACT Grow-to-learn garden)	3395 Weston Rd
Gord and Irene Risk Community Centre	2650 Finch Ave W
Jamestown Community Garden	10 Rampart Rd

John D. Parker Children's Garden	202 Mount Olive Dr
North Kipling Community Centre	2 Rowntree Rd
Panorama Park Community Garden	31 Panorama Dr
Rexdale Community Health Centre Community Kitchen	8 Taber Rd
Rexdale Community Health Centre Men's Cooking Club	
Rexdale Community Hub	21 Panorama Crt
Rexdale Women's Centre Building Communities Community Kitchen	
Robert J Smith Apartments (TCHC) Community Garden	101, 102 Kendleton Dr
Rowntree Manor (TCHC)	2765 Islington Ave
Smithfield Middle School Children's Garden	175 Mount Olive Dr
Stoffel Drive Allotment Garden	Stoffel Dr & Dixon Rd
Tanridge Crescent 1 (TCHC)	44-80 Tanridge Cres
Thistleton 1 and 2 (TCHC)	6455 Finch Ave W
Thistleton Collegiate Garden (PACT Grow-to-learn garden)	20 Fordwich Cres
Thistleton Multiservice Centre	925 Albion Rd
Toronto Public Library, Albion Branch, Children's Garden	1515 Albion Road
Village Green Community Garden	925 Albion Rd
West Humber Collegiate Garden (PACT Grow-to-learn garden)	1675 Martin Grove Rd
Weston Towers (TCHC)	3101 Weston Rd