HARBORD ST

Grace St

BATHURST ST
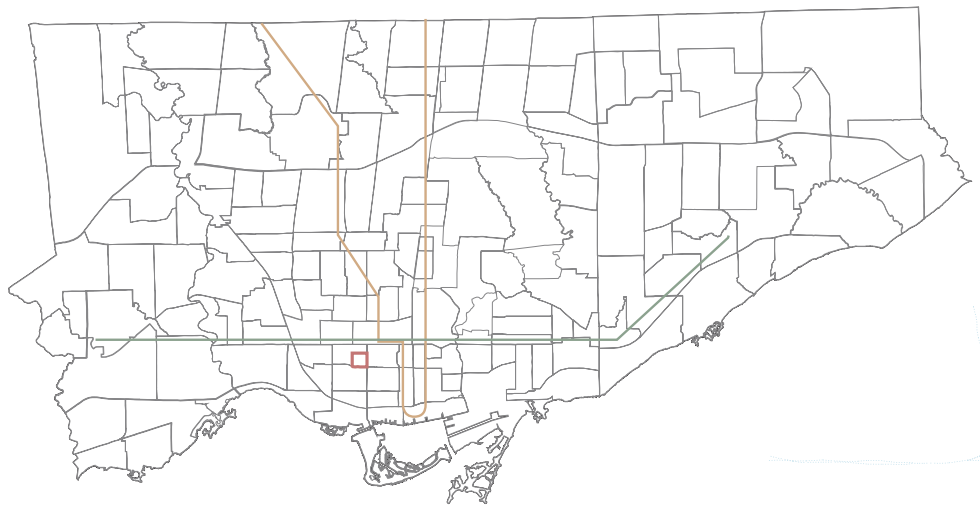
5 3 5 0 0 5 8

COLLEGE ST

200m    100    0

# Palmerston-Little Italy Census Tract
## Community Profile
### 5350058.00

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October 07, 2024

# INTRODUCTION

Census Tract 5350058, located in the Palmerston-Little Italy neighbourhood, stands out as a distinctively young and vibrant area within Toronto. With a population of just over 3,500, this tract is slightly smaller than the city average and is nestled between the arterial roads of College and Bathurst. Known for its bustling cultural scene, the area is a hotspot for young professionals, characterized by a thriving restaurant and bar scene that attracts a population of predominantly young singles and couples. What makes this neighbourhood particularly notable is its divergence from city-wide trends, both in demographics and lifestyle choices. With excellent walkability, access to transit, and a strong presence of cycling infrastructure, this area serves as an example of how urban neighbourhoods can shift away from car dependency toward more sustainable modes of transportation. These features position Palmerston-Little Italy as a microcosm of future urban living—an accessible, dynamic, and socially vibrant community that supports a more eco-conscious lifestyle, albeit one heavily populated by young, single individuals.
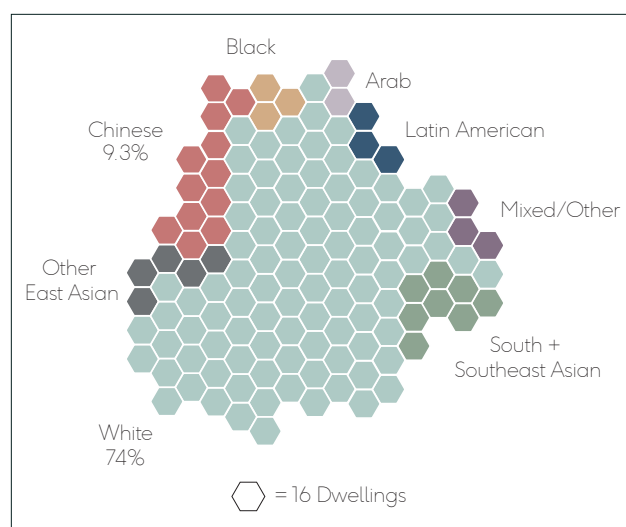
Notable Differences between the City of Toronto and Palmerston-Little Italy in 2006 and 2021:
- walkability, biking, and transit access
- ethnic diversity
- household size
- age distribution

# THE URBAN PROFILE

## POPULATION
Palmerston-Little Italy has experienced a slight population decline, shrinking by 149 people since 2006. Interestingly, while the number of dwellings has increased by six, the household count has remained stable at 1,834. This stagnation in household growth suggests that the neighbourhood's population dynamics are influenced more by lifestyle choices, particularly the area's large population of young singles and possibly the large number of university students, than by an influx of new residents or families. The minimal changes in household size indicate that the area remains attractive primarily to individuals or couples without children, reinforcing its image as a hub for young professionals.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 1.** Ethnic Minority Distribution in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood (25% Sample Data)
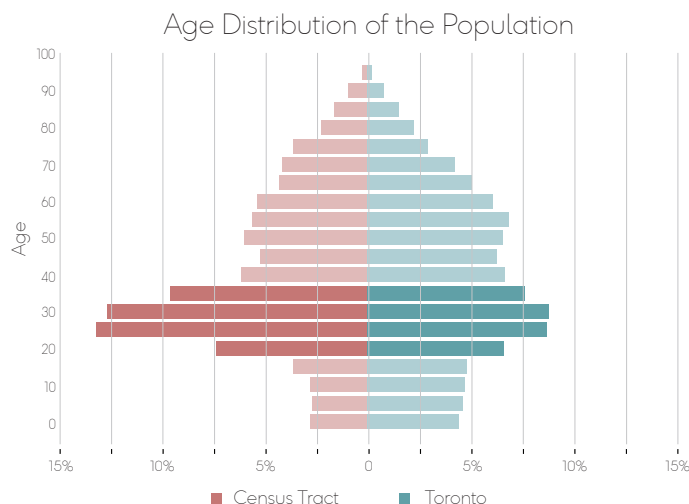
## ETHNIC COMPOSITION
Historically Italian, the neighbourhood remains predominantly white, with almost three quarters of residents identifying as such. Illustrated in Figure 1, the next largest ethnic group, Chinese, comprises just over 9% of the population. The relative homogeneity of the neighbourhood is notable, particularly in contrast with Toronto's overall diversity. Toronto has a 44.3% white population with the remaining made up of visible minorities.

However, the demographics of Palmerston-Little Italy may also reflect the socio-economic trends associated with gentrification, where young white professionals dominate previously more diverse urban spaces.
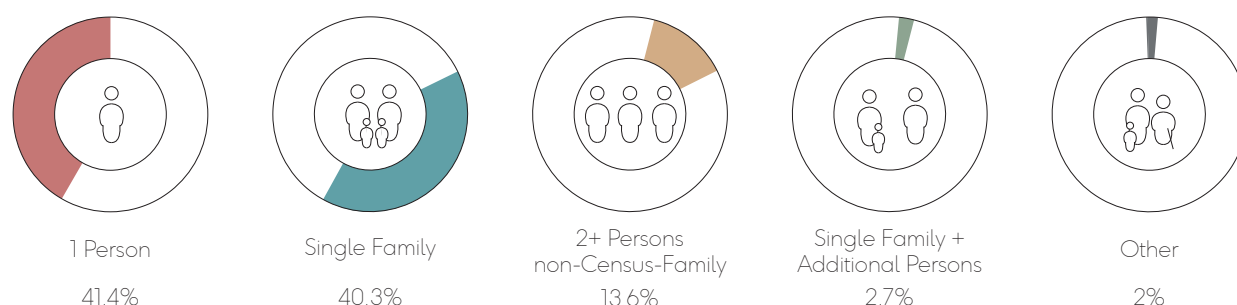
## AGE DISTRIBUTION

This neighbourhood is distinguished by its notably youthful population, as illustrated in Figure 2, which shows that both Toronto and Palmerston-Little Italy have their largest age group concentrated with individuals in their 20s and 30s. However, Palmerston-Little Italy has an even higher proportion, with 40% of residents falling into this age range compared to 30% for the city as a whole.

This concentration of younger residents not only highlights the area's appeal to early-career professionals but also reinforces the connection between its demographic makeup and its sustainability initiatives, as younger individuals are generally more likely to adopt alternative modes of transit and sustainable living practices.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 2.** Age Distribution in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood and the City of Toronto in 2021 (100% Data)



| 1 Person | Single Family | 2+ Persons non-Census-Family | Single Family + Additional Persons | Other |
|----------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 41.4% | 40.3% | 13.6% | 2.7% | 2% |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 3.** Household Type in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood in 2021 (100% Data)

## HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Palmerston-Little Italy stands out not only for its youthful population but also for its significant proportion of single-person households, a key aspect of the neighborhood's demographic makeup. Figure 3 highlights that over 40% of households in this area are occupied by single individuals, a striking contrast to Toronto's broader household structure.



Average Tract Household Size     Average Toronto Household Size

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 4** Average Household Size in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood and the City of Toronto in 2021 (100% Data)

Figure 4 further illustrates that the average household size in Palmerston-Little Italy is just 2 people, significantly lower than the citywide average. This trend suggests the area has remained attractive to young professionals, students, and young couples, driven by factors such as its high walkability, vibrant social scene, and proximity to essential amenities.

walkability
Tract — 97
TO — 61

biking
— 94
— 78

transit
— 94
— 61

Source: Walk Score 2024, www.walkscore.com/CA-ON/Toronto

**Figure 5.** The Walk Scores of the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood and the City of Toronto in 2024.
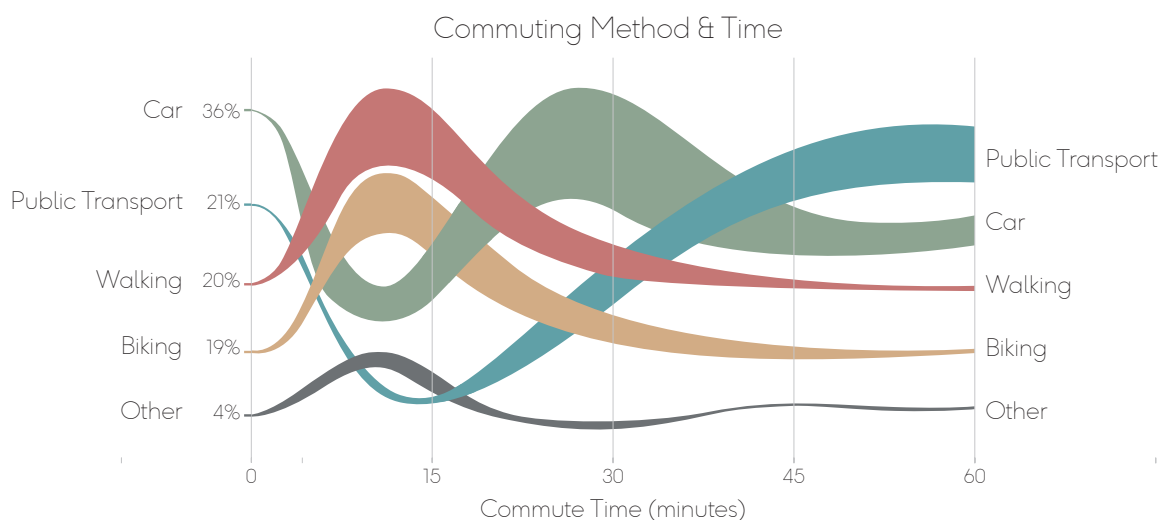
## TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTE PATTERNS

The neighborhood's exceptional walk, bike, and public transit scores in Figure 5, well surpassing Toronto's ratings, highlight its success in promoting more sustainable transportation options. With close access to Bathurst station on the TTC subway's Line 2 and frequent streetcar service along College and Bathurst, residents have multiple convenient transit options. College Street's protected bike lanes, separated by concrete barriers and parked cars, are especially notable for fostering safe cycling. Similarly, Palmerston Blvd's dedicated bike lane and speed bumps make it safer for cyclists to share the road with drivers.

| | Census Tract | | Toronto | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Car | Biking, Walking, Transit | Car | Biking, Walking, Transit |
| 2021 | 36% | **60%** | 61% | **36%** |
| 2006 | 25.5% | 72% | 56% | 43% |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, 2006 Census of Population

**Table 1.** The proportion of residents who commute via biking, walking, public transit, or car in Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood and the City of Toronto in 2021 and 2006 (25% Sample Data).

Transportation data further reinforces the neighbourhood's sustainability. While car usage remains the highest individual mode of commuting, and has grown in popularity since 2006, the combined total of residents who walk, cycle or use public transit in Table 1 far surpasses car users. For the rest of Toronto, however, it is the reverse, the car is the dominating mode of transportation.
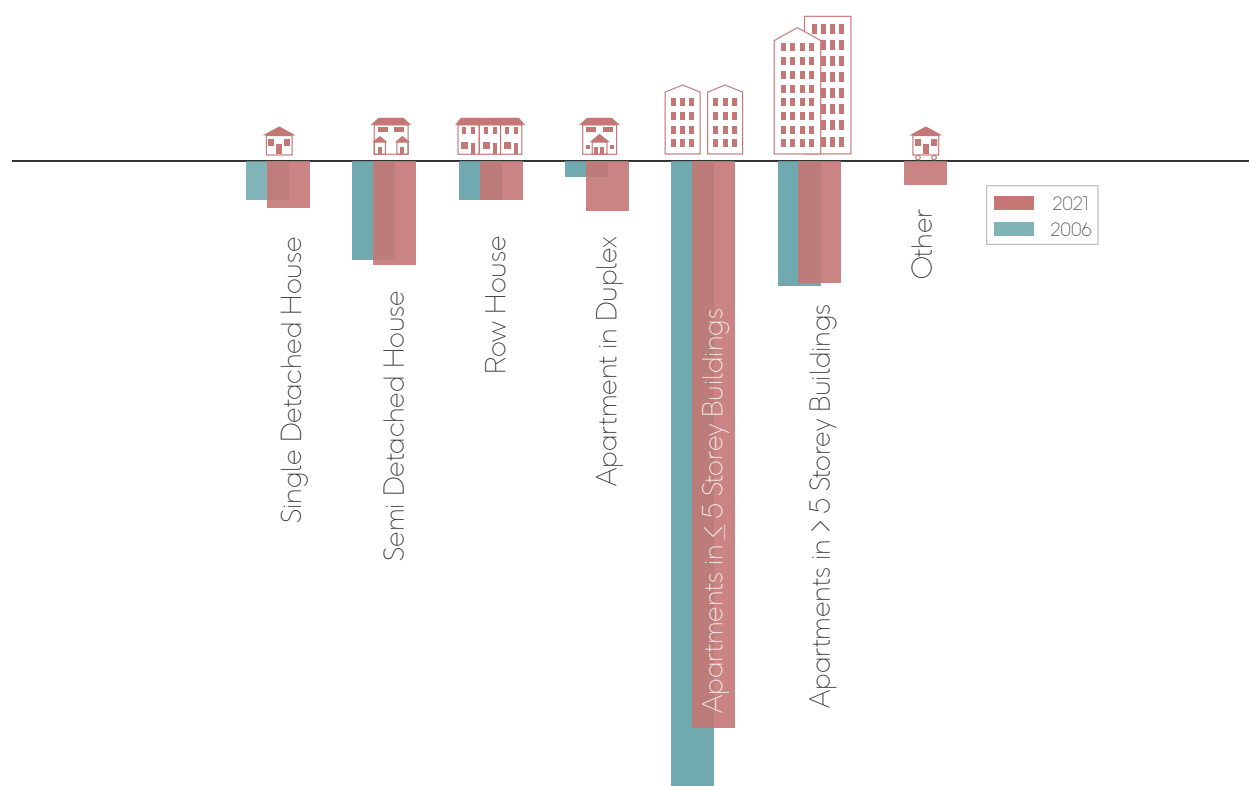


Commuting Method & Time

Car 36%
Public Transport 21%
Walking 20%
Biking 19%
Other 4%

Public Transport
Car
Walking
Biking
Other

Commute Time (minutes)
0    15    30    45    60

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 6.** The main mode of commuting and average commute time for residents in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood in 2021 (25% Sample Data).

The relationship between mode of transport and commute time displayed in Figure 6 is particularly telling. In this chart, the thickness of each line corresponds to the proportion of commuters using different modes of transport and their respective commute times. The majority of those who walk or bike tend to have significantly shorter commutes—often under 20 minutes—thanks to the neighbourhood's dense urban fabric and proximity to workplaces, amenities, and transit hubs. In contrast, residents who rely on cars or public transit generally experience longer commute times, often ranging from 30 to 45 minutes or more, as these modes are typically used for travelling greater distances outside the local area.

This disparity emphasizes the efficiency and convenience of sustainable transportation options within Palmerston-Little Italy. The shorter commute times for those walking or cycling not only enhance the quality of life but also reduce the environmental impact of daily travel. By contrast, car and public transit users face congestion and delays that contribute to longer and less predictable travel times, making the sustainable options even more attractive to the neighborhood's predominantly young, urban population. These findings highlight how well-connected and accessible the area is for residents who are able to prioritize efficient, eco-friendly travel while minimizing time spent commuting.
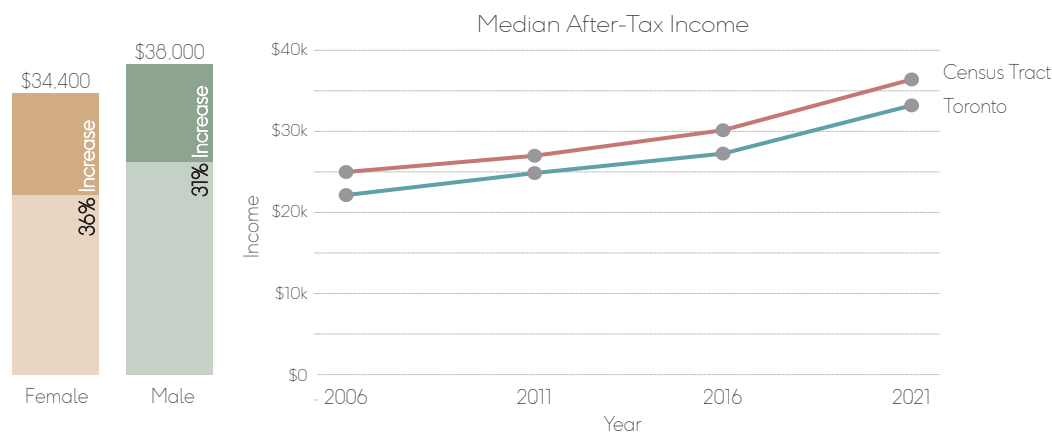


Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, 2006 Census of Population

**Figure 7.** The main mode of commuting and average commute time for residents in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood in 2021 (25% Sample Data).

## HOUSING STOCK

Palmerston-Little Italy's housing typology is dominated by early 20th-century, low-rise semi-detached homes. With only a modest increase in apartments within duplexes and semi-detached homes since 2006, Figure 7 shows a large outlier of apartments in sub-5-storey buildings. However, the neighbourhood is still characterized by its lack of high-rise apartments. Most dwellings are multi-unit homes that have been retrofitted to accommodate separate apartments across different floors, with many houses reaching four or five stories including basements. This helps explain the census data that may initially appear contradictory, as these homes may be classified differently across categories.
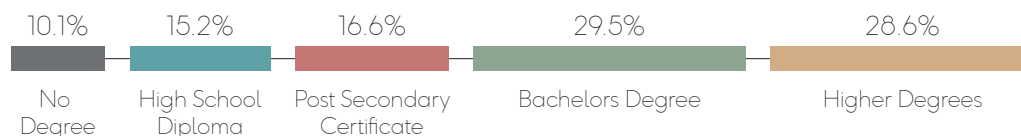
**Figure 8.** Median after-tax income in 2019 among recipients n the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood and in the City of Toronto (100% Data).

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The neighbourhood's income in Figure 8 has consistently remained higher than Toronto's average by about two to three thousand dollars. Notably, while a gender pay gap persists, women's income has been rising at a faster rate than men's, signaling a positive trend toward greater economic equity. This upward shift aligns with the social transformations in the area where younger, more progressive residents are drawn to the neighbourhood's sustainability efforts and inclusive atmosphere. The steady income growth, particularly among women, further emphasizes the community's evolving identity as both a desirable and equitable place to live.
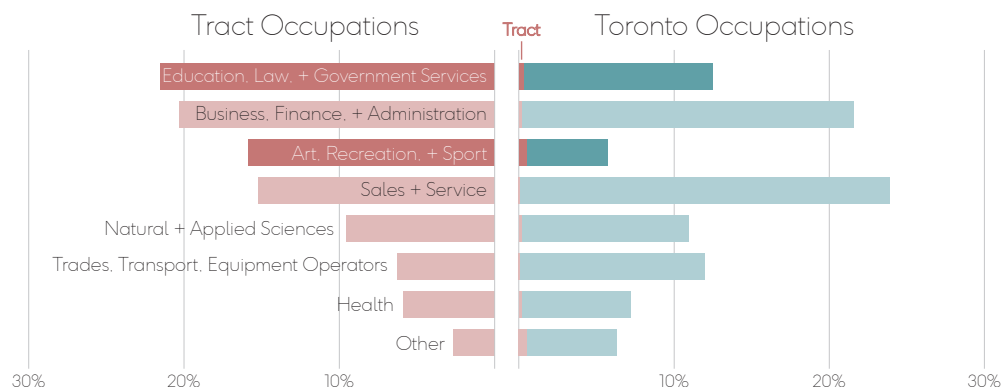
**Figure 9.** The highest certificate, diploma or degree for those aged 15 years and over in private households in the Palmerston-Little Italy area in 2021 (25% Sample Data).

## EDUCATION & OCCUPATIONS

Palmerston-Little Italy is home to a highly educated population, revealed in Figure 9, with nearly 75% of residents over age 15 attaining some form of higher education. This is mirrored in the neighbourhood's employment landscape, which boasts an employment rate of 89%.
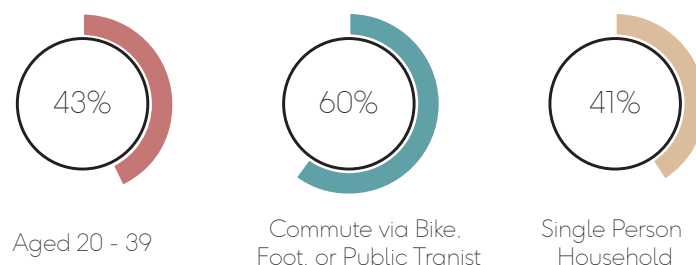
**Figure 10.** Labour force aged 15 years and over by National Occupational Classification in the Palmerston-Little Italy Neighbourhood (25% Sample Data8

Figure 10 compares the proportion of occupations in the Tract to that of Toronto. Despite representing only 0.13% of Toronto's total population, Palmerston-Little Italy accounts for 5.7% of the city's occupations in Art, Recreation, and Sports. While Education, Government, Finance, and Sales remain significant occupations in the neighbourhood, they are less dominant in the broader city, further emphasizing the neighbourhood's diverse professional makeup.

## THE LIFESTYLE

The data and visual evidence make it clear that Census Tract 5350058 has evolved into a vibrant hub for young professionals who prioritize independence and sustainability. As highlighted in Figure 11 the area is dominated by a disproportionately high number of young adults and professionals, many of whom live in single-person households. This demographic trend, significantly different from the rest of Toronto, reflects a shift in urban living preferences, where individuals are opting for solo living arrangements in walkable, transit-friendly neighbourhoods.



| 43% | 60% | 41% |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Aged 20 - 39 | Commute via Bike, Foot, or Public Tranist | Single Person Household |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

**Figure 11.** A summary of the key statistics in the Palmerston-Little Italy neighbourhood: the 20-39 age group (100% Data) , the biking, walking, and public transit commuters (25% sample data), and the single person households (100% Data).

Compared to other parts of Toronto, Palmerston-Little Italy has become a model for urban sustainability, as evidenced by its exceptional walkability and bike infrastructure, complemented by easily accessible public transit options such as the nearby Bathurst subway station and the frequent streetcar service along College and Bathurst. These factors not only enhance daily convenience but also promote a more eco-conscious lifestyle—key elements that appeal to this younger, highly educated demographic.

Local amenities also contribute to the area's appeal. The abundance of grocery stores, farmers markets, diverse restaurants, and social venues within walking distance makes a thriving daily life accessible and fosters a strong sense of community. This proximity to essential services aligns with the broader trend among young professionals to prioritize health, convenience, and sustainability without sacrificing the vibrancy of urban living. The availability of parks and recreational spaces nearby further enhances the quality of life, offering residents an opportunity to engage in outdoor activities and maintain a balanced, active lifestyle.

The neighbourhood's ability to attract and retain this youthful population underscores its success in creating an environment where individuals can live sustainably and independently while enjoying all the perks of city life. It exemplifies how urban spaces can be adapted to meet the evolving needs of residents who are increasingly mindful of environmental impacts and the quality of their surroundings.