



9.0 YOUTH

The 10 - 19 population is currently the largest age group in most suburban districts of Metro. Environments which accommodated the parenting of younger children are now faced with large numbers of older children, adolescents, and young adults. The suburban response to the dominant presence of youth in their midst is one of unease and tension. This was the most consistent theme to emerge in almost every interview conducted, whether with residents, front-line workers, or service providers.

The sources of suburban unease and tension are somewhat understandable. The period of adolescence is frequently a difficult stage of transition for both adults and youngsters. These are often unpredictable years, where the behaviour or activity of young people can drift into unanticipated directions, outside the realm of parental aspiration and expectation. This element of unpredictability is a situation faced by all parents and communities, irrespective of family income levels, occupational status, cultural background, family structure, the type of home in which one lives. Feelings of unease and uncertainty about

youth are not unique to Metro's suburbs. The social effects on youth of the deteriorating economic climate are being felt everywhere. There are, however, special conditions which intensify the experienced impact of youth in Metro's suburbs, and contribute to the current climate of unease and tension.

The dominant presence and visibility of youth is a new experience for the post-war suburbs. Youth are neither adults nor fully dependent children; they are subject to the influences of the general culture, and less subject to the supervision and control of adults as are younger children. Youth are using the environment in ways which were neither anticipated nor intended. Suburban youth, as part of the phenomena of the last decade, have acquired increased levels of discretionary income. They have been encouraged to become active market consumers for age-related food, clothes, music and life style pursuits. Suburban youth are expected to act as adult consumers, often without the financial resources and judgement that is called for. While the market influences youth to consume, it creates an environment which does not enable them to meet some of their basic needs - needs for belonging, needs for expression, needs for social contact.

Metro's suburbs are going through an intensified adjustment process. There are the traditional adjustments that families experience when their children become adolescents. At the same time, the general community is being pressed into an accommodation to the dominant youth pressure.

The process of accommodation is proving to be a difficult one. The traditional suburban framework of support for child welfare and development is no longer sufficient. The support needs of youth go beyond the physical setting of the single family home, the neighbourhood, the school, and leisure facilities.

Older communities in the central urban area, have experienced previous generations of adolescents in their midst. Some accommodation has already occurred, whether this has taken the form of services which are in place, or an acquired measure of comfort in the visible use of the environment by young people. The physical compactness of the central urban area facilitates youth mobility and independent activity, even though such opportunities are generally viewed by adults as a liability rather than an advantage. From an adolescent perspective however opportunities for mobility and diverse experience are valued. Adults are more publicly visible users of the central urban environment. This reduces the conspicuous presence

of young people.

Metro's newer suburbs have neither the acquired experience nor the community resources necessary to respond to the range of legitimate social needs that are characteristic of the adolescent stage of development. The adolescent period is one where young people retain levels of dependence on family life and parental direction, but begin to experience community life independently. The ways in which the community responds to the presence and needs of its young people can in turn shape the attitudes of youth to adults and the general community.

In some instances the community may be required to offer support in order to compensate for difficulties in the home environment or in the parent-adolescent relationship. It comes as no surprise that suburban child welfare workers report increased demands for family and protective services involving adolescents. There are other forms of support which only the community can uniquely confer -- the opportunities to socialize, to observe and participate in public forms of community life, to pursue special skills and interests, to secure access to employment where jobs are scarce, to be counselled and

receive services in areas of intimate concern sometimes too sensitive to be fully discussed with parents.

A shared parental-community responsibility is required to respond to the legitimate social needs of youth. While parental responsibility is primary, the community also plays a critical role. For the community to meet its responsibilities, some measure of collective sensitivity and commitment is required.

There are a range of demands being placed on the suburban environment by youth from all family backgrounds. Middle class youth are among those who make extensive use of plazas as public meeting places, a continuing source of suburban tension.⁵⁵ Service workers noted the excessive use of alcohol, the sale and use of soft drugs, among a wide range of suburban youth. Access to part-time or full-time forms of work is a shared concern of all youth. A significant number of adolescents receiving child welfare services come from middle and upper middle income family backgrounds in Metro's suburbs. A Mississauga report on

⁵⁵ Perceptions of project respondents were similar to findings in: J. Dean, Streetwork Report, Don Mills Youth Scene, 12 Madison Youth Project, June 1971.

vandalism issued in 1976 noted that:

"... no correlation was found between the density of a residential area and the rate of vandalism in that area. Areas characterized by high rates of vandalism were typically low density areas, having less than 8 units/acre."⁵⁶

Vandalism was not to be necessarily associated with any socio-economic segment of the community, nor was it correlated with the residential density of a neighbourhood.

Social development patterns in Metro's suburbs during the last decade have increased the need for adequate youth supports. The post-war suburban environment incorporated a number of basic assumptions about conditions that would prevail as young children grew into adolescence. Many of these assumptions are not as self-evident as they once seemed:

- (a) The two parent structure of family life is less secure.

⁵⁶ H. Wolf (Chairman), Report of Task Force on Vandalism, City of Mississauga, June 1976, P. 12 - 13.

One parent families, primarily mother-led, are increasingly prevalent in Metro's suburbs, and are to be found across all income groups. Parent separation often occurs when children are older. Adolescents face difficult periods of adjustment when one of their parents moves out of the home. Some suburban youth may have grown up for a number of years without a secure male or female parent relationship. There are now young people in the suburbs who need stable forms of adult contact and support outside the family environment.

(b) The future is not as promising nor predictable as it was once assumed to be for those youth who applied themselves seriously at school, at home, and in the community.

Enclosures 41 and 42 document 1976 census data on youth unemployment throughout Metro districts. Because the census is conducted in June, the count records both youth out of school and looking for ongoing work, as well as young people looking for summer jobs. It should be stressed that the distributions in the enclosures are conservative projections of youth unemployment levels. They only include youth who had looked for work in a one-week reference period. This would eliminate significant numbers of young people who had become discouraged, were less motivated, or were less certain of where

to look for jobs. The general unemployment rate in Canada and Metro has jumped considerably since June 1976. We know that in recent years youth consistently represent 40% - 50% of the recorded unemployed, and that there are large numbers of unrecorded unemployed.

In 1976 there were seriously high levels of youth unemployment in many parts of the suburbs and throughout Metro. All but one of the districts with higher unemployment levels for females aged 20 - 24 were in newer suburban areas, primarily in Scarborough. There was a more even distribution between central areas and suburban districts in high unemployment rates for females aged 15 - 19, and in the combined rates for females aged 15 - 24. There were critically high unemployment rates for male youth clear across Metro. Almost two-thirds of newer suburban districts had unemployment rates for 15 - 19 year old males above Ontario percentages. There were even higher levels of unemployment for 15 - 19 years olds in the central urban area. Two-fifths of newer suburban districts had very high unemployment rates for males aged 20 - 24. Once more the central urban area had even higher unemployment rates. In two-fifths of newer suburban districts the combined rate of unemployment for males aged 15 - 24 was

above Ontario levels. Throughout most of the central area youth unemployment levels are above the Ontario rate.

It should be noted that high suburban youth unemployment in 1976 showed up in districts with a wide range of family income levels, and not just in districts with high concentrations of publicly assisted housing stock.

There is growing evidence that there are serious social effects for those who are unemployed.⁵⁷ The stress of being unemployed leads to increased and costly demands on service resources. There is evidence from project interviews that high youth unemployment is a direct source of instability to the present and future life of suburban communities.

One might note M.P.D. 9A in North Etobicoke, a multi-income and multi-racial community. In June of 1976 there were high unemployment levels for both females and males aged 15-19. In July of 1976, one month later, serious inter-racial conflict broke out among youth in the area.

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H. Brenner, Estimating the Social Costs of National Economic Policy, Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1976

Respondents from other similar districts also related patterns of instability to youth unemployment. In one Etobicoke neighbourhood, instability declined when there were funds to hire local youth and to support their efforts to operate neighbourhood centre programs.

There are other forms of community instability that arise from high levels of youth unemployment. The Etobicoke Guardian, when commenting upon increased levels of vandalism in the borough, noted that:

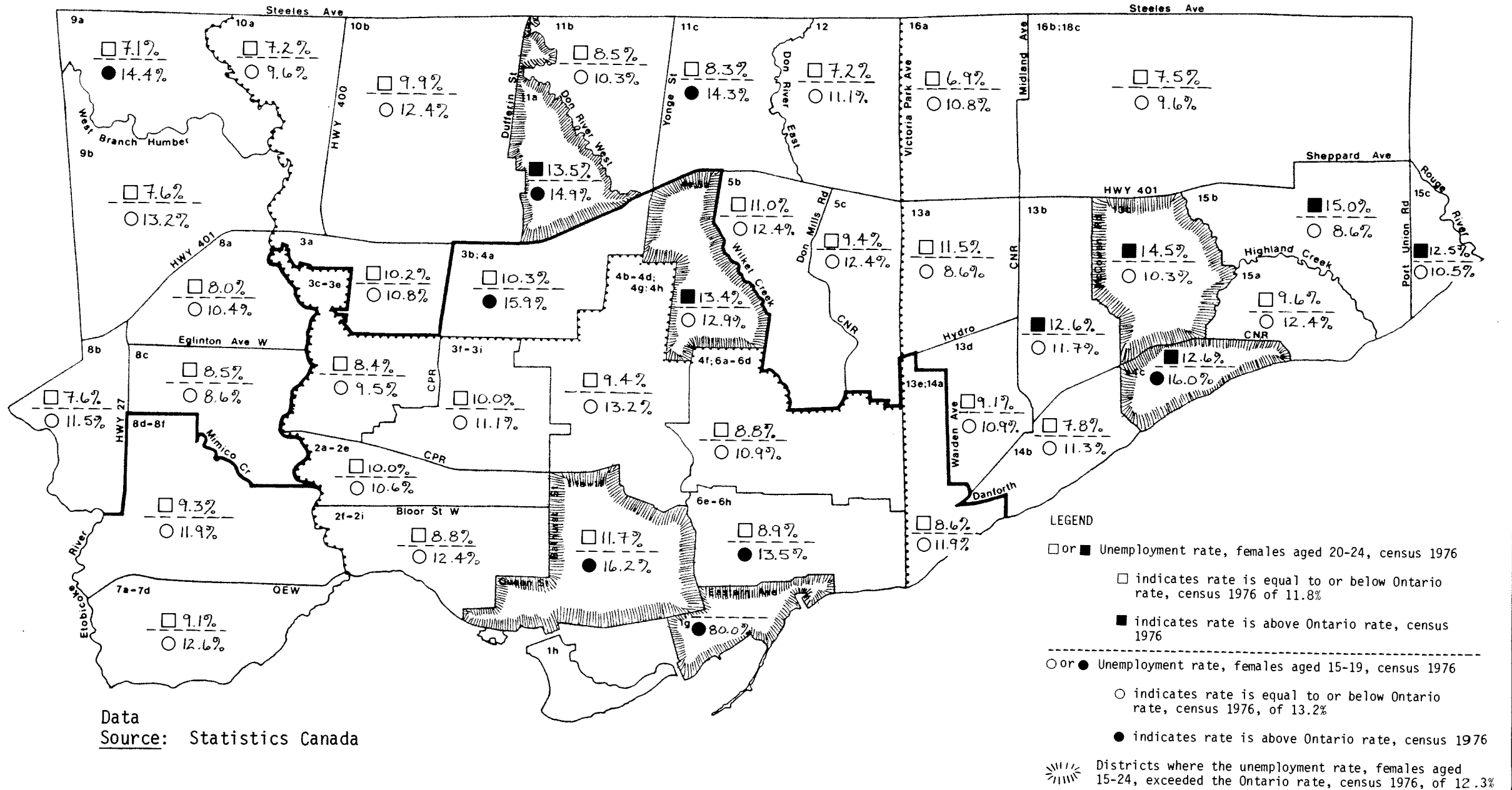
"Our industrial society is based on the work ethic, which includes respect for the property of others and sadly that ethic has eroded in proportion to the increase in the unemployment rate."⁵⁸

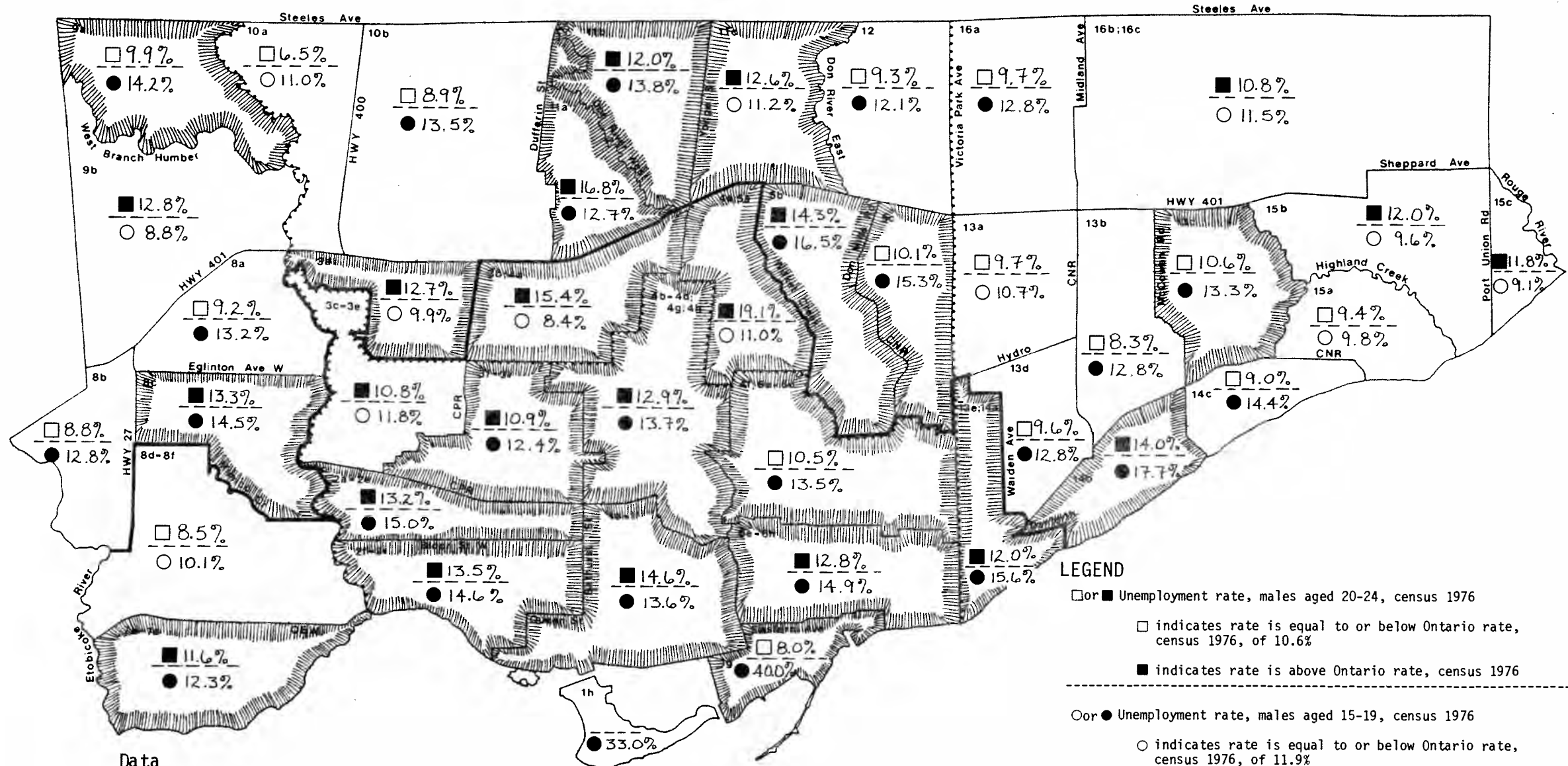
In a recent report summarizing investigations into vandalism, the Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council noted that:

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Etobicoke Guardian, High Unemployment Devalues Work Ethic, Editorial of May 7, 1978.

ENCLOSURE 41: DISTRIBUTIONS (PLANNING DISTRICTS): RECORDED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, FEMALES AGED 20-24 AND 15-19, CENSUS 1976





Data Source: Statistics Canada

LEGEND

- or ■ Unemployment rate, males aged 20-24, census 1976
 - indicates rate is equal to or below Ontario rate, census 1976, of 10.6%
 - indicates rate is above Ontario rate, census 1976

- or ● Unemployment rate, males aged 15-19, census 1976
 - indicates rate is equal to or below Ontario rate, census 1976, of 11.9%
 - indicates rate is above Ontario rate, census 1976
- ▨ Districts where the unemployment rate, males aged 15-24, exceeded the Ontario rate, census 1976, of 11.1%

"The premises or expectations contained in the work ethic seem to be failing due to economic realities and with this failure is a growing frustration...The concept of a good education leading to good employment is no longer true. Failure to meet expectations result in a high degree of frustration and may lead to an increase in drug and alcohol related incidents."⁵⁹

Service workers reported increased numbers of school drop-outs, less accessible employment for youth, with groups of young people drifting aimlessly around suburban communities without work, and with nothing to do. Among such youth there is evidence of low self-esteem combined with anger. Growing numbers of suburban youth are among those applying for and receiving welfare. In general, there is a pattern emerging, once exclusively associated with the central urban area, of despondent groups of suburban youth with little sense of immediate direction, and prospects for an uncertain future.

⁵⁹ Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council, An Investigative Approach to the Problem of Vandalism in Hamilton-Wentworth. Interim Report, second draft; February 1978, P. 5.

(c) Not all adolescents are growing up in single family homes or other kinds of ground-level dwellings.

For youth living in apartments, traditional basement recreation rooms, family rooms, backyards and driveways are not available for informal pursuits such as listening to louder music, having social contact with friends inside the home without direct adult observation, playing billiards, chatting casually in a driveway or on front steps. Even where recreation facilities are placed in apartment dwellings for specialized forms of youth activity, these facilities do not compensate for the absence of settings where informal social contact, characteristic of adolescent years, can be pursued. Although there is little evidence that youth growing up in suburban apartments are any special source of instability to the community, the physical limitations of the home increase their reliance on supportive experiences in the community.

(d) The social and cultural homogeneity of suburban life has changed.

There are now youth in the suburbs for whom

Canadian life is a new experience. Racist epithets and incidents are as much a feature of suburban living as they are of the rest of Metro. Adjustment can be difficult in Metro's suburbs, where youth of multi-cultural backgrounds have limited opportunities for continuing attachments to their native culture while integrating into Canadian customs and patterns.

There are now a wide range of family income groups in the suburbs. Sometimes the contrast can be quite stark. As one resident noted, young people growing up in poverty can look out of their apartment windows and observe the contrasting affluence of single family homes just beyond. It is no longer possible to organize leisure programs on a "fee for service" basis and then assume relative homogeneity of family income levels so that all youngsters will be able to participate financially.

It was disconcerting to discover, for example, that youngsters from low-income suburban families were often unable to play in organized hockey leagues because of the cost of equipment and registration.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ L. Kalchuman, Minor Hockey is Big Business. The Mirror
May 3, 1978, P. 54

One police officer interviewed cited the fund-raising efforts of his service club to help suburban youngsters from poorer families play in organized leagues. They were able to reduce the expense from \$60 to \$35 a youngster; this was still costly for youngsters from poorer families.

The need for community youth support does not arise because conditions are worse in the suburbs. There is little evidence that behaviour patterns of suburban youth are significantly different from youth elsewhere. The themes raised by service workers and residents when describing suburban youth are all too familiar to those who have worked with youth in the central area. These themes include:

- young people complaining of "nothing to do";
- lots of organized programs but "kids don't often seem to be interested";
- observed differences between "motivated" and "unmotivated" youth;
- youth who are socially active, and those who are lonely and isolated from friends, adults, and the general community;
- concern over how to reach "kids";
- the expressed fear of youth gangs, whether real or perceived;

- apprehension over younger children being induced into inappropriate activity and behaviour by older youngsters;
- irritation with the personal appearance of youth, their public clustering in groups, the use of glib, loud, and sometimes offensive language in the presence of adults, and sometimes directed to older adults;
- the association of litter, untidiness, and property damage when groups of young people congregate in public places.

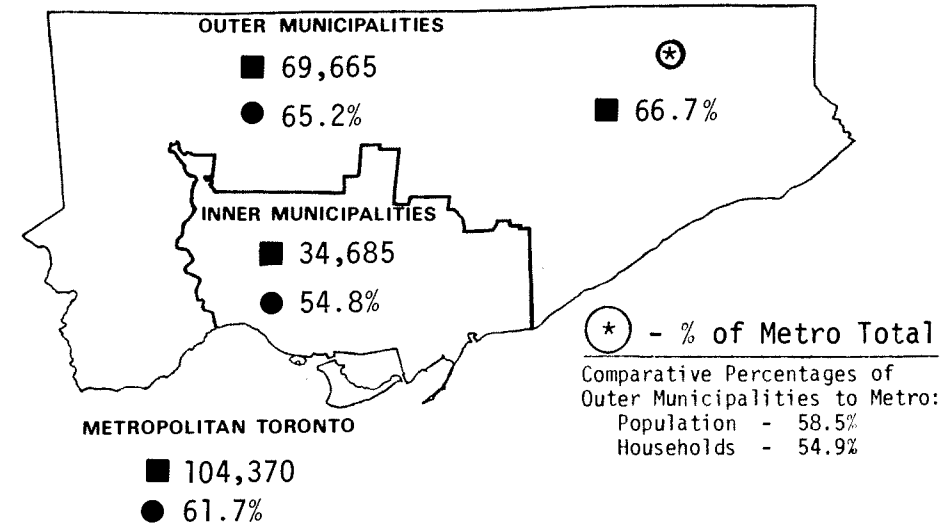
There are large numbers of older children and youth moving around on their own in Metro's suburbs. A recent study conducted in the Yonge/Finch and Jane/Finch areas of North York found that by age ten over 50% of those interviewed were permitted to travel alone of the T.T.C.⁶¹ By age 12 more than 70% of all children never travelled with adults, and 92% rarely or never travelled with older brothers and sisters. Older children and adolescents travelled with friends and found these experiences to be a source of enjoyment precisely because they were on their own. Adolescence is a time when young people form friendships and networks of contact with other adolescents and adults in the community. They engage in exten-

⁶¹ J. Durlock, B. Duncan, G. Emby, Suburban Children and Public Transportation in Metropolitan Toronto. Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, January, 1976. P. 10.

Figure: 32

Distributions: Full-Time School Attendance, Children at Home Aged 15-17, 1976

- Number of Children Aged 15-17, at Home
- Percentage Attending School Full-Time



COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTIONS

Etobicoke	■ 16,910	● 66.6%	East York	■ 3,500	● 58.6%
Scarborough	■ 23,075	● 65.5%	York	■ 5,955	● 58.4%
North York	■ 29,680	● 64.1%	Toronto (City)	■ 25,230	● 53.5%

Data Source: Statistics Canada

sive forms of social discovery - of people, places, ideas, styles, all in the context of new social relationships.

Many suburban youth are living up to parental aspirations. They drop out of secondary school less frequently, attend post-secondary institutions in greater numbers when living at home (see Figure 17), and participate in a whole range of organized leisure programs provided by the municipality, voluntary agencies, and committed community volunteers. Figure 32 identifies the number of children aged 15 - 17 who were living at home in 1976, and the percentage who were in full-time attendance at school. In Metro's suburban municipalities 65% of suburban youth aged 15 - 17 were still in school full-time. The contrast with the inner municipalities is quite evident. In the City of Toronto nearly 47% of youth aged 15 - 17 were no longer in full-time attendance. Once more these are conservative projections. The census recorded a youngster in full-time attendance if he/she had been in school at any time in the preceeding nine months. Youngsters who dropped out during the 1975 - 1976 school year were recorded in school full-time.

While full-time attendance patterns are higher in the suburbs, there are still more than 33% of youth aged 15 - 17 who were not in school full-time. Even though these youth are

a distinct minority, they have important needs such as access to work-study programs, alternative schools, short-term employment prior to school re-entry, continued career and lifestyle counselling while on their own in the community.

These programs often place extra financial demands on the community. But there are too many youth currently in Metro's suburbs to expect that they will all turn out the same. Many youth will go through adolescence in ways which conform to parental expectation or aspiration. Other young people will have less predictable and sometimes trying patterns of development. Whether these patterns persist through youth into adulthood will in some measure depend upon the quality of community supports which are available when youngsters experience difficulty at home, at school, or in the community.

Figure 33 identifies levels of recorded juvenile offences in 1976 (base year of the report). Suburban municipalities contained 65% of all juveniles aged 7 - 15 in Metro. In 1976 56% of juvenile offences in Metro were recorded in the suburbs. Thus the ratio of offences to resident juveniles was lower than in the inner municipi-

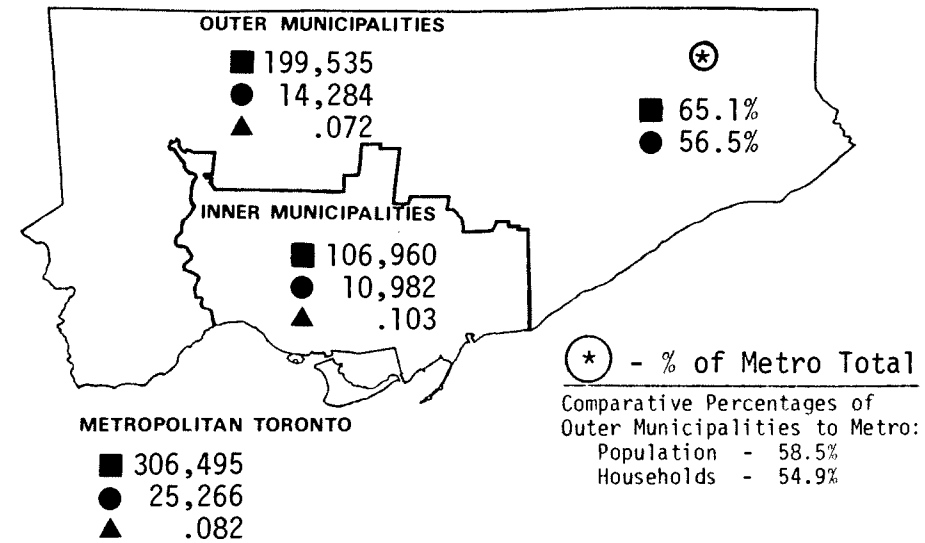
palities. Youth crime in the suburbs is not at crisis levels relative to the size of the juvenile population. However, given the large numbers of suburban juveniles, there were correspondingly larger numbers of youth apprehended in the suburbs in 1976. As a result, there is a clear need for programs and services to deal with deviant forms of youth activity. If one were to view 16 and 17 year olds (currently treated as adults when apprehended) as adolescents, then the scale of need for youth services is even greater.

Enclosure 43 identifies the distribution of juvenile offences by police division. Once more it is evident that in newer suburban areas of Metro there are large numbers of juveniles which in turn leads to larger numbers of recorded offences. The suburban ratios of offences to the estimated juvenile population are lower than central urban area ratios south of Davenport and the Danforth. Some would contend that higher ratios in downtown areas reflect the presence of non-resident juveniles in these areas and increased police surveillance, because of more patrol areas in these divisions. It should be noted that Division 41 in Scarborough had the highest number of recorded offences in 1976, and a ratio equivalent to some of the downtown areas. This should come as no surprise to public officials -- the Scarborough Agencies Federation reported in June of 1976 that there were unusually

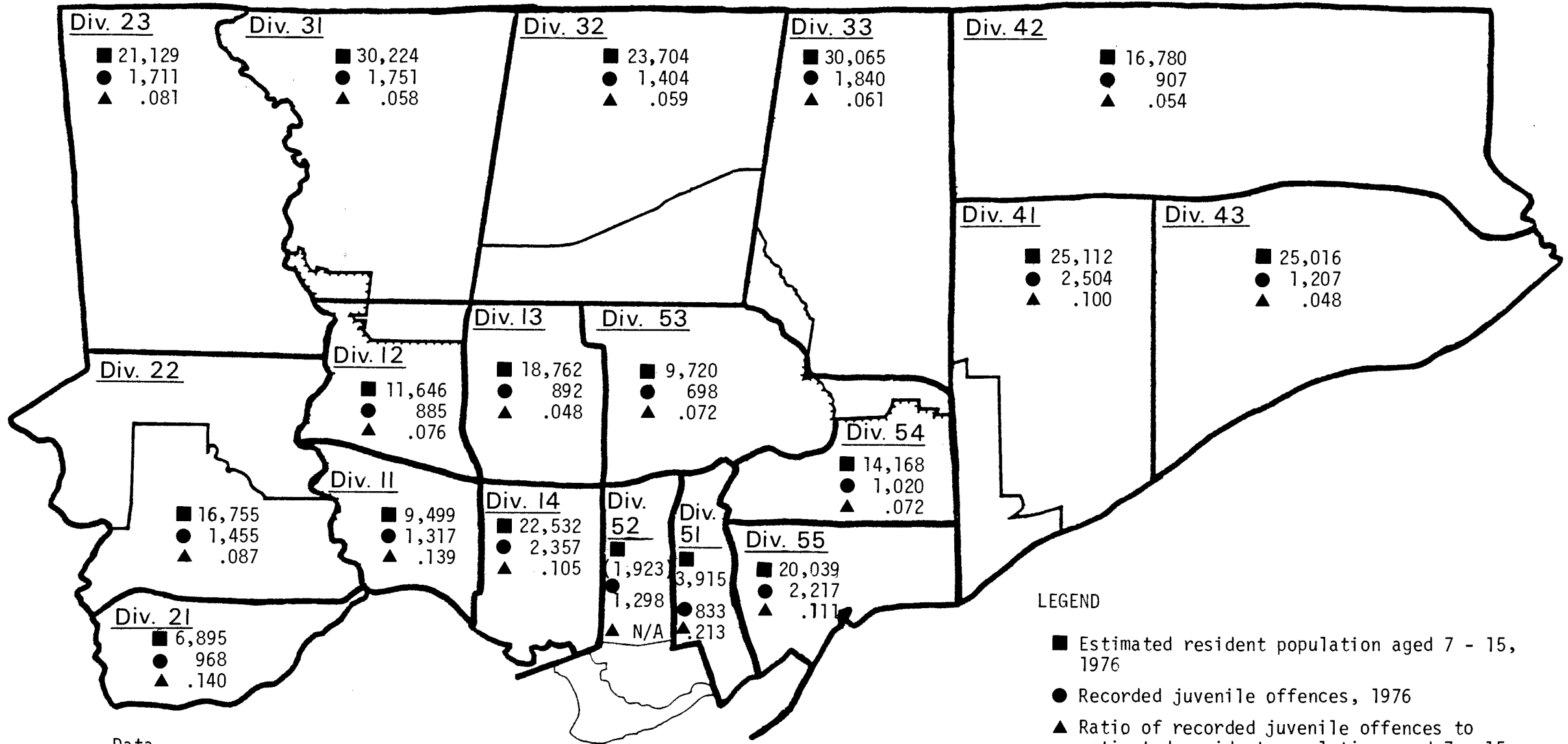
Figure: 33

Distributions: Apprehension Patterns, Recorded Juvenile Offences, 1976

- resident population aged 7-15, 1976
- recorded juvenile offences, 1976
- ▲ ratio of recorded juvenile offences to resident population aged 7-15, 1976



Data Source: Statistics Canada
 Research Department, Metropolitan Toronto School Board



LEGEND

- Estimated resident population aged 7 - 15, 1976
- Recorded juvenile offences, 1976
- ▲ Ratio of recorded juvenile offences to estimated resident population aged 7 - 15, 1976

Data Sources: Statistics Canada
Metropolitan Toronto Police Force

Please note: Offences record place of apprehension and not the place of residence of the alleged offender.

high offence levels in this division, based on an analysis of 1974 data.⁶² The report cited gaps in after-school services for Scarborough youth, particularly for young males who outnumbered female offenders by at least 4:1; of further concern was the difficulty of attracting young males into existing recreation programs. The report called for preventive programs:

"...matched to the characteristics of young offenders, their hours of operation and location." (P. 54)

It further noted that:

"...since shoplifting is the most frequent juvenile offence, programs should give consideration to operating in shopping areas." (P. 54)

Enclosure 44 identifies patrol areas in Metro where 300 or more juvenile offences were recorded in 1976. Of the eleven patrol areas with 300 or more offences, eight were located in newer suburban areas. This reflects not only the large numbers of juveniles in the suburbs, but the extensive use of plazas by young people as activity and meeting places.

⁶² D. Kimberley et al, Initial Report on Social Service Issues and Directions in Scarborough, Scarborough Agencies Federation, June 1976, Table 9. P. 52

Patrol areas with high apprehension levels, including 1406 and 5509 in the City, were primarily those with major shopping centers. One patrol area in Scarborough - 4103 - had almost as many recorded offences in 1976 as the central business district of downtown Toronto.

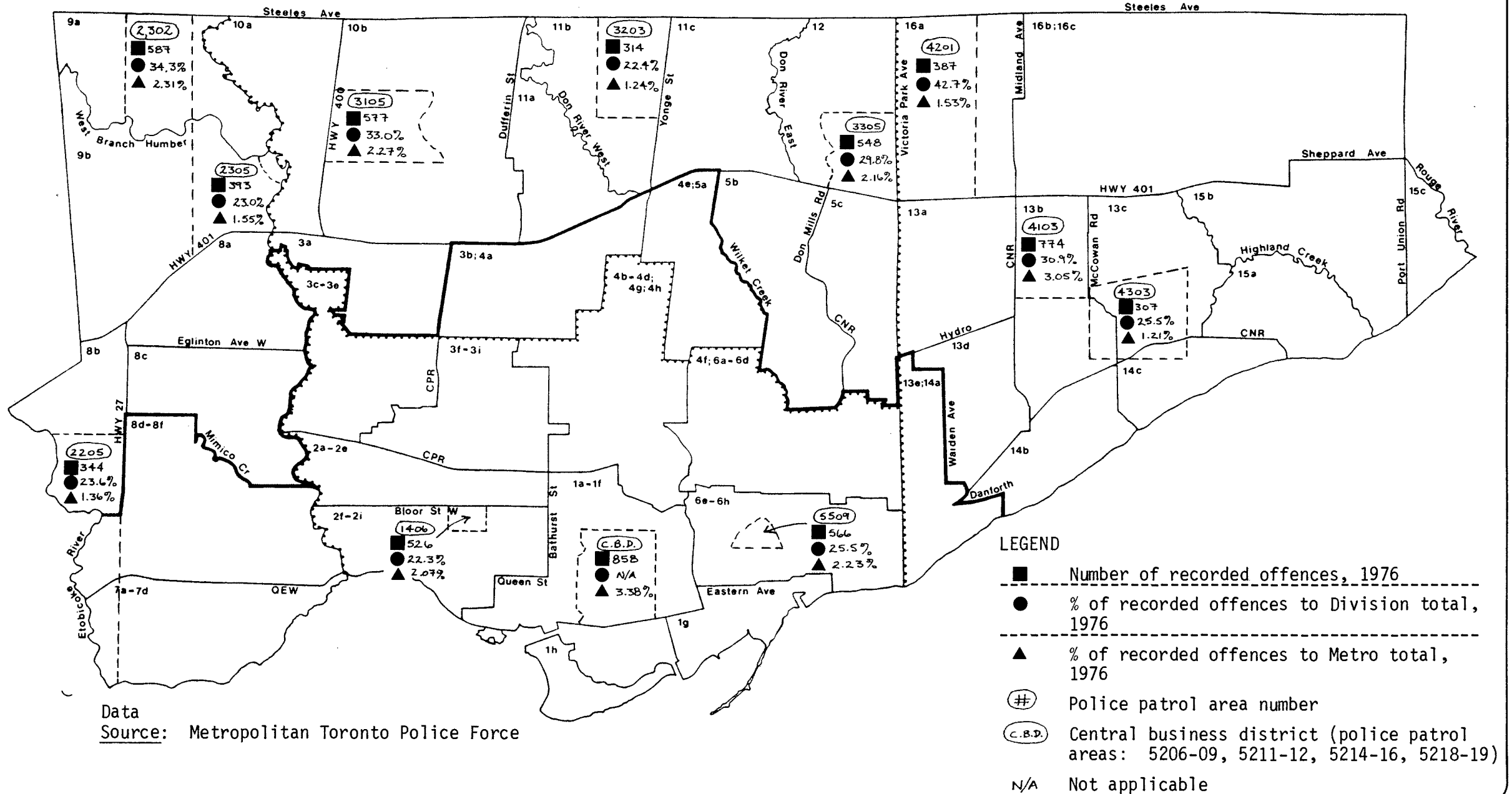
Juveniles are a conspicuous element of the policing experience in the suburbs. The police may often be the only community service workers that many young people with difficulties come into contact with outside of the school.

There are few ongoing outreach programs in Metro's suburbs equivalent to the drop-in and neighbourhood services of the central area, to reach young people who are uncomfortable or unable to use established public programs or agency services. These young people may be: (1) unemployed, out of school, and with a vague sense of what to do, (2) experiencing family tension, (3) undergoing adolescent identity dilemmas, (4) new to Canada and going through some cultural disorientation, (5) in states of depression or loneliness and in urgent need of contact with adults who are not authority figures, (6) drifting into destructive life styles and peer group networks, (7) discovering their sexuality but reticent

ENCLOSURE 44: DISTRIBUTIONS (PLANNING DISTRICTS): PRIMARY APPREHENSION LOCATIONS, 300 AND OVER RECORDED JUVENILE OFFENCES, BY POLICE

PATROL AREAS, 1976

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or unaware of the need to monitor their personal behaviour, (8) unaware of the range of public and community resources that they may draw upon in Metro to pursue leisure or cultural interests, because of their suburban isolation.

The function of outreach programs are to reach young people with support in whatever ways that are effective. Approaches may include operating small "storefront scale" drop-in settings - casual non-judgemental, and non-intimidating - to facilitate contact and support. Outreach also includes a commitment to move around the community and reach young people where they are - in plazas, around school yards, in front of apartments, in the parks, at the library, etc. Detached work can be with individuals, groups, or networks of youth. Outreach programs are necessary supplements to the work of the schools, health organizations, and social agencies. They are flexible and adaptive in nature and can more readily be designed to reach the diverse range of young people who now live in the suburbs.

Outreach services are also an important approach to prevention. They provide an opportunity for the community to be in touch with young people through difficult periods of transition and adjustment where support can be offered before life situations deteriorate and require more intensive forms of treatment and corrections. The preventive value of outreach is

enhanced where there are back-up resources in the community for short-term and crisis support. One important gap cited by respondents was the absence in the suburbs of temporary accommodations where young people might stay for a night or longer while tensions or problems in the home were being addressed.

There is an urgent need for stable job creation programs to restore a sense of the work ethic among unemployed suburban youth. It is clearly not enough for the provincial government to limit its job programs to summer employment for young people in full-time attendance at school. Community employment programs for those out of school and without work can serve as a transitional experience into vocational preparation and labour market entry. Job creation programs are productive investment for everyone concerned. For adolescents and young adults there is the discipline of daily activity associated with work. Social integration is promoted where youth contribute to the life of their community.

With large numbers of suburban women now in the labour force, fewer volunteers are available for needed community services in the suburbs. The needs however remain and have increased in light of the social transformations of suburban life. There is important

community work for youth and young adults to perform in the suburbs; after school programs, supplementary child care, home support and para-transit services for the elderly, the development of neighbourhood and multi-lingual information resources, tutorial and educational assistance programs particularly for new Canadian children, multi-cultural programs, health information services, and the organization of leisure programs for those with limited financial resources. Community employment for youth can fill the gaps in current services for those in need who would be otherwise excluded. There is a direct benefit to all suburban residents from community employment programs. Where jobs are scarce for young people, and will continue to be scarce throughout the mid-eighties, job creation for youth is a preferable alternative to general welfare assistance, idleness, and subsequent despair.

Youth unemployment and job creation are not unique suburban concerns. Programs are needed throughout Metro. But Metro's suburbs have a special stake in seeing to it that these needs are addressed, for the majority of Metro's youth are now in the suburbs, and will continue to be there in the coming years. It is hard to assess the mood of unemployed youth and young adults at present. What appears to be apathy and resignation can conceal deeper feelings which are taking hold, and

which could erupt quite suddenly. If this occurs, Metro's suburbs could experience serious forms of disruption in the eighties, similar in some ways to what took place in many North American cities in the sixties.

Another major source of tension in Metro's suburbs is over the independent and informal use of public space by youth. As suburban children grow into adolescence, they behave as do youth in general. They begin to form social worlds independent from parents and other adults. Community meeting places are sought out in order to create and consolidate social contact experience.

In the suburbs the expectation exists that young people will carry out prescribed activities in public settings and then leave. Thus one goes to the recreation centre to swim, to the library to borrow a book, to the plaza to make purchases, to a restaurant to eat food. The outside entrance to an apartment building is for purposes of entering and leaving the building. As young people in the suburbs grow in numbers they increasingly challenge these restrictions. The conflict escalates. Security guards are hired; troublesome youth

are banned from public and private places. Because some are delinquent, a generalized image emerges which castigates all young people who lingers. A climate of irritation and resentment develops. Young people are aware of adult attitudes and respond accordingly.

Needless to say these conditions do not prevail everywhere, nor are they always evident with the same level of intensity. Nevertheless, tension between adults and youth over the use of public places clearly exists.

It is commonly recognized that many North American suburbs often suffer from aimlessness and a missing "sense of community"⁶³ There are limited opportunities for people to affirm a sense of common belonging and membership. The framework of belonging for most adults remains the home and the neighbourhood. Young people are breaking out of this framework as they begin to move on their own, engage in social discovery, and attend secondary schools where non-neighbourhood friendships and networks are developed. When young people transcend the framework of home and neighbourhood and move out

⁶³ C.M. Haar (Editor), The President's Task Force on Suburban Problems, Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge, Mass. 1974. P. 30-40

into the larger suburban community, they come up against the stark reality that they are almost alone in seeking public forms of community life. There are few adults around, walking, or casually acknowledging each other as in many parts of the central urban area. Young people are highly visible because adults are not there. As a result, young people come to be perceived as deviant, not for what they do -- that is seeking out public forms of community life -- but in relation to prevailing adult behaviours.

In interviews with suburban residents with cars, it became evident that moving around on foot was rarely seen as a form of personal transportation, but had been elevated to the status of leisure and physical fitness. Adults without cars did not see movement on foot as a source of leisure or health promotion. Walking to them was an unfortunate necessity of their lives; unfortunate because suburban distances and physical surroundings made this less than a pleasant experience.

Adult use of the suburban environment tends to be specialized. Informal social contact can be secured through other settings -- at work, through home entertainment, in restaurants, loungers, private clubs, social

institutions, etc. The suburban environment has been stripped of public meeting places for young people. It is not appropriate to meet in front of apartments. There are few neighbourhood parks, compact and in the centre of local life. Large, open, and deserted spaces are foreboding and insecure. There are few lounges in recreation centres, schools, libraries, in which to meet.

The structure of retail activity has eliminated and jeopardized many traditional public meeting places for young people. A whole range of small owner-managed retail enterprises have given way to impersonal forms of chain retailing. For adults this may represent convenience, efficiency, and marginal savings in retail costs. For young people and the community in general important social benefits offered through small owner-managed enterprises are gone.

Chain retailing ventures focus on high volume and large turnover through to secure their profit margins.⁶⁴ They seek to minimize labour input, promote self-service,

⁶⁴ J. A. Dawson, The Suburbanization of Retail Activity in J.H. Johnson (editor) Suburban Growth, John Wiley & Sons, London, 1974. P. 157-172

standardize functions and procedures; they discourage lingering and social contact. Fast food chains seek to get young people in, have them spend, and then leave. In one fast-food outlet visited, there was in effect a parking rate structure on the wall. Young people were expected to spend 75¢ within a 20 minute period. This is in contrast to traditional owner-managed neighbourhood restaurants and variety stores where young people were often welcome to stay, meet other friends, or chat with the adult owner who took some interest in the young people being served. The same experiences might have been available in neighbourhood garages and service stations, drug stores, sporting goods outlets, record stores, bicycle repair shops, specialty food places, hobby stores and so forth. Most of these smaller stores do not exist in the post-war suburbs where high volume and large overhead space predominates. Less expensive retail space for owner-managed small enterprise, specialty functions, and community services provision is limited.

The emergence of shopping centres as primary community meeting places present additional difficulties. In the central urban area neighbourhood parks and sidewalks often serve as community meeting places. They are public places. Young people have the "right" to be

there, to walk, to browse, to sit on publicly provided benches if their behaviour conforms to public law and standards. They cannot as a group be discouraged or restricted in the use of public facilities. Suburban meeting places inside plazas and shopping centres are private spaces. The Supreme Court of Canada made this clear in a recent ruling.⁶⁵ Young people do not have a "right" to be there -- it is a "privilege", with the conditions of use privately determined.

In one large suburban plaza visited for this project prior to Christmas of 1977, it was possible for the plaza management to issue a directive to its security guards that young people should be discouraged from sitting on plaza benches and be asked to move. Senior citizens however, less a source of irritation to shoppers, would be allowed to use the benches. The plaza manager thought that having seniors around the plaza would enhance the Christmas spirit for shoppers. They were to be bussed in, encouraged to linger, and offered coffee. In this same plaza, a school principal reported that a youngster, having been banned from entry into the plaza, was also banned from visiting her physician's office

⁶⁵ Harrison v. Carswell - June 26, 1975, Dominion Law Reports, 62 D.L.R. (3d) P. 69-83

located in the plaza.

In another plaza visited over the lunch hour, youngsters were being lined up by a uniformed security guard outside a chain variety store in order to enter and make purchases. Groups of friends were arbitrarily separated. The security officer was prodding youngster on their shoulders to move on, or placing hands in front of their chests for them to remain outside. One young girl, upon leaving the variety store, expressed her hostility by symbolically banging her fist into the plate glass window of the store next door. The plaza had defined her and every young person as a potential shoplifter.

There is no suggestion that these are prevailing patterns in suburban shopping centres, but this is where present conditions can and sometimes do lead. Nor is this only a problem for youth. Adults have discovered that lawful forms of social and political expression - picketing, assembly, distribution of information - can be excluded from plazas and shopping centres. In the suburbs this means that social and political forms of public expression are less visible to young people.

The increasing location of public functions in suburban shopping centres raises important sets of questions. If young people are banned from a plaza, is it legitimate that the private judgement of a manager govern the right of a young person continued access to the services of a library, information centre, or health service. If a community agency wishes to place a detached youth worker in a plaza to reach groups of young people - this can now be restricted; similarly, if a group of youth or adults wishes to secure signatures on a petition opposing transit fare increases, or call attention to other conditions of common concern.

Where public forms of community life are missing, there are fewer opportunities for social integration. It led one respondent to note that "adults are intimidated by groups of youth especially if they don't know any of them". There are alternatives. Existing settings such as schools, parks, recreation centres, libraries can be redeveloped so that they in fact become alternative public meeting places for the community through which youth and adults develop a common sense of belonging.

In brief then, the presence of large numbers of youth in Metro's suburbs requires that there be adequate frameworks of support to ensure that these are productive years for young people. This includes outreach services, crisis support,

job creation, financially accessible recreation, and public forms of community life. Not to act is to face the possibility of continued and increased tension between adults and young people, irrespective of the protective measures that are taken in private and public settings. The investment in child welfare does not end with the home, neighbourhood, and school. Adolescence and young adulthood are fragile years, irrespective of how tough and assertive young people often appear to be. Not to invest or make provision for required support does not save money. It merely transfers to another set of taxpayers, five, ten or fifteen years down the road, higher social costs in the areas of treatment, corrections, and family welfare resources. It might be in the better interests of Metro's suburbs to make the required investments in youth support now, when it is less costly and likely to be more productive for all concerned.



10.0 LIFE CYCLE DEPENDENCE: THE ELDERLY AND SOLITARY PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Youth and adults are less house-bound; they have the capacity for independent mobility, a major source of their visibility. When large numbers of youth and young adults are present in a community with unmet needs, visible forms of instability are evident. Communities are compelled to acknowledge that something isn't working out as well as it should. The responses can vary, but there are responses.

There are other groups in the community, less mobile who also require support. Where adequate forms of community support do not exist, these groups become less visible. Instability takes the form of hidden suffering, primarily through isolation.

The very old and the very young share many common needs in relation to residential environments. Both groups are limited in their respective capacities for independent functioning and mobility by virtue of age. The human life span inverts itself -- there are significant

states of social and physical dependence at the beginning and the end. Two groups with common environment needs are: (1) the elderly who live alone or at advanced stages of aging; and, (2) solitary parents of young children.

Solitary parenting in this report refers to a household where there is only one adult present aged 16 and over, caring for at least one child 12 and under. Single parents should be contrasted from solitary parents. Single parenting is where only one of the child's parents is present in the household. This does not rule out the presence of other adults in the household -- older adolescents, family adults (e.g. grandparent, parent sibling), an adult companion, or live-in help; people who are available to relieve, share, or assist the single parent in the care of young children. In states of solitary parenting there is only one adult present in the household, who assumes full responsibility for the daily care of the young child. This responsibility places limits on independent activity and mobility by the parent, including the pursuit of employment. With only one adult in the household, the income level of the family unit is lowered.

In the case of dependent elderly, it is their own condition which creates environmental dependence. With

TABLE 14:

Distributions and Ratios by Sex of Aged Adults (e.g. Elderly) and Solitary Parents in Selective Life Situations, Metropolitan Toronto 1976 and 1977

Life Situations	METROPOLITAN TORONTO			OUTER MUNICIPALITIES			INNER MUNICIPALITIES		
	No. of Women	No. of Men	Ratio of Women/Men	No. of Women	No. of Men	Ratio of Women/Men	No. of Women	No. of Men	Ratio of Women/Men
Living above, Aged 60+, 1977	46,813	11,348	4.13	20,477	4,402	4.65	26,336	6,946	3.79
Aged 75+, 1976	48,655	24,625	1.98	21,850	10,910	2.00	26,795	13,725	1.95
Solitary Parents: Child 12 & under, 1977	8,832	876	10.08	6,009	543	11.07	2,823	333	8.48

Data Sources: Statistics Canada, 1976
Special Assessment Run, 1977

solitary parents of young children, the social dependence of the child limits the physical mobility of the adult. For purposes of daily living, the consequences are frequently the same -- households where adults live in states of isolation, either as a function of their own age, or the limitations imposed by the age of a dependent young child.

Both groups are now more likely to live on their own. In Metro's suburbs, the growth of apartment units and publicly assisted housing have created the conditions necessary for independent household formation.

The elderly and solitary parents frequently share the common experience of being poor.⁶⁶ Income support programs in Canada and Ontario are not generous. Labour market insensitivity to part-time forms of employment hurts solitary parents and the less dependent elderly more than others. There is however another dimension which increases the likelihood of poverty for these groups.

⁶⁶ See recent Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto reports:

- (a) Social Allowances in Ontario July 1977.
- (b) Old Age Insecurity August 1978.

When we speak about the elderly living alone or at advanced ages, and when we speak about solitary parents, we are really talking about adult women. It is in these two life situations -- agedness and solitary parenting -- that the social inequalities borne by women in general are most acutely experienced. In both life situations women form households without men. While women in these life situations are able to acquire their own housing, they frequently lack the private means to secure other resources for daily living. They are highly dependent upon frameworks of community support particularly with respect to mobility, access to community services, home support, continuing education, opportunities for social contact and community integration, and access to part-time work.

Men do not always fare better in these life situations, but there are important differences to note. Elderly males are less likely to live alone; wives tend to survive husbands. Because of labour force careers during much of their adult life span, elderly men are likely to have built up private pension entitlements. Men earn higher wages in the labour market, which improves the state of their financial resources in those

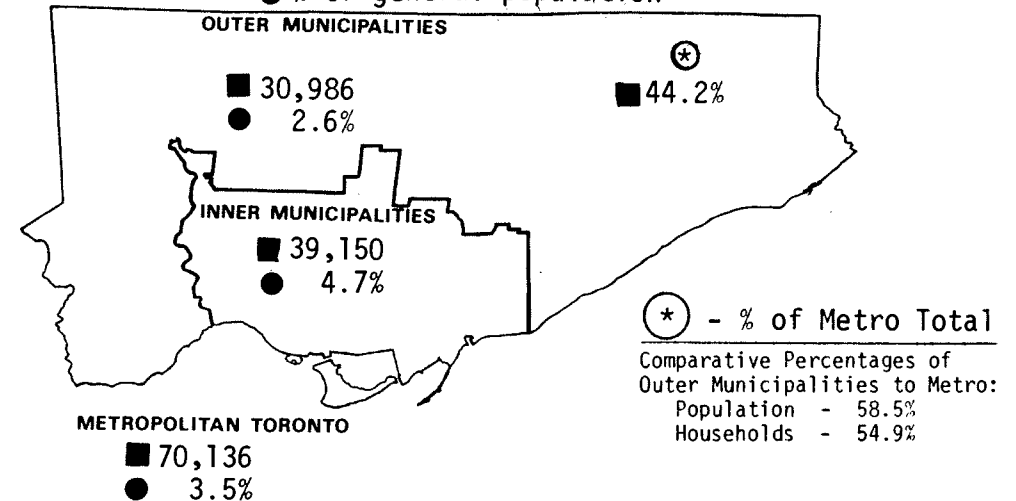
Limited situations where men raise young children alone.

Table 14 identifies the distributions and ratios by sex of elderly adults and solitary parents in Metropolitan Toronto. In 1977 there were more than four times the number of women aged 60 and over living alone to men, almost twice as many women 75 and over to men, and ten times the number of women who were solitary parents of young children. Adults aged 60 and over living alone, and adults aged 75 and over, are overlapping categories. They are presented separately in the report as alternative perspectives on the common phenomenon of aged dependence.

The suburban ratios of women to men in states of aged dependence and in solitary parenting are slightly higher. Metro's suburbs are now faced with the need to provide physical and social support to groups of women who are not part of the classic husband-wife/child-rearing household.

Figure 34 identifies the distributions by municipalities of adults (men and women) aged 75 and over in 1976. Suburban municipalities had lower proportions of aged elderly than did the inner municipalities; nevertheless in 1976 44% of all Metro adults aged 75 and over were living in suburban municipalities. More importantly, the number and proportions of this age group will grow significantly in the suburbs and throughout Metro in

Figure 34:
Distributions: Estimated Distribution of Adults Aged 75 & Over, 1976



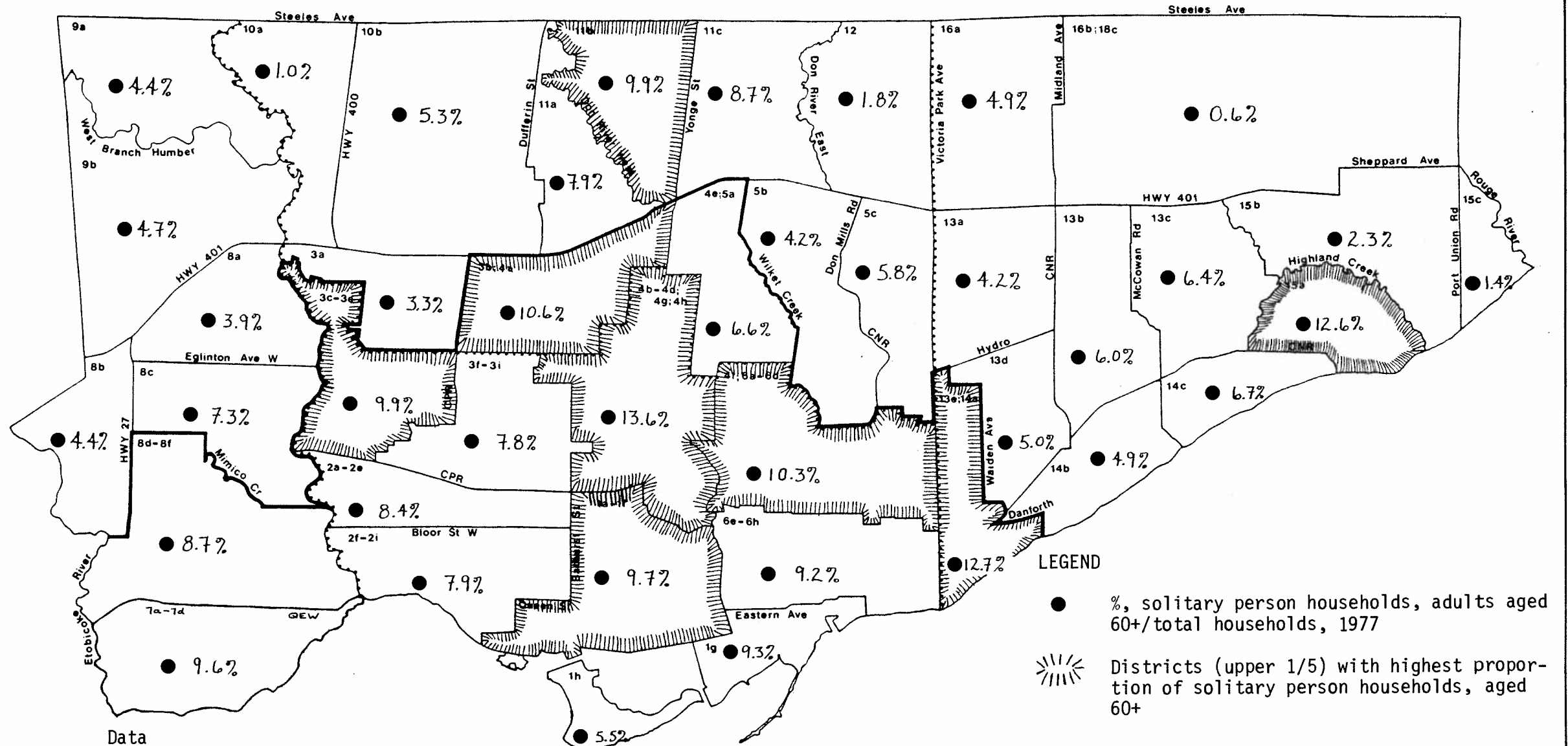
COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTIONS:

Toronto (City)	■ 28,426 ● 4.8%	Etobicoke	■ 8,410 ● 3.0%
North York	■ 13,290 ● 2.4%	East York	■ 5,520 ● 5.6%
Scarborough	■ 9,286 ● 2.5%	York	■ 5,204 ● 3.9%

Data

Source: Metro Social Services Department
 Ontario Community and Social Services

ENCLOSURE 45: DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS (PLANNING DISTRICTS): SOLITARY PERSON HOUSEHOLDS, ADULTS AGED 60+, 1977



Data Sources: Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department
Assessment Data 1977, Special Run

LEGEND

- %, solitary person households, adults aged 60+/total households, 1977
- ▨ Districts (upper 1/5) with highest proportion of solitary person households, aged 60+

the coming decade.

Enclosure 45 identifies the distributions by planning districts of solitary person households in 1977, where adults were aged 60 and over. Two of the eight districts with the highest proportions of older adults living alone were located in Metro's rapid growth suburbs -- M.P.D.11B (North York), and M.P.D.15A (Scarborough). The highest proportion of solitary aged households were distributed across the central urban area.

In recent years there has been a growing recognition that agedness is not necessarily synonymous with dependence. With the average human life span now approaching 80 years, agedness has become an extended stage of human experience for increasing numbers of adults. For the younger elderly, physical dependence may not be the most significant change in their lives. The death of a spouse or friends, imminent retirement from work, require some form of social adjustment. Living alone at age 60 and over is a new experience for many elderly. It invariably leads to increased levels of social dependence on community resources and services to sustain independent patterns of personal living.

Aging is not necessarily a period of inactivity and withdrawal from community life. It is one in which new forms of dependence emerge because traditional supports are less

available. Aging is a period of disengagement from earlier patterns of life. With available community support, aging can become a period of re-engagement in other fulfilling forms of life.⁶⁷ If significant numbers of elderly come to live in isolation and despair, this is more a reflection on the state of community support than on the inevitabilities of the aging process.

The parenting experience also involves a process of disengagement and re-engagement, more so for mothers living alone. The time demands of parenting place significant limits on the opportunities for social activity and experiences associated with previous living patterns. Because the needs of young children are closely related to the physical and social resources of the residential environment, the social experiences of parenting are highly dependent upon the quality of community support in the neighbourhood or district. This is true when both parents are raising their children together. When adults raise children alone, dependence on community support increases considerably.

⁶⁷ O.R.C. Atchley, The Social Forces in Later Life: An Introduction to Social Gerontology, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 1972. P.199-226

The rapid growth suburbs of Metro now contain higher numbers and proportions of solitary parents raising young children than the central area. Figure 35 indicates that in 1977, 57% of all solitary parents with younger children were in the newer suburbs. There were an average of 1.6 younger children in suburban solitary parent households, indicating a number of households where women were alone with two or more younger children.

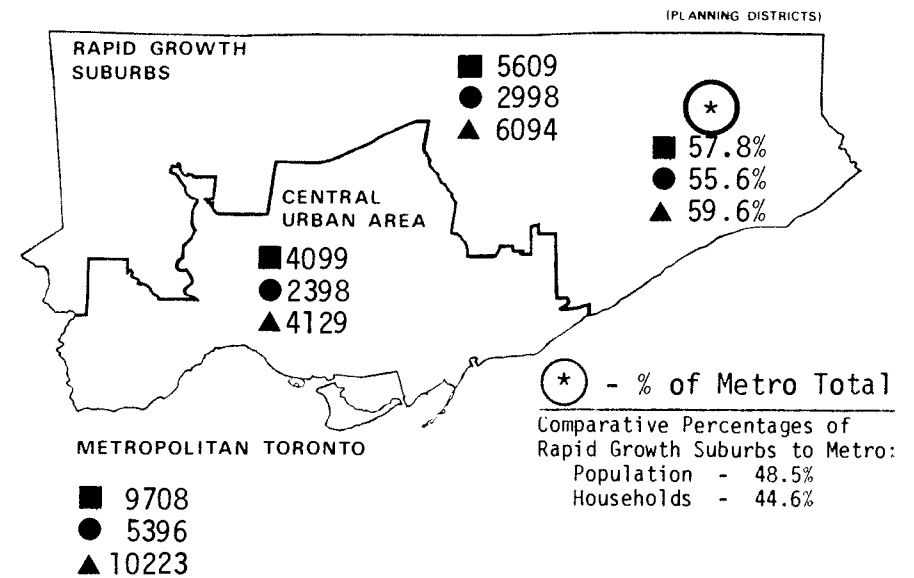
Enclosure 46 documents the distribution of solitary parent households by planning districts. In 1977 districts with the highest proportion of solitary parent households with young children were all located in the rapid growth suburbs of Metro. These then are suburban households with high levels of dependence on community resources and services.

The proportions however are not an index of social need. There are significant numbers of solitary parents with young children in the central area with equally pressing needs for parenting support and child care services. The stress of raising young children alone is not related to the proportion of one's household to the total number of households. What the proportions indicate are the need for appropriately distributed parenting support and child care services in high need suburban districts as well as in the central area.

Figure 35:

Solitary Parent Households With At Least One Child 12 and Under, 1977

- number of solitary adult households
- number of children 0-5
- ▲ number of children 6-12



Data

Source: Special Assessment Run, 1977

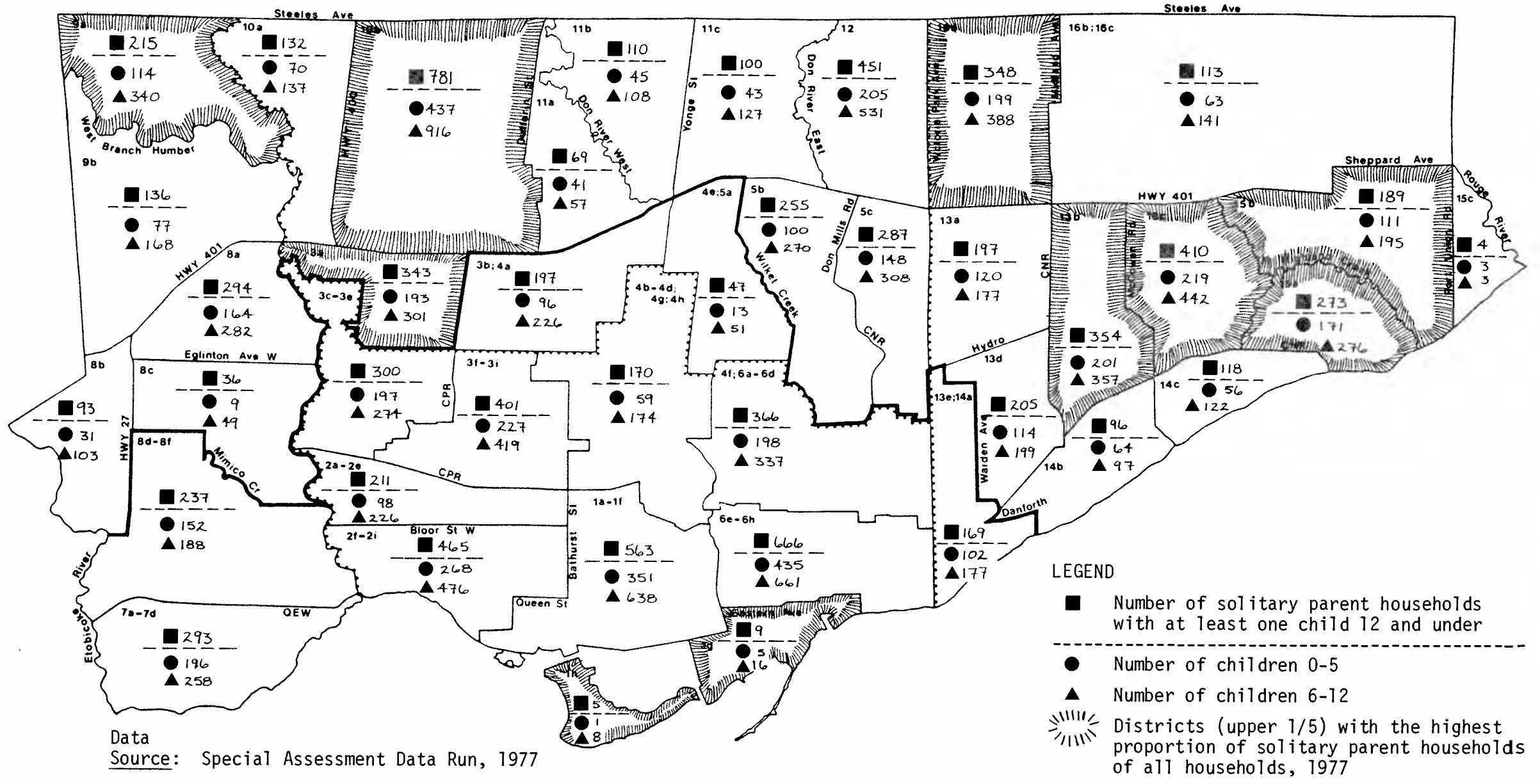


Figure 36 would suggest that OHC housing is a major source of accommodation for single parents living in the suburbs. Almost three-quarters of all one-parent OHC households in 1975 were located in Metro's suburban municipalities. Figure 37 indicates that nearly 60% of all OHC households with heads 65 and over were also located in suburban municipalities in 1975. One must assume that the composition and distribution of OHC households did not emerge overnight. There is therefore some measure of public responsibility where solitary parents and dependent aged are located in sites where the location is insensitive to the living needs of inhabitants.⁶⁸

Social isolation and difficulties in moving around the local area were common themes raised by respondents in describing the situations of dependent elderly and solitary parents in public housing environments. Frequently, local stores were at some distance from a development. Walking in the winter was sometimes hazardous. Of particular concern were wind tunnels around housing developments. Service workers reported that

⁶⁸ Also discussed in: A. Andrea, Senior Citizens Housing: Locational Considerations and Social Implications, Unpublished master's paper in Geography, University of Toronto, 1978. P.70.

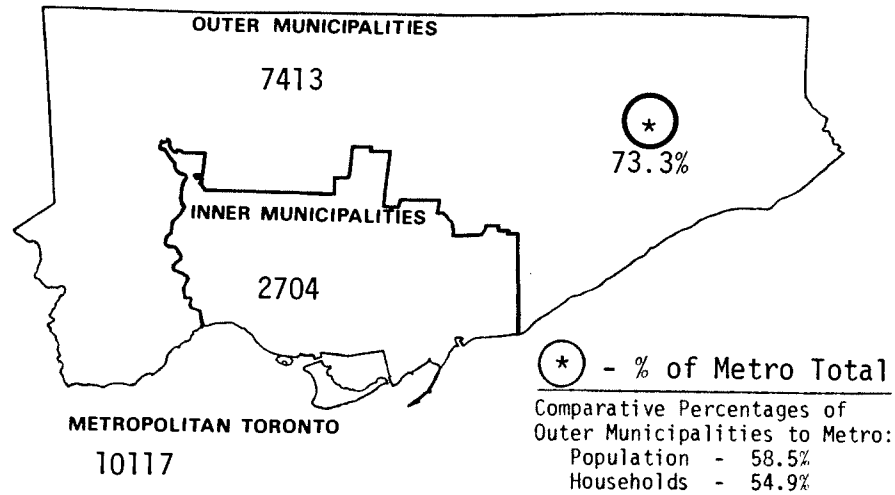
some solitary parents and elderly would stay indoors for days on end rather than risk the winds outside. Mothers would fear a 1,500 foot walk to a subsidized child care centre or library under these conditions. In two of the developments visited it was difficult for project staff to maintain secure footing in 30-50 yard walks from the parking lot to the building entrance. It is hard to understand how the land-use and public housing planning process could allow high rise apartment projects with surrounding open space to be built without requiring that these developments be wind-tunnel tested prior to construction, in anticipation that there might be prospective residents without cars who would be dependent upon walking. Nor is it understandable how developments could be put up, or acquired, largely inaccessible to local services.

The theme of isolation of the suburban elderly and single parents is not new. It has been documented in previous social reports on Metro's suburbs.⁶⁹ There are common problems of accessibility for both groups. The inadequacies

⁶⁹ I. Taylor, Profile Study of the Borough of Etobicoke Children's Aid Society of Metro Toronto and Etobicoke Community Health Department, August 1975; and D. Kimberley et al and, op. cit.

Figure 36:

Distributions: Number of One-Parent OHC Households, 1975



COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTIONS

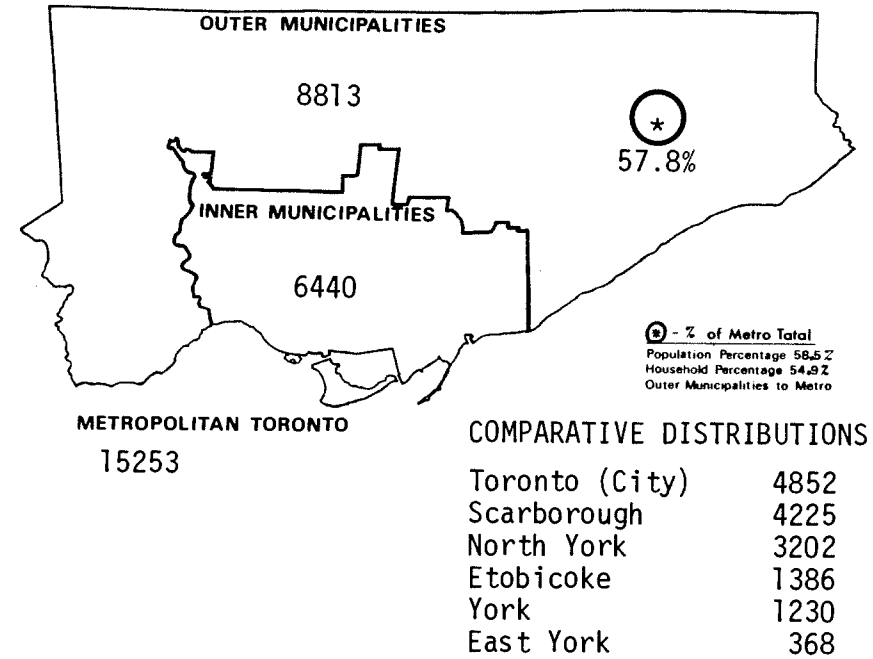
Scarborough	3603
North York	2768
Toronto (City)	2308
Etobicoke	1042
York	368
East York	28

Data

Source: Metropolitan Toronto Statistical Series, 1975

Figure 37:

Distributions: OHC Households With Heads 65+, 1975



Data

Source: Metropolitan Toronto Statistical Series, 1975

of public transportation services were often cited. This included long waits, poor connections, transit oriented to downtown with consequent difficulties moving across suburban municipalities. Both the elderly and solitary parents rely on public transit for access to medical services, since the aged and the young are high users of health care services.

Grocery shopping for both groups often requires the use of taxis, an additional expense for those on low and fixed incomes. There are fewer grocery stores in the suburbs with delivery services.

In recent years, para-transit services have been introduced on an experimental basis into some suburban districts. The transportation needs of the handicapped and less mobile elderly are supported through Metro's Wheel Trans service. These services are important initiatives in recognizing the need for supplementary transportation services. There are also community agencies whose volunteers assist the less mobile where special needs exist, such as transportation to health services. What is missing however is a para-transit strategy in the suburbs which would include all individuals with

special mobility needs, particularly around the local area. At present, there is no recognition of the supplementary transportation needs of parents in dispersed areas who are without cars and with young children.

Many common forms of community services are required by the elderly and solitary parents to support daily living needs, and to promote opportunities for social contact and integration. Common forms of service include; day centres for activity, care, or informal contact; access to continuing education; specialized recreation services; home support services for the more dependent. While the forms are similar, programs are organized and offered on an age-related basis in light of differing affinities and interests. Urban policy perspectives should recognize common patterns of need in land-use planning and in funding priorities of community services.

Metro's suburban municipalities have recognized the social contact and integration needs of the elderly. Programs are provided by municipal recreation departments and voluntary agencies; included are clubs, excursions, befriending services, crafts, and other leisure activities. There are serious limitations on the ability of community agencies to extend home help and home support services in light of low

provincial subsidies for the elderly on modest incomes. There are gaps in home support service for groups of scattered elderly in districts north of Highway 401. Volunteers are more difficult to secure for home visiting and transportation services. This reflects increased participation rates by women in the labour force.

Respondents noted that the elderly, as do youth, seek opportunities for informal social contact in the community. The elderly linger in plazas, lounges of apartments, or at local centres. The suburban mailman was cited by respondents as an important source of casual daily contact. When the elderly linger in public places, they are less likely to be perceived as sources of irritation or threat to the community. As with youth however, the suburban environment makes limited provision for their informal contact needs. Public services have few lounges, coffee areas, or reading rooms. The social environments and cultural diversity of owner-managed small enterprises are missing. This limits the opportunities for immigrant elderly to pursue informal social contact with adults of similar cultural origin. Service workers noted that elderly suburban men were more dependent on casual environments than were women. In the

absence of community opportunities for social contact, some men were reported to spend long hours watching television or drinking either alone or in small groups.

The climate in Metro's suburbs is one of seeking to accommodate to the presence of older people. Respondents commented on the sensitivity of management in public housing settings in their support of the elderly. Unfortunately, the present revenue resources of suburban municipalities are limited. The province is committed to "deinstitutionalization" of the elderly, encouraging older adults to live in the community. Non-institutional support for the elderly will however be more costly in the suburbs. Dispersion, more limited opportunities for mobility, a non-supportive structure of public and retail services will increase the need for compensatory forms of community services. The more efficient use of land in the suburbs, along with more sensitive public and retail service environments, can have a significant influence on the extent and cost of required community services for future suburban elderly.

If compactness of living and increased independent access to social and environmental resources are to be possible for the elderly, more flexible forms of housing will

be required. The choices for the suburban elderly are quite stark at present. High rise apartments are often away from the neighbourhoods where children were raised or where grandchildren might live. For the elderly in family homes, the costs of maintenance are high. The heavy burden of the property tax was a persistent theme in interviews and public forums attended. More flexible suburban housing would make living alternatives available to the elderly. Alternatives could include "granny flats" in existing neighbourhoods through low-rise forms of redevelopment, or the conversion of single family homes; non-profit housing and services on vacant school land; agency sponsored housing clusters for the elderly in apartments and townhouses.

Metro's suburbs appear to be receptive to meeting some of the housing needs of the elderly. There is less resistance to non-profit forms of housing for the elderly than there is for families with children. Whether the rigidities of suburban neighbourhood zoning will be modified to increase the housing choices of the elderly remains to be seen.

In contrast to the climate for the elderly, there is less recognition in the suburbs for the support needs of solitary parents with young children. In part this

may be the result of lumping solitary parents in with the "public housing problem". It may also reflect limited frameworks for parenting support in general, particularly for pre-school children. This arises from continued assumptions about the self-sufficiency of the suburban family.

Public health nurses, child welfare workers, treatment centres, and voluntary agencies offer important forms of individual support and group programming. In North York, the Public Health Department, and Dellcrest Centre operate a telephone support service for parents. Recreation departments offer a range of specialized leisure activities.

Statutory services - public health, child welfare, are distributed throughout the suburbs. Municipal-wide voluntary agencies offer local programs; these vary relative to local conditions and available resources. There are special programs such as Times Change, Mothers on the Move, Opportunities for Advancement, which focus in on the employment needs of women, including mothers. These are non-statutory services; the extent and continuity of their funding, their availability where needed in the suburbs, are subject to government discretion. Recent reductions in federal financing of employment support services for women are evidence of how tenuous the future of these programs are.

The picture which emerges is one of a suburban patchwork of support for solitary parents of young children. This is not unique to the suburbs. The recently formed Special Committee on Children's Services by Metro Council recognizes the need to introduce some framework of planning to the provision of support programs. The absence of effective local centres of voluntary initiative in rapid growth districts limits the capacity of solitary parents to collectively identify and secure necessary supports. The physical design of the environment limits mobility and contact, and restricts the appropriate location of needed resources.

There are few child-parent centres in the suburbs (or in the central urban area) to serve as community meeting places and sources of informal support to parents caring for young children full-time. Storefront settings in the general community with their intimate and non-judgemental environments are often impossible to secure. A child-parent centre in North York, located on the main floor of an OHC apartment building, found parents from the apartment least likely to use the service for quite a while. Parents came with their children from outside the building, suggesting the strong need by parents with young children for more diverse opportunities

for adult contact outside the immediate residential environment. Service respondents noted that relationships between solitary parents in OHC developments were frequently strained or fraught with suspicion. Daily contact between parents in similar states of stress and despair introduced special tensions into living relationships. There was the need for solitary parents to have relationships with a range of parents, and thereby acquire alternative experiences and insight beyond the perspectives derived from common deprivation which characterize OHC public households.

Service workers did not note a direct relationship between isolated living in suburban environments and child abuse. Their sense was that isolation and poor housing acted as additional stresses but did not in itself induce abuse. If parents were abuse prone, however - low self-esteem, personal experience of abuse as a child, etc. - then the suburban environment with its isolation and lack of support was one more stress to contend with. This could contribute to, or accelerate, the breakdown in parental stability and result in abuse patterns.

Both parents and service workers noted the poor quality of outdoor suburban play areas - some called them "sterile". Indoor play environments, either in apartments or child-parent centres, were limited. This was of particular

concern in the winter when outdoor activity for young children is more restricted. Suburban dispersion sometimes made it more difficult to call on family relatives in a crisis. Emergency homemaking was difficult to secure. There was a clear absence of emergency hostels when household conflicts or problems made staying at home for parents and children undesirable. Second hand stores for less expensive appliance and clothing purchases were not always available. Getting a child to the emergency department of a hospital late at night where there was no car, meant depending on a neighbour, securing a taxi (hard to get in northern Etobicoke), seeking assistance from the police, or even the ambulance service. There were few, if any, information directories in suburban areas on the range of local services and programs in support of parenting young children. In some suburban districts, women reported that outlets to buy TTC tokens were inaccessible. This meant having to pay more costly cash fares. "Fee for service" recreation programs were a deterrent to the use of recreation programs where solitary parents were living on fixed incomes. Immigrant mothers with young children were particularly isolated, finding it hard to make contacts for the provision of mutual support.

Service workers stated that a sense of apathy had set in among some isolated parents. There was limited energy available to pursue patterns of daily living. A respondent noted that in one school parent apathy meant that children weren't taken to dentists even when the service was free and arranged for them.

The need for parenting support and adequate child care was repeatedly cited by service workers. Provincial cutbacks in social spending, below growth levels in the wealth of Ontario, are particularly damaging to the income and support needs of solitary parents and young children. Women have traditionally borne the social costs of living in new developments and suburbs even where there has been a two parent structure to family life. A paper presented to the U.N. Habitat Conference in 1976 by York University environmentalists made the following observations on what existing suburban research suggests:

"Women are stuck in isolated environments that lack day care facilities, jobs, and educational facilities for job upgrading. Part of the problem is related to planning practices that create homogeneous residential areas, single-use zoning, urban sprawl, and inadequate public transportation to support services. For women, these environmental

problems are often exaggerated by poverty, especially among sole-support mothers and the elderly."⁷⁰

There are significant pockets of the dependent aged and solitary parents - mostly women - living in Metro's suburbs. Their numbers will grow during the coming decade. Without adequate frameworks of social and physical support, patterns of hidden suffering and invisible deterioration are inevitable. The suburban environment can conceal these conditions more effectively than the central urban area where compactness results in the need to acknowledge social realities, or to at least defend the absence of required support.

The extent of social support required by dependent suburban elderly and solitary parents will be largely related to future land use and housing patterns. Housing is more than a source of accommodation; it confers or inhibits by its location access to the social resources of the general community. Current living environments are highly concentrated, but dispersed and isolated. Less concentrated forms of housing within more compact residential environments

would increase access to necessary forms of informal and formal support. For appropriate land-use policies and support programs to develop, the instruments for integrated planning by local government have to exist. There must also be the revenue sources available to finance non-profit housing and community service initiatives in the suburbs. Provincial fiscal policies which place the full burden of restraint on the needy and dependent in Ontario are not an encouraging sign for the future.

⁷⁰ R. Peterson, G. Wekele, D. Morley, Women and Environments: An Overview of an Emergency Field, York University, U.N. Habitat Conference, June 1976. P.13