Perceptions about Crime and Safety in the Region of Peel: A qualitative assessment of connections between the social and built environment and crime in three neighbourhoods

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis investigated the role that local environmental factors play in influencing perceptions of crime and safety across three neighbourhoods within the Region of Peel, Ontario. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with local experts to examine their perceptions of crime and safety, and elements of the built and social environment that may influence these perceptions and identified dimensions of social capital that serve as pathways through which broader environmental determinants of crime and safety can become embedded at the local neighbourhood level. Findings of this research revealed that the perceived relationships between the social and built environment and crime are complex and that dimensions of social capital such as informal social ties serve as a mediator between the environment and perceptions about crime and how perceived and actual crime may be reduced by modifying elements of the built and social environment in order to strengthen local dimensions of social capital.
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ..................................................................................................................... iii

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... iv

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... viii

List of Figures ........................................................................................................................ x

List of Appendices .................................................................................................................. xi

Chapter 1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1

1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 Overview of Thesis ........................................................................................................... 1

1.2 Broader Research Project ............................................................................................... 4

1.3 Research Question and Objectives .............................................................................. 6

1.4 Thesis Organization ....................................................................................................... 9

Chapter 2 Literature Review ................................................................................................. 10

2 Literature Review .............................................................................................................. 10

2.1 Overview ....................................................................................................................... 10

2.2 Social Capital ................................................................................................................ 14

2.2.1 Formal and Informal Social Ties .............................................................................. 16

2.2.2 Reciprocity and Trust ............................................................................................. 16

2.2.3 Social Norms .......................................................................................................... 17

2.3 Roots of Social Capital and Related Theories ............................................................. 17

2.4 Related Concepts that May be Viewed as Outcomes of Social Capital .................... 19

2.4.1 Social Cohesion ....................................................................................................... 19

2.4.2 Sense of Community ............................................................................................... 20

2.5 Perceptions about the Connections between Social Capital and Crime ............... 21
2.6 Built Environment........................................................................................................... 23
2.7 Social Environment......................................................................................................... 26
2.8 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 29

Chapter 3 Methods and Research Design ........................................................................... 32

3 Methods and Research Design ......................................................................................... 32

3.1 Overview ....................................................................................................................... 32
3.2 The Region of Peel .......................................................................................................... 32
3.3 Community selection process and neighbourhood boundary identification ................. 35
3.4 Neighbourhood Descriptions ......................................................................................... 36
3.5 Brampton ....................................................................................................................... 38
3.6 Mississauga ................................................................................................................... 41
3.7 Caledon ........................................................................................................................ 45
3.8 Demographics ............................................................................................................... 48
3.9 Qualitative Exploration of Local Experts ....................................................................... 58
3.10 Sample Selection and Recruitment ............................................................................ 61
3.11 Interview Question Guide .......................................................................................... 63
3.12 Data Collection ............................................................................................................ 64
3.13 Data Analysis ............................................................................................................... 66
3.14 Rigour and Reflexivity ................................................................................................. 67
3.15 Ethics ........................................................................................................................... 68
3.16 Confidentiality ............................................................................................................. 69
3.17 Risks and Benefits ...................................................................................................... 69

Chapter 4 Summary of Key Findings ............................................................................... 71

4 Summary of Key Findings ............................................................................................... 71

4.1 Overview ....................................................................................................................... 71
4.2 The Social Environment .............................................................................................. 71
4.3 Community Transience .......................................................................................... 73
4.4 Diversity ............................................................................................................ 75
4.5 Vulnerable Populations – Recent Immigrants and Socio-economically Marginalized .... 76
4.6 Stigma ................................................................................................................ 80
4.7 The Built Environment .................................................................................... 82
4.8 Housing Form and Density ............................................................................. 83
4.9 Lack of Meeting Spaces ................................................................................... 84
4.10 Community Infrastructure: Lighting .............................................................. 87
4.11 Recommendations for Strengthening Community ........................................ 89
4.12 Creating Meeting Space ................................................................................ 89
4.13 Creating a Collective Space for Informal Gatherings and Collaborating with Community Services .............................................................. 90
4.14 Reducing Stigma and Increasing Maintenance and Pride .................................. 92
4.15 Modifying the Built Environment .................................................................. 93
4.16 Community Differences .................................................................................. 96
4.17 Housing Form and Density ............................................................................ 96
4.18 Diverse Population .......................................................................................... 97
4.19 Opportunities for Youth .................................................................................. 98
4.20 Communication among Residents and Neighbourhood Services ................. 100
4.21 Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 102

Chapter 5 Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research .... 104
5 Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research ............... 104

5.1 Summary of Key Findings ............................................................................... 104
5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research .............................. 105
5.3 Theoretical Implications .................................................................................. 107
5.4 Social Capital ................................................................................................... 108
List of Tables

Table 3-1 Peel Regional Police – police personnel and selected incident-based crime statistics, CANSIM table 254-0004 and 252-0077. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 ........................................... 34

Table 3-2 Ontario Provincial Police - Caledon Detachment – police personnel and selected incident-based crime statistics, CANSIM table 254-0004 and 252-0077. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006................................................................................................................................. 35

Table 3-3 Population for municipality, average dissemination area and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 .......................................................................................... 49

Table 3-4 Recent immigrant selected places of birth for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. ................................................................. 50

Table 3-5 Population by age grouping for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. .................................................................................. 51

Table 3-6 Percentage of census families in private household in the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. .................................................... 51

Table 3-7 Median and average household incomes for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. ............................................................... 52

Table 3-8 Percentage of property ownership type for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. ................................................................. 53

Table 3-9 Percentage of occupied private dwellings by structural type for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. .......................................................... 55

Table 3-10 One and Five Year mobility rates for the Region of Peel, municipalities and dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006. ................................................................................................. 55

Table 3-11 Percentage of population with reported levels of formal education and unemployment rate for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006................................................................................................................................. 57
Table 3-12 Sampling strategy for key informant interviews ........................................................ 63

Table 3-13 Actual key informant categories ................................................................................. 65
List of Figures

Figure 1 A conceptual model of factors from the built and social environment that influence social capital and local perceptions about crime and safety ................................................................. 13

Figure 2 The Region of Peel. Source: Canada Mental Health Association of Peel, 2013........... 33

Figure 3 The Region of Peel with municipalities and dissemination areas indicated. .............. 37

Figure 4 Dissemination area 211272, which is located within census tract 571.01 in Brampton. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006................................................................. 39

Figure 5 Dissemination area 211272, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.............. 40

Figure 6 Close up view of dissemination area 211272, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013......................................................................................................................... 40

Figure 7 Dissemination area 211448, which is located within census tract 513.02 in Mississauga. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006................................................................. 43

Figure 8 Dissemination area 211448, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.............. 44

Figure 9 Close up view of dissemination area 211448, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013......................................................................................................................... 44

Figure 10 Dissemination area 211206, which is located within census tract 585.03 in Caledon. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006................................................................. 46

Figure 11 Dissemination area 211206, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.............. 47

Figure 12 Close up view of dissemination area 211206, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013......................................................................................................................... 47
List of Appendices

Appendix A: The Interview Guide

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Appendix C: Parental Informed Consent

Appendix D: Maps outlining community areas in question

Appendix E: Ethics Submission
Chapter 1
Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of Thesis

There is a great deal of research in the discipline of geography that addresses the well-being of residents in suburban and urban neighbourhoods (Matthew and Yang, 2010; Ross et al., 2004); similarly, much focus in criminology has been placed on identifying areas with increased risk of crime and local residents’ perceptions of safety (Charron, 2009; Sun & Triplett, 2008; Downes and Rock, 2007). With few exceptions (see Duncan et al., 2009), there is a paucity of research that focuses on the explicit links between crime, safety, and well-being at the local neighbourhood level. Further, there is a paucity of research that addresses the locally held perceptions about crime and safety by local stakeholders and local experts, and the links among crime, safety and well-being.

The perception of crime and safety and the interaction of place is of interest to the discipline of human geography (Smith, 1987; Coleman, 1990; Wood, Shannon, Bulsara, Pikora, McCormack & Giles-Corti, 2008; Pain, 2000). Place-based theories place emphasis on understanding the built and social characteristics of places and the activities that occur around locations (Gorman, Gruenewald & Waller, 2011). In the discipline of geography, these theories address how people use the space around them and how these patterns of use can be related to anti-social, deviant or criminal behaviour. Research has indicated that particular features of the built environment play a role in the perception of crime and safety (Pain, 2000). The combination of place-based theories with social capital theories emphasizes the role of neighbourhood social disorganization
on anti-social and deviant behaviour and the role of social interactions within and between places.

The concept of social capital realized through social relationships and collective efficacy has been a compelling force for studies at the neighbourhood level (Macintrye & Ellaway, 1998; Saegert & Winkle, 1998; Coleman, 1988; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). At the neighbourhood level, local levels of crime and violence can threaten the levels of collective efficacy and social capital enjoyed by a community (Sampson, 2009). In addition, low levels of collective efficacy and social capital can influence levels of crime and decrease the perception of safety. Strong collective efficacy and social ties among neighbours may moderate levels of crime through bringing the community together with a common voice (Sampson, 2009). Research suggests that communities with high concentrations of community instability and high levels of crime may be mediated by collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997). Social capital and resources available at a neighbourhood level, in terms of level of trust between members are also considered capable of combatting levels of crime through providing opportunities and promoting ownership of shared spaces, such as community parks and reducing levels of fear in community members (Eicher & Kawachi, 2011; Gainey et al., 2011; Baum et al., 2009). Community well-being is therefore impossible to achieve without consideration of local patterns of crime and safety that influence such key community dimensions as collective efficacy and social capital.

At the individual-level, day-to-day activities, decisions and behaviours can be affected consciously and subconsciously based on perceptions of and experiences with crime and safety in an individual’s local neighbourhood setting. For example, in neighbourhoods where residents perceive that local incivilities and crime are high, regardless of actuality, fear about crime and instability among residents is also often high (Wyant, 2008). This can in turn influence the psychosocial and physical well-being of the individual over time, over and above the direct
impacts perceptions of safety and well-being experienced from being a direct victim of crime. The same is true at the local neighbourhood level and community well-being is impossible to achieve without consideration of local patterns of crime and safety. The perceptions of local stakeholders and experts are important to examine in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of local determinants and experiences of crime and community well-being (Wyant, 2008)

Further, since perceived community cohesion and safety can account for variations between neighbourhoods regarding safety and well-being, it is vital to obtain a clear understanding of local residents perceptions of their neighbourhoods in addition to objective features of these neighbourhoods (Baum et al., 2009). Few studies exist however, that examine the perceptions of local experts, such as police officers, school officials, social and service providers and long-time residents (Sun & Triplett, 2008).

A geographic community may be made up of geographic boundaries, common ties, social interactions, and interdependencies, or a combination (Poland & Mare, 2005). According to Poland and Mare (2005), a condition for a geographic community is that it has a geographic boundary. According to the Dictionary of Human Geography, 5th edition (2009), a community is “a group of people who share common culture, value and/or interests, based on social identity and/or territory and who have some means of recognizing and (inter)acting upon, those commonalities (pg. 103).” Further the definition of neighbourhood is “an urban dominated by resident units” (pg 494) and the term is highly dependent upon the particular location in which it is embedded, the local political and social culture, and the perspective of the individual experiencing or observing the neighbourhood” (pg. 495).
This research will utilize the words *community* to define the broader social community initially identified by the CAC, and *neighbourhood* to describe a specific geographic area that this social community is bound to in this research, and in particular the geographic boundaries determined by Statistics Canada’s administrative unit of a dissemination area\(^1\). This researcher understands a community is a fluid unit that can not typically be tied to physical boundaries such as specific streets. Due to the requirements of the broader research project that this research fits within, the boundaries of the dissemination area were used to establish the geographic boundaries of individual neighbourhoods within each selected community.

1.2 Broader Research Project

This research project is one component of a broader research project led by Professor Dana Wilson. This research was a partnership between Safe City Mississauga, Peel Crown Attorney’s Office, Peel Regional Police, the Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon, and Brampton Safe City. The broader research project had four objectives, and this thesis research addressed the fourth objective in particular:

1. To describe social and spatial patterning of crime across Mississauga and Brampton and collaboratively (i.e., in partnership with the established community partners for this project) identify three priority neighbourhoods with respect to crime and socio-economic characteristics in each of the municipalities in the Region of Peel to be

\(^1\) A dissemination area is defined by Statistics Canada as a small relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks which have an approximate population between 400-700 persons (Statistics Canada, 2006).
further explored in subsequent objectives.

2. To develop a community environmental survey tool (NEST) that can be implemented by researchers and community members to enhance an understanding of local-level community resources, needs and priorities relating to community safety and well-being.

3. To pilot the survey tool in three selected areas (i.e., one in each of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga) identified in objective one.

4. To further explore the connections between community environments and crime through key informant interviews in each of the three NEST pilot community sites.

An important component of the broader research project and the research for this thesis was that it was funded as a community-based participatory research (CBPR). According to WK Kellog Foundation (2013), a CBPR is a "collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings". CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities." The research conducted for this thesis was in alignment with the needs and perspectives of the community partners involved with the broader research project.

For the broader research project, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was established by the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel (co-funders of the broader research project). The CAC was established at the point of funding the broader research project to oversee the project from the beginning to end in order to ensure the objective, methods, interpretation
and dissemination of the findings aligned with the needs of the broader community and individual agencies represented in the committee. CAC members included representatives from the Boys and Girls Club of Peel Region, City of Brampton, Peel Crown Attorney’s Office, Peel District School Board, Peel Regional Police, Polycultural Immigration and Community Services, Social Planning Council of Peel, United Way of Peel Region, Town of Caledon, Brampton Safe City, City of Mississauga, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Peel Police Services Board, Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon Detachment, Region of Peel, Safe City Mississauga and YMCA Peel. The CAC was established to ensure the research project is a collaborative one with relevant community partners and to act as a liaison to connect with specific local individuals and organization to connect the research to key informants.

1.3 Research Question and Objectives

There is a general consensus on the broader and often interrelated factors that influence crime. However, these general factors do not influence each community in the same way. This research seeks to examine the socio-environmental elements of crime, safety and well-being at the community level in the Region of Peel.

This thesis investigates the perceived connections between the built and social environments and community crime and safety in the Region of Peel. The research will use key informants to discover what dimensions of social capital are seen as important to influencing crime and acting as a barrier to increasing safety and cohesion in a neighbourhood. Through semi-structured key informant interviews with key individuals throughout the three communities within the Region of Peel, this research will use a qualitative analysis to understand how the built and social environment influence the perceptions about crime and safety and asses the responses from the key informant interviews to determine how they relate to social capital.
Specifically, this study was guided by the following questions:

1. How is community crime and safety linked with elements of the built and social environment?

2. How do perceived links between crime and the built and social environment relate to dimensions of social capital?

In order to address these questions, the objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate the perceptions of local experts about local (neighbourhood) crime phenomena and factors influencing crime and safety;

2. To explore dimensions of social capital as pathways through which the social and built environment influence local levels of crime and safety;

3. To document local experts’ recommendations for reducing local levels of crime;

4. To identify characteristics of the social and built environment that can be modified to bolster social capital and reduce local levels of crime and enhance safety.
This research is important to the discipline of geography because it explores how factors influencing crime and safety are manifested in local built and social environments. There is a need to understand place where day-to-day activities occur. The discipline of geography has brought the connection of place to the forefront as a critical element of the lived experiences in a community through their study of place-related attitudes, behaviours, and feelings (Tuan 1974; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff 1983; Altman & Low 1992). A greater understanding of the social environment as a way to enrich the built environment requires a critical understanding of community member’s experiences of place.

The built environment has an impact on the social environment and the ability of how community members may perceive criminal and antisocial behaviour. This research seeks to bridge the gap in the literature by focusing on the explicit links between crime, safety and well-being, and in particular how local stakeholders and local experts view these links. This research will also contribute to discipline of geography by further examining the social and environmental dimensions of crime and safety at the community levels, and how social capital is a mediating factor between the broader environment that can influence the perception of crime and safety. Despite aggregate levels of reported crime decreasing in communities across Canada, perceptions of crime and victimization have remained the same (Statistics Canada, 2006). As well, there are difficulties obtaining local level data concerning crime, a key issue in the Region of Peel, preventing an understanding of how aggregate levels of reported crime are displayed locally and where exactly inequalities exist with respect to the burden of crime.

The practical applications of this research can help the Region of Peel identify local level issues and opportunities that can contribute to building safer communities. This is critical in order for the Region of Peel to identify community-based interventions that align with the specific needs and priorities of local experts to create safe and cohesive communities.
1.4 Thesis Organization

In order to adequately investigate the relationships between the built and social environments and community crime and safety in the Region of Peel, this thesis first reviews existing bodies of empirical research and theoretical ideas in the areas of the built and social environment and social capital. This review will be used to develop a framework for understanding the dimensions of community as well as the relationship of crime and the environment. Section two presents a review of the academic literature on the built environment, social environment, social capital and perceptions about the connections between social capital and crime. Section three articulates the methodology and research design utilized in this study. Section four outlines the study's key findings from the key informant interviews. Section five discusses the theoretical and substantive contributions of this research, addresses the limitations and offers suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This research examines connections between social capital, crime and well-being at the community level with a particular emphasis on elements within the built and social environment that influence local dimensions of social capital and local perceptions about crime and safety. Social capital is commonly described as the features of social life – networks, shared norms, reciprocity and trust – that enable a community to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam, 1996). An individual’s fear and perceived risk of crime is based on the community in which the individual resides. A community can influence perceptions about crime and safety through structural characteristics, visual signs of disorder, and actual crime. However, as explained in the review of academic literature in this section, individual differences in perceived levels of crime and safety can be moderated by the built and social environment through these networks, shared norms, reciprocity and trust of social capital.

Much research has been done on neighbourhoods and crime, including identifying areas with increased risk of crime (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Scarborough, et al., 2010; Brunton-Smith & Sturgis, 2011), identifying risk factors for local crime rates, (Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Agnew et al., 2008, Hipp, 2010), and how communities control crime and negotiate order (Carr, 2012). Research has also examined factors that influence local residents’ perceptions of disorder and crime (Pitner et al., 2012), as well as perceptions of safety (Borroah, & Carcach 1997; Kullberg et al., 2009; Doran & Lees, 2005). With few exceptions (see Duncan et al., 2009), there
is a paucity of research that focuses on the perceived links between crime, safety, and well-being from local stakeholders and experts. There is a lack of research in this area in the Region of Peel, which has been identified locally and is evidenced by local funding for the broader research project that this thesis fits within. This thesis addresses this gap by exploring perceptions that local stakeholders in the Region of Peel hold about the perceived connections between community characteristics and local levels of crime, safety, and community well-being, and how these may be understood as dimensions of social capital. It is important to address this gap for practical and applied community-based research and planning to understand the connections at the local community level and to identify opportunities to affect change (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Kimmel et al., 2012).

A particular emphasis is placed on the interplay between characteristics of the built and social environment that influence how community experts perceive and interact with their local community environments, which in turn shape local levels of social capital. To the best of the author’s knowledge at the time of this research, previous research has not examined the local contexts of crime and community well-being by exploring connections between community environments and perceived social capital, as understood by local stakeholders and local experts in the Region of Peel.

The Region of Peel is a relatively young region compared to the neighbouring City of Toronto. Toronto has been the subject of many research studies including those examining local crime-related issues (See O’Grady et al., 2010; Bowes & Ihlanfeldt, 2001; Chiricos et al., 1997), while far fewer studies have occurred in the Region of Peel. United Way Toronto released “Building Strong Neighbourhoods: closing gaps and creating opportunities in Toronto’s inner suburbs” (2012) that addressed the decline in Toronto’s neighbourhoods. The rapid growth of Peel in recent decades as a major center for immigration, and a context that contains rural, urban, and
suburban settings, coupled with few neighbourhood-based studies make the Region an interesting and timely location for this research. Finally, a community approach to explore the connections between crime, social capital, and well-being at the community level can support the development of a model that bridges the two often separate streams that either focus on crime or community well-being, but not often both.

The following diagram (see figure 1, below) is adapted from Matthews and Yang (2010) and Kawachi and colleagues (1999) and illustrates the relationship of the built and social environment on crime, and the mitigating factors related to social capital that will be discussed during this literature review.
This diagram above illustrates the how the built and social environment influence social capital which in turn influences local perceptions and local perceptions about crime and safety. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between these three concepts.
The mediator of social capital, with its own range of dimensions of formal and informal ties, reciprocity, trust, social norms, may help to intervene with the built and social environment to reduce – or increase – illness, crime and the perceptions about crime and safety. The social and built environments have a direct impact on the ability of a community to come together and utilize and build upon the community assets (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Perceptions of local resources and norms, crime and well-being also have direct impact on the ability of a community to work together to reduce crime and create a cohesive and organized community. Brown and colleagues (2003) linked community clean-up and revitalization efforts to positive perceptions of the community by its members. The ability and willingness to address community-level problems are influenced by the perception community members have to their communities. As these bonds can motivate residents to participate in their communities and work to improve and protect them, the development of these bonds is critical to the well-being of neighborhoods (Brown, Perkins & Brown, 2003).

This literature review will begin with describing social capital and its dimensions, and how social capital can influence the perception about crime and safety. This will be prefaced by introducing social disorganization theory as a founding theory from which social capital emerged. Next, the built and social environments will be discussed regarding their influence on social capital and safety and the perceptions about crime and safety. Finally, the literature review concludes with how local experts perceive the relationships between the social and physical environment and crime.

2.2 Social Capital

Building from the earlier works of Shaw and McKay (1942) and others, social capital has emerged as a similar theory to social disorganization and has been defined by Robert Putnam
(1995, p. 67) as “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation.” Social capital is considered to be a product of how community members interact with one another, with a particular emphasis on networks, shared values and norms of behaviour that encourage social cooperation, sometimes among diverse individuals (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001). While not exclusively focused on crime like the social disorganization theory, social capital has been used to understand local crime phenomena in addition to community wellbeing. In particular, high levels of social capital, are considered to both mitigate against local crime levels and enhance the quality of life of residents through a high local capacity of residents to work together to affect change, maintain active ownership over shared spaces, and informal control over local behaviours (Eicher & Kawachi, 2011; Gainey et al., 2011; Baum et al., 2009).

As indicated in figure 1 (above), the key dimensions of social capital discussed here include formal and informal ties, reciprocity, trust, and social norms. These characteristics of communities are considered influential on community outcomes including social cohesion, levels of informal social control, and eventual crime rates as well as the overall sense of community and belonging residents hold about their community. This research recognizes that social capital is influenced by the interplay between the characteristics of individuals in a community as well as the built environment and the social environment. The former pertains to the physical human-made aspects of a community, while the latter pertains to the social elements of the community, including the social setting and groups in which people belong. The following dimensions of social capital are therefore described in relation to their connections between local social and physical environments.
2.2.1 Formal and Informal Social Ties

Hirschi (1969, p16) describes formal and informal social ties or bonds as “elements of social bonding including attachment to families, commitment to social norms and institutions (school, employment), involvement in activities, and the belief that these things are important”. Informal social ties are described as those developed with family, friends and others within an individual’s social network, while formal social ties are those connections that exist within the context of a formal organization, such as bylaws, statues, rules and regulations against deviant behaviour and are enforced through police officers, courts, judges, school systems, teachers and government agencies. Increased levels of informal and formal social ties among community members can lead to increased levels of connection, trust and reciprocity at the local level (Stone, 2003). Without informal and formal social ties, community members may have high levels mistrust or even fear and begin to feel alienated and withdrawn from their community (Ross & Jang, 2000).

2.2.2 Reciprocity and Trust

Reciprocity is when an action is responded to by another similar type of action. In a community setting, reciprocity, or ‘trading favours’, implies that people will respond to friendly actions in an equally friendly manner, and thus create a more cooperative and collegial community. These small favours can create a sense of obligation and expectation to continue with positive reciprocating actions and sets the groundwork for future positive acts of kindness. Evidence suggests that when community members know that others will act in the same way, an informal sense of trust and mutuality is generally instilled among residents (Stone, 2003).
2.2.3 Social Norms

Social bonds or ties are also considered to be influential in creating a sense of obligation that community members may take on with respect to norms of behaviour within the community. Social norms are viewed as the expectation that community members behave according to an unspoken code of behaviour (Coleman, 1988). Communities with strong social ties and accepted norms of behaviour are considered to have strong informal social control whereby the community informally regulates general rules or social norms of behaviour. Informal social controls are not stated officially, but are implicit norms and customs that are accepted within the community and are demonstrated through socialization at social institutions, such as work, family and schools. Informal social controls are enforced through social interactions between people by way of reinforcing appropriate behaviour and addressing inappropriate action through chastisement, ridicule, and gestures of disapproval (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Informal social controls are important to maintain social unity and order.

2.3 Roots of Social Capital and Related Theories

Social capital was developed from existing criminological theories including social disorganization, territorial functioning, and broken windows. These theories related to social capital explain the connection between low informal social control and resulting community-level incivilities and more serious crimes.

Social disorganization is considered the inability of community members to achieve shared values or to solve jointly experienced problems in the absence or breakdown of certain types of social bonds and relationships among people (Bursik, 1988). The theory of social disorganization, developed by Shaw and McKay (1942), suggests that crime thrives in the
presence of inadequate community-level social controls such as family, schools, churches, and voluntary community organizations. Disorder in society thus comes from the violations of norms regarding acceptable behaviour, which, if allowed to perpetuate, these violations can then become the norm (Skogan, 1990).

Social disorganization focuses on the relationship between community structure, social control and crime and the (in)ability of a community to realize common goals through collective efficacy and the ability to solve community issues. According to Sampson (1992), the central component of social disorganization theory is socio-structural barriers “impeded the development of the formal and informal ties that promote social cohesion and the ability to solve common problems (p. 47).” The theory addresses the community’s ability to mediate the perception of crime, safety and community disorder through the social environment including the more recent concept of social capital, formal and informal social ties, and collective efficacy.

Territorial functioning focuses on the behaviour or treatment of shared spaces. This consists of attitudes related to the protection and perception of spaces, behaviours expressed through surveillance and landscaping, and visible markers that antisocial or unaccepted behaviour are likely to be defended by the occupants (Craik & Appleyard, 1980; Taylor et al., 1984). The active monitoring of public spaces by local residents and the creation of an environment that is unwelcoming to graffiti and vandalism can send a message that anti-social or criminal behaviours cannot occur without a strong risk of being detected and works to increase informal social control.

Broken windows describes how the monitoring and maintenance of a given community or community by its members can effectively deter the occurrence or accumulation of physical incivilities such as vandalism and graffiti, littering, as well as the escalation of criminal acts such
as property damage, theft and other anti-social behaviours (Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Skogan, 1990; Kelling & Coles 1997). The analogy of the broken window is that a single instance of disorder, such as a broken window, can create a chain reaction to community decline if it is not fixed. Similar to social disorganization, this sends a message to residents and the surrounding area that the mechanisms in place for regular monitoring and upkeep have been broken down. In a community where collective efficacy and social cohesion and control are low, one broken window left unattended may thus increase the likelihood of future broken windows or other disorderly behaviours and physical incivilities such as littering, graffiti, vandalism or escalating antisocial behaviours.

2.4 Related Concepts that May be Viewed as Outcomes of Social Capital

A key concept considered as an outcome of social capital or correlated with social capital that influences local crime rates and levels of community well-being is social cohesion. This concept is described below as outcomes influenced by the main of social capital (i.e., informal and formal social ties, trust and reciprocity, and social norms). While they are distinct theories in and of themselves, it is acknowledged that they are influenced by many of the same dimensions of social capital. Sense of community is also included in this section as an outcome linked with all three of these concepts.

2.4.1 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is defined as the “ability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (Morenoff et al., 2001, pg1). Social cohesion is considered a characteristic of a social unit, such as a neighbourhood, that explains the bonds that bring residents together through common values, social order and control (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002). Social cohesion works to increase a community member’s sense of belonging
within the community. Socially cohesive communities can effect change or action more readily than less cohesive ones as there is strength in numbers and a shared vision or plan.

Sampson (1999) considers that it is not sufficient to address incivilities, such as graffiti and litter alone in attempts to reduce major crime, such as homicide and robberies. However, the atmosphere of a collective community or a socially cohesive community, with members who take pride and ownership within their communities may send the message that anti-social and deviant behaviours and crimes are not tolerated (Sampson, 1999).

2.4.2 Sense of Community

The social fabric of a community, or the experience of a community, is viewed as a result of the social ties and informal social control operating in the community. A connection to others within the community creates interdependence, feelings of belonging and collective willingness to work together to ensure the needs of all neighbours are met as part of a larger and more functional community. A sense of community is considered a product of the social attachment, sense of responsibility and level of engagement individuals have within their community. With a community sense of belonging, members feel that they matter to one another and to the community, that their needs and the needs of others will be met through everyone’s commitment to the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Through a strong sense of community, communities can come together to demand higher quality amenities (e.g., collective efficacy) (Kawachi & Berkman 2000; Veenstra, 2000). A perception of high quality community facilities is associated with increased levels of community belonging (Bowling et al., 2006). Further, those who participate in community organizations and events have been found to view the community more fondly than those who do not (Glynn, 1981; Alhbrandt & Cunningham, 1979).
Schweitzer and colleagues (1999) found that the perception of crime and safety is more strongly related to a low sense of community than related to the actual incidence of crime. As a resident’s sense of community is not static, it can be enhanced through social ties, collective efficacy and social cohesion. (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). A sense of community belonging by community members has been linked to social capital (Statistics Canada, 2005; 2008; 2009; Ross, 2002; Shields, 2008). People with a high sense of community belonging are more likely to have more ties with other individuals within the community. Equally, people with a low sense of community belonging are likely to be socially isolated and have fewer ties with other individuals.

2.5 Perceptions about the Connections between Social Capital and Crime

Perceptions about crime or the fear of being a victim of crime have a strong bearing on individual and community well-being, though it should be noted that perceptions about crime and safety is not the same as actual crime or the likelihood of being a victim of crime. An individual’s perceived level of safety and perceptions about crime and safety are often based on a combination of local physical and social (dis)order, actual community crime levels, and a host of individual-level factors such as gender, family structure, and history with crime or violence (LaGrange et al., 1992). For example, residents in neighbourhoods with high levels of fear based on social or physical incivilities can be with or without high levels of actual crime. Equally, residents in neighbourhoods with high actual crime rates may even perceive high levels of safety based on low levels of social and physical incivilities (Wyant, 2008).

At the individual-level, day-to-day activities, decisions and behaviours can be affected consciously and subconsciously based on perceptions of and experiences with crime and safety in an individual’s local surroundings. This can in turn influence the psychosocial and physical
well-being of the individual over time, whether or not the individual has any direct experiences with crime (i.e., being a victim of crime or violence).

The levels of incivilities and antisocial behaviours in a community are considered influential on local crime rates, as well as having a strong impact on local residents’ perceptions of safety and their ability to develop and maintain connections with one another throughout their community. This can lead to a positive feedback loop where increased local levels of disorder can influence residents’ day-to-day perceptions, including the avoidance of public areas and the retreat into home environments. The perception of crime and disorder may discourage the building of a collective response (e.g., collective efficacy) by the community to address crime and disorder (Sampson, 2012). Less involvement in the public realm can result in a reduced willingness to intervene to maintain public order or to address physical signals of deterioration. When residents retreat into their houses, they also tend to cease creating relationships with their neighbours, which also works to weaken social connections or bonds and informal social control (Covington & Taylor 1991; Perkins & Taylor 1996; Rountree & Land 1996; Borooah & Carcach 1997). Local perceptions about crime and safety are also thus important to assess in addition to actual crime rates, as they contribute to the behaviours and ultimately the well-being of local residents.

It is important to consider the perceptions of local stakeholders and local experts in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of local determinants and experiences of crime and community well-being (Wyant, 2008). For example, research has demonstrated that in neighbourhoods where residents perceive that local incivilities and crime are high, regardless of actuality, fear about crime and instability among residents is also high (Wyant, 2008). Zelinka and Brennan (2001) examined aspects of the urban environment through planning and community design that influence perceptions about crime and safety in the United States through a series of in-depth qualitative case studies. Their study concluded that efforts to reduce the
perceptions about crime and safety among residents would have the most success if they engage the actual citizens of the targeted areas, embrace diversity, and enhance a sense of community. Few studies exist that examine the perceptions of both local stakeholders and local experts (Sun & Triplett, 2008).

2.6 Built Environment

The built environment is defined as the human-made surroundings of a community or community and encompasses places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks, and transportation systems (Weich et al., 2001). Aspects of the built environment, such as housing style and density (e.g., detached, semi-detached, low or high rise), and broader residential design (e.g., suburban, rural, or urban, as well as attention to design features that may influence patterns of ‘natural surveillance’), land use, and public spaces can influence patterns of interactions and behaviours of residents and provide opportunities for the development of social ties. In addition to features of the social environment, the built environment is considered influential in shaping local levels of social capital and collective efficacy that a community accumulates (Morenoff et al., 2001), which can ultimately influence crime or perceptions about crime and safety at the community level.

The built environment can influence local levels of natural surveillance and provide individuals with the ability to easily see what is occurring in a particular setting. The ability to observe and also to be observed is a major component of natural surveillance and a founding principle of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines originally developed by Jeffery (1973). Increasing the ability of residents to naturally observe social activities going on in public or private spaces is considered an effective security method that effectively sends a signal to potential criminals or vandals that there are limited places for hiding or behaving in an anti-
social manner without detection. Natural surveillance is enhanced in areas by arranging built structures and vegetation to allow for clear sight lines, increased visibility through lighting and encouraging space for social interaction. Clear and unobstructed areas also encourage social activities to take place out in the open, as community residents feel safer under the watchful eye by other community members. Research into criminal and anti-social behaviour has demonstrated that an offender’s decision to offend or not to offend is influenced by the perceived risk of being caught (Jeffery, 1973). Defensible spaces are those that through physical characteristics, such as building layout and site plan, can function to allow inhabitants themselves to become key agents in ensuring their security (Perkins et al., 1992). Through increasing natural sightlines by designing windows, lighting and landscaping to improve one’s ability to see and to be seen in a local environment can reduce the opportunity of criminal and antisocial behaviour by increasing the risk of detection (Jeffrey, 1971).

Housing style and density within a community can influence opportunities for establishing informal ties, and building trust among residents. For example single detached or semi-detached homes may provide more opportunities for residents to encounter their neighbours during their day-to-day activities, and to identify individuals and families within specific homes or units. In contrast, low or high rise apartment or condo buildings with large-scale underground or outdoor parking lots may provide very few opportunities for the same individuals to encounter one another during their daily routines, or to identify units or buildings where individuals live (Curley, 2010). This is, however, very dependent on the level of social ties and social cohesion. For example, in high-rise buildings with a high sense of cohesion and high levels of community interaction may experience greater trust amongst neighbours. Equally, a community of single-detached homes in an area of low social cohesion may have low levels of interactions with other. Few opportunities for residents to run into one another or even to become familiar as individuals
and families will by necessity limit opportunities for establishing informal ties and eventual trust among fellow residents to create social cohesion.

Land use mix, such as mixed residential and commercial as compared with exclusive residential can also influence opportunities for establishing informal ties (e.g., through bringing more residents in contact with one another and business owners as they frequent various commercial establishments), as well as establishing formal ties (e.g., connecting local organizations with one another and to local residents), and eventually trust (Dale & Newman, 2010). Vrij and Winkel (1991) found that the perception of crime decreases when aspects of the built environment are altered for better surveillance. These include increasing the built environment to include multiple functional areas, which have a mix of residential, commercial and leisure space and attract a constant flow of community members throughout the day and thus increase natural surveillance. Further, the presence of public and non-governmental institutions, such as schools, health care clinics, community centers, religious institutions, and settlement centers within neighbourhoods can also create opportunities for ties between and among institutions as well as opportunities for formal ties between residents and institutions through volunteering, membership, and participation in events and activities (Browning et al., 2010).

The nature and extent of public spaces can work in similar ways as land use to provide opportunities for informal social gatherings and the development of informal ties and trust. Public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, trails and town squares, are typically flexible and accessible spaces that can encourage and facilitate greater connections among residents. Community members can use these dynamic spaces as meeting places, or to participate in a variety of activities, whether planned or spontaneous. Shared community spaces and a welcoming residential environment can engender residents to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for those spaces, their residences and their neighbourhood. This can increase the
likelihood that they will actively work to maintain order (i.e., avoid littering, clean up dog waste, maintain private gardens, etc.) within the community (Taylor et al., 1984; Pacione, 1986; Kaplan, 1983).

2.7 Social Environment

The social environment refers to the immediate physical and social setting where people reside and carry out their day-to-day activities. People from within similar social environments may trust and help one another in creating a socially cohesive community (Galabuzi, 2004). A level of trust can be fostered from the social environment, and other dimensions of social capital (i.e., collective efficacy) may lead to people working towards a common goal for the community. This cooperation can influence the development of social capital formed by similar values and attitudes that influence interactions among community members.

Antisocial and criminal behaviour depend on the incentives facing the individual, but also on the individuals and social norms influencing the individual. An individual is less likely to commit antisocial and criminal behaviour if the community punishes deviant behaviour, through formal and/or informal means (i.e., arrest and/or shaming). The theory of social organization describes how communities that are empowered through their trust in each other can enable residents to take action against antisocial and criminal behaviour resulting in lower crime rates (Sampson & Groves, 1988). A high level of social capital within a community creates a social environment that disapproves of antisocial and criminal behaviour.

Physical disorder and incivilities are considered to be more common in neighbourhoods with high levels of social disadvantage than in neighbourhoods with high levels of relative advantage (Ross & Jang, 2000). Residents of socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods may have less income
and less time to maintain their residences, as do businesses in socially disadvantaged
neighbourhoods who have less revenue to contribute to community improvements (Ross & Jang,
2000; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). In particular, studies have found that neighbourhoods
with high levels of residential instability, ethnic heterogeneity, and low socioeconomic
indicators, impede the development of a shared and articulated system of norms, through which
informal social control is practiced and maintained, and are therefore more vulnerable to physical
disorder and other related crimes (Cohen et al., 2003; Sampson et al., 2002; Sampson &
Raudenbush, 1999; Ross & Jang, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997; Curley, 2010).

Physical disorder and poor health are more common in poor neighbourhoods, where residents
often have less income and often less time to maintain their homes, yards, and public spaces. In
addition less affluent neighbourhoods are often situated in less desirable areas by way of having
few residential amenities and often a disproportionate presence of disamenities (Cohen et al.,
2003; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Neighbourhoods with physical disorder can generate
further disorder as residents who have the capacity to move to less disordered neighbourhoods,
leaving behind those who have fewer resources to affect change (Wilson, 1987). Less affluent
communities often end up with few resources to maintain public spaces and to clean up physical
disorder such as picking up litter and maintaining green spaces. Local businesses in such areas
also often lack the revenue and resources to maintain and improve their business image, and have
less collective influence on governments to invest resources to improve the community (Alwitt
& Donley, 1997; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999).

Residential stability, which is living in the same home for more than one year, is considered an
integral component in creating shared common values, social efficacy and informal social
control (Morenoff et al., 2001). Skogan and Maxfield (1981) concluded that the perception of
crime is less likely among young and middle-aged persons who own their homes and have lived
in their neighborhoods for a long time as opposed to renters and those who are newcomers to the same community (1981). Residential instability is represented by frequent residential moves, doubling up families in single-family homes and homelessness. Neighbourhoods with high residential turnover coupled with high proportions of renters may make it difficult for neighbours to make connections with each other and to develop trust (Ross and Jang, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997). Neighbourhoods with high levels of homeownership are typically associated with residential stability and have been shown to have higher levels of property maintenance, and the longer tenure of residents may result in increased capacity of residents to control and influence their physical surroundings (Jones et al., 2010). Homeowners typically have a more invested interest in residential upkeep, property maintenance and community improvements than renters (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). These conditions can be cyclical as high concentrations of poverty can lead to lower investments in housing and businesses, which can lead to high residential turnover and a high proportion of renters. The departure of residents with the financial capacity to move can decrease surrounding property values and can result in an increasingly homogenous population by income. In contrast, high levels of rental properties can lead to increased residential turnover, which can also contribute to increased physical disorder as renters do not have the same incentive or capacity to invest in their properties and surroundings (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999).

Neighbourhoods with high residential instability typically have high proportions of vulnerable people, such as individuals who live with limited or fixed incomes (e.g., seniors), residents without fluency or proficiency in English (e.g., newcomer populations), and transient community members (e.g., those who have unstable housing as a result of economic or employment-related hardships) (Kiefer, et al., 2008). Vulnerable populations often become over-represented in less ordered or organized neighbourhoods, with a concentration of poverty and disinvestment in housing and business. Often as a result of low income and difficulties accessing stable
employment, newcomers are more likely than Canadian-born to spend over 50% of their total household income on housing costs (Preston et al., 2009). Also, many newcomers suffer from ‘hidden homelessness’, where individuals or families are out of sight of the ‘normal’ homeless population. The hidden homeless live on the floors or sofas of friends and family, in shared accommodations and multiple family dwellings (Preston et al., 2009).

High rates of immigrants and newcomers in a community have also been linked to lower levels of social bonds (Jones et al., 2010; Morenoff et al., 2001; Sampson et al., 2002; Sampson et al., 1997). Newcomers may feel intimidated due to a number of factors (such as language, family responsibilities, attending multiple jobs part-time jobs) to join community networks and thus may not develop social bonds with other community members. A Canadian 2004 social inclusion survey indicated that 34% of newcomers were conscious of the existence of racism (Galabuzi, 2004). Studies of social support among recent immigrants show that many newcomers prefer to stay within their own social/ethnic groups for support and experience discomfort and other barriers in seeking formal ‘mainstream’ support (Simich, et al., 2004). Newcomers may have more reservations about connecting with others in the community. This feeling of social exclusion can then negatively affect the development of social bonds and trust. A report by Statistics Canada (Perreault, 2004, pg. 14) reported that “even though immigrants run less risk of being a victim of violent crime, and despite being more likely to feel that there is no social disorder in their neighbourhood, they express slightly higher levels of fear than the Canadian-born population.” It is important to note that newcomers have not been statistically connected to higher rates of crime (Perreault, 2004).

2.8 Conclusion

This literature review sought to identify and explain the key elements of social capital, and the connections between social capital, crime and well-being at the community level with a
particular emphasis on elements within the built and social environment that influence local dimensions of social capital and perceptions about crime and safety. This review identified a gap in studies specifically for the Region of Peel in examining the local context of crime and community well-being in exploring the connections between community environments and perceived social capital, as understood by local stakeholders. While there are many studies conducted in neighbourhoods within Toronto (United Way, 2004; Meagher, ND; Charron, 2009) similar studies have not yet been conducted on the diverse and rapidly growing neighbour of the Region of Peel.

Studies have been conducted in other contexts that examine the various elements, such as neighbourhoods with increased risk to crime (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Brunton-Smith & Sturgis, 2011), identifying risk factors for crime (Agnew et al., 2008) and perceptions of disorder, crime and safety (Pitner et al., 2012; Borooah, & Carcach 1997). None have been identified however that has studied the relationships of the elements in combination for the Region of Peel. Further, while quantitative data is available at a large-scale aggregate level (i.e., Brampton and Mississauga as a whole) to indicate the level of crime, there are no studies that analyze the local micro scale, or studies that analyze how local stakeholders and experts perceive levels of crime and safety.

The objectives of this study thus are to examine the local perceptions about crime and safety at the micro-level in the Region of Peel, as well as to explore the connections between the built and social environments and perceptions about crime, and how social capital may be a mediating factor between the broader environment and crime. It will highlight the perceptions that key informants and local experts hold in regard the local community environment including the built and social environment. This study will contribute to the literature of the social and
environmental dimensions of community crime and safety, social capital, and literature available on the Region of Peel in particular.
Chapter 3
Methods and Research Design

3 Methods and Research Design

3.1 Overview

A description of the method framework and the reasoning are explained in this section. This research relied primarily on qualitative methods to address the research objectives. Qualitative data collection and subsequent analysis was conducted with 22 key informants across three study sites in the Region of Peel in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Quantitative methods were also utilized to provide a context for the research setting. Quantitative data consisted of secondary data analysis (descriptive analysis) of demographic data obtained from the national census for the Region of Peel, as well as from a local environmental observational survey tool (also called the Neighbourhood Environmental Survey Tool – [NEST]) that was conducted in the three study sites as part of the larger project that this thesis research fits within (as described in section 1.2).

3.2 The Region of Peel

The Region of Peel consists of three municipalities – Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon (see figure 2, below). It is located in Southern Ontario west of the Greater Toronto Area. The Region of Peel is the second largest municipality in Ontario, second to Toronto. From 2006 to 2011, the population of Peel increased by 11.8% to 1,296,814 people largely due to its high immigration rate (Statistics Canada, 2006).
The Region of Peel is serviced by two law enforcement agencies, namely the Peel Regional Police and the Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon Detachment. The Peel Regional Police is the third largest municipal police service in Ontario and provides police coverage for the cities of Mississauga and Brampton. The Peel Regional Police is partnered with several agencies also focused on crime prevention and community safety such as Brampton Safe City, Peel Crime Stoppers, Safe City Mississauga, The United Way of Peel and Victim Services of Peel. The Ontario Provincial Police – Caledon Detachment provides police coverage for Caledon. OPP – Caledon is involved with community partners such as Caledon Citizens on Patrol,
According to Peel Regional Police’s 2012 Annual Performance Report, despite a population increase in Mississauga and Brampton of 1.1% from 1,250,000 in 2011 to 1,264,000 in 2012, reported crime rates declined. Specifically, the number of incidents reported to police decreased by 0.7%, calls for priority service requiring immediate assistance decreased by 3.1%, the rate of crimes against persons (including assault, murder, homicide, etc.) decreased by 1.5%, and crimes against property (break and enter, theft, possession of property obtained by crime) decreased by 7.6%. Similarly, Statistics Canada (see Table 3-1, below), the Crime Severity Index (CSI)\(^2\) for Peel Regional Police showed a similar reduction crime severity and supports the claim that Peel is a safe community. The actual incidents have decreased by 5.3% from 2008 to 2011. It is appreciated the above statistics are for reported criminal rates and that there is a dark figure of crime that consists of unreported or undiscovered crime.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,219,027</td>
<td>1,244,933</td>
<td>1,273,238</td>
<td>1,298,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of police officers</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,749</td>
<td>1,855</td>
<td>1,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers per 100,000 population</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual incidents</td>
<td>47,803</td>
<td>47,007</td>
<td>46,040</td>
<td>45,287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-1 Peel Regional Police – police personnel and selected incident-based crime statistics, CANSIM table 254-0004 and 252-0077. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006

\(^2\) The CSI calculates the volume and seriousness of a crime by assigning a weight to the offences of an incident. The weight is derived from an average of sentences handed down by the criminal courts, with the more serious the offence the higher weight for that offence (Statistics Canada, 2006)
Due to reporting methods of the OPP, specific data for OPP – Caledon was unobtainable by this researcher. According to Statistics Canada (see Table 3-2, below), the number of police officers in Caledon has increased by 9.6% since 2010. The CSI has held steady at 33 in 2010 and 2011 after a decrease in 2009 of 27. The actual incidents have decreased by 4.0% from 2008 to 2011.

<table>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>62,855</td>
<td>64,185</td>
<td>65,636</td>
<td>66,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of police officers</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers per 100,000 population</td>
<td>103.4</td>
<td>102.8</td>
<td>100.6</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>35.36</td>
<td>27.36</td>
<td>33.61</td>
<td>33.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual incidents</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>1,672</td>
<td>1,734</td>
<td>1,796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2 Ontario Provincial Police - Caledon Detachment – police personnel and selected incident-based crime statistics, CANSIM table 254-0004 and 252-0077. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006

3.3 Community selection process and neighbourhood boundary identification

As stated in section 1.2, this research project is one component of a broader research project. The broader project involved community-based research and the establishment of a community advisory committee (as described in Section 1.2). The CAC selected the three community areas where this qualitative research and an observational environmental survey (described in Section 1.2) would be conducted. The community selection process was based on anecdotal evidence held by the CAC pertaining to vulnerable areas in the Region of Peel, socio-economic indicators (see Section 3.8) as well as gun-related crime offences obtained through a one-time data sharing agreement with the local crown attorney’s office for use in the broader research project. The three specific micro-scale neighbourhood boundaries subsequently identified were selected based on their boundary alignment with Statistics Canada’s dissemination areas in order to be able to link these neighbourhoods with important socio-economic and demographic data from the national census. A dissemination area is defined by Statistics Canada as a small relatively stable
geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks which have an approximate population between 400-700 persons (Statistics Canada, 2006).

As noted in section 1.2, a community is a fluid construct and does not follow the geographical boundaries of a dissemination area. While key informants were asked for their opinions on the dissemination boundaries best describe the neighbourhood as well as how might they change the boundaries to better reflect their local community, the results provided in this research are confined to the geographical neighbourhood boundaries of the dissemination area.

3.4 Neighbourhood Descriptions

One community from each of the three municipalities in the Region of Peel was selected by the CAC for this research project, representing three unique contexts. The community in Brampton represents a suburban community, where it is close to but not in the city and land use is mixed with a lower population density than inner city neighbourhoods. The community in Mississauga represents an urban community with multi-story buildings, with a high population density and not very much open space or natural areas. The community in Caledon is the most representative of rural community where it is mostly residential with few businesses and a lot of open space and natural areas. The following section describes the three smaller neighbourhoods selected from each broad community area to provide context to the qualitative exploration.
Figure 3 The Region of Peel with municipalities and dissemination areas indicated.
Source: Peel Data Centre, 2006.
3.5 Brampton

The boundaries of the neighbourhood within the Brampton community selected for this study was defined by dissemination area 211272, which is part of Statistics Canada’s census tract 571.01. As indicated in figure 3 (above), this dissemination area is located in the approximate center of Brampton, in an area referred to as the community of “Queen and Kennedy”, which is the main intersection located to the north of the dissemination area. Figure 4 (below) indicates dissemination area 211272 and figures 5 and 6 (below) provide an aerial view of the area.
Figure 4 Dissemination area 211272, which is located within census tract 571.01 in Brampton. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.
Figure 5 Dissemination area 211272, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.

Figure 6 Close up view of dissemination area 211272, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.
The neighbourhood was zoned for residential, institutional, and commercial land use. The neighbourhood was mainly residential with single/semi-detached homes, medium density townhomes, and the majority of residences are in high rise high density apartments. In figures 5 and 6 (above), the single/semi-detached homes are located on the bottom left corner, the medium density townhomes are located in the bottom middle and the high rise apartments are localized in the far-right corner of the dissemination area. The institutional land use consisted of a local public school, Sir Winston Churchill Public School, and the former land of Brampton’s largest hospital, the Peel Memorial Hospital. This now-vacant land supported ancillary commercial sites, including now-abandoned medical offices. The neighbourhood had very little commercial land use with approximately 10 shops located in the south-eastern perimeter of the neighbourhood, which mainly consisted of fast-food restaurants. There was vacant commercial land on the corner of Queen Street between Centre Street and John Street which was previously medical-type offices that have closed and/or moved following the closure of Peel Memorial Hospital. The neighbourhood contained open green space south of the CN railroad tracks, and no recreation facilities (i.e., baseball diamond, soccer field, structured playground). The CN railroad track represented a human-made built barrier that bisects the community and created dead end streets. The only way to cross the train tracks is through a pedestrian overpass or to drive to the perimeter of the neighbourhood to cross. The neighbourhood was well-serviced by both Brampton public transit and Zum public transit service along the exterior roads.

3.6 Mississauga

The boundaries of the neighbourhood within the Mississauga community for this study were dissemination area 211448, which is inside Statistics Canada’s census tract 513.02. As indicated in figure 2, this dissemination area is in the southern central part of Mississauga, located in what is often referred to as the community of “5 and 10” or “Dundas and Hurontario”, which is the
main intersection located to the north of the dissemination area. Figure 7 (below) indicates dissemination area 211448, and figures 8 and 9 (below) provide an aerial view of the area.
Figure 7 Dissemination area 211448, which is located within census tract 513.02 in Mississauga. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.
Figure 8 Dissemination area 211448, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.

Figure 9 Close up view of dissemination area 211448, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.
The neighbourhood was zoned for residential and commercial land use. It was an area that had mixed commercial and residential with many commercial and residential properties within walking distance of each other. A significant portion of this neighbourhood was commercial, with approximately 50 commercial establishments located at the top and far right of figures 8 and 9, where a strip-mall setting of several chain and independent restaurants, as well as financial institutions, hair salons and grocery stores are located. The residential land use consists of low and high density residential with single detached homes and three high-rise apartment buildings. In figure 9 (above), the single homes are located on the bottom middle, and the high-apartment buildings are located on the left side of the dissemination area. The neighbourhood was serviced by Mississauga Transit and Zum Transit. There were no public parks in the neighbourhood, as well as no fire stations, hospitals, ambulance stations or police stations. It should be noted that at the time of this analysis, the neighbourhood was under re-zoning to allow for a 688-apartment unit building, office and retail commercial uses, a community center, and an 8-storey office building (Mississauga Plan, 2012).

3.7 Caledon

The boundaries of the neighbourhood within the Caledon community selected for this study were dissemination area 211206, which is inside Statistics Canada’s census tract #585.03. As indicated in figure 2, this dissemination area is in the southeast part of Caledon. Figure 10 (below) indicates dissemination area 211206, and figures 11 and 12 (below) provide an aerial view of the area.
Figure 10 Dissemination area 211206, which is located within census tract 585.03 in Caledon. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.
Figure 11 Dissemination area 211206, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.

Figure 12 Close up view of dissemination area 211206, outlined in blue. Source: Google Earth, 2013.
The neighbourhood was almost exclusively zoned for residential with very few commercial/retail businesses. Almost the entire neighbourhood was residential land use and included single/semi-detached homes and two town home complexes. The commercial land use consisted of four businesses and one restaurant (a pizza eatery) on the north-eastern perimeter. There was a large amount of space zoned as open space policy area and environment policy area throughout the neighbourhood. There were two public parks with recreational facilities (i.e., baseball diamond, soccer field, and/or structured playground), known as the Ted Houston Memorial Park and the Albion-Bolton Fairgrounds next to the Albion A. Bolton Community Centre. There was no public transit system that serviced this neighbourhood, as well as no fire stations, hospitals, ambulance stations or police stations.

3.8 Demographics

This section investigates the demographic characteristics that may influence perceptions about safety and crime as well as actual crime phenomena (Bellair, 1997, 2000; Burski & Webb, 1982; Rountree & Warner, 1999; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999; Sampson et al., 1997; Skoga, 1990; Warner & Rountree, 1997; Markowitz, Bellair, Liska & Liu, 2001). The census data for the quantitative analysis were obtained from Statistics Canada’s 2006 census. Data sets were downloaded to Excel, a spreadsheet program that allows numerical values or data to be entered into the rows or columns, and then be used for calculations, graphs, and statistical analysis. The research acknowledges that data obtained from the 2006 census may be outdated for research reported in 2013. However, at the time of this thesis that was the best local level data available during analysis in 2010-2012. At the time of this dissertation, data from the 2011 census were not available.
For analysis purposes as indicated in section 1.2 and in 3.4, the dissemination area for the three selected communities was used. The population of the three municipalities, the chosen dissemination areas and the Region of Peel is as follows.

**Table 3-3 Population for municipality, average dissemination area and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006**

The dissemination area 1206 (DA 1206) in Caledon has the highest population of the three dissemination areas in this study (see table 3-3, above). DA1206 also has the highest population in the dissemination area in comparison to the other two (see table 3-3, above). In comparison to the average dissemination area population, Caledon has on average the least number of people per dissemination area.
Table 3-4 Recent immigrant selected places of birth for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

The percent of recent immigrants represents “landed immigrants[^3] who came to Canada up to five years prior to the given census year” (Statistics Canada, 2006). The table 3-4, above, includes recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between January 1, 2001 and May 16, 2006. The three dissemination areas have smaller percentages of recent immigrants than the Region of Peel. While overall the highest place of birth for recent immigrants in the Region of Peel is Asia and the Middle East, the three dissemination areas have contrasting configurations of recent immigrants. The distribution of places of birth is highest from the Caribbean and Bermuda for the Brampton dissemination area; whereas the Mississauga dissemination area is mainly from Asia and the Middle East, and the dissemination area in Caledon is strictly from Europe. A diverse population may present a possible barrier to recent immigrants accessing or having knowledge of services available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population, 2006 - 100% data</th>
<th>Ages 0-14</th>
<th>Ages 15-24</th>
<th>Ages 25-64</th>
<th>Ages 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^3]: A landed immigrant is “a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Canadian citizens by birth and non-permanent residents (persons from another country who live in Canada and have a work or study permit, or are claiming refugee status, as well as family members living here with them) are not landed immigrants.” (Statistics Canada, 2006)
Table 3-5 Population by age grouping for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas.

The population distribution by sex and age groupings is listed in table 3-5, above. The dissemination area in Brampton has the highest percentage of both sexes with children under the age of 14 years of age. This suggests that there are a high number of young families in the area. The dissemination area in Mississauga has the lowest percentages of all sex and age groupings except for the grouping of 65+ years of age, where this dissemination area has the highest. This is a result of the retirement homes located within this dissemination area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Census Families in Private Household</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Common-law</th>
<th>Lone Parent Families</th>
<th>Lone Parent - Female</th>
<th>Lone Parent – Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-6 Percentage of census families in private household in the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

Table 3-6, above, indicates the percentage of families in private households. The majority throughout the Region of Peel are married households. However, lone parent households make up the second highest family structure followed by common-law households. The family is the primary informal social institution that can instill norms and behaviours, trust, and reciprocity (Rontree and Warner, 1999). These are elements of social capital essential to creating a cohesive community (see section 2). Lone parent households may have additional struggles that married or common-law families do not experience such as child care issues and raising a family on a
single income, which may impact the ability of a lone parent to socialize children on their own. Lone female parent households are more prevalent throughout the Region of Peel, the municipalities and the dissemination areas than lone male parent households. Rontree and Warner (1999) speculate the negative effect of women’s social ties on crime is diminished in communities with higher percentages of female-headed households due to the limited capacity of lone-parent households to exert social control over young males. The dissemination area in Brampton had a significantly high percentage of lone parent households when compared to married or common law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Economic Families</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Average Household Income</th>
<th>Prevalence of Low Income After Tax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>$72,655.00</td>
<td>$87,765.00</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>$75,704.51</td>
<td>$84,021.34</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>$43,753.00</td>
<td>$46,213.00</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>$81,208.31</td>
<td>$93,054.86</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>$22,421.00</td>
<td>$34,693.00</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>$91,638.04</td>
<td>$110,711.34</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>$53,289.00</td>
<td>$70,414.00</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-7 Median and average household incomes for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

The median household income indicates the middle value in the data when values are sorted into ascending order, while the average indicates the sum of the data divided by the number of data points (Statistics Canada, 2006). The Region of Peel and its municipalities have moderately similar median and average household incomes, and it is evident that more households earn low salaries than high salaries (see table 3-7, above). The three dissemination areas all had income levels that were less than half of the respective municipal averages. The low household income may present a litany of vulnerabilities for households attempting to survive, such as finding
affordable housing, food and the necessities of life. In the Mississauga dissemination area, the median household income is $22,421.00, which was slightly lower than the poverty level\(^4\) of $22,361 (Statistics Canada, 2006). In contrast, the dissemination area in Caledon is considerably more affluent than the other two dissemination areas.

The prevalence of households with low income after tax in the Region of Peel is very low, at 9.7% (see table 3-7, above). This measure represents households that spend more than 20% of after-tax income than average on food, shelter and clothing. The dissemination areas in Brampton and Mississauga have 20.5% and 32.6% households with low income after tax (see table 3-7, above). This is representative of a vulnerable population and a population that can become socially excluded and isolated from the greater community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Property Ownership</th>
<th>Owned</th>
<th>Rented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{4}\) Statistic Canada uses low-income cut-off (LICO) as the indicator of poverty. LICO varies according to family and community size. In 2008 the LICO after tax for a 2-person family in a large urban centre was calculated at $22,361.00.
The Region of Peel has a high percentage of residential property that is owned rather than rented (see table 3-8, above). While the municipalities of Brampton and Mississauga have similar percentages of owned residential property, the dissemination areas in Brampton and Mississauga have a higher percentage of residential property that is rented and this is evident in the housing structure types (see table 3-9, below). The dissemination areas in Brampton and Mississauga were four and three times higher respectively than their respective municipalities for rental residences. The dissemination area of Caledon has the highest percentage of owned residential property and the low percentages of rented residential ownership. Despite that, the dissemination area in Caledon had a very high percentage of rental properties relative to the municipality of Caledon. The high percentage of rental properties may result in a higher transient population with residential turnover and less investment in the community if a rental property is used as a “stop gap” in temporary housing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Occupied Private Dwellings by Structural Type</th>
<th>Single Detached</th>
<th>Semi-detached</th>
<th>Row house</th>
<th>Apartment duplex</th>
<th>Apartment 5 or more</th>
<th>Apartment 5 or less</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 The data available from Statistics Canada, 2006 census indicated that there are no apartments with 5 or more stories within the Brampton dissemination area DA 1272. However, as revealed in the NEST observations and as indicated in section 3.5, there are two apartment buildings with 5 or more stories, and these apartment buildings have been in existence for more than 10 years.
Table 3-9 Percentage of occupied private dwellings by structural type for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

The Region of Peel primarily consists of single detached homes, which represents 47.0% of all occupied private dwellings (see table 3-9, above). The dissemination area in Caledon has a higher percentage of single detached dwellings than the Regional average. As discussed in section 2.11, housing style can affect opportunities for establishing informal ties, and building trust among residents depending on the community. The dissemination area in Brampton has the highest percentage of row houses (also known as townhouses) at 86.4%. This increases the number of people living in close proximity to one another as these are one of three residences that are joined by a common wall but do not have any other dwellings either above or below (Statistics Canada, 2006). The dissemination area of Mississauga has the highest percentage of rented high-rise apartments at 74.4%, which may be an aggravating or mitigating factor to the development of informal social ties with a high percentage of people living in close proximity and sharing common spaces, such as elevators, laundry rooms and parking garages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobility Rates</th>
<th>One Year</th>
<th>Five Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movers</td>
<td>Non-Movers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1206</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-10 One and Five Year mobility rates for the Region of Peel, municipalities and dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

The one year mobility rates in the Region of Peel are relatively stable, and the five year mobility rates indicate levels of transience. The municipality and dissemination area in Caledon have the
lowest percentage of mobility one year and five years ago (see table 3-10, above). This may be representative of the number of owned residential properties (see table 3-8, above). The dissemination area in Brampton had the highest percentage of mobility and residential movement for one year. However, in five year mobility the dissemination area had more than half of its residences moving, whereas the dissemination area in Mississauga had more than half of residences remaining for five years. Residential transience may result in low levels of social capital as residents do not develop the relationships and connections to the community (see section 2).

While the dissemination area in Mississauga had the highest percentage of rented residential households (see table 3-8, above), the mobility rate for both one- and five-years is low in comparison to dissemination area in Brampton. The dissemination area also has the lowest median and average household income, and the high percentage of non-movers may be representative of households not being able to afford to move to a better community, and thus may also become socially isolated and thus reduce levels of social cohesion and control (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). In contrast, however, the low mobility rate for Caledon may be more connected to the high level owned residences and a strong sense of community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage population no certificate, diploma or degree – 25 to 64 years of age</th>
<th>Percentage population with certificate, diploma or degree – 25 to 64 years of age</th>
<th>Unemployment – 25 years and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1272</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 1448</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caledon</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-11 Percentage of population with reported levels of formal education and unemployment rate for the Region of Peel, municipalities and select dissemination areas. Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.

| DA 1206 | 16.8% | 83.2% | 6.3 |

The age category of 25 to 64 years of age represents the eligible labour force. The level of formal education attainment may be an impact on employment attainment. The Region of Peel had 87.7% of persons 24 to 64 that had a certificate, diploma or degree awarded at the post-secondary level (see table 3-12, above). This percentage was similar across the municipalities and dissemination areas in Brampton and Caledon. The dissemination area in Brampton had the lowest percent of the population 24 to 64 who had a certificate, diploma or degree awarded at the post-secondary level, and consequently the highest percentage of population with no formal post-secondary education attainment.

While post-secondary attainment is often correlated with employment, this does not seem to have a relationship as show in table 3-12 (above). The highest unemployment rate of 8.8 was in the dissemination area of Mississauga, which had one of the highest percentages of the population with formal post-secondary education. In contrast, the lowest unemployment rate at 2.7 was in the municipality of Caledon which had one of the highest percentages of the population with formal education attainment at 89.2%.

Some key similarities and differences were noted, including vulnerable populations in the three communities. In the Caledon community, residences were mostly single detached privately owned dwellings. However, the communities in Brampton and Mississauga were mostly rented premises of row houses or apartments. The community in Brampton has the highest one- and five-years mobility rate. The community in Caledon and in Brampton had the highest percentage of the population between the ages of 25-64, which represents the eligible labour force. While the Mississauga community has the highest percentage of the population aged 25-64 years of age
with a certificate, diploma or degree, the Mississauga community also has the highest rate of unemployment and the lowest levels of income, and highest population of 1st generation self-identified immigrants.

This section investigated the demographic characteristics of the Region of Peel, municipalities and the dissemination areas that may condition the effect of social cohesion on the perception of fear and safety. The perceptions of crime and safety have clear roles in the spatial and social exclusion of marginalized or vulnerable social groups. Communities with low levels of formal education, low income levels, high percentages of people living in 1-2 person households, high levels of mobility and 1st generation self-identified immigrants may lead to the creation of a vulnerable population and those that are socio-economically disadvantaged. The combination of these socio-economic inequalities may result in limited opportunities and life chances for those that experience them.

3.9 Qualitative Exploration of Local Experts

Quantitative methods are useful in the social sciences for providing a basis for suggesting relationships between different social phenomena. Qualitative methods are considered highly effective in explanatory and descriptive studies, as a way to explain why such relationships exist or in providing a more in-depth understanding of such relationships (Eisenhardt, 2002).

For this research, qualitative data collection consisted of 22 key informant interviews from the three neighbourhoods introduced above. The goals of key informant interviews were to better understand the local determinants of crime and safety from local experts in the community. Key experts are considered those individuals who possess special knowledge or status in the topic
being explored (Fetterman, 1989; Gilchrist, 1992). An advantage of using key informant interviews is that it may be necessary to only speak to a few individuals who may have knowledge about the topic of interest to explore a variety of perspectives and perceptions based on their intimate understanding of the topic at hand (Neuman & Robson, 2009).

As with all research methods there are limitations as well as strengths. Data obtained from key informant interviews and all qualitative methods in general cannot be used to make assumptions beyond the specific group of participants (Neuman & Robson, 2009). Also, qualitative research is not a research method that allows for the collection of statistical data. Further, key informants may be biased if they are not carefully selected, and key informants may be susceptible to interviewer biases (Neuman & Robson, 2009). Also, it may be difficult to prove validity of findings depending on the particular research topic and questions posed, and is difficult to generalize results to the larger population unless interviewing many key informants.

As defined by Fetterman, a good key informant is one who is “articulate and culturally sensitive” (p 59, 1989), is well-connected, and is generally an expert in their field. The answers from good key informants can assist the researcher in understanding and interpreting the concepts that are being studied. For this research, key informants were members of the community that the CAC identified as those possessing local insights into each of the neighbourhoods in question with respect to crime, safety, and community well-being.

A one-on-one interview setting (e.g., researcher and key informant participant) allowed the researcher to capture candid and sensitive information that otherwise individual informants may not feel comfortable sharing. The key informant interviews were completed with a semi-structured interview guide which enabled the interviewer the opportunity to probe deeper for
more in-depth or detailed answers to particular questions based on that particular key informant’s previous responses, and also enabled the interviewer to clarify information provided in real-time that may not be possible using other data collection methods (e.g., surveys or group discussions).

When interviewing for individual perceptions and opinions, it is ideal to connect with the key informant in a relaxed conversational environment with the participant in order to maximize the amount of information gathered (Neuman & Robson, 2009). During focus group or in a written form questionnaire, this opportunity is often lost. Given the psychosocial complexities of the perception of crime and safety, quick checklist surveys or scale-rated surveys are inappropriate. If focus groups are not facilitated effectively, the group can become influenced by one or two dominant people in the session, which can make the output very biased. Focus groups are not as efficient in covering maximum depth and opinions on particular issues. It is difficult to have participants within a focus group to share their real feelings toward sensitive topics, and can in turn influence outcome data (Neuman & Robson, 2009. The moderator leading a focus group can also greatly impact the outcome of the focus group discussion, as a moderator may intentionally or inadvertently lead focus group participants into reaching certain assumptions or conclusions about a topic. As well, the focus group environment is usually outside the environment being studied and can be very artificial.

With written form questionnaires, participants may be overwhelmed with a lengthy paper survey. Open-ended questions can generate large amounts of data that can take a long time to process and analyze, and open-ended questionnaire questions can also lead to poor data collection as there is no opportunity for further clarification to probe responses, and limits the flexibility of the participant to engage outside the question asked. Participants may answer questions superficially, especially if the questionnaire is lengthy and too in-depth.
Focus group discussions were decided against for this research as candid comments about one’s community and/or neighbours may single out particular households, community members. The potential risks of harm from participants in a focus group discussion thus outweigh the benefits of participating, especially if particular issues of concern are raised or inflated due to the discussion. Without the confidentiality and anonymity that a one-on-one interview offers, it is unlikely that participants would be willing to speak out about their perceptions related to crime and safety within their community, areas that may be more likely to be less safe than others, and areas or houses that are in need of repair, for example.

3.10 Sample Selection and Recruitment

The selection process for the key informants relied on a non-random sampling process, and consisted of a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling (Blee & Taylor, 2002). Purposeful sampling targets a specific group of people to obtain information on a specific population, and participants are chosen because of some characteristics (Robson & Neuman, 2011). Snowball sampling involves requesting initial contacts to refer to their peers or members of a target network (Robson & Neuman, 2011).

In purposeful sampling methods, individual key informants were chosen based on their connection or relevance to the research questions as well as based on their insight into the three neighbourhoods of interest. The researcher worked with the CAC to identify the categories of informants that would be recruited in each community as indicated in the target sampling in Table 3-13 (below). The CAC had established rapport with an extensive population of service providers, service-users, and other well-known community members. CAC members then identified prospective individuals that would fit within each of the categories, for a total of six potential individuals from each dissemination area. Members of the CAC provided contact
information for each of the prospective interview participants. In some cases an introduction was provided to the researcher by a CAC member (by email or by telephone) by introducing the prospective informant to the researcher and the research project. In other cases, the researcher directly contacted the prospective informant by email or by telephone with information provided by the CAC. The snowball recruitment method was used at the conclusion of an interview by asking interviewees to identify additional person(s) who they felt would be appropriate to invite as informants and to offer insight into the project. Participants were not compensated for their participation in the interviews.

It should be noted that the sampling methods used could have resulted in a biased sample of participants. Selection bias is a systematic error caused when non-random sampling of participants occurs and members of the population are less likely to be included than others (Neuman & Robson, 2009). In particular, the CAC acted as a gatekeeper to the pool of potential key informants. Gatekeeper can bias arise when there is as systematic bias to the participant sampling selection process for a study (Groger & Mayberry, 1999).

Since the CAC was responsible for the initial prospective list of participants, the participant pool was dependent on the CAC. Potential participants without prior connections to the CAC or even with negative relations with CAC members may thus have been missed in the sampling selection process. Snowball sampling was included as a way to broaden the sampling selection process but participants identified through this sampling method were still initially connected to the first round of participants that were identified by the CAC. In addition, while telephone numbers were provided for some key informants, electronic mail was the primary method of contact. This excluded potential key informants who may not have had a telephone or access to email within the recruitment period.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Brampton dissemination area</th>
<th>Mississauga dissemination area</th>
<th>Caledon dissemination area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School official</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police representative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth resident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-time resident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other service-provider (e.g., Region, Municipality or other non-profit organization, spiritual leader or other individual with key insights into the community)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-12 Sampling strategy for key informant interviews

3.11 Interview Question Guide

Semi-structured interviews were selected for interviewing key informants. Semi-structured interviews are common in social research as they allow for the “exploration, discovery, and interpretation of complex social events and processes” (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p 93), and are utilized when researchers want to obtain information related to people’s views, ideas, opinions, and experiences (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The interview question guide provided structure to ensure that key topics of interest were explored in each interview, and was flexible so that answers to certain questions often segued into other questions, which the interviewer built on naturally rather than imposing a rigid structure to questions and responses.
The interview question guide was reviewed by the CAC through a collaborative approach which enabled the CAC to have input into the question design and phrasing. The collaborative approach also ensured that the broader research project objectives were met. It consisted of a series of focused open-ended questions to obtain a range of responses and opinions about local factors in the community that may contribute to local perceptions about crime and safety. Specifically, the interview guide focused on five areas of inquiry. These included: the key informant’s definition of the physical boundaries of the neighbourhood; common challenges and strengths within the neighbourhood; services and provisions that are available within the neighbourhood; social capital and social cohesion; perceptions of crime and safety within the community (Appendix B).

3.12 Data Collection

Individuals were initially contacted by the researcher by email (based on their introduction or not by CAC members or past interviewees) and invited to participate in the research project. Interviews were scheduled based on the convenience and preference of the participant. Follow up emails or telephone calls were made as necessary to each potential key informant who had not responded to the initial request a week after the initial contact. A final email or telephone call was made approximately four weeks later after the second contact. If a response had not been received at that time, the potential key informant was removed from the list.

Prior to participating in an interview, all key informants were provided with a letter of informed consent (Appendix C) and were required to complete this informed consent form prior to participating in the study. Those potential key informants who were youth (i.e., those who were between the ages of 15 and 17) and their parents/guardians were required to complete an informed consent form and parental consent form (Appendix D) before participating. Interviewees were also sent a copy of the map outlining the neighbourhood area in question prior
to the interview (Appendix E). Participants also received another copy of the letter of information that contained the contact information for the researcher and principal investigator on the broader research project.

At the beginning of each interview, the research project was explained to participants. Participants were asked if they had questions or concerns prior to beginning the interview and were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences to their relationship with any members or organizations linked to the CAC.

All interviews were conducted in English and interviews continued until the list of potential key informants was exhausted. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and all but one interview was done over the telephone. With the knowledge and consent of the interviewees, all interviews were digitally audio recorded. All interviews were professionally transcribed and transcripts were sent to individual interviewees for review. All data collected from the participants were treated as confidential and codes were used for all participants rather than their names. The categories of the key informants that participated in the interview are indicated in Table 3-14, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Brampton</th>
<th>Mississauga</th>
<th>Caledon</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-time resident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School official</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police representative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other service provider (e.g., non-profit, municipality, region, spiritual leader)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-13 Actual key informant categories
As can be observed from the table of informants by category and community, there was an unequal representation of participants from the three communities with Mississauga participants being overrepresented and Caledon participants being underrepresented. There are several possible reasons for this unbalanced sample including the fact that there were more service providers within Mississauga associated with the CAC and similarly fewer from Caledon. In addition, the research and related meetings were held in Mississauga on all but one occasion potentially resulting in fewer CAC members (and subsequent potential key informants being identified) from Brampton and Caledon. Finally, not all respondents who were invited to participate agreed to participate, which also influenced the final distribution of participants by municipality. The recruiting period lasted from September 2011 to March 2012. A total of 38 people were contacted through telephone and email. The 16 people that did not participate did not respond to the initial contact or two follow-up emails sent one week and four weeks after the initial contact.

### 3.13 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to identify specific themes and topics about behaviours and perceptions related to crime, safety, and community well-being and social capital. Content analysis involves analyzing the interview transcript by categorizing segments of the transcripts into topic or areas (Berg, 1995; Morse, 1995). The interview script acted as a basis for the initial analysis, and the themes, key terms, and concepts emerged through subsequent analysis. Transcripts were divided and grouped according to the interview guide into questions and responses varied in size from a single word to full paragraphs. The process of open coding was used to identify concepts and themes in the data rather than forcing the opinions and views of the key informants into pre-conceived categories. While a theoretical framework was developed in the interview guide, themes, key terms and concepts were revealed during this first analysis.
Responses were then divided into subjects and themes using descriptive codes to identify any obvious patterns. Each theme was then placed in a topic category based on content. Initial categories were very broad. All initial themes were thoroughly reviewed by the principal investigator and were refined before a second pass was completed to ensure no responses were missed or incorrectly coded. Following the second review of the themes and transcripts, all themes were presented and reviewed by the CAC for feedback to ensure that all themes made sense and appeared valid to the committee. Prior to a third review, themes were refined again and further linkages between themes emerged through sub-theme connections.

All content analysis coding was done using the coding software NVivo. NVivo facilitates the management of content analysis, but does not conduct analysis for the researcher. The program enables the researcher to classify, sort, and arrange data and develop relationships. The transcribed interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo, which allows the text to be highlighted, sorted, and coded.

### 3.14 Rigour and Reflexivity

There were no pre-existing relationships between the researchers and the participants. The researcher took steps to ensure that the relationship with participants was not only ethical but also did not influence the collection of the data or the interpretations of the findings. To ensure the researcher conducted rigorous qualitative research, the researcher followed Baxter and Eyles (1997) standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Due to the snowball selection process of participants, the researcher made best efforts to ensure that a credible representation of the group being studied was made. This process was not as successful as anticipated as discussed above in Section 3.12. To ensure transferability, the strategies and processes utilized in this research are detailed throughout this thesis to enable replication and duplication. The standard of dependability was supported as the researcher was the only one who
conducted the interviews and interpreted the findings. To increase dependability, the findings were verified by the principal investigator and CAC. The last standard addresses conformability, where steps are taken to ensure the objectivity of the researcher is upheld. At the time of this research project the researcher was also a professional employed with the criminal prosecution that services the Region of Peel (i.e., Crown Attorney’s Office for the Region of Peel), and as such the student researcher had to ensure no bias, motivation, or personal interest in the research. During all contact with potential and actual participants, the researcher was consistently identified as a graduate student from the University to Toronto – Mississauga. During interviews, the semi-structured interview script was closely followed to ensure routine responses from the researcher were provided but also enabled a conversational flow to the interviews. This enabled improved probing, fewer assumptions, avoidance of premature interpretation, and an accentuated sense of curiosity during interviews.

3.15 Ethics

An ethics submission was submitted to the Social Science, Humanities, and Education board of the Office of Research Ethics at the Office of the Vice-President of Research at the University of Toronto and was approved in June 2011. A copy of the initial agreement and annual renewal form for the larger research project can be found at Appendix E.

Funding was provided by graduate support from the University of Toronto and through a grant held by the principal investigator on the larger project obtained from the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel.
3.16 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was an ethical issue for this study due to the nature of the subject matter and the intimate relationship that key informants had professionally and personally with the neighbourhoods and broader communities in question and with other informants and local stakeholders within the community. There was a great deal of local community-based dissemination of the findings with the CAC throughout the research project as a requirement of the funding agencies (United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel).

To protect the participants and uphold ethical standards, all information collected for this study was kept strictly in confidence. Participant quotes used in reports, presentations, and publications contained no personal identifiers. The participants’ names were not used at any stage of the research process and participants were identified by their broad key informant category as well as the municipality in which they were interviewed. This was to ensure privacy and enable anonymity for the key informants to speak freely. All data was kept on a secure computer and access to the computer was by specific passwords known only to the principal investigator and researcher. No information was released or printed what would disclose any personal identity.

3.17 Risks and Benefits

There were minimal risks to the participants. Each participant was informed that his or her identity would be kept confidential and any reports, papers, or presentations that contain data from the study would not have any identifying information. The vulnerability of the participants was also low, given that their identity remained confidential since the subject matter (i.e., crime in an area) was sensitive and could be linked to labeling or stigmatizing localized neighbourhoods. Also, key informants were not asked about their personal involvement or
experience with crime but rather their insight into the neighbourhood in question and any professional experiences that may be relevant. Key informants did not have any specific group vulnerabilities relating to pre-existing physiological or health conditions, cognitive or emotional factors, and socio-economical or legal status.

A benefit for the participants was that they had the opportunity to discuss their thoughts about their perceptions related to crime, safety, and community well-being within the neighbourhood where they were considered an expert either through their occupation or role in the broader community. Further, the research results provided important feedback needed to identify opportunities for new and/or improved programs and services related to neighbourhood-level crime, safety, and well-being. Although the subject matter may be considered as sensitive, it had been identified as a priority area of research by the broader community and by the CAC and thus, it was a topic that the Region felt strongly that there was a need for greater research and action to be taken.
Chapter 4
Summary of Key Findings

4 Summary of Key Findings

4.1 Overview

This section presents the results of 22 key informant interviews from three study sites in the Region of Peel, one neighbourhood in each of Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon. The purpose of the key informant interviews was to examine perceptions about the local social and physical factors of crime according to local experts in each of the three neighbourhoods and identify how these perceived connections relate to dimensions of social capital. The results are presented in four main sections: the social environment, the built environment, recommendations for strengthening neighbourhoods and the differences amongst the neighbourhoods.

4.2 The Social Environment

The social environment includes the immediate social setting where people live as well as the interactions one has with other people and institutions in a physical environment. Living in a community with high social ties was considered by informants to reduce crime and thus indirectly to enhance resident well-being, through the powerful direct effect of building trust and trustworthiness in a community. The elements of the social environment identified by informants that emerged from the key informant interviews included community transience, diversity, and vulnerable populations including newcomers and socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Informants felt that in order to create social ties, the connections between and among residents must be fostered. If residents do not feel a sense of connection within their community, any
attempt at building a sense of community will be a challenge. A Mississauga service provider indicated that the anxiety of rejection may prevent the formation of initial connections. The lack of connection was further expressed by another service provider in Mississauga, who also highlighted the transitory population and housing type that prevent the building of a sense of community.

“I think it’s the lack of connection. I think all the other things would be okay if you know your neighbours, and you know who belongs – like who – I’m trying to think of how to describe it. I kind of liken it to the front porch idea where when you sit on your front porch, you know your neighbours, you at least have a visual of who belongs in your neighbourhood, and you can recognize who doesn’t belong, or who could be kind of lurking around, looking out of place. That’s something that for all the traffic that we have, everyone tends to be very insular, so each business kind of keeps to itself, each apartment building tends to keep to itself, so there isn’t the defensive connection between, “Oh, I saw someone creeping around your building.”” – Mississauga service provider

The effects of a lack of a sense of community were highlighted by a service provider in Brampton: “like people wouldn’t know when their neighbours were on vacation. There’s been a white van in the driveway for the last three months, and all of a sudden a black van comes in. They don’t know the difference.”

In contrast to the Brampton and Mississauga communities, a key informant from Caledon noted how people in general look out for each other, and even more so within the Region of Peel subsidized housing complexes:

“I find that people in general will look out for each other. Now, within Station View, it's a community within a community. So they will look out for their neighbour or a couple of people because, like at any community, you might not like the person next door to you, but the person
three doors down, you've got a relationship with that person. So they will be looking out for each other.” – Caledon service provider

4.3 Community Transience

In this context, transience is the tendency and frequency of residents in neighbourhoods to move in and out of dwellings. Key informants reported it was difficult to build a sense of community in an area that has high mobility and a transitory population. As indicated in section 3, the dissemination area of municipality of Brampton has high rates of five year mobility which may indicate a high residential transient population. The issue of community members not knowing who “belongs” in the community and who does not was raised by several informants. Key informants also suggested that transience acted as a limiting factor to developing mutual trust among residents, which is ultimately linked to that capacity of the community to exert social control.

“How do you get to know your neighbours when you're recycling the housing experience? Every month there's somebody different in the home. It just doesn’t generate to build that healthy community because they're recycling people basically.” – Brampton service provider

Key informants further reported it was difficult to build social trust and social cohesion in a place that is in constant transition, where the neighbour that you just met may not stay long enough to find shared values, assist in overcoming personal and local-level challenges.

“Yes, because there’s a lot of movement, so they don’t get to stay long enough to gain friendships and that type of thing. Before, when I was in elementary school, we’d help out each other all the time. But now, people are always moving in and out of the building, and stuff like that. So it’s hard to keep track, more of a transitory kind of, your year lease is up and you move onto another residence. Just the fact that we just don’t know who is who walking down the street
anymore. It’s not as if I can walk down the street and I’d be like, ‘hey, how are you?’”
– Mississauga service provider

With a very transitory population, the area can also appear to be very transitory. As one service provider in Mississauga indicated the community is a stop-over point or a means to an end to get from one place to another.

“What I see is mostly the people that transit through there. So I see them in the morning, anywhere from 8:00 to 9:00, and then again in the afternoon from 4:00 to, say, 6:00. So what I see are … seems to be like a major hub for bus stops and a lot of … of people catching different buses to go other places. So that’s what I see, is it being more of a transient looking area.”
– Mississauga service provider

This daily commute was also considered as an additional barrier to establishing local connections. Key informants from Brampton and Mississauga reported the additional transit time required by the population commuting long distances for work adds to the amount of strangers in the neighbourhoods on a daily basis.

A similar sentiment was expressed by a key informant from Caledon where a busy lifestyle creates a feeling of “on the go” that can create difficulty in building relationships among local neighbours:

“You come and go to work every day. You get home at night and you’ve only got time to spend with your family and then everybody is in bed and you’re off to work again the next day. And you know I think a lot of our busy lifestyle – and I kid you not and the need for having two parents working just to make ends meet and that’s not just in poor households, that’s in more affluent households where you know if you want to make the ball roll, you’ve got to have two incomes in the house.” – Caledon Police representative
The above opinion is in contrast to a Caledon Service Provider opinion expressed in section 4.2, which identified the Region of Peel subsidized housing development on Stationview Road as being very socially cohesive. This may be in part due to the fact they are socioeconomically segregated from the rest of the community.

4.4 Diversity

While the Brampton and Mississauga neighbourhoods had very diverse populations with visible minority populations at 39.7% and 44.9% respectively, the Caledon neighbourhood was very homogeneous with a visible minority population at 5.7%. Diversity in the Mississauga and Brampton neighbourhoods was noted as a strength by key informants by way of many perspectives and life experiences, and a greater overall capacity for resilience and tolerance. The lack of diversity was considered as a drawback in the Caledon neighbourhood.

“The wealth of life experiences that people from different places bring together. There's a resiliency about people who have experienced adversity about being able to go "Okay, what are they going to throw at me next," kind of. Yeah. "I've survived worse than this." So, there's a resiliency about people that have survived adversity.” – Brampton service provider

“And the community in general is very multicultural, and I think all the different multicultural shops, grocery stores, banks, I think that gives it a very familiar feel to residents of particular cultures. It also creates a sense of belonging that with so many different languages, and signs, and cultures seen, you feel like it’s okay to be different. Like you don’t have to be a homogenous type to fit in into this community. I think that’s comforting and makes people feel at ease here.” – Mississauga service provider

A common response voiced from the key informants was to bring the neighbourhoods together through special events that are community based to celebrate diversity. One service provider in Mississauga indicated:
“The community needs some sort of community festival where we all can come together and celebrate all the great diversity that’s happening in the community, and get to know more of your neighbourhood. And then they’ll also even get connected to local businesses and community organizations that are out there.”

4.5 Vulnerable Populations – Recent Immigrants and Socio-economically Marginalized

As indicated by a number of key informants, the Region of Peel is a very diverse region with a variety of cultures intermingling (see section 3.8, above). Key informants identified recent immigrants and socio-economically disadvantaged groups as populations vulnerable to increased fear of crime. Key informants discussed how this can be a barrier for establishing social ties and social cohesion as newcomers in particular may feel isolated. One key informant service provider indicated that one way to build social ties for recent immigrants was to encourage volunteering with newcomer centers and community services. Another service provider in the same neighbourhood indicated that waiting for people to take the initiative and begin connecting with their community was a barrier and that greater local facilitation of these connections was required.

“There doesn’t seem to be that interaction because no one is starting it. And I don’t think it’s from that they don’t want to, I think that they’re just waiting for someone to smile. They’re waiting for someone to … and they’re not always sure. And, again, this is a high concentration of new immigrants area, lots of different diverse cultures living in there, and so I think it’s a matter of, “I just don’t know you,” or, “I don’t know if you’re going to be receptive to me.” – Mississauga service provider

Key informants who were service providers noted that these newcomers also had numerous other challenges when they arrive, including, learning a new language, finding gainful employment, and sustainable and affordable housing. Service providers in Mississauga noted the need for
language resources, from simply providing information in their language to hosting conversation clubs where individuals have the opportunity to practice their English in a safe environment with similar peers.

“I think in communities where there’s a high number of residents who don’t speak English or French as a first or second language, getting [service-based] materials to them in a language that they are fluent is very important. But tied in with that is to build that trust that anyone can give them a flyer in a language.” – Mississauga service provider

Depending on newcomers’ experiences in their home country or even their customary behaviours, key informants indicated that they may not be accustomed to engaging with their first host community. As indicated in section 3.8 above, the majority of recent immigrants are from Asia and the Middle East. This may present language and cultural barriers in acclimatizing to the area. Key informants indicated that upon arrival many recent immigrants may be more inclined to keep a low profile to ensure everything goes smoothly with their integration and settlement into their host community/country. Service provider key informants highlighted the link that recent immigrants often end up in these low socio-economic status neighbourhoods at least initially and are more prone to multiple moves within their first few years of arriving to Canada.

Another service provider in Mississauga noted how the lack of connection within neighbourhoods with high rates of newcomer settlement can be detrimental to developing social ties with the community at large: “There’s a great need for different services in the community, and there are these agencies and businesses that offer these services, but there isn’t that connection to get the word out, to get the word out in the appropriate language, or the appropriate sources that residents would trust, or feel comfortable coming to.”
Another barrier to developing social ties identified by the key informants was the socio-economically vulnerable population. Underemployment, the cycle of poverty, and unaffordable housing are common issues for this population, and were highlighted by key informants in all three communities. In the context of underemployment, it refers to employment that is insufficient for the worker and includes holding employment that does not accurately reflect the employee’s education, experience or skill level, or holding part-time employment when full-time employment is desired and necessary. A key informant from Mississauga highlighted both the underemployment and unemployment that both the newcomer and youth population face.

“Unemployment, under employment. I would think that there are people with certain expertise that come from abroad, but cannot get the kind of job, you know, based on their expertise. So they take other jobs that may not be as well paying. I think that unemployment, I see a lot of young people walking around, doesn’t seem to have having any work, you know. I can just surmise that they are not employed.” – Mississauga service provider

In the Brampton neighbourhood, a key informant indicated that many families in the community were in an intergenerational cycle of poverty.

“This community has been this way for a long time. And with that, you kind of grow up with that mindset that, “This is what my community is. This is how far I’m going to get. This is how far I’m going to achieve.” And then there’s no – it’s kind of like they just kind of settle with that and not really – you’re not really any higher. So I’d say it’s more or less the young people that are there. So until there is more after school programs going on, more opportunity, more employment opportunities, leadership opportunities for them, then they may be the ones that are – that will you know, suffer the most.” – Brampton service provider

As indicated from a key informant, affordable housing is an issue. Many residents cannot purchase or maintain homes without subletting, making basement apartments or changing a house into a rooming house. In Brampton, a key informant service provider voiced that for these
families their “family resources [are] being over tapped just for survival purposes.” Another service provider from Mississauga noted “even despite the fact the buildings in this area are not considered tremendously nice, they are still expensive to live in.”

Key informants identified that the extraordinary effort required to provide the basic necessities of life – housing and shelter – can result in neighbourhoods where residents simply have little time and energy remaining on a daily basis to become involved with their community, thus creating little sense of community or feelings of obligation to their community and fellow residents.

“A lot of the people that have purchased those homes are purchasing them to rent out to families or to renovate basements and then put people in rooms. So there is a lot of homes where they’re renting out just rooms which changed the idea of that family unit being like a residence itself. You're getting a lot of - you might have the family upstairs and now you’ve got three individuals who might be on Ontario Works or might be in that situation due to social dynamics or addictions or what have you. And then I guess everybody needing to pay their mortgage these days, that's basically what's happening, and so most homes look to rent a basement.”

– Mississauga service provider

As the key informant indicated, some residents may be on Ontario Works (temporary financial need provided for eligible residents through the Ontario government). The socio-economically vulnerable population have the most challenges including precarious employment and housing, and increased likelihood of multiple moves. It is these fragile and precarious living circumstances, as indicated by key informants, that the most vulnerable populations end up living in, where mobility is high and residential stability is low. A long-term resident of Brampton commented how they have witnessed the socioeconomically disadvantaged pushed into isolation by other residents: “you know, both parents are working, they’re not likely to feel the need or the want to try and help out somebody four or five doors down from them that is
struggling to make ends meet. Like, there won’t be… it’ll be almost keeping their children away from those other children.”

Service providers report that this population is left with poorly maintained and aesthetically unpleasing or unwelcoming properties, where illegal basement apartments or multiple families per dwelling are common residential arrangements.

4.6 Stigma

The community in which one resides provides a source of identity. A community may have its own distinct traditions, values, and norms that are built from numerous interactions over various socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural attributes over time, which play an important role in shaping the identity structures of its members (Waseem, 2008). Key informants from all three neighbourhoods discussed how the lack of identity in their respective community has negatively affected its members:

“Unfortunately, with the new developments happening throughout Brampton, Queen and Kennedy, it’s kind of – it’s almost like this was, “Okay, well we’ll come back to you guys later.” Other areas got names such as like Springdale. There’s such as Meadow, you know, Brampton Northeast. But Queen/Kennedy just ends up with Queen/Kennedy, right. So it was almost left without an identity. And then – yeah, and then there’s this history. And then it just started to get known for the crime, for prostitution, etc.” – Brampton service provider

“There is no singular identity for the Town of Caledon. The community is called the Town of Caledon, but in reality it’s a series of very fiercely independent, maybe, hamlets.” – Caledon Service provider
When a community does not promote an identity, it can often become stigmatized by outsiders and can even develop a reputation. As indicated by the above key informant from Caledon, the community has no identity. A service provider comments on their relocation to the Mississauga neighbourhood: “When I got placed here people were going you're moving to the ghetto in Mississauga.” Another key informant, who is both a service provider and resident of a neighbouring community, speaks of the negative reputation of the Mississauga community. While not being a victim of a crime, the key informant discussed the personal safety precautions taken:

“I think, at least from what I've seen, it can be kind of rough neighborhood. I know I never walk home from work after -- like if I'm finishing at nine o'clock, I would never walk home by myself. There's some apartment complexes that I often see that there's a big police presence. The high school in the neighborhood, T.L. Kennedy, I've heard -- I mean it's all hearsay, but it kind of has a rough reputation too.” – Caledon service provider

The presence of police can often stigmatize an area and create a negative reputation. As one service provider in Brampton summarized: “Well obviously there's a police presence for a reason”, and is seconded by a police representative in Mississauga “We are very visible in that area. You don’t have to wait too long to see cruisers driving around up and down the 5 and 10 corridor.” The opinion of the Brampton service provider and the Mississauga police representative are telling that there is a need for police presence. While residents of these communities were not canvassed as to their opinions on police presence, the key informants who commented on this topic indicated the police presence created suspicion and sent out the wrong message about the neighbourhood.

The physical condition of buildings can also erode at the image and create a negative reputation of a neighbourhood. Many key informants commented on this throughout the three
neighbourhoods and the created perception that their neighbourhood did not appear to be safe, that simply because of the aesthetics, it is considered to have high crime.

“I think there is a perception out there in Mississauga that this place is really ghetto, and if you just looked at the street, I can see why people think that. It is, it looks like it’s rundown. There are places that are not well-maintained. … There’s a perception that the neighbourhood’s not safe just because of the appearance of certain parts of it. And also I think there’s a fear that people think if there’s a whole – large concentration of high rises that certain people live there, or things happen in the spaces in between the apartment complexes. And certainly from talking to businesses, that’s their biggest thing, especially when the sun goes down, there’s this perception that it’s not safe when you walk in that neighbourhood.” – Mississauga service provider

A service provider in Brampton commented on how the historic stigma of a community can create an everlasting impression on outsiders:

“It just has the stigma of being the red district area because of the prostitution that was there, that was happening at the time. I guess the stigma is that people are very afraid of the area, right. So they’re like, “Oh, that’s the bad part of Brampton.” When actually it really isn’t one of the – you know, it’s not the worst part in Brampton. It’s not one of the best, but it’s not as bad as people were making it out to be.” – Brampton service provider

One service provider in Mississauga highlighted the extent of what the lack of a community image or identity can do in pushing people away from moving into the: “Would I live in this community? Probably not. We call it no man’s land for a reason.”

4.7 The Built Environment

The built environment includes the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity. This includes buildings and parks, green space to community design. The built
environment was seen by key informants as a barrier to the development of social ties through housing form and density, and the lack of spaces for informal gathering.

4.8 Housing Form and Density

Housing type, form and density were considered by key informants to be capable of having both a positive or negative impact on building social ties within a neighbourhood. The importance of space is important to the built environment as housing structure may inhibit or encourage interaction. As indicated in the literature and voiced by key informants of Mississauga and Brampton, when a high volume of people live in close quarters it was considered detrimental for establishing social ties due to the inability of residents to know who is who or who belongs or doesn’t, by way of not knowing your neighbours. A service provider in Mississauga highlighted how urban form and high-rise apartment buildings can negatively impact the development of social ties.

“When you live in an apartment building instead of having a couple of neighbours like on your street, there's so many people that you don’t know. Like you might know a couple of people within the building, but there's hundreds of families there. Just like not being able to know everyone, and then you're less inclined to help someone that you’ve never met or never seen, or aren’t even sure if they are your neighbour” – Mississauga service provider

In the Mississauga community, two service providers comment on the housing density as a factor affecting social cohesion and influencing social isolation:

“When you live in an apartment building … instead of having a couple of neighbours like on your street, there's so many people that you don’t know. Like you might know a couple of people within the building, but there's hundreds of families there. So, I think that might be a barrier, just like not being able to know everyone, and then you're less inclined to help someone that you’ve
never met or never seen or aren’t even sure if they are your neighbor, kind of thing. Yeah, it
would be a lot harder to distinguish a stranger or a suspicious kind of person in that kind of
setting.” – Mississauga service provider

Another service provider in Mississauga reiterated how the housing form of apartments and the
rental population negatively effects the formation of social ties.

The situational context of crime occurrence was highlighted by another Mississauga service
provider where the housing structure decreases the risk of detection and may make it more likely
that a motivated offender will commit a crime: “I think the high density and the number of
apartment buildings obviously has an impact on crime and the perception of crime in that area
for sure.”

4.9 Lack of Meeting Spaces

One of the first steps towards building social ties as indicated by a number of key informants is
getting people to meet, talk, and form ties, discover common interests, and shared values. Key
informants reported that when neighbourhoods have a common meeting space to meet and talk,
or share a cup of coffee or a meal, it encourages introductions where social ties can be created.
When neighbourhoods don’t have a common meeting place, social isolation can occur which can
lead to social disorganization and breakdown.

A resident in Brampton reported that there was not a discernible center of the community except
for an intersection: “there are not an abundance of places where residents can meet to have a
coffee or a common bumping ground to socialize in.” In Mississauga, a key informant explained
“there is no discernible center or available gathering space even for employees to sit and have
lunch or a coffee break, let alone residents.” This leads to a disconnected area despite the amount and volume of people that move through the neighbourhood. Without the opportunity of a meeting space, neighbours become strangers and isolate themselves from one another. This service provider highlighted how by creating social spaces, social connections can be built which in turn can then build social trust and social cohesion.

“One of the challenges that it has is there isn’t a discernible center except for the intersection. And it's not like you're going to close the intersection and put up a bouncy castle. So, those opportunities to meet one another don’t exist in a natural space… And it's meaning that takes away the isolation. You know, when you know your neighbours… Because once they have constant conversations, they realize the mutual isolation.” Brampton service provider

The lack of a central spot for social interactions and informal social gatherings in Mississauga despite it being such a high volume area was expressed by another service provider:

“There’s no real bumping zones for people there. You know, you look at Dundas and Hurontario; statistically it is the busiest corner in Mississauga. So, on the southeast corner there is, just outside your zone…there is a small park that’s on the south corner that is a piece of grass with some…and you would think that that would be like a great people to sit and kind of people watch or whatever. But because that corner is so busy, it just doesn’t get utilized…it’s just a waste of space … You know, the storefronts, they’re right buffed (sic) up right to the street so there really isn’t a streetscape for people to mingle and enjoy.” Mississauga service provider

A lack of meeting space for the general population and the youth population within a neighbourhood was identified as an important aggravating factor limiting the creation of social ties. This was expressed as a concern by key informants in both the Mississauga and Brampton neighbourhoods.
“There really is nobody there after school to hold them accountable for their actions and then the homework and so forth. So then you get a lot of kids congregating and then some people like to refer to them as gangs. And really they’re just congregating because they have nowhere. They can’t go home, right, because there’s nobody home … Mom and dad cruise up at five, five-thirty. Sometimes six, right, so that’s also part of you know, the challenge of having after school programs, right. One, affordable ones, and ones that they’re able to, you know, easily get themselves to, and ones that they’re interested in, right.” – Brampton service provider

“Compared to other communities, there isn’t a skateboard park, or you know, somewhere where they can go that’s just free. Where they don’t have to pay admission, they don’t have to worry about being kicked out for loitering, or even just a park where they can just sit on the grass and just be left alone. There’s a lot of resources for very young kids, but there isn’t very much for the middle group who can’t drive yet, or don’t have access to a car on a regular basis yet, who at the same time don’t – can’t afford to always be in a mall, or they’ll get kicked out of a mall. Now some of the newcomer agencies have offered youth drop-in programs where kids can go and they can play video games, and I think they had a foosball table, and all sorts of really neat stuff, but I think it’s letting people know that it’s there, and not just for newcomer teens. Like that other teens are welcome there as well.” – Mississauga service provider

The lack of public transportation to other communities within Caledon was also viewed as a prohibitive factor for youth to participate in activities. Youth are reliant on their parents to drive them to other parts of Caledon to participate in any type of organized activity.

“Within the region that we're looking at, there is a community centre … and if they're going to have activities, they've got to be driven by their parents or will never outside that area. So if you are young and you don't have access to a vehicle, forget it. You've got to create your own activities.” – Caledon police service

A service provider in Caledon echoed this sentiment, and stated there is: “very much to an absence of child- and youth-related activities that are within close proximity to different, sort of, hamlets within the community, or the neighbourhood.”
The housing form and density was highlighted by some key informants as a barrier to constructive open space activities for youth opportunities:

“Oh, yes, because we're very much a concrete village here, right. … There's not a lot of stuff for the kids to do and to play. So they're limited so that's why I say if they don't have things to do, say at the community center, that's why you probably see these types of crime rates.” – Brampton school official

In addition to the lack of meeting space to create social ties, many key informants highlighted the lack of social trust and social cohesion within their communities which lead to a feeling of social isolation. A service provider in Brampton discussed the lack of sense of community: “I think it's a community that just probably stay to themselves, but I don't think - I wouldn't say it's a welcoming community to outsiders.” This sentiment was furthered by a police representative in the Brampton neighbourhood who highlighted the level of fear that leads to social isolation and is detrimental to fostering social trust and social cohesion: “I think you’ll find [a sense of connection] less frequent in the Ardglen Orenda Court neighborhoods because I think people are fearful [of becoming]… involved with other people. So they sort of want to mind their own business.”

4.10 Community Infrastructure: Lighting

The lack of natural lighting and lack of any artificial light can provide criminals and those engaged in anti-social behaviour a cloak of darkness to shield their identity. Key informants from all three neighbourhoods discussed the change in perception about crime and safety after dark.

“I think in the daytime it’s never an issue. I think it becomes more of an issue for people in terms of their safety in the evening hours, once it’s dark.” – Brampton police representative
“Well there’s a few back alleys and stuff like that. That certainly does not look like it’s safe. And I’ll admit I won’t even walk there late at night-time, so. During the day, maybe, but yeah. At night-time I could see why people avoid certain parts of the neighbourhood.” – Mississauga service provider

A service provider in Mississauga commented on how the environment and social atmosphere changes after the sun sets:

“During the day, very safe. I think because there’s so much traffic there is a lot of visibility. During the evening, it gets very dark very quickly, and I know for, like, sending my staff out to their cars in the parking garage, some feel a little anxious because of the way the buildings are organized or are built in this area. There are barriers to being seen from the street level, so there may be traffic on the street, but depending on where you’ve parked your car, it can be very dark and isolated. There’s a lot of blind spots where visibility can be an issue, and so safety – like, concerns about safety can be an issue. There have been instances of tagging, graffiti tagging. We recently had a customer who when we refused to give out the washroom key towards the evening, he said that, “Well then, I’m just going to pee in the stairwell,” and he did. And there’s kind of the sense that we close the doors at 9 at night, and we don’t really know what’s going on out there.” – Mississauga service provider

Another service provider in Mississauga discussed the change they had witnessed growing up in the area, and how the community has changed specifically at night:

“A lot of people dabble into drugs and get into all different types of crimes. So when I was younger, I would consider it the safest place ever, you can walk, I was like 9 years old, and I could walk to the park and walk home at 10:00 at night by myself, it wouldn’t matter, but now you would never see a mom or a dad allowing that for their child. So it’s gotten worse over the years.” – Mississauga service provider

A service provider from Mississauga commented on the opportunity for crime to occur when general physical disrepair lowers the risk of detection and can increase to opportunity for crime:
“You do see a lot of things that are unsafe, traffic … or lights that have been knocked out, garage doors for condo buildings that are left up the whole time. Access points are all over the place for the … you know, for anyone that lives in this particular area.”

4.11 Recommendations for Strengthening Community

The main recommendations that were identified by informants included creating meeting spaces and modifying the built environment to foster and build a sense of community that can create trust, social capital and encourage the development of social cohesion.

4.12 Creating Meeting Space

Neighbourhoods often benefit from having a community center or a space that is open to the public. All three neighbourhoods lacked a community center. Three service providers stressed the unavailability of space for the public to book and use in the Mississauga neighbourhood:

“Well that’s their big thing they have a problem with, and a lot of people agree with me is that this is the one community in Mississauga that does not have a community centre. You look at all of Mississauga, we do – we are probably the largest community that does not have a dedicated community center.” – Mississauga service provider

Another Mississauga service provider proposed a solution to address the lack of a community centre in the Mississauga neighbourhood:

“I would put a community center and library right smack in the middle of Ten and Five Because it would be transit-accessible, it would have large spaces where you could hold functions. Like meeting rooms for the community to gather as a group, space where people can go in for fitness and recreation programs, the library to provide literacy programs. It would be great if it was large
enough that we could also fit in maybe one of the, like, some of the other community agencies so that there’s a real sense of community. And as a city property, it would be available to the public, so people wouldn’t have to feel like they have to buy something in order to be allowed to hang out there for a little bit. And it’d be nice to have some outdoor space since we’re onto that too.” – Mississauga service provider

The lack of a central spot for social interactions and informal social gatherings was reported by key informants across the three neighbourhoods. While the neighbourhoods in Brampton and Mississauga are bustling transit hubs, there was a substantial lack of commercial spaces where people can meet to have a coffee or “take a break” from the daily demands of life. Caledon in particular had neither public transport nor commercial places to encourage greater social interactions.

With a 48.4% of the population in the Region of Peel identified themselves as immigrants, key informants indicated that it is important to incorporate this population into the community when they may not know where to start. A service provider comments on the strength in the Mississauga newcomers’ centres:

“The other great thing about the community is that there’s a lot of great community— what do you call it? Newcomer centers. So there’s the newcomer center of Peel on the other side of the street, there’s the… Rainbow, and there’s great settlement services, and they have great programs.” – Mississauga service provider

4.13 Creating a Collective Space for Informal Gatherings and Collaborating with Community Services

A strong neighbourhood that works together can be accomplished through pooling community resources. This can improve communication links from services, amenities and within
community members. A service provider in Mississauga commented that “a collective space, where agencies in the community that there could be one place, one place that everybody could have space, like a community agency that services everyone instead of them all individually doing their own little thing.” The collective space would enable all service providers to be in a central location to ensure the neighbourhood is served in by pooling resources together and work towards servicing their neighbourhood collectively and collaboratively.

A religious leader from Mississauga shared this appreciation of a need for a collective space, and added that cost is often a barrier that prevents many residents from participating and getting out and involved in the neighbourhood and broader community.

“Yes. I think, you know, there are places where you go, but then you have to pay, right? People have to get money for it, they have a building and they are renting it out and things like that. But here again, I don’t know of any place where it is subsidized to the extent where people can go and there is some kind of recreational, educational get together situations for people, that wouldn’t have to pay, or wouldn’t have to pay substantially, you know? It might mean that whatever groups it is, they might say well, we will set a time when we don’t have to ask the money for these things, and people can come and participate...” – Mississauga service provider

In the Brampton neighbourhood, a service provider acknowledged this lack of connection and provided a solution on to how to initiate the process within the neighbourhood and encourage interactions among residents and local institutions:

“That’s the biggest piece, because when people start talking, you get to know who each other is, right, and then you’ll want to have – look out for each other’s back. A bigger piece, again, is like being able to connect some of these places together, the schools. The schools, being connected with the neighbourhood, open their doors. The schools open their doors to the residents for whatever it is that they’re having. Business owners getting to know who their clients are, who their customers are. Yeah because there’s just that disconnect that was happening, and it got real
positive that has happened. … The thing is that a lot of people are unaware of what’s there. Some people are like, “Oh my God, I didn’t know that we had, you know, a newcomer service. I didn’t know that we had – there was a tutoring program.” – Brampton service provider

4.14 Reducing Stigma and Increasing Maintenance and Pride

The stigma of a neighbourhood can be perpetuated and influenced by stories about the community that may or may not be true. A police representative in Caledon noted, however, that sometimes a reputation is developed out of the fear of the unknown:

“People aren’t always aware of their surroundings and sometimes a neighborhood comes with a reputation and so because of that, they have that innate sense of fear about their safety. But if we were to look at the overall statistics, it’s actually a very safe community.” – Caledon police representative

Key informants reflected on the need of a business improvement association (BIA) that would work together to create streetscape beautification, create a more attractive and marketable image for the neighbourhood to decrease negative stigma for the businesses serve. A BIA can create a local culture of maintenance and beautification around commercial areas where vandalism, graffiti and litter can be most prevalent.

“It’s a mishmash. There’s no consistent signage. So it looks dingy and there’s no BIA in that area. In a part of town like Streetsville or Port Credit, their BIA has a beautification committee, so they have people volunteers that are business owners who dedicate time to try and make their shopping experience more enjoyable. And this particular community doesn’t have that.” – Mississauga service provider

“And one of the things in this neighbourhood, I don’t think there’s a Business Improvement Association by the way… Yeah. That I’ve seen in other neighbourhoods, and that creates – at
least from a business perspective, a sense of community, and you get to know your other fellow business-owners or mentors.” – Mississauga service provider

The Mississauga and Brampton neighbourhoods both had a high percentage of rental premises. Key informants from both of these neighbourhoods reflected that that the landlords and owners should invest and improve the premise to create an attractive and engaging environment for tenants to encourage tenants to take ownership of the property.

“Yes. I guess the Superintendent or the building owners actually taking initiative to make the apartments better, on the outside, and I’m hoping on the inside as well.” – Mississauga service provider

One long-term resident indicated when the opportunity for crime or anti-social behaviour exists, and is taken advantage of, it will perpetuate. When a space looks uncared for, it will continue to be uncared for.

“I mean, people treat things that look bad, bad. It’s the fork in the sink principle. Once there's a fork in the sink, everybody dumps their stuff in the sink instead of washing it and putting it away. When there's garbage lying around, everybody dumps the garbage. So when it's clean, people have a tendency to pick up. And you don’t necessarily see it until you drive into some of the townhouses that are right beside Ardglen and in through the back. You get a sense of the disrepair of the buildings. And if you actually go in and visit families within them, it's even more remarkable. You know, urine in the stairs. It's hard to care about a place when it has those challenges.” – Brampton long-term resident

### 4.15 Modifying the Built Environment

The basic principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) aim to deter the opportunity for criminal behaviour through environmental design within the built
environment. This can include things such as natural surveillance and maximizing visibility, natural access control, and territorial reinforcement to delineate between public and private spaces. As indicated in the literature, CPTED modifications include natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, access control and maintenance. For example, a CPTED modification for natural surveillance may be to have a parking garage with large panoramic window openings facing a major street to enable pedestrians and motorists to see into the parking garage. CPTED modifications also include maintaining an area to demonstrate that the area is cared for and watched over, such as a business being regularly painted to maintain a clean appearance.

A police representative from Caledon commented on how CPTED can help reduce the opportunity for crime as it: “assists if you give people less of an area to be able to commit a crime through the environment, like wide-open spaces criminals don’t like because you can see them, right? Area of bush and so on and so forth around houses where people can hide helps lead the crime or gives more of an opportunity for crime to be committed.”

In Mississauga, a service provider indicated that the process of installing security lights and illuminating the grounds of the church has reduced the number of break-ins. A police officer commented on how the Mississauga neighbourhood businesses could benefit from CPTED as the business windows are often cluttered with signs: “keeping the neighbourhood’s, the sight lines clean and certainly the storefronts clean for officers to view in I think would be something that could benefit, particularly some of the businesses along Dundas because they have a tendency to crowd up their windows’ frontage with signs and the like.”

A police representative in Brampton offered some insight into Peel Regional Police’s take on CPTED:
“We have crime prevention officers that are CPTED trained that will go into any business and they will have a look at the environmental design of their building and surrounding area and make recommendations of how they can augment their safety and prevent, or make it less inviting for people that would do damage to their property or their business to do so. The other thing that we also do because our crime prevention officers, you know, are limited in numbers and there’s many different businesses that are asking for their assistance. But there’s also the residential homeowners. We have our officers that are … CPTED trained and they’ll go in and do residential audits. So we’ll go into someone’s house when they call us, to invite us, and we’ll look at their windows and their doors and, you know, sort of the shrubbery in front of the house, their lighting situations and, you know, how they can better protect themselves or their homes. So we do that as well as a matter of course.”

The risk of detection was highlighted by a service provider in Mississauga who reflected on the high amount of public transportation and chance for anonymity when committing a crime:

“So many buses are coming through and people are getting off and getting on and … and I think some of the crime that occurs in that area is transient crime because people know, “Okay. I can take a bus to here, I can walk over there, I can,” you know, “steal whatever I want, and then I’m just coming back over here and hurry up and catch another bus.” - Mississauga service provider

This sentiment was furthered by a service provider in Brampton, who stated that despite areas being very well trafficked, there are other areas within the community exist where the ability not to be detected can increase anti-social behaviour:

“I would say like that the areas that are more safe are the ones that there’s a lot more traffic. So when you’re talking about Kennedy getting closer to Queen, coming close to Queen Street, it’s so well-lit. A lot of traffic is happening there. Also a lot of foot traffic as well, not just cars, happens around those areas. So I would say that those are the safer areas. You know, those are some of the safer areas within that neighbourhood, that community I would say, so that you know, more like Kennedy on towards Queen. But then the further out you go, north or south is the more, you know, the more high risk it gets because then it’s not so visible, you know, a lot of places to hide, go behind bushes.” – Brampton service provider
A police representative in Brampton commented on how the stigma of a community can contribute positively or negatively to a community, and how this can affect the opportunity for crime:

“I think once an area is open and inviting, people become prouder of it … You know, there’s the pride factor that comes into play that this is where I live, this is where I work, this is where I play, this is where I’m raising my family. When, you know, very sterile or, you know, not well thought out structures are put up into place, and people are sort of cattled into them and told that this is where you’re going to live, people don’t take pride in where they reside, they don’t take pride in that particular neighborhood, and that’s demonstrated through, you know, by tagging and graffiti and the overall repair of a particular area, you know, whether it’s in disrepair or whether it’s in good maintenance and I think you’ll find that more readily visible in the three areas that we’ve already talked about, Orenda, or not Orenda, rather, Ardglen” – Brampton police representative

4.16 Community Differences

The three different municipalities represent three different geographical perspectives – rural, suburban and urban. The main differences reported by key informants included housing form and density, and the diverse populations. The main similarity report by key informants was the lack of opportunities for youth and a lack of communication or impediment to the flow of locally pertinent information throughout the neighbourhoods.

4.17 Housing Form and Density

There were very few negative comments about the housing form and density of the Caledon neighbourhood. However, the built environment and housing form in both Mississauga and Brampton neighbourhoods included primarily high-rise rental properties. This can create local tensions and conflict between these mobile residents and less mobile residents, as expressed in this service provider’s comment:
“One side of the street, there’s a lot of renters. And then the other side, there’s homeowners. Right, so then now you have the renters who are there for so long, and then they’re gone. But they’re not really keeping the property up. And then you have the homeowners who want the value of their home, of the area, up. So you get that frustration going on on the street. So then now you have this thing of apathy now. Now I’m going to take care of my area because – of my home, you know, because it’s not really working and I don’t know who the neighbours are because there could be new neighbours next week or next month, right. So there’s a lot of apathy that needs to be broken down in the area, a lot of renters, which, you know, poses a challenge in certain areas as well.”

Even in the rural neighbourhood of Caledon, it seems the housing form of cul-de-sacs and formed community street-structures has a negative effect on building social ties and developing a neighborly neighbourhood.

“Cause you find a lot of communities these days, you don’t even know who lives next door to you. Or two door down, because you never see them.” – Caledon police representative

4.18 Diverse Population

The diverse population of Brampton and Mississauga with multicultural backgrounds also offers the neighbourhoods exposure to other cultural cuisines and fashions, as noted by this service provider in Mississauga: “There is lots of diversity in the community. You can buy a food from any ethnic group under the sun.”

However, in the Caledon neighbourhood, diversity can be less welcoming to newcomers. One service provider noted that:

“Seven percent is visible minority, roughly … give or take a per cent or two, is visible minority. About ten per cent is newcomer, meaning from other countries recently And I think that in a
community that is fairly main stream, that those people that don’t fit within the model of... of, you know, second and third generation Caledon family, they’re very much in the minority. And I... you know, and I don’t want to say they don’t feel safe, I just think that they... there is, in Caledon, an old-guard mentality, and... and newcomers have a harder time finding their way into various institutional settings.”

A service provider in Mississauga reported on the lack of communication and knowledge of services in the area: “I think that there’s quite a few agencies that try and interact with the different cultural groups.” Further, a long-term resident in Brampton comments on how one cultural community communicates with their resident and recent immigrants of Portuguese culture: “I know a lot of them belong to a Portuguese cultural club that's in Brampton. So I think that's probably how a lot of the news had spread between at least one part of that community.”

4.19 Opportunities for Youth

A main finding from key informants in all three neighbourhoods was the need to focus on after-school activities for youth at no or low cost, that are age appropriate and include recreational activities, peer learning, bullying prevention and supportive employment skills. By concentrating on youth and ensuring they have activities that are stimulating and aimed at pro-social development, the groundwork is established for producing productive and involved community members.

“After school programs. Right now their parents aren’t home. They're not there. What they're doing, they're going to loiter. They're getting in trouble. At Knightsbridge they're getting in trouble here, there. Just that extra hour and a half or so of supervised access to that school allows for that free sporting, allows for the social dynamic. It allows them to buy time before the parent or parents get home. Which is and that’s a high risk time for youth and kids.” – Mississauga service provider
“I would say they are lacking recreational things. A lot more recreation needs to happen. Low cost or free, we're not getting that. And I'm also seeing -- I've seen a couple of schools tune in to the idea of -- I know after school programs. Unfortunately, they're individualized to the school and to the principals.” – Mississauga service provider

As expressed by the key informants in all three neighbourhoods, cost and accessibility continually came out as a prohibitive factor to recreational and activities for youth.

“I’d say the opportunities are there, but I think a lot of the opportunities are blocked to some people due to financial constraints. And I think that’s a problem like in any community. It costs a lot of money to send your kid to hockey. It costs a lot of money to send your kid to anything that’s organized, cause there’s always dues to pay and there’s fees to pay, you’ve got to get them there, you’ve got to bring them back. I would say that a lot of the barriers that would prevent kids from being involved in things are financial.” – Caledon police representative

“After school programs is a big one, right, and affordable after school programs. Because a home that has four or five kids and you know, whatever the price is, even if it was $30 per child, that’s quite a bit. So I would say affordable, obtainable after school programs, tutoring programs, mentoring programs are something that’s definitely needed for young people, and employment opportunities. Employment and volunteer opportunities: I think an increase in that will make a difference as well.” – Brampton service provider

A service provider in Mississauga noted the stigma of having space dedicated for unstructured or unmonitored youth activities seems to prevent the creation of a public space for free organized recreational activities for youth in Mississauga.

“Basketball’s huge in this community. There is no basketball courts And you know, people say that, “Oh, if we build a basketball court, kids are going to hang out there and it’s going to be a bad thing.”” – Mississauga service provider
The ability to provide youth with opportunities for constructive opportunities after school and at a nominal if not free of charge provides a huge investment in the youth and adults of tomorrow, as indicated by this Caledon key informant:

“Well….I’d like to maybe see more youth-related services particularly to the youngsters say in Station View, who maybe just need a little bit more help and perhaps a little bit more guidance and assistance with making the right choices and moving along in their lives.” – Caledon police representative

4.20 Communication among Residents and Neighbourhood Services

Resident engagement in the use of a neighbourhood’s amenities and awareness of services can assist in developing a sense of community. The services and amenities within a neighbourhood are designed to work with the interests of residents. Effective communication to engage resident awareness of the services and amenities available within a neighbourhood can help to build relationships within the neighbourhood that foster social trust and social cohesion. A common thought expressed by key informants in all three neighbourhoods expressed the lack of communication for the most part and thus lack of knowledge of the services and social events that may be occurring.

“There are some services offered in the area, but often people don’t know. Because my idea is that there are a number of people that don’t seem to know what’s in the area, even for example, the Food Bank. People come to us, they don’t even know where the Food Path is, or the Salvation Army or something like that. You would think they would know, but very often they don’t.” – Mississauga service provider

Key informants reported that the housing complexes often have a bulletin board or other fashion of communicating with their residents:
“I live in a townhouse complex. So, we have -- people stick things in our mailbox to let us know if there's a meeting or something. And I mean at the library here, at least we offer a lot of information about public events. We have bulletin boards and flyers all over the place letting people know about things. In terms of within direct neighbourly contact, I'm not really sure.” – Mississauga resident and service provider

In the Brampton neighbourhood, the resource center was closed due to lack of funding. A service provider indicated the closure left a gap in the resources available to the neighbourhood. The closure of a facility such as this may unfortunately lead to social isolation by newcomers, especially in a neighbourhood with a high level of newcomers and vulnerable populations: “Once again, Brampton Neighborhood Resource Centre [which closed] would have been one. So, it's definitely left a hole.” – Brampton service provider

A key informant for the Brampton neighbourhood commented on how the small commercial strip mall owners meet on a regular basis to discuss what is going on with their stores and the neighbourhood, and tries to reach out with each other.

“Like I say to the plaza, I know at the plaza, one of the things that they do is that the store owners now meet on a regular basis and kind of speak to some of the challenges and the other things that they face and how they can safeguard themselves because they have the school that’s directly across the street. And some of the store owners are doing a fabulous job you know, working with the youth that are there. And there are some who struggle with it, right. But they do meet and talk about that and so forth.” – Brampton service provider

A common reflection from the Mississauga neighbourhood key informants as a way to increase engagement with the neighbourhood was to bring back the community police station.
“There’s no … like, we have little … community police stations, like all over … you know, all over Mississauga – -- but there’s nothing like that in this particular area. I think putting one of those in one of those buildings would be very helpful.” – Mississauga service provider

Overall, key informants reflected that communication to residents about available amenities and services was lacking in all three neighbourhoods.

4.21 Conclusion

The key informant interviews revealed their local perceptions of the social and built environments as they connect to crime phenomena. Key informants identified aspects of the social environment, such as neighbourhood transience, diversity, and vulnerable populations as well as other barriers to building a social sense of community. The built environment plays an important role according to informants in creating social capital. Housing form and density, as well as lack of meeting spaces and sufficient lighting were identified by key informants as barriers to building a physical space that played an important role the perception of safety and reduction in local perceptions about crime and safety. The importance of establishing local social ties emerged in discussions from the respondents across all three neighbourhoods. The key informants found that the inability to establish local social ties was perceived as a major barrier to a safer, stronger community in each of the three unique neighbourhoods. A lack of trust, lack of knowing ones neighbour and being engaged with other residents in the community were repeatedly identified by informants as major neighbourhood concerns.

The key informant interviews also provided recommendations for strengthening neighbourhoods and building social capital within a community. These recommendations included creating meeting spaces, reducing stigma and modifying the built environment to build stronger neighbourhoods.
While the three neighbourhoods represented three different geographical perspectives, there were a few differences in how factors influence the perception of fear and building of a socially cohesive neighbourhood. These included housing form and density, the diverse population, opportunities for youth and a lack of communication on community events and amenities.
Chapter 5
Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

5 Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The objectives of this research were to i) investigate the perceptions of local experts about local (neighbourhood) crime phenomena and factors influencing crime and safety; ii) to explore dimensions of social capital as pathways through which the social and built environment influence local levels of crime and safety; iii) to document local experts’ recommendations for reducing local levels of crime; and iv) to identify characteristics of the social and built environment that can be modified to bolster social capital and reduce local levels of crime and enhance safety. The objectives and research were specific to the three neighbourhoods identified by the CAC for the broader research project.

Using 22 semi-structured interviews with key informants from each of the municipalities of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon, this research revealed perceptions of crime and safety by local stakeholders and local experts at the neighbourhood level in the three selected communities. The key informants discussed their perceptions of the relationship between the environment, safety and crime, and how the role that the local social and built environmental factors contribute to their perceptions of crime and safety. Results relating to the social environment included community transience, diversity, vulnerable populations and the reputation or stigma that may be attached with a particular area. Results connected to the built environment included housing form and density, the lack of meeting space and community infrastructure. The
key informants also discussed opportunities to reduce crime and the prevalence of anti-social behaviour, including creating meeting spaces, creating collective spaces for informal and community gatherings and greater collaboration between community services, ways to reduce stigma and increase maintenance and pride within a neighbourhood.

These results will be discussed further in the sections below. Limitations of this research will also be acknowledged, followed by a discussion of the theoretical implications of this research. Lastly, this research will highlight the key substantive contributions to the three neighbourhoods studied and to the Region of Peel.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Prior to discussing the major implications of the research findings, several research limitations need to be acknowledged. This research was framed around a broader community-based participatory research project where research objectives and directions were established and modified to best suit the needs of the community, which in this case involved the funders of this research (the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel) and the community advisory committee (CAC) that was established to oversee and guide the direction of the broader research project including this research project. Three limitations linked with this type of research are discussed below.

First, this research relied on the CAC to identify potential key informant participants. This may have resulted in a limited or biased pool of participants (i.e., those networked with or connected with the CAC in some capacity) (See Section 3.10 for greater discussion). While the CAC was a sufficiently diverse group from a wide range of public and non-profit agencies (see Section 1.2) that would help in reducing systematic bias in participant selection, the CAC may have impacted
the ability of other organizations or individuals to participate. The use of snowballing as a secondary sampling method attempted to reduce bias from the CAC though participants recruited through this method were still connected to the CAC in some capacity through the initial participants that were identified by the CAC.

Second, the research participants did not form equivalent groups, which could be partially attributed to the gatekeeper bias (Neuman & Robson, 2009). Key informants from Mississauga and in the “service provider” category were overrepresented and Caledon participants and youth were underrepresented in this study. In addition to potential gatekeeper bias, the research meetings surrounding this research and the broader research project were all held in Mississauga with the exception of one meeting that was held in Brampton. This could have resulted in less prospective or participating CAC members from Brampton or Caledon being logistically capable of attending the meetings and becoming engaged with the research project which would have resulted in a smaller pool of prospective research participants in Brampton and particularly Caledon (the drive from Caledon to Mississauga can take an hour or longer depending on traffic). In addition, since all CAC members were adults, this could have limited the potential pool of youth participants. A follow up study could include a greater effort to recruit Caledon participants for a deeper exploration into the neighbourhood. Similarly, a focus exclusively on youth in the three neighbourhoods could better illuminate the challenges and perspectives of youth, particularly since opportunities for youth was a key research finding identified by research participants across all three neighbourhoods.

Third, the neighbourhood boundaries chosen in this study aligned with administrative boundaries defined by Statistics Canada rather than actual boundaries residents would likely identify when considering their local neighbourhood. Many studies of communities rely on geographic boundaries that are defined by administrative agencies such as Statistics Canada
(Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). While administratively defined census tracts and dissemination areas are reasonably consistent with the notion of a local neighbourhood, they are flawed definitions of how residents would identify their local community (Grannis, 1998; Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Future work that may involve engaging local residents and stakeholders to work towards strengthening local neighbourhoods would benefit from recognizing the fluid nature of communities as perceived by residents that are unlikely to align with these artificial administrative boundaries. Similarly, it should be emphasized the advantage of aligning micro-level studies with these boundaries as research can be linked with important sociodemographic data from the national census.

The CAC also had a significant role in the development of the interview question guide. While the interview question guide was a collaborative effort and input as to themes and categories from the researcher were considered by the CAC, the ultimate interview question guide required approval by the CAC.

### 5.3 Theoretical Implications

The results of this research revealed the perceived relationships between the social and built environment with social capital and crime are complex as described by key informants in three local neighbourhoods in the Region of Peel. This research found that both the built and social environment can influence perceptions about crime and safety, and that social capital may be a mediating factor through which the environment (social and built) can influence how crime and safety is viewed locally. These relationships are discussed below.
5.4 Social Capital

This research revealed how elements of the built and social environment may influence the perception of crime and safety through the pathway of the various dimensions of social capital. As discussed in Section Two, social capital is the product of how community members interact with each other and opportunities for interactions provided by the broader environment. The dimensions of social capital discussed in Section Two included formal and informal ties, reciprocity, feelings of trust, and social norms. As discussed in Section Four, key informants identified relationships between the built and social environment safety. The analysis identified how social capital is a mediating factor between the built and social environment.

As stated in the literature, an increase in levels of informal and formal social ties can lead to an increase in levels of trust and reciprocity among members in a community. Key informants echoed this in their statements. When formal (i.e., institutional) social ties are not accessed or valued equally among community members, anti-social, deviant and criminal behaviour may be allowed to perpetuate. When community members know each other and know what the social norms and acceptable behaviours are, social ties can develop and grow. This can develop social bonds amongst neighbours, where small favours, such as a wave hello or trading favours, can work to increase levels of trust and reciprocity.

Further, the key informant statements underlined the aspects of social disorganization theories and Wilson and Kelling’s theory of Broken Windows (1982). The regular monitoring and maintenance of a community by its residents can effectively deter the occurrence of anti-social, delinquent and criminal behaviours. However, throughout the three neighbourhoods, key
informants noted “if no else cares, why should I” (see Section Four). This attitude will generally work to decrease the levels of social efficacy and social cohesion a community may have.

Nonetheless, key informants did indicate that community residents in the respective communities are willing to become invested in the community – however, there was a reported need for direction or facilitation for community members (see Section Four). Service providers within the communities shared the need for greater pooling of resources and greater collaboration to build strong social relationships within the neighbourhoods and thus social capital within their clientele and community members. By bringing residents together with community services, and encouraging residents to volunteer and become accountable to their actions and to the neighbourhood, the dimensions and thus overall level of social capital may be strengthened. As social capital prospers, the perception and ideally actual levels of crime will decline while safety will be enhanced.

5.5 The Built Environment

The built environment was also found to have an influence on the perceptions about crime and safety among key informants. As indicated in Section Two, the literature outlined aspects of the built environment that can aggravate or mitigate perceptions about crime and safety. Key informants discussed aspects of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in their responses (see Section Four). As per key informant perceptions, if residents are able to increase the ability to naturally observe social activities, they may feel safer under the watchful eye of other neighbourhood members. The literature supports this, where anti-social, deviant or criminal behaviour is increased by the perceived risk of being caught. This can increase aspects of reciprocity and instilling what the social norms and appropriate and inappropriate behaviour takes place in the the neighbourhood.
The importance of housing density and form influenced the perceptions about crime and safety which was emphasized in both the literature and key informant responses. The communities in this research have single detached housing, as well as low and high rise apartments or condo buildings. This housing style was discussed by key informants and in the literature, whereby providing few opportunities for residents to interact with each other and become familiar with each other was viewed as detrimental to social ties and overall crime and safety (see Section Four). When high volumes of people live in close quarters, this can either negatively affect or positively build social cohesion, social connections and social trust. Key informants in this study considered high density housing to limit social connections.

The lack of meeting spaces for residents to meet and interact, and form the ties to support the development of social cohesion and social ties were also highlighted in the literature and the key informant interviews. This disconnect can result in social isolation and breakdown of social organization. Without the opportunity of a meeting space, neighbours become strangers and isolate themselves from one another, and can make residents perceive areas as unwelcoming or unsafe.

The built environment, and in particular the elements that promote or limit visibility of areas by residents was also viewed as key to the level of social capital that can be established by way of reciprocity and collective efficacy. The amount of anti-social and criminal behaviour can decrease through clear sight lines and ‘eyes on the street’ by neighbours who can foster reciprocity (e.g., looking out for one another) and collective efficacy (e.g., working collectively to address a local issue). This in turn can reduce the local perceptions about crime and safety.
5.6 The Social Environment

This research provides important insight into the influence the social environment has on the local perceptions about crime and safety. The social environment can influence the development of social capital, through the establishment of strong positive social norms and social ties that encourage the development of a sense of community and ownership of the local neighbourhood. Key informants alluded to how living in a community with high levels of social cohesion may reduce the local perceptions about crime and safety and may indirectly enhance a neighbourhood’s well-being.

Specifically, the key informants in this study reported that a challenge of fostering and building the social ties was an anxiety of rejection or uncertainty of the reception they will receive by fellow neighbours. The initial fear of saying “hello” may be held higher than the fear of living isolated within a community. As discussed in Section Two, social cohesion is the bond that brings residents together, and can help to increase the sense of belonging within the community. The literature reports that in communities where social efficacy is low and communities are unable to work together, the locally held perceptions about crime and safety may be strong. Community members may not know who their neighbours are, and who does or does not belong in the community, and are not likely to intervene if anti-social behaviour occurs. To combat the locally held perceptions about crime and safety, key informants indicated that community members need to engage each other and embrace local diversity to enhance a sense of community. This is resonated in the literature where, as indicated in Section Two, residents perceive that local incivilities and crime are high, regardless of actuality, fear about crime and instability among community members is also often high.
5.7 Crime

In reference to Section Three, the Region of Peel has decreasing rates of reported crime. The perceptions about crime and safety, whether there is real crime occurring or not, can decrease a neighbourhood’s well-being and the perceptions of safety held by its residents. The design of the built environment to include structures that influence natural surveillance and provide land use for places to encourage increased social interactions such as informal social gatherings at parks, playgrounds and town squares, can work to increase social capital and particularly dimensions such as mutual trust and eventually social cohesion.

This research highlighted the intersections of the social and built environment, social capital and local perceptions about crime and safety within the three communities in the Region of Peel. Key informants highlighted the difficulty of building social trust and social cohesion in neighbourhoods that are in transition – both in the built environment and social environment. The impact of a transitory environment and population can decrease the ability and willingness of residents to develop social relationships. When community members, especially those indicated as vulnerable populations in Section Four, become isolated from the community, these community members may develop an anxiety to the unknown and may perceive neighbours as strangers. This increased isolation and lack of trust or even fear may incorrectly drive the perception that the community is unsafe. This cyclical pattern can ultimately drive the perceptions about crime and safety where, as indicated in Section Three, there may be decreasing levels of actual reported criminal acts.

Neighbours who work together to mediate criminal and antisocial behaviour have lower crime rates (Carcach and Huntley, 2002). The participation in local organizations leads to increased
opportunities for social interaction, which in turn enhances the community's ability to work together in the solution of local problems, realize common values, provide for informal social control to reduce local crime, and increase the community's ability to achieve improved levels of public safety.

Communities that have high concentration of community instability with high levels of crime can be largely mediated by collective efficacy. Social capital and resources available within a community level can combat levels of crime through providing opportunities and promoting ownership of shared spaces. Community incivilities, defined as both social and physical features of the environment that produce feelings of negativity or anxiety within residents, are one local phenomenon that can serve as a hindrance to overall community health and perceptions of community safety.

The culmination of these three leads to functioning communities that work together to decrease criminal and antisocial behaviours, and thus decrease local perceptions about crime and safety. From a community governance perspective, communities play an important role in crime prevention by providing informal social control, support and networks. As Dilulio (1996) puts it, the presence of social capital provides community-oriented solutions to the crime problem and these solutions are more important than increasing expenditure on police or incarceration.

5.8 Key Contributions to the Neighbourhoods and the Region of Peel

The key informant interviews revealed opportunities and barriers to the strengthening of social capital within the three neighbourhoods surveyed, emphasizing the need for community-based and neighbourhood-specific approaches to reducing crime and disorder within neighbourhoods, while at the same time improving overall wellbeing. While the three communities piloted in the
broader research study were identified as priorities within each municipality based on socio-economic conditions and crime and safety-related concerns, each community featured unique challenges and opportunities.

A few potential neighbourhood-specific recommendations were identified and are described here. Based on the assessment from the observational survey conducted as part of the broader research project that this dissertation fits within, and from the literature on the built environment, crime and social capital, greater attention to vacant/derelict land in Brampton could help combat the graffiti, litter, and vandalism in the area. At the time of this research, the Brampton community was in transition following the closing of the Trillium Hospital. The regeneration of this vacant land into community amenities would support an increase in social capital and may also work to reduce the limited social interactions possible through the physical barrier of the railway cutting through the neighbourhood. As well, greater maintenance at the street-level in addressing graffiti and litter in the neighbourhood – in all three neighbourhoods in fact - could work to increase social norms and social capital. As well, the elementary school could be leveraged as local community anchor in future for neighbourhood activities for youth and other residents.

In Mississauga, one recommendation was to create a Business Improvement Association-type body to foster greater ties among local business owners. While research may suggest that BIAs displace community residences and are not driven by the local merchant community (Ranking & Delaney, 2011; Walby & Heir, 2013), a unified body or greater consensus amongst businesses may create a local culture of maintenance and beautification around commercial area where vandalism, graffiti and litter were most prevalent. Business Improvement Associations may encourage prospective customers to the shops by improving the attractiveness of the area and promoting the shop as a comfortable, pleasant and safe place to shop, visit and participate in
business and indirectly increase social interactions among residents, businesses, and between businesses and clients.

In Caledon, the overriding recommendations were to increase amenities and transportation for youth. As the community was almost completely residential, an increase in services available for youth may reduce the frequency of anti-social and deviant behaviour stemmed from lack of opportunities. As highlighted by key informants, the high commuting population may make it difficult for busy families to get out of their residences and involved in the community to meet other neighbours.

5.9 Conclusion

This study found that local expert perceptions about crime and safety are highly related to the local social and built environments. This study investigated the role that local environmental factors play in influencing local experts’ perceptions of crime and safety across three neighbourhoods within the Region of Peel, Ontario. This research identified dimensions of social capital that serve as pathways through which broader environmental determinants of crime and safety can become embedded at the local neighbourhood level. Findings of this research revealed that local perceptions about crime and safety are highly related to the local social and built environments, and that the perceived relationships between the broader environment and crime are complex. Further, the research found that dimensions of social capital such as informal social ties serve as a mediator between the environment and perceptions about crime. Local experts identified aspects of both the social and built environment that influence crime and safety including neighbourhood transience, local diversity, the reputation of an area, vulnerable populations, housing form and density, spaces for informal social gatherings, and local infrastructure.
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Appendices

Appendix A: The Interview Guide

Key Informant Interview Questions

As you know, we are conducting a research project on relationships between local neighbourhood environments and behaviours and perceptions related to crime, safety and neighbourhood health and well-being. I have emailed you two maps which show the boundaries of the current neighbourhood we are examining here in (Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon). The first maps is a close-up of the neighbourhood and the second is a map of the neighbourhood with more of the surrounding area visible.

Defining the Neighbourhood

1. Do you think the boundaries outlined in the first map best describe your neighbourhood?
   a. How might you change the boundaries to better reflect your local neighbourhood where you (live / work / attend school – depending on respondent)?
2. How familiar is this area to you?
   a. How well do you know the area
   b. How long have you lived (or worked) in this neighbourhood
3. What makes this neighbourhood feel like home? (~for residents)

Residents of the neighbourhood, common challenges, key strengths

4. Can you give me a rough description of the types of people who live in this neighbourhood in terms of general demographic characteristics like age groups, gender, language and ethnic background or some other characteristics?
5. How diverse would you say this neighbourhood is considering the people who live here?
6. In your opinion or based on your experiences, what are the particular challenges you think this neighbourhood faces?
7. Do you think everyone on the neighbourhood experiences these challenges equally?
   a. Or might one or more group face or experience this challenge more than others?
8. In your opinion, what are some key strengths of this neighbourhood?
   a. Is this something everyone benefits from? Some more than others?
9. When you speak with others, either in work or in your daily routines, about the neighbourhood that you live in, what are their general perceptions? Is it negative or positive?

Services and Provisions
10. Can you tell me what types of programs or services are offered or available to residents in this neighbourhood area surrounding:
   a. Recreation
   b. Healthcare or health promotion
   c. Employment
   d. Childcare
   e. Settlement programs
   f. Crime prevention or safety
   g. Education

11. Are there any other types of programs or services in your neighbourhood area that I have not listed that you know of?

12. Can you identify one priority of these that you think should be improved upon in this neighbourhood?

Neighbourhood / Social Cohesion

The next couple of questions are about neighbourhood or social cohesion, which is generally the belief that neighbours are likely to help other neighbours out, and the extent to which helping one’s neighbours is the norm in the neighbourhood. There are many factors that contribute to the level of neighbourhood or social cohesion in a neighbourhood, and it can be perceived differently by different individuals in the neighbourhood.

13. Do you think people in this neighbourhood are generally willing to help their neighbours out?
   a. Do you think people in this neighbourhood generally look out for one another or do you think residents look after their own households for the most part?

14. Are there any barriers to helping other neighbours out?
   a. Different backgrounds
   b. Different housing type
   c. How well residents get along

15. Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood that residents rely on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?

16. Are there any places in the neighbourhood where people can gather causally to connect/socialize, hold events or celebrations…?

Crime, Safety, Fear

17. How safe do you consider this neighbourhood with respect to crime?
   a. Do you think there are areas around here where crime is more of a concern?
   b. Do you think there are areas around here where crime is less of a concern?
18. Do you think people in this neighbourhood generally feel safe in their neighbourhood to carry out their day-to-day activities, as required in the daytime or evening?

19. What do you think the main issues are, if any, with respect to crime or safety in this neighbourhood?
   a. Are there any groups that you think are particularly vulnerable in this neighbourhood to being involved with crime or being a victim of crime?

20. Research suggests that there are relationships between the general physical characteristics of a neighbourhood – like the homes, streets, open spaces or businesses – and crime rates in an area. Do you see any evidence of any relationships in this neighbourhood?
   a. If so, are there any places in the neighbourhood where these connections may be particularly apparent? *Like where crime or a lack of crime seems clearly linked to the condition or makeup of the neighbourhood environment?*

21. Are there any precautions that local residents take to prevent crime or improve safety?
22. Are there any specific precautions local organizations or businesses take to prevent crime?
   a. By stakeholder, I mean Peel Regional Police/OPP/ the Region of Peel, local municipality, business owners, local non-profit organizations, neighbourhood groups, etc

23. Can you identify any precautions that you think could be introduced or implemented that may improve the safety or reduce crime in this neighbourhood?
   a. By individual residents or stakeholders (as indicated above)?

24. Are you aware of any general maintenance or disrepair that occurs in your neighbourhood?
   a. What about in terms of lighting, neighbourhood watch, etc.

25. Over the last few years, do you think this neighbourhood has been
   a. Getting more safe
   b. Getting less safe
   c. Staying about the same

26. Are there any places in your neighbourhood that seem to be safer than other places within the neighbourhood?
   a. Any places that seem less safe than other places within this neighbourhood?
27. Young people can become involved with risky or delinquent behaviours when they are faced with a lack of other opportunities for more meaningful activities.
   a. Do you think young people in this neighbourhood have enough opportunities to participate in meaningful social or extra-curricular activities?
   b. What do you think could be done to improve the local opportunities for young people in this neighbourhood?
      i. With respect to after school programs
      ii. With respect to recreational opportunities
      iii. With respect to neighbourhood groups, programs, services
      iv. With respect to skill development, training

United Way United in Action
28. On Friday September 23, there was a United Way of Peel ‘United in Action’ Day that occurred in your neighbourhood.
   a. Did you know about it? How did you find out about it? (Read about it, heard about it, participated in it?)
   b. If a similar event were to occur in the future, would you be interested in volunteering and helping out?
   c. What type of neighbourhood-based initiative do you think might be most meaningful for residents as a way to enhance the safety and well-being of the neighbourhood but also to engage local residents in a local activity?

Closing Questions
29. In thinking about your primary residence/career/business, where do you see yourself in five years?
   a. Are you generally happy with this neighbourhood?
   b. Could you see yourself moving out of this neighbourhood? If so, why?
30. Have you seen any general neighbourhood improvements over the last five years?
   a. In the area of
      i. Cleanliness
      ii. Crime
      iii. Social
      iv. Amenities
      v. Transportation
31. If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood, what would it be?
32. Is there anything else that we have not covered thus far that you think is important to discuss with respect to crime, safety or general health and well-being in this neighbourhood?
33. Could you recommend one or two other people in this neighbourhood that you think we should talk to in this study?
Appendix B: Informed Consent

FROM PROSECUTION TO PREVENTION: COMBATING DETERMINANTS OF CRIME WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEighbourHOOD INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

DATE

Dear Participant:

You have been identified as someone who may be interested in participating in a research study on the social and physical neighbourhood -level characteristics that influence, crime, safety and well-being in the Region of Peel. The research is being conducted by Professor Dana (Department of Geography, University of Toronto Mississauga) in collaboration with Safe City Mississauga, Brampton Safe City, Peel Regional Police and the Crown Attorney’s Office for the Region of Peel.

We are requesting your cooperation as a voluntary participant in this research. The project has received the support of [enter name of Neighbourhood Advisory Committee member] and is funded by the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel. If you agree to participate, we will ask you to participate in a 15-30 minute interview session. During the interview you will be asked about those neighbourhood features (both physical and social) that you feel are influencing local levels of crime, perceptions about crime and/or safety, and relationships between crime and neighbourhood health and well-being. You will be under no obligation to answer any specific questions and all of your responses will be kept completely confidential.

Although this research may not benefit you directly, the findings will be used by the neighbourhood partners and funding agencies associated with this work, and potentially [enter name of Neighbourhood Advisory Committee member] to better understand the local neighbourhood -level determinants of crime, safety and well-being. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your level of participation in this study (e.g., if you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw at any point in the study) will not affect your relationship with [enter name of Neighbourhood Advisory Committee member].

If you are interested in participating, we ask that you complete the enclosed consent form on Page 2 by INSERT DATE. For youth under 18 years of age, please have your parents read the
letter of information for parents, and if they consent to your participation in this research, please have them complete the parental consent form and return your consent form. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact us or the Ethics Office at the University of Toronto 12 Queen's Park Crescent West, 3rd Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 1S8 Phone: 416-946-3273.

Dana Wilson
Assistant Professor
University of Toronto Mississauga
Phone: 905-569-4556
Email: dana.wilson@utoronto.ca
CONSENT FORM: Participation in Interview

I understand that participation in this research project is limited to youth who reside in or near to the neighbourhood located at [enter name of neighbourhood in Peel Region]. I understand that I will participate in an interview session that will ask for my views on local factors in the neighbourhood that may contribute to levels of crime and safety, or perceptions about crime and safety in the neighbourhood, as well as how crime, safety and neighbourhood health and well-being are connected. The interview will last around a half-hour (30 minutes). I understand that with my permission the interview session will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. I am aware that the audiotapes and transcripts will be used only by the researchers and their research assistants, and that no other person will have access to them. The audiotapes and transcripts will not have my name or any other identifying information on them. A research code number will be used instead. The completed interview transcriptions, audiotapes and other research data will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet. No information will be released or printed that would disclose any personal identity and all such research data will be destroyed after five years after the date of the last publication.

I understand that my parents have consented to my participation in this study but that I am under no obligation to agree to participate. Any questions I have asked about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been assured that no information will be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity. Any risks or benefits that might arise out of my participation have also been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that my decision either to
participate or not to participate will be kept completely confidential. I further understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

I understand that, although this research will not benefit me directly, by participating in this study I will be contributing to the understanding of local challenges and opportunities for crime prevention and neighbourhood well-being in my neighbourhood and in the Region of Peel more broadly. I understand that the findings of this study will be shared with local neighbourhood partners.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

I, ______________________________ (please print name), agree to take part in a qualitative study examining perceptions of crime, safety and well-being in my local neighbourhood located near to [enter name of neighbourhood in Peel Region].

_____________________________  ____________________________
Signature                                                      Date
Appendix C: Parental Informed Consent

DATE

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is to inform you that your child has been invited to participate in a 20 minute to 40 minute interview session, held in [location to be identified by each participant], on the topic of neighbourhood crime, safety and well-being in the neighbourhood near [enter name of neighbourhood in Peel Region]. This interview is part of a study conducted by Professor Dana (Department of Geography, University of Toronto Mississauga) in collaboration with Safe City Mississauga, Brampton Safe City, Peel Regional Police and the Crown Attorney’s Office for the Region of Peel.

As a participant in an interview, your child will be asked to share her views on neighbourhood factors that contribute to local levels of crime, perceptions of safety, and neighbourhood well-being. The interview will be taped and transcribed, in order to ensure accuracy. No sensitive questions will be asked, and your child can choose not to answer any particular question. Data collected will be used only by the researchers, and will be destroyed after the study period. Results will be anonymized, and responses cannot be traced to your child. No information will be released or printed that would disclose your child’s name or identity. Your child can leave the interview at any point if they choose to no longer participate.

This research will contribute to our understanding of the local determinants of crime, safety and neighbourhood well-being in [enter name of neighbourhood in Peel Region], and in the Region of Peel more broadly.

If you require additional information about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher:
Appendix D: Maps outlining neighbourhood areas in question

Brampton
Mississauga
Appendix E: Ethics Submission

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Office of the Vice-President, Research

Office of Research Ethics

ETHICS REVIEW PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM - FACULTY

(For use by University of Toronto Faculty Researchers only)

SECTION A – GENERAL
INFORMATION

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

From Prosecution to Prevention: combating determinants of crime with opportunities for
neighbourhood involvement in social development

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Principal Investigator:

Title: Assistant
Name: Dana Wilson
Professor

Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Geography

Mailing address: 3264 Davis Building, University of Toronto Mississauga, 3359 Mississauga Rd North, Mississauga, ON, L5L 1C6

Phone: 905-569-4556    Institutional e-mail: dana.wilson@utoronto.ca

**Alternate Contact** (e.g., Research Coordinator):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>Fax:</td>
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</table>

**Co-Investigators:**

Are co-investigators involved?  Yes X  No 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Crown Attorney</th>
<th>Name: Mark Saltmarsh</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Office of the Crown Attorney for the Region of Peel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing address: 7755 Hurontario Street, Suite 100, 5th Floor, Office Suite 506, Brampton, ON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title: Executive Director</td>
<td>Name: Teresa Burgess-Ogilvie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Safe City Mississauga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing address: 300 City Centre Drive, Ground Floor, Mississauga, ON L5B 3C9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 905-615-6272</td>
<td>Fax: 905-615-4111</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Superintendent O.I.C. 11 Division</th>
<th>Name: Bob Devolin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Peel Regional Police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing address: 3030 Erin Mills Parkway, Mississauga, ON, L5L 1A1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 905-453-3311</td>
<td>Fax:</td>
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</table>
Please append additional pages with co-investigators’ names if necessary.

3. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD:

Health Sciences □ Social Science, Humanities and Education X□ HIV REB □


4. LOCATION(S) WHERE THE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED:

If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring administrative approval/consent (e.g. in a school), please include all draft administrative consent letters. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of approval are required, and to obtain approval prior to starting the project.

University of Toronto □

Hospital □ specify site(s)

School board or neighbourhood agency □ specify site(s)

Neighbourhood within the GTA X□ specify site(s)

Interviews will be held in trusted and familiar neighbourhood locations identified by participants in neighbourhoods in the Region of Peel (i.e., Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, Ontario).
The University of Toronto has an agreement with the Toronto Academic Health Sciences Network (TAHSN) hospitals regarding ethics review of hospital-based research where the University plays a peripheral role. Based on this agreement, certain hospital-based research may not require ethics review at the University of Toronto. If your research is based at a TAHSN hospital please consult the following document to determine whether or not your research requires review at the University of Toronto.

http://www.research.utoronto.ca/for-researchers-administrators/ethics/human/at-a-glance/where-to-apply-tahsn-institutions/

5. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL(S)

(a) Does the research involve another institution or site?  Yes ☐  No X☐

(b) Has any other REB approved this project?  Yes ☐  No X☐

If Yes, please provide a copy of the approval letter upon submission of this application.

If No, will any other REB be asked for approval?

Yes ☐  (please specify which REB)  No X☐

Please note that REB approvals from other sites must be submitted to the ORE at U of T

6. FUNDING OF THE PROJECT
(a) Please check one:

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agency:</td>
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Applied for funding

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
<td>Submission date:</td>
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</table>

Unfunded

If unfunded, please provide an explanation why no funding is needed?

If one protocol is to cover more than one grant, please include all fund numbers:

(b) If waiting for funding, do you wish to postdate ethics approval to the release of funds?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(c) For funded research, will more than one protocol be submitted to cover all research funded by the respective grant? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please list these protocols by title and RIS # (if known):

7. CONTRACTS

Is there a University of Toronto funding or non-funded agreement associated with the research?

Yes ☐ No X ☐
If Yes, please include a copy of the agreement upon submission of this application.

Is there any aspect of the contract that could put any member of the research team in a potential conflict of interest? Yes ☐ No X☐

If yes, please elaborate under #10.

8. PROJECT START AND END DATES

Estimated start date for this project: June 2011

Estimated completion of involvement of human participants for this project: June 2012

9. SCHOLARLY REVIEW

(Please note: for submissions to the HIV REB from neighbourhood investigators, scientific review is a pre-requisite for ethics review. If your study is unfunded, please contact the OHTN to arrange a scientific review prior to completing your ethics submission.)

Please check one:

☐ The research has been approved by a thesis committee or equivalent (required for thesis research)

☐ The research has undergone scholarly review prior to this submission for ethics review
(Specify review committee – e.g., departmental research committee, CIHR peer-review committee, OHTN scientific review, etc)

☐ The research will undergo scholarly review prior to funding

☐ The research will undergo scholarly review prior to funding

(Specify review committee – e.g., departmental research committee, CIHR peer-review committee, OHTN scientific review, etc)

X ☐ The research will not undergo scholarly review

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

(a) Will the researcher(s), members of the research team, and/or their partners or immediate family members:

   (i) Receive any personal benefits (e.g. financial benefit such as remuneration, intellectual property rights, rights of employment, consultancies, board membership, share ownership, stock options, etc.) as a result of or in connection to this study? Yes ☐ No X ☐

   (ii) If Yes, please describe the benefits below. (Do not include conference and travel expense coverage, or other benefits which are standard to the conduct of research.)

N/A
(b) Describe any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information (during or at the end of the study) that has been placed on the investigator(s). This includes controls placed by sponsor, funding body, advisory or steering committee.

The funding agency has not placed any restrictions on the disclosure of information.

(c) Where relevant, please explain any pre-existing relationship between the researcher(s) and the researched (e.g. instructor-student; manager-employee; minister-congregant). Please pay special attention to relationships in which there may be a power differential.

There are no pre-existing relationships between the researchers and the participants.

(d) Please describe the decision-making processes for collaborative research studies. If Terms of Reference exist, please attach them.

A Neighbourhood Advisory Committee (CAC) has been established by the United Way Peel Region to ensure the research project is a collaborative one with relevant neighbourhood partners as defined by the PI on this contract as well as the United Way Peel Region and the Region of Peel. CAC members include City of Mississauga Neighbourhood Development Workers, City of Brampton staff, City of Mississauga staff, Region of Peel – Human Services
and Public Health, Peel Data Centre, Strategic Social Policy, Peel District School Board, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, Brampton Safe City, Mississauga Safe City, Peel Children and Youth Initiative, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Boys and Girls Club, Peel Youth Village, Mississauga Summit members and the YMCA. As such, certain elements of the project have been altered from their original proposal (when initially submitted for funding) in order to establish a balance between academic and neighbourhood partner priorities and produce locally relevant results from the research. One major change to the original proposal in fact, has been the addition of key informant interviews with local experts in each neighbourhood (which forms the basis of this ethics application).

Please see Terms of Reference attached (Appendix A).

SECTION B – SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

11. RATIONALE

Describe the purpose and scholarly rationale for the proposed project, and, if relevant, the hypotheses/research questions to be examined. The rationale for doing the study must be clear.

Peel Region has recently burgeoned into one of Canada’s major urban municipalities. Roughly one-half of the urban residents in Peel are immigrants, and over one fifth are recent immigrants,
making it one of the most diverse communities in Canada. Despite being such a young and
dynamic population, Peel Region reports being one of the safest communities in Canada with the
lowest per capita rates of crime. Although official rates of violence and crime are relatively low
in the Region of Peel and in Canada overall by international standards, increasing polarization
across urban centres in Canada has resulted in growing disparities in the experiences of crime
and victimization among and within neighbourhoods. The most disadvantaged and vulnerable
members of society are facing disproportionate and increasing burdens of crime and
victimization in their day-to-day environments (Waller, 2006; Waller & Weiler, 1984). In
contrast with recent calls to expand the (reactionary and costly) criminal justice system (See
Clark, 2010), the clear social gradient in the intensification of crime at the neighbourhood level
suggests that a focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of crime at the local level may
hold the greatest promise of reducing rates of crime and disparities in experiences of crime (see
Waller, 2006).

Commonly accepted risk factors for violence include poverty, racism, neighbourhood design
(e.g., isolation of residential areas, poor transportation services, lacking spaces for meaningful
engagement and socialization), the education system, family conditions, pre-existing health
issues (e.g., mental health), lacking economic opportunities, and settlement issues for
newcomers/immigrants (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). Despite a general consensus over the
broader factors that influence crime and violence, a main challenge of developing interventions
to target these complex and often interrelated factors, is that these root causes are not equally
manifested and experienced at local levels. For example, experiences of racism can vary
dramatically across local neighbourhood settings, from bustling street corners to isolated housing
projects. Similarly, racism is experienced differently among individuals and groups, and these
experiences are subject to evolve across time and among local places. Thus, despite a general
understanding of the broader determinants of crime and violence, a lack in understanding how
those determinants play out across local neighbourhoods can serve as major barriers to identifying locally relevant and meaningful crime prevention initiatives.

This project will bridge fundamental gaps in previous studies through an examination of social and environmental dimensions of crime and safety at regional and localized neighbourhood levels. In particular it will identify pathways and processes through which broad or regionalized determinants and dimensions of crime and safety become embedded and internalized uniquely across highly localized neighbourhood contexts. Greater insight into how determinants of crime and safety are manifested in local social and physical environments is critical in order to identify neighbourhood-based interventions that align with the specific needs and priorities of local residents.

One of the research objectives is to develop and pilot a neighbourhood environmental survey tool (i.e., survey for measuring characteristics of the built physical and social environment, not a survey of individuals) that can be implemented collaboratively by researchers, neighbourhood partners and residents to enhance understanding of local-level neighbourhood resources, needs, and priorities relating to neighbourhood safety and well-being. The neighbourhood environmental survey will be piloted in three priority neighbourhoods identified collaboratively with the neighbourhood partners (i.e., one in Caledon, one in Brampton, one in Mississauga). In conjunction with the environmental survey piloting, key informant interviews will be conducted in each of the three neighbourhoods as a means of evaluating the validity of the environmental survey as well as to add another layer or perspective to our understanding of the neighbourhood with respect to neighbourhood priorities, safety and well-being.

12. METHODS

Please describe all formal and informal procedures to be used. Describe the data to be gathered, where and how they will be obtained and analyzed. If research includes intentions to publish in other than standard academic venues, please indicate.

The goal of the key informant interviews is to better understand local determinants of crime, safety and fear from local experts in the neighbourhood. In-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants from each of the three neighbourhoods where the environmental survey will be piloted. **We plan to interview approximately five local experts in each neighbourhood (i.e., 5 experts X 3 neighbourhoods = minimum of 15 interviews).**
In accordance with the neighbourhood advisory committee established to help guide elements of this (i.e., between the age of 15 and 24 years) research project, key informants in each neighbourhood will ideally include: one long-time resident, one youth, one business owner, one local neighbourhood policing officer, and one other local expert.

Interviews will focus on perceptions about local features in the neighbourhood that may contribute to crime, safety, or perceptions about crime or safety.

Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis, a qualitative word processes software package. Codes will be identified using both deductive and inductive coding. Preliminary results will be shared with participants to help ensure credibility of the findings.

Attach a copy of all questionnaires, interview guides or other non-standard test instruments.

Please include a list of appendices here for all additional materials submitted (e.g., Appendix A – Informed Consent; Appendix B – Interview Guide, etc.):

Please find attached the following:

Appendix B: Interview Questions, Information Letter and Letter of Consent – Key Informants
13. PARTICIPANTS OR DATA SUBJECTS

(a) Describe the participants to be recruited, or the subjects about whom personally identifiable information will be collected. Where recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personally identifiable information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include. Strategies for recruitment are to be described in section #15.

Key informant interviewees will initially be identified by members of the CAC linked to this research project (see section 10d). Individuals will be contacted with the assistance of the CAC using their existing connection to members in the local communities of each neighbourhood as they have an established rapport with many diverse neighbourhood members working in or utilizing a wide array of services linked to the CAC.

While, this may result in a limited pool of participants (i.e., those networked with or connected with the CAC in some capacity), since the goal of the key informant interviews is to glean knowledge and insight from a relatively specific cross-section of neighbourhood members, using the CAC connections will be the most efficient way to identify informants.
(b) Is there any group or individual-level vulnerability related to the research that needs to be mitigated (for example, difficulties understanding informed consent, history of exploitation by researchers, power differential between the researcher and the potential participant)?

To reduce group or individual-level vulnerability of participants, CAC members will assist in connecting potential participants to researchers as they have an established rapport with potential participants. Interviews will be conducted by the PI on this project (Wilson) and one other UTM student to ensure rigor in the interview process.

14. EXPERIENCE

(a) Please provide a brief description of (i) the principal investigator’s, (ii) the research team’s and (iii) the people who will have contact with the participants’ experience with this type of research. If there has not been previous experience, please describe how the individual/team will be prepared.

Dana Wilson’s research interest relate to the social determinants of health with a focus on local (neighborhood) opportunities and challenges for positive youth development. Dana has experience designing and implementing qualitative studies including focus group interviews and key informant interviews with both youth and adults in various cultural contexts and languages (i.e., Montreal (Quebec), Chennai (India), and various locations in Ontario). Dana is also a
resident of Mississauga with a number of connections to local organizations related to safety, crime prevention and well-being in the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel.

(b) For projects that will involve neighbourhood members (for example, Peer Researchers) in the collection and/or analysis of data, please describe their status within the research team (e.g. are they considered employees, volunteers or participants?) and what kind of training they will receive.

N/A

15. RECRUITMENT

Where there is recruitment, please describe how, by whom, and from where the participants will be recruited.

Where participant observation is to be used, please explain the form of insertion of the researcher into the research setting (e.g. living in a neighbourhood, visiting on a bi-weekly basis, attending organized functions). Please make it explicit where it is reasonable to anticipate that all or some of the participants who will be recruited will not speak English or will speak English as a second language. Describe any translation of recruitment materials, how this will occur and whether or not those people responsible for recruitment will speak the language of the participants.
Attach a copy of all posters, advertisements, flyers, letters, e-mail text, or telephone scripts to be used for recruitment. This copy should be exactly as it will appear for recruitment.

Members of the CAC will assist in contacting potential participants as they have an established rapport with an extensive population of service providers, service-users, and other well-known neighbourhood members. Individuals will be contacted by telephone and/or email to set up face-to-face semi-structured interviews, designed and tailored to the participant.

16. COMPENSATION

(a) Will participants receive compensation for participation?

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<th>Type</th>
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<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(b) If Yes, please provide details and justification for the amount or the value of the compensation offered.
(c) If No, please explain why compensation is not possible or appropriate.

Compensation will not be offered as funding does not currently exist for compensation (i.e., the United Way grant that is funding this research does not include compensation for key informants).

(d) Where there is a withdrawal clause in the research procedure, if participants choose to withdraw, how will compensation be affected?

N/A

SECTION C –DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH
17. POSSIBLE RISKS

Risks to participants as individuals or as members of a neighbourhood may include:

(a) Physical risks (including any bodily contact or administration of any substance); Yes ☐  No X ☑

(b) Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious or upset); Yes ☐  No X ☑

(c) Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation); and/or Yes ☐  No X ☑

(d) Legal risks (potential of apprehension or arrest or being identified as a member of a legally-compromised group). Yes ☐  No X ☑

Please describe the risks involved in the study, and what steps will be taken to ensure that they will be managed and/or minimized.

There are no estimated risks involved with this study at the present time.
18. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project. Discuss any potential direct benefits to the neighbourhood, including any capacity building which is integrated into the study design. Comment on the potential benefits to the scientific/scholarly neighbourhood or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.

Neighbourhood Benefits:

The research represents a collaborative relationship among researchers in the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto Mississauga, and neighbourhood partners and collaborators on this project, namely Safe City Mississauga, Brampton Safe City, the Crown Attorney’s Office for the Region of Peel, and the Peel Regional Police.

By collaborating with these partners as well as the CAC set up by the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel, the research results will provide important feedback needed to identify opportunities for new and/or improved programs and services related to neighbourhood level crime, safety and well-being.

This research will also set the stage for revising and improving upon the utility and effectiveness of the neighbourhood environmental survey tool so that it can be implemented throughout neighbourhoods across the Region of Peel to better identify and understand local level needs and opportunities related to crime, safety, and well-being. This research will also set
the stage for future studies that seek to understand the role of the local environment in shaping perceptions and outcomes related to both health and crime. The focus of this study across the three very unique settlements of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon within the Region of Peel will provide an additional layer of understanding to the unique opportunities and challenges of interventions that work to reduce crime and enhance neighbourhood health.

Benefits to the scientific/scholarly neighbourhood or society:

This proposed research three important contributions to the literature on crime, health and neighbourhood contexts. First, much of the existing work focuses on the geographic distribution of crime, social determinants, or individual determinants of crime. This work moves beyond narrow approaches to understanding and addressing crime by joining with the body of work that explicitly links neighbourhood characteristics with health outcomes, like physical activity or access to local opportunities for nutritious and affordable food options. This work makes the case for research that focuses simultaneously on neighbourhood health and well-being, and crime and safety. Existing research almost exclusively works on the two domains (i.e., crime and safety or health and well-being) separately.

Second, this research will shed light on implicit and explicit connections between social and physical environments and their link to both crime and health, as evidenced from findings of the environmental survey tool and key informant interviews. The findings will also provide a better understanding of how determinants of crime/health play out differently across highly localized neighbourhood contexts (i.e., one in Caledon, one in Brampton and one in Mississauga).
Third, focusing this research on one large and growing suburban context (i.e., the Region of Peel) will have strong relevance to other suburban centres across Canada that are experiencing similar levels of rapid growth and development as well as similar growing pains related to social concerns and challenges around crime and health.

SECTION D – THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

19. THE CONSENT PROCESS

Describe the process that will be used to obtain informed consent. Please note that it is the quality of the consent, not the format that is important. If the research involves extraction or collection of personally identifiable information from a research participant, please describe how consent from the individuals or authorization from the data custodian will be obtained. If there will be no written consent, please provide a rationale for oral or implied consent (e.g., discipline, cultural appropriateness, etc.) and explain how consent will be recorded.

Where applicable, please attach a copy of the Information Letter/Consent Form, the content of any telephone script, screening materials, introductory letters, letters of administrative consent or authorization and/or any other material which will be used in the informed consent process. If any of the information collected in the screening process - prior to full informed consent to participate in the study - is to be retained from those who are excluded or refuse to participate in the study, please describe how those individuals will be informed of this.

Prior to participating in an interview, all potential key informants will be provided with a letter of informed consent (see Recruitment) and will be required to complete the informed consent form prior to participating in the study. Those potential key informants who are youth and are between the ages of 15 and 17 years of age (i.e., those who are under the age of 18, since our definition of youth is 15-24 years of age) will be provided required to return a completed informed consent and parental consent form (see Recruitment) before participating.

At the beginning of each interview, the research will be explained to participants. Participants will also receive another copy of the letter of information that contains the contact information for the PI in this research project. All participants will be asked if they have any questions or concerns prior to beginning the interview.

20. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND/OR ORGANIZATIONAL CONSENT, OR CONSENT BY AN AUTHORIZED PARTY
(a) If the research is taking place within a recognized neighbourhood or an organization which requires that formal consent be sought prior to the involvement of individual participants, explain whether consent from that neighbourhood/organization will be sought. Describe this consent process and attach any relevant documentation. If consent will not be sought, please provide a justification and describe any alternative forms of consultation that may take place.

N/A

(a) If any or all of the participants are children and/or are not competent to consent, describe the process by which capacity/competency will be assessed, the proposed alternate source of consent - including any permission/information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the alternate consent – as well as the assent process for participants.

All potential participants between 15 and 17 years of age are required to have their parents sign a form consenting to their participation in the research.

21. DEBRIEFING and DISSEMINATION

(a) If deception or intentional non-disclosure will be used in the research study, please justify. Please consult Guidelines for the Use of Deception and Debriefing in Research
Please provide a copy of the written debriefing form, if applicable.

(b) Will participants and/or communities be given the option of withdrawing their data following the debriefing? Please explain.

(c) Please explain what information/feedback will be provided to participants and/or communities after their participation in the project is complete. (e.g., report, poster presentation, pamphlet, etc.)
At the end of the consent form, there will be a space for participants to indicate if they want to receive a summary of the focus group results. Those interested will be requested to print their name and mailing address on the form. A summary of the research findings will also be supplied to the United Way of Peel Region, the Region of Peel, and neighbourhood partners collaborating on this research.

**22. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL**

(a) Where applicable, please describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project. Outline the procedures which will be followed to allow them to exercise this right.

Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project at the beginning of the interview. This information will also be included in the informed consent form.

(b) Indicate what will be done with the participant’s data and any consequences which withdrawal may have on the participant.

If a participant decides to withdraw from the study, their responses from the interview will be removed from the interview transcripts. There are no consequences associated with withdrawal.
Participants will be assured that withdrawal will not affect their relationship with any members or organizations linked to the CAC through which they were recruited.

(c) If participants will not have the right to withdraw from the project at all, or beyond a certain point, please explain. Ensure this information is included in the consent process.

N/A

SECTION E – CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

23. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) Will the data be treated as confidential? Yes X No

(b) Describe the procedures to be used to protect anonymity of participants or informants, where applicable, or the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of
results. Data security measures must be consistent with UT's *Data Security Standards for Personally Identifiable and Other Confidential Data in Research*. All identifiable electronic data outside of a secure server environment must be encrypted, consistent with the standards described at: [http://www.utoronto.ca/security/UTORprotect/encryption_guidelines.htm](http://www.utoronto.ca/security/UTORprotect/encryption_guidelines.htm): 

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During interview sessions, all participants will be reminded that the information shared during the interview is confidential. To ensure confidentiality codes will be used for all participants in transcripts, and any written results arising from the research. No information will be published that could reveal the identity of a participant.
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(c) Describe any limitations to protecting the confidentiality of participants whether due to the law, the methods used or other reasons (e.g., duty to report)

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N/A
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(d) Explain how written records, video/audio recordings, artifacts and questionnaires will be secured, how long they will be retained, and provide details of their final disposal or storage. Describe the standard data security procedures for your discipline and provide a justification if you intend to store your data for an indefinite length of time. If the data may have archival value, discuss this and whether participants will be informed of this possibility during the consent process.
The audiotapes and transcripts from the interviews will not have any identifying information on them. Codes will be used for the names of all participants. All audiotapes and transcripts will be stored in a secure location in the PI’s (Dana Wilson) research lab at UTM (Davis Building 3205). No information will be released or printed that would disclose any personal identity and all such research data will be destroyed five years after the last publication from the study.

(d) If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, please explain. Also, explain how identifiable data in written records, video/audio recordings, artifacts, questionnaires, etc. will be secured.

N/A

24. PRIVACY REGULATIONS

For research involving extraction or collection of personally identifiable information, provincial, national and/or international laws may apply. I will report any apparent mishandling of personally identifiable information to the Office of Research Ethics. My signature as Principal Investigator, in Section G of this protocol form, confirms that I am aware of, understand and will comply with all relevant laws governing the collection and use of personally identifiable information in research.
RISK MATRIX: REVIEW TYPE BY GROUP VULNERABILITY AND RESEARCH RISK – check one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Vulnerability</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1 X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the *Instructions for Ethics Review Protocol Submission Form* for detailed information about the Risk Matrix.
Explain/justify the level of risk and group vulnerability reported above:

Both the research risk and group vulnerability are low in this project. The focus of the research and the questions asked do not pose any physical, social or psychological risks to the participants. In addition, the vulnerability of the participants as a group is low. That is, the participants we seek to include (known neighbourhood members linked to the CAC) do not have any specific group vulnerabilities relating to pre-existing physiological or health conditions, cognitive or emotional factors, and socio-economic or legal status. In addition, participation of youth in the research is dependent on parental consent to participate, and participation of both youth and adults in the research is voluntary.

Review Type

Based on the level of risk, these are the types of review that a protocol may receive:

Risk level= 1: Delegated Review (formerly expedited); Risk level = 2 or 3: Full Board Review

For both delegated and full reviews (SSH&E, HS, or HIV REB), please submit one electronic copy of your protocol and appendices (e.g., recruitment, information/consent and debriefing materials, and study instruments) as a single Word document or a pdf. Please ensure that the electronic signatures are in place and e-mail to new.ethics.protocols@utoronto.ca
All other submissions, which are not new (e.g., revisions and continuing review submissions), as well as general inquiries, should be sent to ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

The deadline for delegated review (SSH&E or HS) is EVERY Monday, or first business day of the week, by 4 pm. HIV REB reviews all protocols at full board level but applies proportionate review based on the level of risk.

REB meeting and submission due dates are posted on our website (SSH&E, HS or HIV).

Please note that the final determination of Review Type and level of monitoring will be made by the University of Toronto REB and the Office of Research Ethics.

SECTION G – SIGNATURES

The PI and his/her respective Departmental Chair/Dean or designate must sign below:

As the Principal Investigator on this project, my signature confirms that I will ensure that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted in accordance with all relevant University, provincial, national and international policies and regulations that govern research involving human participants. I understand that if there is any significant deviation from the project as originally approved I must submit an amendment to the Research Ethics Board for approval prior to its implementation.
As the **Departmental Chair/Dean**, my signature confirms that I am aware of the proposed activity and that it has received appropriate review prior to submission. My administrative unit will follow guidelines and procedures which ensure compliance with all relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human subjects. My signature also reflects the willingness of the department, faculty or division to administer the research funds, if there are any, in accordance with University, regulatory agency and sponsor agency policies.

Print Name of Departmental Chair/Dean (or designate):
Signature of Departmental Chair/Dean: ___________________________    Date:
(or designate)