

# Food-Friendly Neighbourhood Plan Weston & Mount Dennis: Phase 2

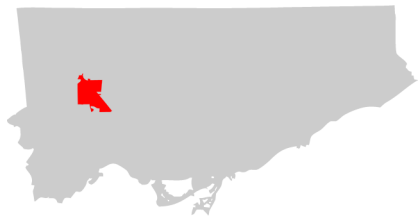
## Neighbourhood profile

Population: 39,842

Area: 7.5 sq km

Median after-tax income: \$38,900

% low income after-tax: 24.5%



## About this neighbourhood

Weston and Mount Dennis have both been identified by the City of Toronto as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in 2014. Located in the west end, the distinct communities of Weston and Mount Dennis have a shared history as former industrial centres which have welcomed diverse new residents in recent years. A rail corridor provides the eastern boundary of this neighbourhood and the Humber River runs through its centre. Key landmarks include Eglinton Flats and Weston’s historic downtown. Special thanks to City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Food Strategy, the Weston King Neighbourhood Centre, Learning Enrichment Foundation and Weston and Mount Dennis residents who participated in neighbourhood consultations.

### Recommendation:

Weston and Mount Dennis residents identified more access to fresh and organic produce as their top priority for a more food-friendly neighbourhood. A mobile market would be a welcome addition to the neighbourhood’s current food assets. This would improve access to affordable fresh produce for residents as a mobile market could visit multiple locations, reaching more neighbourhoods, reducing the amount of time spent in transit for some residents.

As in 2012, the recommendation for local community organizations to explore models for how to improve the accessibility of the Weston Farmers’ market remains relevant. For example, the Stonegate Market in southeast Etobicoke is a successful example of a joint venture between the local community health centre and a neighbourhood food action team. It offers “market money” for community members for low income.

### Who should be involved:

- Local community organizations
- Ward 11 Councillor Nunziata
- Foodshare

### Opportunity:

Based on the 2012 Food Friendly plan recommendation, the Weston and Mount Dennis Food Action Team was formed in 2013 and has held a number of excellent events, such as a movie night at UrbanArts, to celebrate and connect the community around food. The aim of the network is to facilitate better coordination and planning around food to better link Weston and Mount Dennis as similar networks across the city have been successful in providing new food programming initiatives and addressing local food security issues. There is an opportunity to build on the successes of the network in 2015 and beyond as the neighbourhood has a wealth of organizations, community associations and residents who are addressing food security through numerous initiatives. Many residents wanted to know more about existing programs and the network could help connect community members to relevant opportunities, especially through local food banks. Throughout the consultation, community members in Weston and Mount Dennis stressed the need for a strategic approach to addressing poverty, unemployment, underemployment and food security, as these issues do not exist in isolation and need to be approached in a spirit of cooperation, both at a neighbourhood and city-wide level. Ideas raised by community members for the Weston and Mount Dennis Food Action Team to explore:

- Providing opportunities for the community to learn about food security through fun events
- Explore options for community members to collectively purchase healthy and affordable food

### Who should be involved:

- Local community organizations, residents and working with food
- City of Toronto, Community Development Officer

## Findings



During consultations with community members in the second phase of this plan, the original 2012 plan boundaries have been revised as many people felt retail locations west of the Humber river were not part of the neighbourhood. Transportation challenges have been raised as a key issue for food access in Weston and Mount Dennis overall, especially for seniors and low income families. Residents called for time-based TTC transfers so people can shop in multiple locations. New data indicates more retail options are available in Weston as compared to Mount Dennis. However, feedback from community members suggests both neighbourhoods are facing similar issues around access to affordable and healthy food with the closure of the Price Chopper near Weston Rd and Lawrence Ave West.

## Grade

C-↓



The Weston Farmers’ Market remains one of the best produces markets in Toronto and a key community asset, however many residents in the neighbourhood felt that prices remain too high. Community members who live in Mount Dennis were often unaware the market existed and travelled long distances to other produce markets in the city. The Learning Enrichment Foundation Good Food Market, located in Mount Dennis, provides residents with an affordable, year round option for high quality fresh produce. The lack of access to affordable and organic produce in the neighbourhood is a top priority residents would like to see improved.

B ↔



Two food banks operate in the neighbourhood and people appreciate the services provided, however, community members would like more frequent access to food bank programs and feel the programs are overcrowded. For example, the WAES food bank program serves more than 300 families a month in a small space in the back of the Frontlines building where community members often have to wait outside. Residents also wanted to see improvements in access to fresh produce and improved food quality at local food banks. The Weston King Neighbourhood Centre was highlighted as a key asset in the neighbourhood and many residents appreciate the connection to community kitchen and garden programs and would like to see them replicated at other programs.

C ↔



There are over 10 community gardens and 10 community kitchens in the Weston and Mount Dennis neighbourhood that cater to a range of participants highlighting the diverse population of the neighbourhood. Community members were often not aware of the programs available and highlighted limited programs for children and youth cooking. The Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre, a satellite of the Weston King Neighbourhood Centre, which provides multiple programs in partnership with the Learning Enrichment Foundation at 1269 Weston Rd has a strong focus on food-related programming through a learning kitchen and community garden and is a key food skills and growing asset for the community.

C+↑

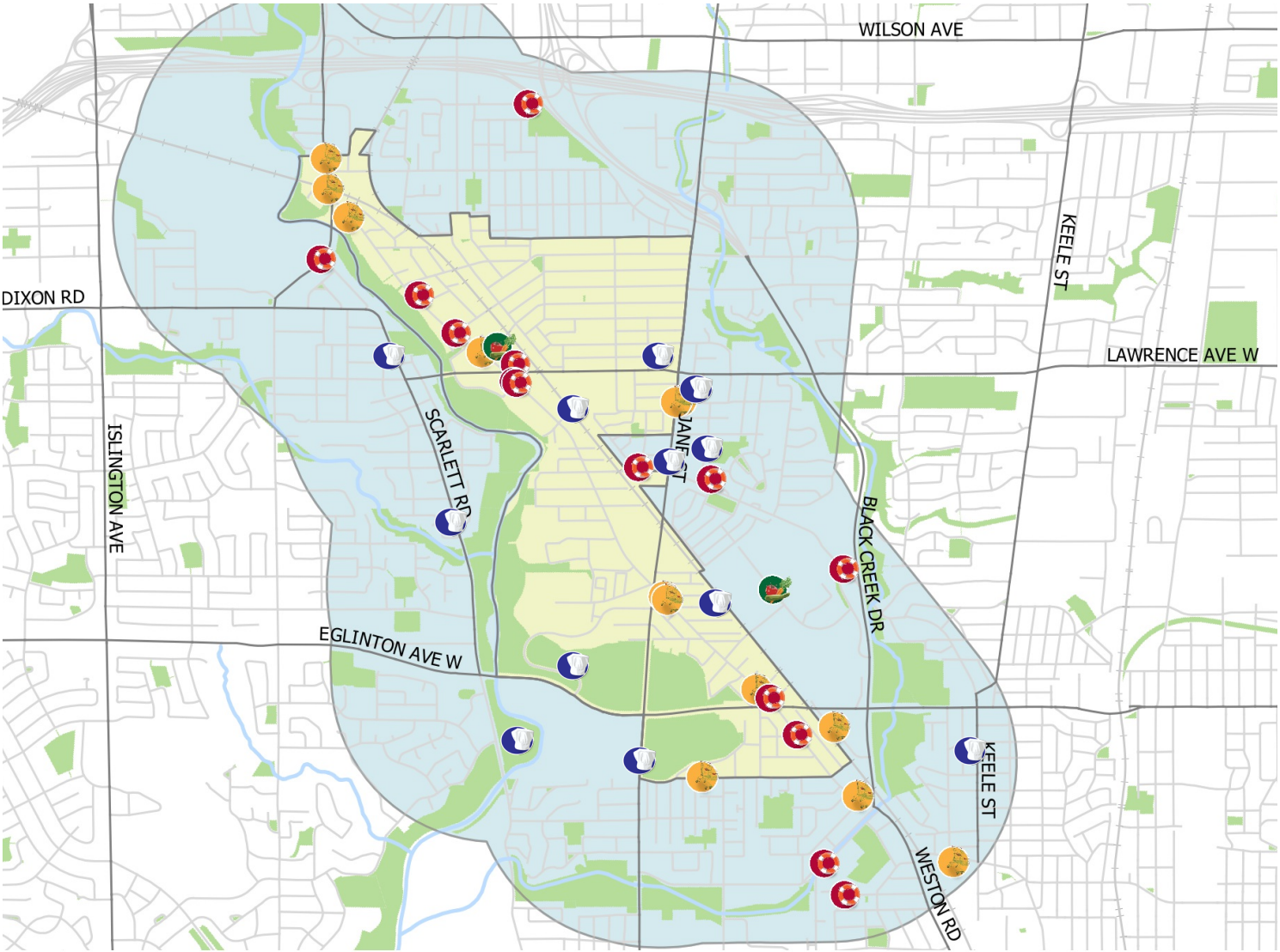


# Weston & Mount Dennis Food-Friendly Highlights



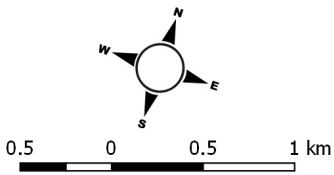
## Young Somali Growers

Young Somali Growers exists to empower Somali youth and develop leadership roles in urban agriculture. The group aims to advance food accessibility and increase awareness of food insecurity for the Somali youth in Weston Mount Dennis. The organization runs two programs, the Growers Advocacy Initiative and Growers Literacy Program which combine to form a paid-volunteer internship program with placements in garden facilities within Weston and Mount Dennis. The group have partnered with the Weston King Neighbourhood Centre to identify growing space and continue to advocate for a healthy and sustainable food system in Weston and Mount Dennis.



## Legend

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



**Toronto**  
Source: City of Toronto, Open Data;  
Toronto Food Strategy, Toronto Public Health

## About this document

This Food Friendly Neighbourhood Food Plan is the product of a year-long consultation process with North York Harvest member agencies, community organizations and local residents. The yellow priority area highlighted in this map are the following City of Toronto, Social Planning Neighbourhoods; Weston and Mount Dennis



## Anishnawbe Wellness Collective - Healthy Nutrition and Community Project

This new pilot project is Aboriginal run and open to the community with priority given to Aboriginal, Metis and Inuit with a focus on community members gathering to cook nutritional meals, share economical knowledge and educational information around food and nutrition utilizing a traditional framework. There is a large Aboriginal community in the Weston and Mount Dennis neighbourhoods, and this project aims to provide community members a chance to connect and share information about healthy food.

Photo: Left Alexa Rudie, Centre, Candace Esquimaux and Right, Star Nahwegahbo

## Catalogue of primary food assets

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

Retail	
Doremi Supermarket	1370 Weston Rd
Emilian & Ana's No Frill's	1641 Jane St
Greenland Farm Supermarket	1966 Weston Rd
Homeland East & West Indian	1642 Jane St
Kim's Grocery	878 Weston Rd
Lambton Grocery	150 Lambton Ave
Oppk & B	1190 Weston Rd
Poong Nyeon Oriental Food Market	1366 Westoon Rd
Real Canadian Superstore	2549 Weston Rd
Real Canadian Wholesale Club	605 Rogers Rd
Ross' No Frills	5 Photography Dr
Seif Halal Food Market	2371 Weston Rd

Starfish Caribbean Market	746 Weston Rd
Produce Markets	
Good Food Market	116 Industry St
Weston Farmer's Market	19 John St
Food Assistance	
Harwood Hall	85 Cayuga Ave
Pelmo Park Community Centre	171 Pellatt Ave
York West Active Living Centre Congregate Dining	1901 Weston Rd
House of Faith Meal Program	5 Bellevue Crescent
Humber Boulevard Meal Program	105 Humber Blvd
Humber Community Services	1167 Weston Rd
St. John's Anglican Church Community Supper	2125 Weston Rd
St. Phillip's Cafe	31 St. Phillips Rd
Trethewey Children's Breakfast Club	1710 Trethewey Dr
Trethewey Supplementary Food Program	710 Trethewey Dr

Trinity Temple Meal Program	46 Denison Rd E
Weston Area Emergenc y Support	1844 Weston Rd
Weston King Neighbourhood Centre Meal Program	2017 Weston Rd
York Community Salvation Army	1100 Weston Rd
Food Skills and Growing	
Edenbridge Centre Garden	235 Edenbridge Dr
Humber Acres TCHC Garden	1 Scarlettwood Crt
Jane John Best TCHC Garden	1570 Jane St
SOY Garden Party	1541 Jane St
Woodbine Acres TCHC Garden	133 Merrill Ave
Caribbean Cook and Talk	1541 Jane St
LEF Community Cooks Kitchen	116 Industry St
LEF Cooks Training Program	116 Industry St
Good Soil Community Garden	1796 Lawrence Ave W
Hispanic Seniors in Action Community Kitchen	1651 Keele St
Jane Street Hub - Unison Prenatal and Early Parenting	1541 Jane St

Outlook Community Kitchen	55 Outlook Ave
Riverlea Park Greenhouse	919 Scarlett Rd
Rockcliff Yard Greenhouse	301 Rockcliff Blvd
Somali Immigrant Aid Organization Community Kitchen	1778 Weston Rd
Spanish Community Kitchen	2562 Eglinton Ave W
Tamil Cook and Talk	1541 Jane St
Toronto Community Housing Garden	1 Scarlettwood Ct
Toronto Community Housing Garden	1570 Jane St
York Hispanic Centre/CARC Community Kitchen	1652 Keele St
Boys and Girls Club of Weston-Mt Dennis	121 Humber Blvd
Urban Arts Snack and Chat	5 Bartonville Ave E
Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre	1269 Weston Rd
Emmett Community Garden	101 Emmett Ave
Young Somali Growers	1778 Weston Rd
Weston King Neighbourhood Centre Community Garden	2017 Weston Rd
Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre Demonstration Garden	1269 Weston Rd

Published by

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