

hubs of activity...

the bookmobile
brings the library to the community on Wednesdays




dominic agostino riverdale community centre
offers swimming, after school programs, basketball, fitness, girls open gym and club, open gym time, table tennis, cricket and other activities.



siso
provides interpretation, translation and assistance with settlement, integration and employment to newcomers. With the help of dedicated volunteers and well-trained cultural interpreters SISO is able to provide services in more than 60 languages.

st charles ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE offers assistance with reading, writing and math skills



the community health bus
offers free dental and nursing services Tuesdays from 9 am until 4 pm ... just outside the community centre



lake avenue public school
offers adult English as a Second Language courses with child minding for parents of children in the school

...partners in change

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)
Located in the Riverdale community Centre, CAPC provides a variety of services and activities for young children and their families. It works actively with partners and community members to respond to the needs of the community.

- The recently opened *multicultural centre* offers a range of information, referrals and supports. CAPC continues to offer:
- Baby's Best Start** - a weekly program for pregnant women and mothers with infants under one year
 - Children's Corner** - a drop in playgroup for families with children age 0 - 6
 - Rhyme Time** - a song and rhyme program offered at children's corner
 - Coffee Break** - child care is provided so parents can take a break and connect with one another
 - Kids & Community** - building parent and community partnerships to improve opportunities for children
 - Story Time for Newcomers** - stories, songs and early years program offered at children's corner
 - Today's Family** - flexible child care and opportunities to build your own business providing licensed home child care
 - CAPC Council** - an opportunity to gather, share ideas, review programs and develop new opportunities for children



If you'd like more information, would like to volunteer or have an idea for a great program, call 905-546-4295. For more information on community trends contact, Sandy Shaw, SPRC, 905-522.1148, ext. 310

"Every time I look at my baby, I feel very happy and proud. This program gives me so much happy time and confidence."



Riverdale 2007

a changing mosaic

a cultural mosaic: According to the 2001 census, more than one-quarter of the Hamilton population were foreign-born (26.5%). This represents the third highest proportion of foreign-born residents in Canada, surpassed only by Toronto and Vancouver. Riverdale's numbers are even higher than Hamilton as a whole. A small neighborhood in East Hamilton, bound by Centennial Parkway, Barton and Queenston Road is home to a vibrant and vital mix of citizens from around the world. 50% of the population is foreign-born. What's more, the percentage of *recent* immigrants is 22.18% in Riverdale, compared to 3.21% for Hamilton as a whole. In fact, close to 10% of all recent immigrants in Hamilton live in Riverdale. The numbers at Lake Avenue Public School suggest that the community is even more diverse than census numbers indicate: 18% of students have been in Canada less than 5 years, 81% of students speak a first language other than English and over 31 different languages are spoken by students. The 2006-07 kindergarten class alone speaks 16 different languages!

in a state of constant change: The Riverdale community is also distinguished by its changing population and high mobility rate. According to the 2001 census, the local population increased 10.3% over the preceding 5 years, compared to 4.8% for Hamilton as a whole. Riverdale also demonstrates higher mobility numbers within the community, entering the community and leaving the community than neighbouring communities and Hamilton as a whole. These numbers are supported by the experience of the local school, which experiences a 70% in and out rate annually.

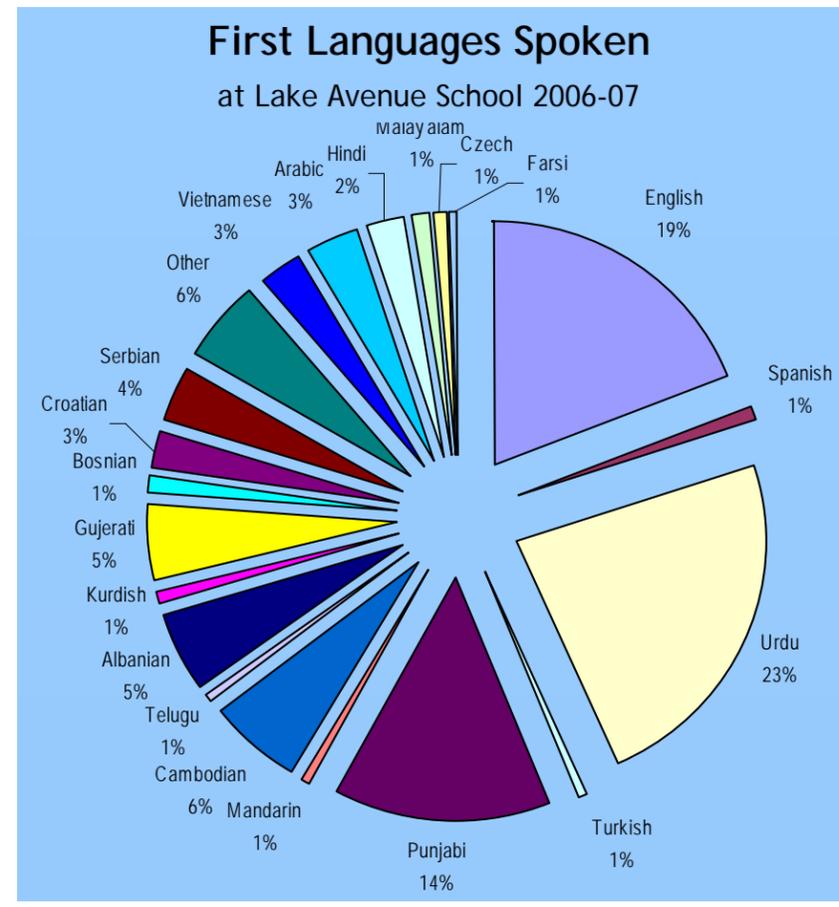
income & newcomer status
Average household income in Riverdale is more than \$20,000 lower than the average household income for Hamilton as a whole. Census data tells us there is a significant relationship between newcomer status and income:

Select Group	Incidence of Low Income
Total Population	20%
With immigrant status	24%
Recent Immigrants (< 5 years)	52%
With visible minority status	37%

A full 25% of CAPC participants in Riverdale have a university education yet encounter numerous barriers to employment: language and cultural barriers, lack of Canadian experience, lack of recognition of foreign credentials. These barriers prevent immigrants from reaching their full potential as participants and contributors to Canada's prosperity and growth.



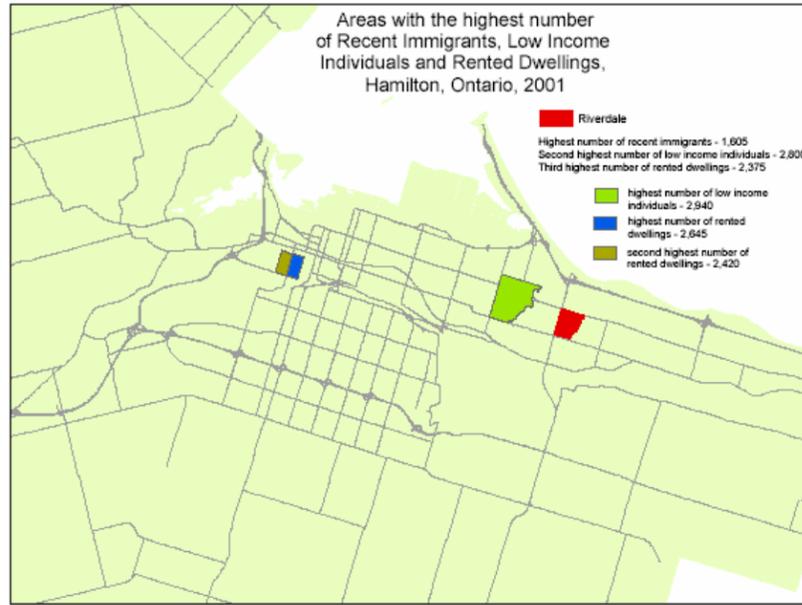
**"I see tremendous hope here...
... now we need a plan."**



a combination of challenges...*a world of opportunity*

Riverdale is unique in Hamilton

When we look at immigration, income and rented dwellings, Riverdale has the highest number of recent immigrants, the second highest number of individual living in poverty and the third highest number of rented dwellings of all Hamilton neighbourhoods:



Recreational Opportunities

Residents report little access to playgrounds for their children amongst the high-rises in which they live.

While the facilities and programs at the recreation centre are acknowledged, accommodation for the large Muslim population especially concerns for Muslim women would also be appreciated.

School

81% of the students at Lake Avenue Public School speak a first language other than English. This presents challenges for both the parents and the school as both struggle to do their absolute best for the children.

Parents and children bring different understandings of school, discipline and respect with them to the school. When teachers and parents express different ideas about right and wrong, children are more often than not caught in the middle. Understanding and ongoing communication between home and school are critical – but hampered by language and cultural differences.

The school has a 70% in and out rate on an annual basis – including children entering Kindergarten, graduating, leaving for extended stays in their countries of origin and returning.

Community consultations identify a range of issues

A series of consultations held by the CAPC Council, Our Kids Count Project, local service providers and students reveal consistent themes amongst the concerns of Riverdale residents:

Employment & Training

25% of CAPC program participants have completed university yet are unable to find work. They cite lack of recognition of foreign credentials, Canadian work experience and references as primary barriers ...

...and can't help but wonder about an immigration system that prioritizes educated immigrants but fails to recognize their credentials or provide supports to them reaching their potential as contributors to the Canadian economy.

They also wonder why eligibility for free or subsidized ESL and job search programs ceases when they become Canadian citizens.

Safe, Decent, Affordable Housing

- 84% of Riverdale residents live in rental accommodation
- Rents are higher than the average Hamilton rent: \$651 in Riverdale compared to \$627 city wide (despite the fact that Riverdale has the 2nd highest percentage of low income individuals in Hamilton)
- High vacancy/turnover rate

Landlord tenant issues abound. Residents report lack of heat & hot water, pests and frequent elevator breakdowns. Newcomers to Canada are not always aware of their rights under the Residential Tenancy Act or the process through which they can make complaints.

Access to Services

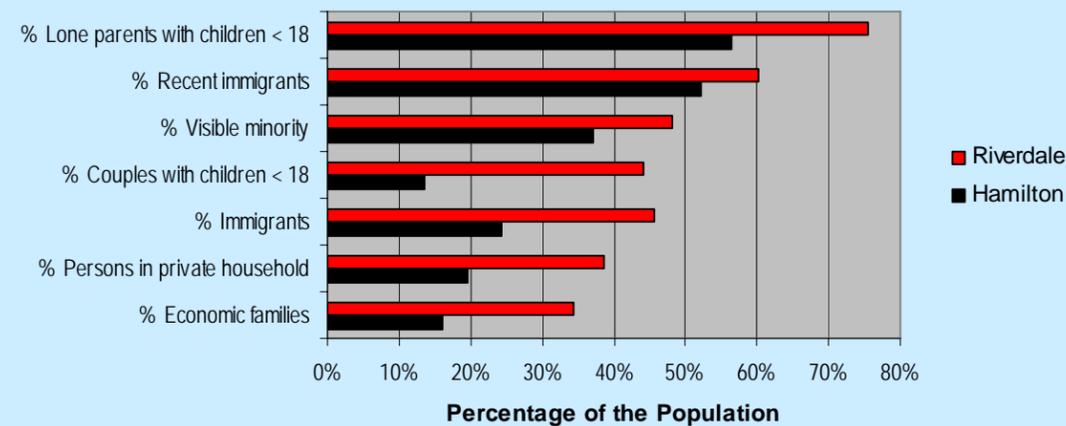
Lack of transportation and the concentration of services in the core presents an ongoing challenge to local residents. For mothers with young children, public transportation is not always a viable or affordable solution.

Residents and service providers alike report that the residents are not eligible to use the closest food bank, located in Stoney Creek, because they have a Hamilton address. Food available at food banks is often not culturally appropriate, impacting on the nutrition and health of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

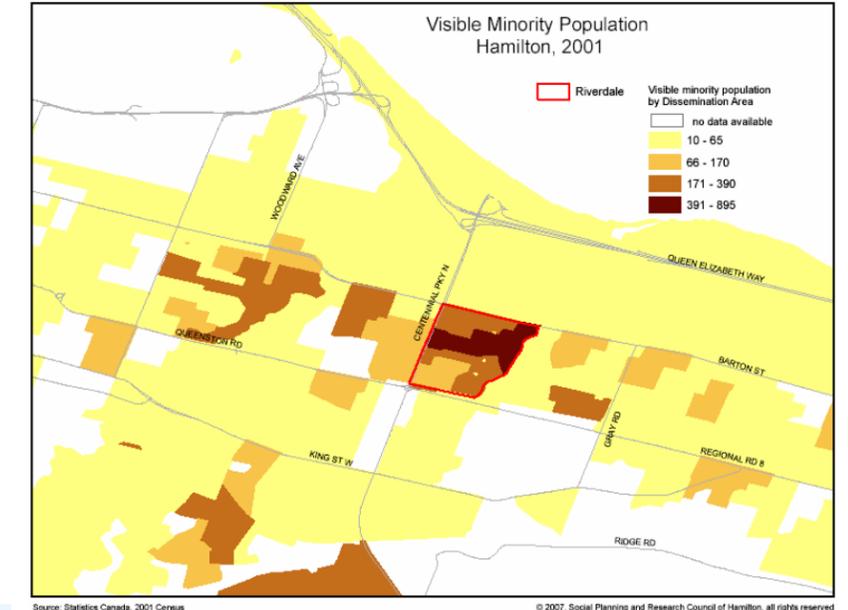
Access to health care is also consistently reported as a significant issue.

Riverdale has a higher percentage of lone parent families and couples with children living in poverty than the city as a whole. Family sizes tend to be larger. It also has a higher percentage of immigrants and visible minorities living in poverty.

Low Income & Selected Groups: Riverdale & Hamilton 2000



Riverdale has the highest number of visible minorities in Hamilton.



Integration

Parents struggle to understand Canadian expectations, norms and systems. Cultural differences regarding respect, discipline, food and a myriad of other factors influence their relationships with their children, schools and society at large.

Personal Safety & Security

Teen gangs and grow ops are prevalent. Community policing has increased in recent years, but the community still feels unsafe.

“The complexity of the issues requires a cross-sectoral, multilevel approach.

We need a community round table with active involvement of citizens, service providers and all levels of government.”