

# Gentrification Reconsidered: The Case of The Junction

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the factors responsible for the gentrification of The Junction, a west-end neighbourhood located on the edge of downtown Toronto. After years of neglect, degradation and deindustrialization, The Junction is currently in the midst of being gentrified. Through various forms of neighbourhood upgrading and displacement, gentrification has been responsible for turning a number working-class Toronto neighbourhoods into middle-class enclaves. The Junction is unique in this regard because it does not conform to past theoretical perspectives regarding gentrification in Toronto. Through the use of an instrumental case-study, various factors responsible for The Junction's gentrification are examined and a number of its indicators that are present in the neighbourhood are explored so that a solid understanding regarding the neighbourhood's gentrification can be realized. What emerges is a form of 'user-friendly' or 'community-driven' gentrification that places emphasis on neighbourhood revitalization and community inclusion, as opposed to resident displacement and neighbourhood exclusivity. Document analysis, observational fieldwork and twenty-one, one-on-one interviews with various residents, business owners, related professionals and city staff members work together to provide context regarding the neighbourhood's user-friendly form of gentrification. Although The Junction's gentrification has not yet reached a state of maturation, the neighbourhood has thus far been able to successfully breakaway from some of the negative narratives associated with the process, replacing them with a form of gentrification that is both inclusive, and community oriented.

## **Foreword**

This paper represents the final submission for the Master of Environmental Studies (Urban Planning) program at York University. It is the culmination of coursework, research and fieldwork that was undertaken throughout a two-year Master's degree that began with the creation of a Plan of Study. The topic of this paper is closely linked to two sections of my Plan of Study: urban redevelopment, and gentrification.

This paper focuses on the gentrification of The Junction, a west-end neighbourhood located on the fringe of Toronto's inner-city. It addresses two of the three learning objectives set out in my POS because it is directly related to urban redevelopment and gentrification. Through a number of one-on-one interviews, document analysis and field-site observation, I now possess a deeper understanding regarding the impact gentrification can have on the social and physical fabric of a neighbourhood. This has provided me the opportunity to better understand the consequences and outcomes associated with residential and commercial change. The paper has also provided me the opportunity to continue building a solid foundation with regards to the various theories and debates surrounding gentrification and neighbourhood change.

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## **Chapter I**

“Doga” a term consisting of the root word dog, with similarity in its spelling to the word yoga. My interest with this unfamiliar word (that was unknown to me at the time), sparked my curiosity to further investigate its meaning. Doga is a form of yoga that provides a dog and its owner the opportunity to work through a series of yoga poses together. I was first introduced to the term during the summer of 2012 while conducting fieldwork in the West Queen West neighbourhood. At that time, my attention was drawn to a sign that advertised an upcoming class of doga. What at first appeared to be a typo was in actual fact a true existing word. I was surprised to learn that the word doga referenced exactly what it sounded like: doggy yoga. If there was one neighbourhood in the city of Toronto that would provide the opportunity to partake in doga classes, West Queen West was it. Gentrified in the 1990’s, and having undergone a drastic transformation from derelict to chic over a fifteen year period, West Queen West is now one of the trendiest neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto. It was during this visit to the West Queen West neighbourhood that I became interested in further investigating the urban phenomenon known as gentrification. As a result, these experiences became the basis for my research topic and the origin of this paper.

Gentrification is a form of neighbourhood upgrading that transforms working class neighbourhoods into middle and upper-class ones. Due to the phenomenon’s fluid state, the ways in which gentrification can take place has changed numerous times over the years, thus challenging the existing definitions of the term. Even though an abundance of literature surrounding gentrification exists, new iterations provide a need for further in-depth examination of the various forces, circumstances and actors surrounding the phenomenon.

The purpose of this paper is to examine and fill in a literature gap regarding the gentrification of a Toronto neighbourhood that has seemingly flown under the radar. The intent



of this paper is to explore the various indicators, strategies, and breaks from gentrification that are transforming The Junction, a west-end Toronto neighbourhood, from a historically working-class blue collar neighbourhood, into a middle-class enclave.

Located on the western edge of downtown Toronto surrounding the intersection of Keele Street and Dundas Street West, The Junction has been chosen for this case study because it is one of the most recent neighbourhoods in the city to experience gentrification. Twenty years ago, many people considered The Junction to be a working-class neighbourhood that was rundown, unappealing, and in need of some form of revitalization. A number of the homes located in the neighbourhood's residential pockets were in need of various forms of restoration. The neighbourhood's retail strip was in rough shape, and a number of storefronts sat unoccupied for numerous years. Today, The Junction is considered to be one of the city's premier up-and-coming neighbourhoods, with a number of homes already extending past the reach of first-time buyers. Although the changes have been considered somewhat drastic, the neighbourhood has thus far been able to maintain a number of elements that have kept the neighbourhood true to its roots.

The importance of this paper is placed on how existing definitions of gentrification can be challenged, placing greater emphasis on the location specific forces and actors associated with a neighbourhood's transformation. This makes it difficult to apply a standard range of definitions with regards to a neighbourhood's gentrification, because a neighbourhood can experience its own unique form of gentrification that has seldom been experienced before. Depending on the various internal and external forces placed upon a gentrifying neighbourhood, its outcome can range from being stereotypical to completely unique.

Chapter II explores various theories related to gentrification, including an analysis of stage-models of gentrification, production and consumption explanations of gentrification and third-wave gentrification. A brief overview of gentrification specific to Toronto is explored and is followed by neighbourhood specific forms of the phenomenon which include commercial, artist-led and municipal gentrification. The chapter concludes with an overview of the methods utilized to complete this paper.

Chapter III is focused on The Junction, and begins with a brief overview of the neighbourhood's one-hundred-and-twenty-year history. Following the historical analysis, a number of factors that led towards The Junction's transformation are examined. The last section of the chapter probes various gentrification indicators found within interview data, demographic data, and the built environment.

Chapter IV discusses the processes, understandings, strategies and tensions concerning the nature of gentrification playing out in the neighbourhood today. Various breaks from typical gentrification narratives are scrutinized and followed by an analysis of three spaces within the neighbourhood where these narratives play out.

Chapter V concludes the paper and discusses the implications of the work for future research and consideration.

## **Chapter II**

This chapter explores gentrification theories and explanations in order to understand the processes currently unfolding in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood. Gentrification is a complex phenomenon and a neighbourhood experiencing gentrification can be affected differently depending on various locational features of the neighbourhood. First, the origins of gentrification will be considered, establishing a historical context and a timeline of the phenomenon. Next, modifications and critical interventions of the process will be examined with emphasis placed on production, consumption, and third-wave explanations of gentrification. Following these interventions, an analysis of Toronto specific gentrification literature will explore various localized influences and neighbourhoods that shape the conditions of gentrification in the city. Commercial, municipal and artist-led forms of gentrification will be analyzed, as well as specific neighbourhoods such as West Queen West and Parkdale. The chapter will then conclude with an overview of my research methodology.

Before defining and describing the various types of gentrification experienced in Toronto, and more specifically in The Junction, it is important to take note of the various ways in which gentrification has evolved. Gentrification is a term that has been used over the last fifty years to describe a shift in the social and physical makeup of a neighbourhood located within close proximity to the central business district (CBD) in cities across North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Although gentrification can be found in various cities worldwide, the phenomenon has been most prominent in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The term "gentrification" was first coined in 1964 by urban sociologist Ruth Glass who used the term to describe a distinct process that was affecting inner-city residential neighbourhoods in London. She noted that

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down- have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period – which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation – have been upgraded once again (Glass 1964: xviii-xix).

It is important to note the original definition of gentrification, because over the last fifty years, this definition has been modified and readapted countless times as new forms of the phenomena have emerged.

### **Classical Gentrification and Stage-Models**

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, a number of researchers presented various models in an attempt to explain and predict the dynamic processes involved in gentrification (Gale, 1980; Clay, 1979; Pattison, 1977, 1983; the National Urban Coalition [NUC], 1978; National Association of Neighbourhoods ([NAN] 1980). Stage models were created to not only help categorize the processes involved in the gentrification cycle, but also to try and predict the future outcomes of gentrified neighbourhoods. These early stage models were based on Ruth Glass's classical definition of gentrification and were designed to represent gentrification as an orderly, temporal and sequential phenomenon (Lees, Slater, Wyny 34). Dennis Clay conducted one of the first major studies of gentrification and came to the conclusion that private urban reinvestment had occurred in a number of the largest U.S. cities by the late 1970's (Clay 1979). Through the use of surveys, he looked at a number of gentrifying cities across the United States which included Philadelphia's Society Hill, Washington's Capital Hill, Boston's South End and San Francisco's Western Addition, and concluded that there were a number of themes that these gentrified neighbourhoods shared with one another (Clay 53). These included: old neighbourhoods that were at least 75-80 years old, a Victorian housing stock occupied by blue-

collar families, and a small percentage of abandoned homes (Clay 54). From these observations, Clay (1979: 57-60) created a four-stage model of gentrification based on both the classical definition of gentrification and the information that he procured during his research. Below is a brief overview of all four stages.

Stage 1: A very small number of people move into a neighbourhood and begin to renovate properties within a small (2-4 block radius) for which they plan to live in. This group of homeowners is usually considered the “pioneers” of the neighbourhood. The newcomers rely on sweat equity and private capital exclusively to renovate their homes. This first group of in-movers is usually made up artists and various design professionals who have the time, skills and means to undertake said renovations.

Stage 2: The same types of people in stage one continue to move into the neighbourhood and are accompanied by a small number of realtors and property speculators. A few houses in this stage are renovated with the intent of reselling or renting the house; most renovators are still purchasing properties with the intent of living there once complete.

Stage 3: At this stage the media and real-estate market begin to widely promote and take a mainstream interest in the neighbourhood. The pioneers continue to be an important group that shapes the neighbourhood, but they are no longer the only ones. Urban renewal and/or major developers begin to move into the neighbourhood. The new in-movers are less tolerant of the original working class residents and new actions against crime are taken; the neighbourhood is now considered “safe”.

Stage 4: More properties are gentrified by the middle-class in-movers. The in-movers professional backgrounds shift from the professional middle-class to the business and managerial middle-class.

(Clay 1979, 57-59)

Following the completion of his stage model breakdown, Clay recognized and commented on some of the shortcomings of his work. The model was made during the early days of gentrification and was heavily biased towards the definitions and descriptions of pioneer or first-wave gentrification (Clay 59). Another shortcoming of his model is that it assumes gentrification ends once it has matured (reached stage four). In the decades following the completion of his work, new processes of gentrification emerged that not only continued the gentrification cycle

(second and third-wave gentrification) but also gave way to completely new forms of gentrification including new-build, commercial, super and state-led gentrification.

In the same year, Gale (1979) conveyed his thoughts on gentrification by releasing a similar stage model which focused more on the class and status characteristics between old and new residents living in a gentrified neighbourhood. Gale's model emphasized population change and the displacement of the neighbourhood's original working-class residents through the analysis of the in-movers demographic characteristics (Gale 1979). These included household size, racial composition, annual income, age, education and occupation; and were used to understand the resident and housing shifts taking place within gentrifying neighbourhoods (Gale 294). The differences between Clay's (1979) and Gale's (1979) stage models of gentrification demonstrates how different areas of emphasis are responsible for creating different "pictures" or "stories" the process can take (Lees, Slater and Wyny 34). Clay based his work on observations, whereas Gale's work emphasized population shifts through the use of demographics. These different stories of gentrification have led researchers to develop various explanations of gentrification which include production and consumption explanations of the phenomena.

Stage models are a useful starting point for understanding the processes associated with gentrification as they provide context and a basic framework of the phenomenon. However, they do not come without their shortcomings. Stage models are a basic framework that cannot be used to describe the processes of gentrification in all neighbourhoods, because they describe specific processes that have taken place in specific neighbourhoods (Caulfield 126). Three gentrifying neighbourhoods that surround Toronto's CBD (The Annex, Yorkville and South East Spadina) missed or skipped over various stages outlined in three and four stage-model theories due to site specific circumstances that effected each neighbourhood's gentrification (126). Stage models of

gentrification can also be uncritical and accepting of the political economy in which they are applied (Smith 1996). However, from these systematic, detail specific stage models, new theories of gentrification began to surface that attempted to explain how and why gentrification took place in various neighbourhoods around the world.

### **Production Explanations**

“Gentrification is a frontier on which fortunes are made” (Neil Smith, *Gentrification* 34).

By the mid to late-twentieth century, major cities across the United States and Canada had been dealing with the damaging effects that deindustrialization and suburbanization were having on the urban landscape (Lees, Slater and Wyly 4). During this time, a number of major cities across North America experienced a sustained period of physical deterioration and depopulation in and around various downtown cores (Smith, “Towards” 538). Initial signs of rehabilitation that took place in the 1950’s, intensified in the 1960’s, and by the 1970’s a number of inner city neighbourhoods were experiencing gentrification (538). In the mid-seventies in the United States, the Urban Land Institute (1976) reported that out of all the cities with a population of at least 50,000 (260 total) almost half of them were experiencing rehabilitation and renewal in and around the downtown cores (538). Washington’s Capital Hill, Philadelphia’s Society Hill, and Boston’s South End are three examples of neighbourhoods that were being gentrified during this time. It was noted that although gentrification accounts for only a small fraction of new housing compared to new construction, its process was most profound in the older North Eastern Parts of the United States (538). Most of the literature on gentrification up until the mid-1970’s focused on the processes and effects associated with a

neighbourhood's physical, social and demographic changes, with little attention being paid to the actual causes and reasons associated with the phenomenon taking place (538).

According to production explanations, gentrification can be initiated in a neighbourhood by several different actors in the land and housing markets. This is contrary to the collective social actions that are undertaken at the neighbourhood level by the consumption explanations (545). Along with state and financial institutions; professional developers (who buy a number of properties in the neighbourhood to rehabilitate and resell) act as the collective initiative behind gentrification under production-centered theories of the phenomenon (546). The only exception to this collective action by developers happens in neighbourhoods that are adjacent to previously gentrified neighbourhoods, where individual gentrifiers are the important rehabilitation initiators (546).

It was not until 1979 that production explanations of the phenomenon took a serious foot-hold in gentrification theory. This was largely due to research published by Neil Smith.

To explain gentrification according to the gentrifiers actions alone, while ignoring the role of builders, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, government agencies, real-estate agents and tenants, is excessively narrow. A broader theory of gentrification must take the role of producers as well as consumers into account, and when this is done, it appears that the needs of production – in particular the need to earn a profit- are a more decisive initiative behind gentrification than consumer preference. (Smith, "Towards" 540)

In short, Smith describes how consumer preference, be it an old Victorian housing stock, a diverse mix of residents or the proximity to the downtown core, only had importance in determining the final product in terms of the form and character of these gentrified neighbourhoods (540). He goes on to argue that profit or more precisely, a sound financial investment, is the driving force behind why gentrification initially takes place (540). With this assumption Smith believes that very few people, if any, would consider the rehabilitation of a



dilapidated property if a financial loss was the expected outcome (540). Moreover, he puts forth the notion that gentrification “...must therefore explain why some neighbourhoods are profitable to redevelop while others are not” (541). It was this reasoning that provided Smith the ability to come up with the single most influential production explanation of gentrification: the rent gap theory.

Rent gap theory grounds its foundation on a neoclassical economic theory and a process referred to as filtering. Filtering involves human agencies (ie. real-estate agents, banks) and their actions regarding “the intentional depreciation and devaluation of capital invested in residential inner-city neighbourhoods” (545). Smith believes that gentrification is almost always led by this filtering process which is made up of five stages of decline, each of which varies from neighbourhood to neighbourhood (545). These five stages of the filtering processes consist of: new construction and the first cycle of use, landlordism and homeownership, blockbusting (persuading owners to sell their property below market value as a result of racial groups moving into the area; then reselling at a higher price to the new in-movers) and blowout (similar to blockbusting whereby, the outward spread of slums forces residents of still healthy neighbourhoods near the slums to sell their homes and relocate), redlining (disinvestment by both landlords and financial institutions further depreciates the neighbourhoods property values), and abandonment (when landlords can no longer collect enough rent to cover necessary costs of utilities, taxes, etc. buildings are subsequently abandoned) (544-545). However, not all of the processes of filtering need to occur in order for gentrification to take place (545). Smith proposes this general explanatory framework and states that the one thing all of these neighbourhoods have in common is that they all have a relatively homogenous housing stock in terms of the age

and quality of housing (545). This decline creates the economic conditions that allow capital revaluation and gentrification to take place (545).

The fundamental process found within this is the rent gap theory. The rent gap is the “gap” or distance between the potential ground rent and the actual ground rent of a property capitalized under the current land uses (540). When the gap between the capitalized ground rent (how much is currently being charged/how much a property is worth in its current state) and the potential ground rent (how much can be charged/how much the property is worth if it is renovated and upgraded) is large enough, only then can reinvestment (gentrification) occur (545). Disinvestment in the property (through the filtering process) is the force that widens this gap between the capitalized and potential ground rents. Traditionally, landlords try get as much money out of their property as possible, and this is what starts the disinvestment cycle; the less money they spend on maintaining the property, the more profit they can make for themselves.

As the properties deteriorate, people with lower incomes take up residence. As Smith puts forth “only when this gap emerges can gentrification be expected since if the present use succeeded in capitalizing all or most of the ground rent, little economic benefit could be derived from redevelopment” (545). Gentrification can then occur when the rent gap is wide enough that developers can purchase inexpensive properties (pay for renovations, construction costs and mortgages, etc.) and sell finished product for a large enough return on their investment (Lees, Slater and Wyly 54). As the ground rent becomes capitalized, the neighbourhood becomes “recycled” and a new cycle of use commences (Smith, “Towards” 545).

Gentrification, according to rent gap theory, is not a chance or inexplicable process. It is, in fact, an expected and direct by-product of the land and housing markets (546). The depreciation of capital during the second half of the nineteenth century, along with the growth

and outward expansion of cities during the first half of the twentieth century, produced conditions that were favourable for reinvestment (546). Rehabilitation began in neighbourhoods closest to the city centre where the gap was the largest and the highest returns on investment were possible, and then slowly spread outward to the other inner city neighbourhoods (546). This furthers the correlation between the rent gap theory and gentrification.

Although the rent gap thesis is straightforward in its methodology, there is debate surrounding its legitimacy. Critics take issue with how this theory tries to explain changes in the urban landscape by placing too much emphasis on consumer preferences and economic factors, while leaving out other factors such as political, social and societal changes (Lees, Slater and Wyly 57). Another critique that researchers have found in the rent gap theory is how it involves concepts that are extremely hard to measure (58). Two researchers, Kary (1988) and Sabourin (1988) have argued that their findings clearly support the notion that the rent gap theory can be used to explain why various Toronto neighbourhoods have been gentrified. Yet their findings are based solely on the analysis of housing prices and the economics of housing renovation, and do not consider the various political, social or societal changes that the city underwent in the years leading up to the neighbourhood's gentrification. Relying too heavily on production explanations with regards to explaining gentrification can be problematic because it can create a somewhat incomplete picture regarding the gentrification of a given neighbourhood.

### **Consumption Explanations**

Consumption explanations place greater emphasis on the shifts in the political, social and economic forces at work within the city. Consumption theories describe gentrification as a reaction to changes in the industrial and occupational structures of numerous capitalist oriented

cities. The loss of manufacturing jobs in and around the city center and the increase of service based, white collar employment led to an increase in the number of middle-class professionals working in the downtown cores of cities.

These middle-class professionals also had a new found attraction associated with central city living, and a newly found hatred for the bland, homogeneous lifestyle that came with suburban living (Caulfield 1994; Ley 1996). Many of the theories associated with consumption explanations explore questions of class structure and ask questions such as “Who are the gentrifiers?”, “Where do they come from?” and “What attracts them to live in central city neighbourhoods?” (Lees, Slater, Wyny 90). Unlike the rent gap theory, which places a strong emphasis on the United States housing markets (as opposed to North American or European markets), a number of consumption explanations of gentrification have taken root with specific focus on the effects gentrification has had on Canadian cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal in particular).

### **Post-Industrial Gentrification**

In the early 1970's, Bell (1973) looked at the changes associated with the de-industrialization (or post-industrial movement) that were emerging throughout parts of North America and Europe. He believed that in the post-industrial society, the majority of the labour force was no longer engaged in agriculture or manufacturing, but were concentrated in services (professional and technical professions) which included the trade, finance, transport, health, research, education, technology and government sectors (Bell 15). A shift in knowledge and the emergence of specialized knowledge that focused on science-based industries placed a greater emphasis on the importance of universities over factories (44). Bell's work was considered to be

extremely influential in shaping David Ley's ideas on the effects associated with the gentrification of major Canadian cities, and as a result, Bell's post-industrial thesis has been referred to as *Ley's Post-Industrial Thesis* because of the similarities they share with one another (Lees, Slater, Wyny 34).

David Ley (1996) attributed the gentrification of various Canadian neighbourhoods to the consequences of Bell's post-industrial thesis, society's transition to post-Fordism, the emergence of the postmodern city and the creation of the new middle-class (Ley, *Middle Class* Chapter 1). Ley argues that the shift from an industrial to post-industrial society created steady growth in Canada's quaternary (knowledge-based) job sector while experiencing a steady decline in manufacturing and factory-based work (14). The growth of the knowledge sector in and around the downtown cores of major Canadian cities is believed to be one of the significant contributors of gentrification because these knowledge-based workers wanted to live within close proximity of their downtown jobs (14). Along with the shift of employment, the new middle class was also searching for distinction in their housing, moving away from cookie-cutter suburban style homes while rejecting mass markets (18). Ley states that "It might well be that gentrifiers are the epitome, and among the pioneers, of a post-Fordist model of consumption" (18). Referencing the effects associated with a post-industrial, post-fordist and post-modern societies, the steadily increasing growth of the quaternary sector, and people's rejection of mass consumption; the 'new middle-class' was born (15).

The new middle class was made up of the emerging professional-managerial cohort or the quaternary occupational sectors which were rapidly expanding throughout major Canadian cities at the time (15). Within this group, an important subgroup emerges which Ley refers to as the 'new cultural-class' (15). This subgroup was made up of professionals that were part of the

arts, applied arts, media, teaching, and social service sectors (15). This new cultural class played an important part in gentrifying various Canadian neighbourhoods because their “Imagineering of an alternative urbanism to suburbanization has helped shape new inner-city environments, where they are to some degree both producer and consumer” (15).

Jon Caulfield conducted one of the most in-depth studies of gentrification focused specifically on Toronto. He found that gentrification accelerated throughout the inner city during the ‘reform era’ of Canadian urban politics in three stages, beginning the mid 1970’s, continuing through the early 1980’s and again in the late 1980’s and then ending in the early 1990’s when the real-estate market began to cool down (Caulfield 200). Caulfield (1994) concludes that gentrification in Toronto is the result of reform era politics, the middle-class’s rejection of modernist planning, a rejection of the suburbs and mass market principles and critical social practices. Critical social practices are seen as a middle-class reaction to the city’s post war development and are defined as the “efforts by human beings to resist institutionalized patterns of dominance and suppressed possibility and create new conditions for their social activities” (Caulfield xiii). These critical social practices can be understood as the middle-classes efforts to break away from the conformity of suburbia by living in the inner-city. Living in Victorian-era homes, for example, offers a break from modernity and suburbia because no two are exactly alike. The fieldwork section of Caulfield’s book focuses on the residential preferences and everyday lives of 63 individuals that lived in various gentrified, inner-city neighbourhoods. He wanted to focus

“solely on the questions of whether the preferences of a segment of middle-class inner-city resettles about their housing locals and everyday lives reflected a pattern of critical social practice and whether the residential choices of these city-dwellers might validly be viewed in a context of urban social-movement theory” (Caulfield, *City Form* 151).

Through the data collected via one-on-one interviews, Caulfield determined that there were four unique qualities of life that all of the interviewees believed could be found within these gentrified, inner-city neighbourhoods (169). Residents sought greater social connection, diversity and tolerance where they lived, while also expressing certain aesthetic preferences for older architecture (169). He concludes his fieldwork section by stating that the gentrification that took place in Toronto between the late 1970's and late 1980's did at least, in part, constitute an urban social movement conceptualized within the general framework of desires described by Castells (222).

### **Third-Wave Gentrification**

There are multiple different strategies being utilized in The Junction that are similar to, and in support of Hackworth and Smith's thesis on third-wave gentrification. The third wave of gentrification began in the mid-90's following the 1987-89 United States stock market crash and subsequent housing crash (Hackworth and Smith 468). During the recession, the movement of capital that was previously flowing into various gentrifying neighbourhood began to drastically slow down (467). The recession, which came to an end in 1993-94, acted as a transition period that led to a third wave of gentrification (468). Unlike second-wave gentrification, which placed emphasis on cultural and individual (small scale) efforts of re-investment (see section on consumption explanations of gentrification), third-wave gentrification is driven by economic conditions, large scale investment and a greater level of corporate capital (468). In the third wave, the state (often the municipal state) can play more of an interventionist role with regards to gentrification because "most of the easily gentrified (high amenity and close to the CBD) neighbourhoods had already been fully reinvested in" and gentrified (Hackworth and Smith 468-

469). Because of this, gentrifiers and outside investors began to target neighbourhoods that featured a higher level of economic risk because they were located in more remote locations, further from the CBD (469). State assistance or intervention became increasingly necessary because these neighbourhoods made it harder for individual gentrifiers to make a profit, and if a neighbourhood was considered ‘underdeveloped’, it was mainly due to their distance from the CBD (469). This increase in state assistance has helped facilitate a rapid expansion of gentrification.

With third-wave gentrification, there are four distinct ways in which gentrification differs from earlier phases of the phenomena. Gentrification spreads to more remote neighbourhoods located further from the city’s downtown core, developers become increasingly involved with investing in and gentrifying neighbourhoods and are usually the first to ‘orchestrate reinvestment’, resident resistance to gentrification declines, and lastly, the state becomes more involved in the process than in the previous two waves (468).

### **Toronto’s Gentrification**

Over the last 50 years, gentrification has affected a number of neighbourhoods that immediately surround the downtown core of Toronto. Neighbourhoods like Trinity-Bellwoods, Little Italy, The Annex, Wychwood Park, Yorkville, Rosedale, Cabbagetown, Regent Park, Corktown, Riverdale and Leslieville have all felt the impacts of gentrification in one form or another. The Junction is a neighbourhood in Toronto’s West end that is also undergoing rapid change with regards to gentrification; yet no one has carried out an in-depth study on the ways in which the neighbourhood is changing. The Junction is experiencing elements of gentrification related to production and consumption theories, as well as forms of municipally led, artist led



and commercially led gentrification; yet it exhibits qualities that are different from the previously examined list of gentrified neighbourhoods.

In Toronto, the gentrification of various inner city neighbourhoods has mostly been attributed to the by-products associated with consumption and emancipatory theories of the phenomenon (Ley 1996, Hamnett 1984, Caulfield 1994). Two researchers, Kary (1988), Sabourin (1988) have argued that some Toronto neighbourhoods experienced gentrification due to the perceived rent gap that was visible in those neighbourhoods, yet they based their results solely on housing prices and the economics of renovation, paying little attention to other external factors that could have attributed to the neighbourhoods gentrification. The main issue with the rent gap is that it was only one of a number of processes that took place within a ten-to-fifteen year time period that provided the right circumstances for the neighbourhood to gentrify. This will be explored in more depth in the following two chapters.

Consumption theories have been the main model used to explain why various Toronto neighbourhoods have gentrified over the last fifty years. Canadian gentrification scholars including David Ley, Jon Caulfield and Chris Hamnett have all argued that gentrification in Toronto can be attributed to the effects of deindustrialization, the growth of post-industrial economies, changing inner city demographics and the acceleration of 'reform era' politics (Ley 1985, 1987; Caulfield 1994; Hamnett 1984). Deindustrialization, which began in the late 1960's, along with the increase and rapid growth of a white collar 'quaternary' workforce was one of the main factors responsible for the changing occupational status of inner-residents in Toronto during this time (Ley, *Middle* 83-87). Ley notes that between 1975 and 1983, metropolitan office space doubled in Toronto and the growth of the service-based economy during this time put an enormous strain on Toronto's inner-city housing market (93).

Neighbourhoods that were traditionally occupied by blue-collar households were now being occupied by the increasing amount of middle-class, white-collar workers whose jobs were located in and around the downtown core.

### **Reform Politics**

During the 1950's and 1960's the city's municipal government utilized an approach referred to as 'urban modernism' to further grow and shape Toronto's urban built environment (Caulfield 52). Urban modernism depicted the historical urban landscape as a problem that needed radical reconfiguration (52). This reconfiguration would come in the form of 'universal architecture' that was committed to order, functional efficacy and a uniform organization of life (Fraser 57). City planners during this time disliked traditional old city neighbourhoods that featured a range of different building types and uses simply because they were old, and looked to replace them with single-use, large-scale developments that were 'structurally homogeneous' and 'easy on the eyes' (57). Neighbourhoods like St James Town and Alexandra Park were planned and built with the use of urban modernist building principles.

By the late 1960's, Torontonians began to oppose the booster oriented municipal council's agenda when a number of proposed plans aimed to tear down entire neighbourhoods that featured mostly healthy building stocks and local economies. This opposition reached critical mass by the early 1970's, and resulted in the replacement of the booster oriented council with a new 'reform' majority in 1972 (Caulfield 67). This marked the beginning of Toronto's 'reform' era political movement. This movement was responsible for the redirection of city building from modernist to post-modernist ideals, and was highlighted by the ideology and theories featured in 'the liveable city' (68). Beginning in the late-eighties and early-nineties we

begin to see the emergence of three site specific themes with regards to Toronto based gentrification research. These three site specific themes include commercial, artist-led, and municipally-led gentrification.

### **Commercial Gentrification**

A lot of gentrification literature is focused on changes that take place in the residential sector, but for some neighbourhoods like The Junction, changes can also take place within and be initiated by the retail/commercial sector. Through the various interviews that have been conducted for this project, there is evidence that supports the notion that the gentrification of The Junction was actually initiated by the commercial strip as opposed to the residential sector (see chapter 3). When a neighbourhood falls into a state of disrepair or decline, the owners of the retail properties have just as much to gain in terms of revitalizing and or gentrifying the neighbourhood. Like the home owners, retail property owners and business owners can look to gentrification as a means of increasing the value of their property, increasing monthly rent, attracting higher end businesses to the area, and opening new businesses that are attractive to the areas changing demographic.

Beauregard (1986) observed that gentrification extends beyond the home to the more general 'habitus'; which includes shopping (consumption) as a significant social experience associated with overall process of gentrification (Beauregard 44). This idea of retail gentrification was furthered by Sharron Zukin (1990) who stated that "gentrification's consumption markers are explicitly identified with a specific type and use of space" (Zukin 40). She goes on to state that these gentrification consumption markers (or indicators) have been typically understood in the past on the residential side, with reference to things like architectural markers (Victorian building stock) found in gentrifying neighbourhoods (40). Gentrification's

spatial form can also be found in the more obvious consumption spaces found along retail strips (41). It is along these main streets where the goods and services that cater to the gentrifiers can be found and linked to the new concentrations of creative capital which include advertising, architecture and publishing (50).

In connection with Caulfield's (1994) work regarding the preferences of gentrifiers, Ley (1996) states that because of the association with individuality and anti-mass-marketed merchandise, so-called hippy retailing allowed residents to break from the conventions of their middle-class childhoods (Ley, *Middle* 185). Counterculture retailing was considered to be a significant contributor to identity formation for the buyers and sellers, and various things like independent shops that sold locally made/produced goods and organic products added to this identity (186). It is important to note that in most cases hippy retailing does have a limited lifespan, and eventually larger chain stores do end up finding their way into these gentrifying neighbourhoods (302).

### **Artist-led Gentrification**

When looking at the various factors responsible for the gentrification of inner-city neighbourhoods, artists can be indirectly responsible for the neighbourhood's gentrification. Often referred to as the 'storm-troopers' or 'shock troopers' of gentrification, artists and their associated ways of life have been responsible for initiating the gentrification of various neighbourhoods in Toronto and abroad, making them attractive locations for middle-class in-movers (Makagon 26). Artists help transform undesirable neighbourhoods into desirable ones because they have the ability to transform the places they live in both symbolic and physical ways (Mathews 2853). Playing the part of the 'pioneer', artists convert derelict neighbourhoods into culturally distinctive nodes (Cole 1987; Ley 1996, 2003; Smith 1996). Unlike the pioneer

gentrifiers of the 1960's 70's and 80's, artists usually have to live in 'rougher' looking neighbourhoods because, "In North America, the life of the artist is an invitation to voluntary poverty" (Ley "Artists" 2533).

Artists and gentrifiers share one thing in common. They are "the quintessential resistance fighters to mainstream ideals and society as a whole", which was a characteristic shared by pioneer gentrifiers who also wanted to break away from the constraints of the mainstream suburban lifestyle (Ley, *Middle* 188). Between 1971 and 1981, the number of artists in Canada rose 115 per cent and there were more artists living in Canada than ever before (188). Artists are seen as innovators that serve "a social role as a broker of fashionable middle-class taste, demarcating the new frontiers of cultural distinction" (189). The cultural distinction that artists create through their artwork and lifestyles allows for the commodification, by the middle classes, of their artwork, and subsequently the neighbourhoods in which they inhabit (Mathews 2853).

In Canada, neighbourhoods that featured concentrations of artists were usually above-average in social status, and were also in close proximity to elite neighbourhoods (which is typical in the gentrification of other non-artist neighbourhoods) (Ley, *Middle* 190). In Toronto, 86 per cent of artists interviewed by Ley felt that living downtown was an important locational requirement (190). Central-city locations are seen as 'authentic locations' for artists because they provide them with cheap studio space, linkages with customers, suppliers and the downtown art scene and 'energy and intensity' that does not exist in the suburbs (194).

Taking into consideration how almost all of the residential neighbourhoods surrounding the downtown core of Toronto have been gentrified (or are currently going through the processes associated with gentrification), Ley went on to predict that if "the location of artists anticipates the subsequent movement of the new middle class, then the encirclement of downtown by 1986

suggests that virtually all of the innermost districts face possible future embourgeoisement” (197). The ‘pioneers’ who first move into and begin to gentrify these artist neighbourhood include members of the ‘cultural new class’ from design, advertising, journalism and media related sectors (192). They are subsequently followed by younger public sector managers and health, education and welfare professionals, who are then followed by doctors, lawyers and more established professionals (192). The final stage of in-movers who complete the gentrification cycle includes private-sector managers, sales workers and financial professionals (192).

### **Municipal Gentrification**

The beginning stages of gentrification can take root through the actions of various ‘actors’, circumstances and conditions present in any one particular neighbourhood. The actors and circumstances responsible for initiating gentrification in various Toronto neighbourhoods have thus far been linked to pioneer gentrifiers, members of new middle-class, business owners, artists and cultural capital, ‘sweat equity’, the ‘rent gap’ and the loss of inner-city manufacturing jobs. Critical analysis has also looked at the role the state can play with regards to gentrification.

As discussed earlier, state involvement with regards to gentrification has increased dramatically during the phenomena’s third wave, which began in the mid 1990’s (Hackworth and Smith 2002). State involvement has increased during the third-wave due to the fact that gentrification is not been taking place further outside of the CBD than ever before (468). Gentrification in these neighbourhoods is considered to be economically risky, and difficult for individual gentrifiers to make a profit without state assistance (469). State intervention is usually required due to the fact that these neighbourhoods are usually ‘underdeveloped’ and require large scale investment to make them attractive to individual gentrifiers and developers (468).

When a neighbourhood exhibits some of the characteristics found in other gentrified areas, yet fails to entice investment from the private sector, the municipality can choose to intervene; making the area more attractive and less risky for private market investment (Lees, Slater and Wyly 134). ‘State-led’ or ‘municipally managed’ gentrification can come in many forms (investment, policy change, and neighbourhood marketing/branding) and can include revanchist (exclusionary) reforms, liberalization of zoning or other restrictions, renewed public investment and or neighbourhood revitalization (Walks and Martine 2008; Whitzman and Slater 675). In Toronto’s case, the municipality has been linked with initiating gentrification in both the Parkdale and Queen Street West neighbourhoods in recent years.

Tom Slater (2004) explains how specific bylaws introduced by The City of Toronto were responsible for the municipal promotion and initiation of (revanchist) gentrification in Toronto’s South Parkdale neighbourhood (Slater, “Municipally” 314). The South Parkdale neighbourhood, which was at one point in time one of Toronto’s elite neighbourhoods, was affected by the city’s efforts of urban renewal in the 1950’s (the Gardiner expressway) and decades of disinvestment following the highways completion; eventually becoming one of Toronto’s poorest neighbourhoods (Whitzman and Slater 675). By the mid-nineties, 93 percent of the neighbourhoods households were renters, and many of the large Victorian homes were converted into multi-unit rooming houses (674). This concentration of rental housing made South Parkdale one of the city’s largest privately owned rental housing markets (674). In 1996, the City of Toronto passed an ‘interim control by-law’ that prohibited any new rooming houses and conversions from taking place until a neighbourhood study was completed (Slater, “Municipally” 316). Two years later, the ban was followed by the provincially initiated ‘Tenant Protection Act’ that introduced ‘vacancy decontrol’, essentially eliminating rent control on vacant units. The

vacancy decontrol provided landlords with the ability to charge whatever they wanted on newly vacated units, essentially ending the areas affordable rental housing market (319). These policies lead to the eventual elimination of the neighbourhood's affordable housing stock, displacing the neighbourhood's poorest residents while simultaneously initiating the neighbourhood's gentrification.

In her article, *Go west, young hipster: the gentrification of Queen Street West*, Heather McLean discusses how Toronto's 2005 Official Plan marketed Toronto's arts and music scene as a main selling point to try and attract real-estate investment to the working-class Queen Street West neighbourhood (McLean 158). Queen Street West was known in the 90's and early 2000's as one of Toronto's largest artist communities. The area attracted a number of artists because it featured smaller Victorian row houses (many of which were in rough shape and in need of renovation), cheap rents, and had a gritty look and feel to it (McLean 159). McLean explains how the municipal government, along with private-sector initiatives, looked to encourage hip, urban liveability with the goal of attracting the 'creative' classes to purchase condos, eat in cafes and shop in boutiques (157-58). This, in turn, saw Toronto promote local art communities (with Queen West front and center) in an attempt to attract private sector investment to the neighbourhood. The official plan also eliminated a number of development charges on new buildings, while also reducing public participation in the development approvals process with the hopes of attracting large scale developers to build numerous condominiums in the targeted neighbourhoods (160). Today, many of the neighbourhood's artists have been displaced from the neighbourhood and are being replaced by the 'creative classes' that can now afford to live in in and around Queen Street West.



These two examples of municipally led gentrification are important to note because in the next chapter I will discuss how The Junction has also experienced a form of municipal intervention. In The Junction's case, the municipality stepped in and made sizable infrastructural investments, eventually kick-starting the neighbourhood's gentrification with the hopes of attracting developers to build condominiums in the neighbourhood.

### **Fieldwork Methods**

In order to complete the research that was needed for this project, I decided to conduct an instrumental case study. An instrumental case study has allowed me the opportunity to gain insight with regards to my research question by studying a particular case, or in my instance, The Junction neighbourhood (Stake 14). Conducting a case study is significant because it provided me with "an up close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of "cases" set in their real-world contexts" (Yin 4). Case studies provide the researcher with an invaluable and deep understanding of the case, which will hopefully result in new wisdom regarding real-world behaviour and its meaning (4). Case study research also assumes that examining the context and other various complex conditions is integral to understanding the cases being studied (4).

In order to complete the proposed objectives for this research paper, I utilized three main methods of data collection including semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and field site observation. To fulfill my project's objective, I needed to gain an in-depth understanding of the various theories related to gentrification. Compiling a detailed history of my field site has provided me with a historical context that I felt was necessary for understanding the evolution and challenges that the neighbourhood has faced over the last one hundred plus years.

In order to assist me with the strategies involved in document analysis, I have chosen to rely on qualitative geography research methods described by Mike Crang (2013). These methods include categorizing content and codes, building ideas, developing theory, how to go from data to theory, and the various ways of organizing information collected.

I utilized a wide range of documentation including both primary and secondary sources in order to create a solid theoretical and historical foundation for my analysis. The primary and secondary sources that I used include: newspaper articles, pamphlets, archival photographs and data, maps, books, scholarly journal articles, census data and blog entries.

Toronto Census data from the years 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 assisted me in understanding changes in the neighbourhoods overall demographic shifts. The City of Toronto neighbourhoods' profile was used to provide me with a better understanding of the neighbourhood's overall composition as well as various demographic changes the neighbourhood has experienced when compared to past years. Bearing in mind the fact that The Junction is geographically small, I have decided to use the data found within The City of Toronto's neighbourhood profiles. I elected to use the neighbourhood profiles over the ward profiles because the neighbourhood profiles are more or less neighbourhood specific, whereas the ward profiles look at much larger areas that include multiple neighbourhoods. The Junction neighbourhood is situated within the boundaries of Ward 13 and other neighbourhoods that fall within the boundaries of this ward include, but are not limited to: Lambton, Runnymede, Swansea, The Kingsway, Roncesvalles Village and Bloor West Village. The neighbourhood profile does have two key drawbacks of its own. First, the neighbourhood profile boundaries for The Junction (90) expand above and beyond the boundaries I have chosen to focus on for the purposes of this paper (CN rail tracks to the north, Keele St to the east, Annette St to the south

and Clendenan Ave to the west). Second, various profiles have not been added from the 2011 census, and thus I compiled my own 2011 neighbourhood profile utilizing 3 of the four census tracts that make up the neighbourhood profile (one census tract, 5350100.00, is not accessible). These neighbourhood profiles are still significant however, because they allow me to track the various demographic shifts that have taken place within The Junction over multiple census years.

Another source of data came from the completion of one-on-one interviews and field site observations. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because I believe this method provides the participant the opportunity to direct the interview, while also allowing them the opportunity to open up, and share with me a deeper understanding of any concerns, issues or problems they might have (Valentine 111). This technique provided me the opportunity to ask follow up questions, as well as formulate new questions in order to further explore new ideas or themes that surfaced during the interview. Utilizing the semi-structured technique, I set out a number of questions for all the interviewees to answer, in addition to some specific ones geared to the person that is being interviewed (be it a business owner, neighbourhood resident or city staff member) (112). I prepared some general themes on the chosen topics for my research in order to give some flexibility in answering the questions, and to allow for a more natural flow during the interviewing process.

In order to recruit interviewees I relied on both the gatekeeper and snowballing techniques (116-117). The gatekeeper technique was used to recruit interviewees located in and around The Junction. Since I did not know anyone that lived and or worked in The Junction, I relied on a gatekeeper to point me in the right direction in terms of finding potential interviewees (116). I used the snowballing technique to further recruit interviewees once I began talking to and meeting local area residents and business owners. I have taken into consideration that

multiple initial contact points must be made so that there is a wide range in demographics amongst my interviewees (112). Purposive sampling was used to assist me in deciding on who I should interview. Purposive sampling is described as a random selection of sampling units within the segment of the population (The Junction) that is identified as having the most information on my subject of interest (Guarte and Barrios 2). Some targeted interviewees included: a former BIA Chair and current BIA member, resident's association members, local ward councillors (both past and present), a city planner, a developer, local business owners, and of course, a number of local neighbourhood residents.

In a casual, informal manner, most of the interviews were conducted in a neutral public place which included various local coffee shops, pubs and the local library. For those that could not meet in person, phone interviews were conducted. My goal here was to try to interview a wide range of people that lived and or worked in The Junction. I had originally planned to interview between ten to fifteen participants, and instead I ended up conducting a total of twenty-one interviews. I felt that interviewing a wider range of people that interact with and live in the neighbourhood would provide me with a plethora of diverse and useful information.

Direct field site observation was the last research method that I utilized. Direct field site observation provided me the opportunity to compare and contrast changes to the neighbourhood's built environment that have taken place over the last few decades. Things that I looked for included: changes to the built environment (related to changes in the condition of the housing and the retail strip), a growing presence of street furniture and decoration, neighbourhood branding, upgrades to parks and public spaces, and the presence of any police patrols. This was an important component of my project because it allowed me the opportunity to uncover the changing residential, and retail environments that might have resulted from the

processes associated with gentrification. Some of these changes provided me the opportunity to see if there were any 'gentrification indicators' present in The Junction that were not present prior to the neighbourhoods gentrification. Field site observation took place on an ongoing basis during the course of the project. I also kept a detailed record of photographs that I had taken during the course of my interviews, and then used those pictures to compare and contrast them with the archival photographs of the neighbourhood.

### **Chapter III**

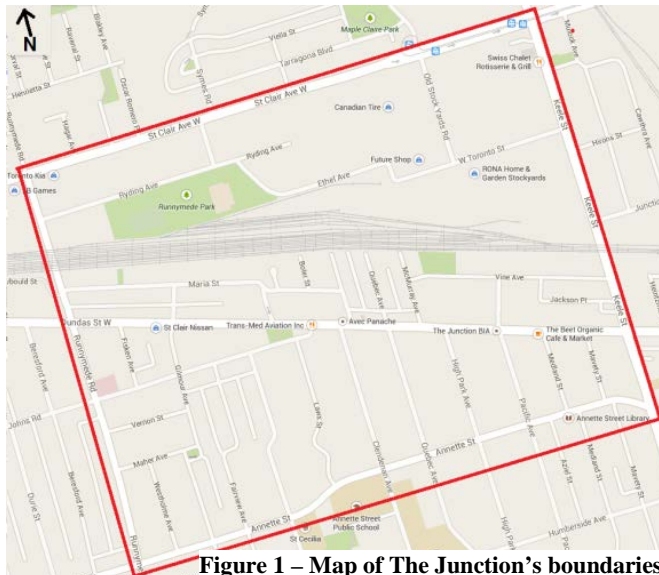
This chapter develops a historical context for understanding the contemporary developments in The Junction. It also provides a discussion of specific events and processes which have contributed to the area's revitalization, and arguably, its gentrification. Here, we can see a blend of municipally-led and consumption-driven forms of gentrification, brought about through legislative change and renewed infrastructural investment. These changes are then explored and explained in greater detail through a visual inventory of the neighbourhood, leading me to conclude that The Junction is experiencing a somewhat unique form of gentrification.

Before discussing the elements that have contributed to The Junction's gentrification, it is important to start off by exploring the neighbourhood's one-hundred-and-thirty-year history so that a timeline of events can be established documenting the ways in which The Junction has evolved since its inception.

Robert Fogelson (2001) once stated that gentrification often requires a 'lost golden age' followed by a 'threat to community,' which requires actions from both the municipality and local community members in order to ensure that the neighbourhood returns to its past glory days. This statement is reminiscent of what The Junction neighbourhood has experienced over the years. The Junction was once a well-to-do working class community that experienced its golden age between the mid-to-late 1800's and 1950's. It fell into a state of decline (crime, drugs and prostitution were all perceived problems associated with The Junction) and disinvestment between the 1950's and 1990's, before the municipality and local community members worked to revitalize the neighbourhood between 1997 and 2005.

## History

The West Toronto Junction, known as The Junction today, is located approximately 8.8 kilometres from Toronto's central business district (CBD) in the city's west-end. The neighbourhood's borders are defined by St. Clair Avenue to the north, Keele Street to the east, Annette Street to the south and Runnymede Road to the west (Figure 1).



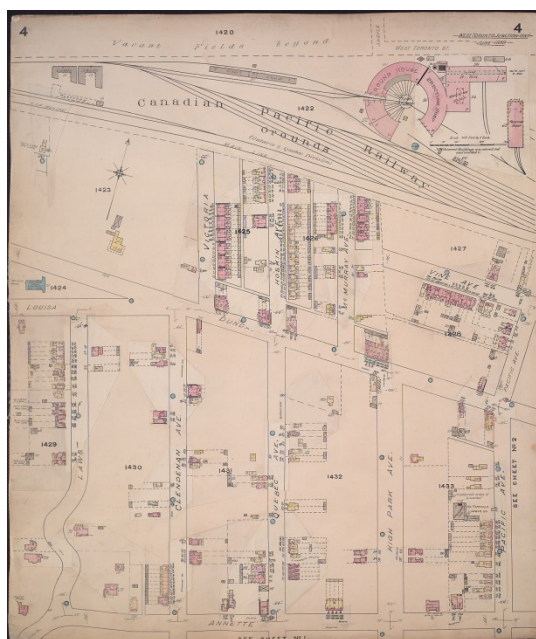
**Figure 1 – Map of The Junction's boundaries (Google Maps).**

Before Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe had the lands of the former West Toronto Junction surveyed in the 1790's, the area was known as the Humber Plains (Fancher and Miles 7). The first major land assembly was acquired by John Scarlett of York, who purchased a total of 644 acres of land within the West Toronto Junction's boundaries, including all the land that fronted both sides of the Dundas Highway (7). In 1845, John Scarlett, his two sons and the rest of the land owners in the area incorporated the Humber Harbour and Road Company which had the rights to build roads (for foot and horse and buggy traffic) as well as railroads from the mouth of the Humber river, north to Weston Road (formally Weston Plank Road) (7).

The building of the railways attracted modest development to the St Clair and Weston Road area during the 1850's, which included the Toronto Grey and Bruce and the Grand Trunk Railway companies (7). Between the 1850's and the early 1880's the Credit Valley Railway, Toronto Grey and Bruce and the Grand Trunk Railway companies were all busy building lines that extended from the heart of Toronto through the West Toronto Junction and beyond. The

development of the railways would be the key that allowed the area to transition from mostly rural tourist/hunting grounds to the Village of West Toronto.

On November 7, 1885 the last spike was driven into the ground on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which marked the completion of a railway line that stretched from British Columbia to Quebec providing access to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (10). One of the many junction points along this line was located in the village of West Toronto Junction and the completion of the line led to the eventual development and growth of the village. The West Toronto Junction was an important junction point on the railway because all the rail lines leading into the western entrance of Union Station passed through this west end neighbourhood.



**Figure 2 – This 1891 fire insurance map of the West Toronto Junction displays a snapshot of the neighbourhood’s development shortly after it was incorporated (Toronto Archives).**

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1888, the Village of West Toronto Junction became incorporated in order to acquire funds that were needed to get a system of waterworks in place for the current and future residents of the neighbourhood (19). By 1891 (Figure 2), the need for public services forced the township to finance the construction of schools, waterworks, fire and police stations, paved roads and sewers; which ran the town’s debt to new highs (23). During this same time the west end residents wanted to simplify the town’s name and had it changed to the “Toronto Junction” (23). By the mid-1890’s, the Toronto Junction’s proximity to rail lines permitted the town’s manufacturing roots to take hold. At the time, the Toronto Junction needed more employment opportunities in order to fill a number of vacant homes that were built, yet remained

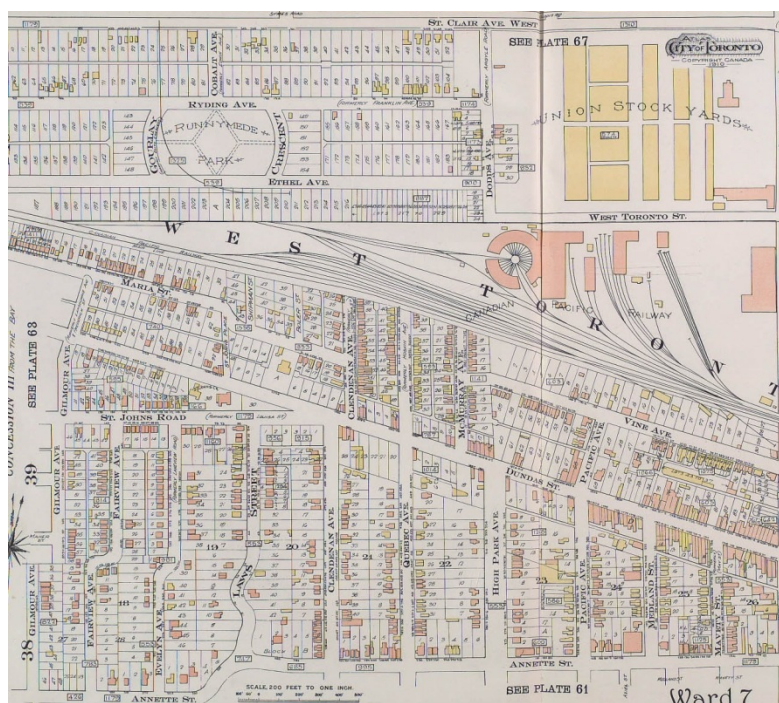
By the mid-1890’s, the Toronto Junction’s proximity to rail lines permitted the town’s manufacturing roots to take hold. At the time, the Toronto Junction needed more employment opportunities in order to fill a number of vacant homes that were built, yet remained



unoccupied. The Toronto Junction was home to only a few factories at this time which included: Heintzman's Piano Factory, Wagner and Zeidler Showcases, Doge Wood Split Pulley, Canada Wire Mattress and Samuel May's Billiard Table Co (29).

In 1900, the Union Stock Yards moved from downtown Toronto to the Toronto Junction (56). An abundance of land, along with a 30-year tax exemption provided enough incentive for the stock yards relocation (56). By 1901, the population in this west end settlement reached 6,000, and the new manufacturing, stock yards, and existing railway jobs made the neighbourhood a more attractive place to live and work (60).

The town's inability to pay for paved streets and a proper sewage system were the two determining factors that amalgamated the Toronto Junction into the City of Toronto on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1909 (74). Both West Toronto and the City of Toronto needed each other in order to continue their growth (Figure 3). West Toronto



**Figure 3 – A 1910 map of the Toronto Junction one year after it was amalgamated with the City of Toronto (Toronto Archives).**

needed the financial capabilities that a large city like Toronto had to offer. The City of Toronto, which at the time was reaching the end of its borrowing ability, needed West Toronto so it could strengthen its financial capabilities, and so it could further expand the city (74).

A plethora of hotels and taverns were scattered throughout The Junction because it was primarily a railway town up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (65). A number of hotels including the Peacock



**Figure 4 - The Heydon House Hotel (Salmon).**

Hotel (1837), Heydon House Hotel (Figure 4), Subway Hotel, Occidental Hotel and the Avenue Hotel were located in The Junction in order to house rail workers and visitors who were passing through and needed temporary lodging (65). In total there were six licenced taverns and two liquor stores located in the Toronto Junction by the early 1900's (66).

Local area residents and church ministers were growing increasingly impatient with the reputation and behaviour that the temporary workers were displaying in public and the idea of a local option by-law began to quickly take root in the neighbourhood. The minister of the Annette St Methodist Church spearheaded a temperance campaign and within weeks the rest of the clergymen in the town spread the word (67). On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1903 town council decided that a plebiscite was to take place during the next election essentially placing the decision squarely in the hands of those that lived in West Toronto (72).

Council decided that a three-fifths majority vote (60 percent) was needed in order to prohibit the sale of alcohol in West Toronto. On January 4<sup>th</sup> 1904, the majority of residents voted to ban the sale of alcohol in what was considered to be the highest voter turn-out in West Toronto's history

(72). April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1904 was the last day legitimately sold liquor was poured within the West Toronto Junctions 1600 acre boundary (72).



2815. Dundas & Keele looking West Nov. 28/23.  
City of Toronto Archives. Series 71. #0071. ©2015

**Figure 5 - Looking West, at the intersection of Dundas Street West and Keele Street in 1923 during the construction of the Junctions streetcar line (Toronto Archives).**

In the early years that followed prohibition, The Junction seemed to reap the benefits and rewards of prohibiting the sale of alcohol within the neighbourhood's boundaries (Figure 5). By

the early 1950's, the neighbourhood was known for being one of the most popular retail shopping destinations in Toronto (Hendley 2012). During this time, deindustrialization, which began in the 1950's and accelerated through the 1980's, played a significant role in reshaping Toronto's urban landscape. Deindustrialization involved the removal and replacement of manufacturing jobs with various service-based, white collar jobs (Caulfield 76). These manufacturing jobs were relocated to other parts of the province, where land and labour were less expensive. The growing dominance of trucks for transporting both raw materials and finished goods also allowed manufacturing and industrial plants the opportunity to move away from fixed transportation facilities like rail lines and ship yards (76).

The Junction was not exempt from the effects associated with deindustrialization. By the



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1223, 11231\_011091  
**Figure 6 - Looking West from the Weston Road bridge - CP Rail Yard and Heintzman piano factory (far left) – April 1933 (Salmon).**

late 1950's, it began to make its way through the neighbourhood. The closure of a number of the area's biggest employers (ie factories, manufacturing plants and the closing of multiple CP Rail repair shops (Figure 6) left a number of Junction residents without the well-paid, and often unionized jobs they previously

held (Johnson 2012). Shortly thereafter, shopping within The Junction also became less popular as a number of businesses located along Dundas Street West relocated to the new suburban malls that began to pop up on the edges of the newly built suburbs of the city (Johnson 2012). In 1960, the decision was made to considerably downsize and relocate the Lambton and West Toronto rail yards to a newly constructed 432 acre yard in North East Scarborough (Kennedy). The closure of

the rail yard significantly affected a number of Junction residents because, at its peak, the Lambton and West Toronto yards and shops employed thousands of men who lived within close proximity to their work (Kennedy). One of the requirements that came with working in the rail yards was that crew members needed to live within a one mile radius so they could hear the call for their trains by the call boys (Kennedy). Other workers lived close by so they could quickly and easily get to work, usually by walking (Kennedy). The opening of the Bloor Street subway line in 1968 made Dundas Street West an even less important retail and transportation corridor; consequently motivating more retail businesses to relocate along Bloor Street and beyond (Grange 1997).

These events negatively impacted the neighbourhood in two ways. First, the lack of available work forced a number of residents to leave the area in order to find work elsewhere. This caused property values to decline, impacting both the residents who were trying to relocate, as well as the residents who were not affected by the closures. With the retail and service based businesses also relocating to other parts of the city, the services that were once offered in the neighbourhood began to disappear further reducing the neighbourhood's appeal. During this time, local area residents and business owners thought it would be a good idea to put an end to prohibition in order to give the area a much needed economic boost (Johnson 2012). In the mid-sixties, a number of local area hotel owners banded together and spent upwards of \$100,000 in an attempt to legalize the sale of alcohol in The Junction (Johnson 2012). In 1966, the hotel owners got a plebiscite on the election ballot, but the efforts of Bill Temple (temperance leader) and his followers were too strong and the vote to stop prohibition ended unsuccessfully (Hendley 2012). Further attempts to end prohibition in The Junction in 1972, 1984 and 1988 also failed (Hendley 2012).

The 60 percent majority requirement that was needed to end prohibition, along with the organization, like-mindedness and powerful presence of the pro-dry advocates, worked to keep the area dry for almost 100 years (Hendley 2012). During the 1980's and early 1990's, prostitution and drug-related crimes were known to take place in The Junction, and by 1995 the BIA reported vacancy rates reaching upwards of 20 percent, leaving one fifth of Dundas storefronts empty (Grange 1997; Ireland G4; White B01; Wilkes GT02; Grange A2; Ness 1). By the mid-1990's, most of the major banks located in the neighbourhood moved out, and the retail strip featured a combination of vacant storefronts, pawn shops, dollar stores, appliance shops and pay-day loan services (Johnson 2012).

In the early 1990's a number of local area business owners took it upon themselves to attempt to end prohibition along Dundas Street in the upcoming 1997 municipal election. W.E.T (Working for Equal Treatment) which was created and led by the owners of Lynett Funeral Home, Vesuvio Pizzeria, Shoxs sports bar, and The Flamingo Banquet Hall, hoped that ending prohibition would help rejuvenate the Dundas Street West commercial strip. In a Toronto Star article published a few months before voting day, W.E.T spokesperson Maureen Lynett was quoted explaining how licenced restaurants and cafes were essential in trying to turn the neighbourhood around, and that the areas surrounding The Junction were developing, while the Dundas Street strip was becoming a "ghost town" (Moloney A4). It is believed that bars and restaurants create street life and pedestrian traffic that is essential to the success of other neighbourhoods similar to The Junction across the city (Grange 1997). On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997, after a lengthy campaign to end prohibition, the residents of The Junction placed their vote. The results, determined by a single vote, were in favour to make the area west of Keele Street wet again, thereby successfully ending over ninety years of prohibition (Toronto, 1998). The east

side of Dundas was part of a different ward, and although the vote failed to end prohibition in the 1997 election; they were able to bring the vote back to the ballot in 2000, successfully getting the sixty percent majority requirement, thus making the entire Dundas strip wet for the first time in almost one-hundred years (Grange 1997).

Today, The Junction is considered to be one of Toronto's premier 'up-and-coming' neighbourhoods (Johnson, 2012). An old Victorian Era housing and building stock, along with the emergence of a number designer boutiques, custom furniture stores, art galleries and supply stores have all worked to make this



**Figure 7 - Two Junction homes and two specialty businesses located on Dundas Street (Black Daffodil and The Sweet Potato) that have contributed to making The Junction an up-and-coming neighbourhood.**

designation a reality (Figure 7). Prohibition, which originally sought to end the neighbourhood's 'unruly' behaviour and reputation, became connected to narratives of decline and revitalization in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is important to note that numerous local area residents and business owners believe that the prohibition of alcohol was one of the main reasons for a lack of reinvestment in the neighbourhood over the last 30 years (Johnson 2012).

In 1998, the City of Toronto approved a revitalization plan with the hopes of convincing developers that The Junction was an attractive neighbourhood to invest in. The overhead hydro lines were buried, the sidewalks and light posts replaced, and a façade improvement program was put in place for the existing businesses along Dundas Street West to utilize; all adding to the overall revitalization of the Dundas Street West retail strip (Toronto 1997). Prohibition, the closing of the rail yards and stock yards, and the neighbourhoods distance from the downtown

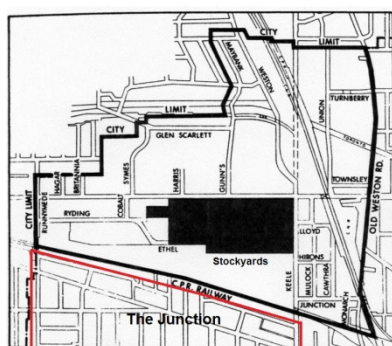
core are all factors that helped shape and change The Junction's history over the last one-hundred years. In the next section, a 'perfect storm' of events that led towards the neighbourhoods gentrification will be explored and examined.

### Factors Leading Towards The Junction's Gentrification

The Junction's revitalization and succeeding gentrification cannot be attributed to one single factor or actor because there were multiple events that occurred which created a 'perfect storm' that allowed the neighbourhood to revitalize and gentrify. These events include: deindustrialization, the emergence of an arts sector and an artistic community, municipal reinvestment, the ending of prohibition, a surplus of older buildings and the residents and business community's efforts all contributed to the revitalization and subsequent gentrification of The Junction.

### Transitions in Land Uses

For almost one hundred years, Canada Packers and the Toronto Stock Yards were located



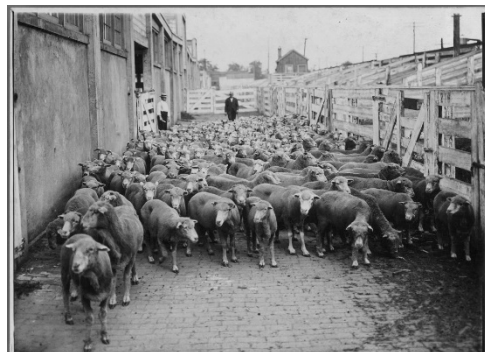
**Figure 8 - Map of Canada Packers and the Toronto Stockyards (Toronto Archives).**

along the northern tip of The Junction (Figure 8). This industry was partially responsible for populating the neighbourhood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Toronto Stockyards was one of the largest employers in the neighbourhood during its one-hundred year tenure and provided upwards of four-thousand, well paid, unionized jobs to local area residents (Ontario Archives). The forces of deindustrialization that swept across the city (beginning in the 1950's) eventually made relocation out of Toronto a reality for the large scale operation



(McDonald 68). On February 10, 1994, the Toronto Stockyards shut-down and relocated to Cookstown, Ontario. An increase in land values, coupled with the increased reliance on truck transportation and decreased reliance on rail transportation all factored into the plants relocation (McDonald 70). When the Toronto Stockyards and Canada Packers moved, a large number of well paying, unionized, blue-collar jobs moved with it. Industries like this often relied on a local workforce, so after the stockyards closure a number of Junction residents likely relocated elsewhere, in turn creating a surplus in the neighbourhoods housing stock, initiating a change in tenure of residents that lived in the neighbourhood.

Although the stockyards employed a number of Junction residents with well-paid jobs, the site was host to a number of elements which unintentionally impacted The Junction's real-estate prices and overall attractiveness in the years leading up to its closure (Hui A14). These elements included the smell that came from the site (Figure 9), noise caused by the constant coupling of train cars which made their way through the plant, and the increasing use and reliance on trucks (beginning in the 1920's) to transport livestock in and out of the site via



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1214, Item 3166

**Figure 9 - Cattle being moved around in the stock yards in 1908 (Toronto Archives).**

Dundas Street West (14). Tensions between economic development and urban renewal can be tough to navigate because, one way or another, municipalities need jobs for their residents. As much as people did not like the smell the abattoirs gave off, they provided residents with steady and well-paying jobs that were not replaced once they shut-down and relocated.

Three respondents referenced the unpleasant smell that often drifted over from the stockyards with one stating that “Canada Packers stank. Until they closed the slaughter houses, if



the wind was blowing in the right direction it was horrible. It really stank and brought the (real-estate) values down” (Respondent 16). Another respondent said that they believed the most influential factor responsible for the gentrification of The Junction was the closing of the stock yards and the general loss of manufacturing jobs in and around the neighbourhood.

When a lot of those industries went it started to lose some of its grittiness, and so it started to transform the area. When you lost the packers, you lost a lot of the train functions too because you had the porters and people switching the tracks. So I think it lost a lot of its grittiness and dirtiness and maybe that was a bit of a transformative thing (Respondent 15).

### Need for Old buildings



Figure 10 - Various examples of old storefronts located on Dundas Street West.

Jane Jacobs (1961) discusses the role aged buildings play in helping to diversify both a city and the residents who live and work within it stating that “Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them”

(Jacobs 187). When she refers to old buildings, she is referring to run-of-the-mill, low-value, slightly rundown

buildings; like the ones that could be found along the Dundas Street West retail strip (Figure 10).

If a neighbourhood only features new buildings, then the only businesses that can occupy those buildings are ones that can support the high costs and rents associated with new construction (187). Businesses that can afford newly constructed buildings are generally well established, have a high turnover and are either standardized or heavily subsidized (188). These businesses include big-box stores, chain stores or restaurants and banks. It is important to note that The Junction is currently home to one bank (BMO) and three chain stores (Dollarama, Starbucks and Tim Hortons). Even neighbourhoods that feature a number of newly constructed buildings

require older buildings in the immediate vicinity to create an economically diverse and lively environment (188). These older buildings demand lower monthly rent than newer ones because the capital costs of construction have been paid off, thus making the older buildings more affordable and cheaper to occupy. The only shortcoming with older buildings is the harm that ultimately comes with old age (188). These buildings are usually not in the greatest physical shape. The structure is solid and often better built than newer buildings, but because of old age, the buildings aesthetics may be in need of restoration (188). Up until the last few years, various independent stores, restaurants and businesses along Dundas Street West have all relied on The Junctions inexpensive rents to stay afloat. This is now beginning to change. A BIA-supported façade improvement program has provided a number of storefronts the opportunity and means to renovate the exteriors of their buildings (Toronto 1997). Combined with the increasing popularity of the neighbourhood; rents are beginning to rapidly climb, potentially restricting new independent businesses from opening up in the neighbourhood (unless they can afford to purchase their retail space outright) (Respondent 9).

### **The Artist**

Artists have played an unintentional, yet important role in revitalizing and consequently gentrifying a number of neighbourhoods including The Junction. Before prohibition ended and various infrastructural investments were implemented, artists and their artwork were used by the BIA in an attempt to bring some recognition and attention to the neighbourhood,

One respondent, a local area business owner and past BIA chair, discussed how the neighbourhood “actively courted” gentrification by displaying artwork in the empty store fronts

that lined Dundas Street West (Respondent 16; Immen A17). When asked if gentrification was taking place within the neighbourhood, the respondent stated

We actively courted it. When we had all those empty stores, we actually started showing art in them to start bringing artists into the neighbourhood (Figure 11). The Junction Arts Festival lasted for a number of years and was quite successful at one time. But it started out by opening up all those empty stores, cleaning them up and hanging art up, and one weekend a year people could come and see the art and see the stores (Respondent 16).



**Figure 11 - Art work displayed inside of a storefront window during the 2009 Junction Arts Festival (Freeman).**

Another respondent made a similar comment stating

That's how The Junction arts fest started. The question was how to dress up the empty storefronts. And so we displayed the art in the empty store fronts, and that essentially, it started attracting businesses who were interested in art or design. And if you asked today what the dominant phrase is that is used to describe The Junction neighbourhood in the media it's been "trendy". It's an art and design destination now (Respondent 18).

The Junction Arts Festival ran for eighteen years between 1992 and 2010, and was one of the neighbourhood's premier annual events. The festival was head by The Junction Forum for Arts and Culture (JFAC) and The Junction BIA. Over the years, the festival's main goal was to allow visitors the opportunity to discover local Junction and Toronto artists by displaying various types and forms of local art inside various storefront windows, and in its later years, outside on Dundas Street West (Junction Forum for Art and Culture). In 2009, the five-day event reached a record attendance of 250,000 people, up twenty-five percent over the previous year (Junction Forum for Art and Culture). 2010 was the last year the event was held due to rising tensions on how the event should be run between JFAC and the BIA. Although the arts festival ended in 2010, the neighbourhood is still host to a number of other art centered events which include the

Toronto Design Offsite Festival, The Junction Music Festival, CONTACT Photography Festival and The Junction Design Crawl.

The empty storefronts, inexpensive rents and gritty look and feel of the neighbourhood were all magnets used to attract artists who were in search of inexpensive live/work spaces in the nineties. Artists are seen as innovators and brokers of fashionable middle class tastes (Ley, *Middle* 189). Artists play a complicated role in gentrification because they are the ones that move into a neighbourhood making it cool and attractive, essentially bringing attention to the neighbourhood and eventually making it an attractive place for the middle-classes to live (190). In this sense, artists can sometimes be considered potential colonizers of a neighbourhood. They are the ones that make undesirable neighbourhoods desirable again, and thus, assist in re-colonizing neighbourhoods by attracting middle-class residents to them.

Beginning in the nineties, local governments including those in Toronto have featured art, culture and gentrification in various public policies (like the Toronto Official Plan) as instruments of physical and economic regeneration for declining neighbourhoods and cities (Cameron and Coaffee 46). While discussing the linkages between art and gentrification Cameron and Coaffee explain that in the third wave of gentrification, art and the consumption of art via public art and artistic events, are utilized to help with the social and economic regeneration of neighbourhoods and cities (46).

One respondent who is a local art gallery owner commented on how the art scene has changed since she opened her business in The Junction three years ago. She explained that although the art scene has grown since she arrived, it's not quite big enough (yet) to receive the kind of recognition art centered neighbourhoods like Queen West get:

There was only one gallery/décor shop when I moved here and opened my gallery. Since that time it's been really great. Articulations opened up which is a project space, art

gallery, and art supply store. Above Ground Art Supply opened as well and Norwell Art projects and tons of other likeminded young entrepreneurs have invaded the neighbourhood. So it's been really, really fun. There is a lot of good energy...there needs to be more of a cluster of galleries to make it worthwhile for people to come out, but clients do visit (Respondent 7).

## Municipal Reengagement



**Figure 12 - Before and after examples of The Junction's streetscape improvement project and the removal of the hydro lines and the installation of new street lights and sidewalks (Toronto Archives).**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, municipally led gentrification can come in a variety of different forms. Ward 13 councillor David Miller announced in 1999 that the city was investing millions of dollars in The Junction's physical infrastructure with the hopes of revitalizing what was once considered

the 'heart and soul' of West Toronto (Rusk A17;

Coyle A5). The Dundas Street West Junction/Malta

Village commercial strip gained the designation of a Community Improvement Project Area by Toronto's city council under by-law 1997-0264 on January 13, 1997 (Toronto, "Approval" 2).

Community Improvement Plans are a strategic framework used to address a number of priorities aimed at rehabilitating and revitalizing targeted neighbourhoods (Ontario 6). One of the main objectives of the plan is to target areas in transition or in need of repair, rehabilitation and or redevelopment (6). The Community Improvement Plan for The Junction covered a number of items (Figure 12) which included taking down and burying the overhead hydro wires, poles and transformers, the installation of new street lights and the replacement all existing sidewalks within the CIP area (Toronto, "By-Law 1997-0264" 6). It was reported that the CIP for The

Junction would cost upwards of nineteen million dollars and would take about three years to complete (Rusk A17; Coyle A5).

Councillor Miller explained that removing the overhead power lines would “allow the natural beauty of The Junction to shine through” and that “the start of this project is the start of the natural revitalization of this area” (Rusk A17). Once the lines were buried, a two-million dollar streetscape improvement program was implemented with the goal of further sprucing up the Dundas Street West retail strip (A17). As a consequence, a commercial façade improvement grant program (Figure 13) was introduced (and is still in



**Figure 13 - An example of a business on Dundas Street (Forever Interiors) taking part in The Junction’s façade improvement program (Martin).**

effect today) that had the city match dollar for dollar (up to a total of twenty thousand dollars) on any work done on the façades of the commercial buildings lining Dundas Street West (Toronto, “By-Law 1997-0264” 3). This façade improvement program would contribute towards the overall enhancement and preservation of the architectural heritage featured on a number of buildings that line Dundas Street West (3).

Although local business owners and residents also played a role in convincing the city to make the large scale investment on the neighbourhood’s infrastructure, the city had its sights set elsewhere. The West Toronto Junction Team (WTJT) was made up of local residents, business owners, community groups, various experts, and the city councillors who come together to push for investment and redevelopment. Henry Calderone, the project director of the WTJT, believed that “There are going to be major-league developers we are attracting into the area which are going to be giving us a lot of private investment into the area” (Rusk A17). He adds that “Basically what we are doing right now is creating the infrastructure for them (developers) to

come into the area” (A17). The Junction’s revitalization plan featured similar goals that shaped the redevelopment of the West Queen West neighbourhood (Toronto 2006). Both plans targeted large-scale, private investment, with the hopes that they would help revitalize and subsequently gentrify the target neighbourhoods.

### **Prohibition and the Role of Restaurants**

In 1997, The Junction’s ninety-year prohibition on alcohol came to an end. As mentioned earlier, the push to end prohibition was led by a handful of Junction business owners which included the owners of Lynett Funeral Home, Vesuvios Pizzeria, Shotx sports bar, McBride Cycle and the Flamingo Banquet Hall (Toronto, “Request” 186). Although the drive to end prohibition was spearheaded by the local business owners, David Miller, the local ward councillor at the time was in full support of the business owner’s attempt to repeal by-law. Various Junction business owners attempted to repeal the prohibition by-law on four previous occasions, all of which failed.

During a 1997 executive committee meeting in Toronto, the president of Working for Equal Treatment (W.E.T) explained the reasons why a plebiscite should be held in the upcoming November election. The submission stated that “The dry designation in the area limits the potential for many kinds of cafes, restaurants and entertainment facilities in the area” (Toronto, “Request” 1). W.E.T believed that neighbourhood cafes and restaurants attract people to a neighbourhood, keeping them there longer periods of time (1). This provides people the opportunity to explore and discover other businesses or services located in the neighbourhood that they might not have known about previously (1). Prior to the ending of prohibition, The Junction was only known for a select few specialty stores (like McBride Cycle). People tended to

come to the neighbourhood to visit a specific store, leaving once their business was complete (1). According to W.E.T, an increase in traffic would not only be beneficial for the existing businesses, but would also allow new businesses the opportunity to call The Junction home.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1997 during the City of Toronto municipal elections, the question to repeal the prohibition by-law (1997-0436) was put on the ballot for the residents of The Junction to vote on. A total of 10,638 ballots were cast, and the Liquor License Act required sixty percent (6,383 votes) of the ballots to support a “Yes” option for the plebiscite to pass (3). In total 6,384 votes were cast to end prohibition and 4,254 votes were cast to keep it in place (3). This meant that prohibition was ended by a single vote (3).

One respondent who has lived in the neighbourhood since 1988 commented on how the lifting of prohibition changed the neighbourhood’s restaurant scene for the better;

After prohibition, if you look at the restaurant side of things, a lot of really fun restaurants that you couldn’t find before have moved in. There’s the new brew pub as I mentioned. Just the more specialized restaurants, there is the Mexican restaurant...So I think the sales of alcohol generated a little more money, they allowed the more interesting restaurants to come because they could afford to pay the rent and could attract more clients. It’s just a more open fun place to be in the summer...with more restaurants come more restaurants. The Indian, Thai all came along too. It’s almost as though it has just blossomed post prohibition (Respondent 4).

Another respondent commented on how restaurants can act as important “anchors” for communities because they “can be noted for giving the area a bit of recognition” (Respondent 15). This recognition, or place making ability, can assist in gentrification because as higher end restaurants move into a neighbourhood, they bring various cultural associations with them that in turn, can make them important destinations within the neighbourhood. Another respondent commented on how “any neighbourhood in the city that already had licenced bars and restaurants also had more interesting street life, with more valuable homes, and were more desirable neighbourhoods” (Respondent 1).



## Restaurants and Alcohol

It is believed that restaurants can be important anchors for smaller neighbourhoods that are not located in the core of the city because they can act like magnets, attracting people to the neighbourhood (To Revive City's Main Streets). On average, alcohol can account for between eight and thirty percent of restaurant's overall sales because it is generally viewed as a more profitable commodity than food because of the higher mark-ups that accompany alcoholic beverages (Pedicini and Giovis 2010). The sale of alcohol in restaurants can also be considered 'recession proof' because people tend to consume it during both the good times and the bad. The sale of alcohol in restaurants also allows the local establishment to stay open later and attract both new and existing customers with special events, specialty drinks and or specially themed nights (Pedicini and Giovis 2010).

One respondent, a local Junction restaurant owner of 56 years, describes the negative effects prohibition had on her business through the 1980's and 1990's due to their inability to sell alcohol:

We closed the sit down part of the restaurant for 16 years. It was bad; it was horrible. Business just kept getting less and less and less. We would bring to the bank, what we bring now; ones days' worth, we would bring for the whole week back then. It was horrible (Respondent 16).

When the same respondent was asked how things have changed for her business since prohibition ended she happily replied,

It's like night and day. Come back on Valentine's Day, there will be a line-up out the door... We don't really want anybody to come in and get drunk. We are a family restaurant, people come in and have a beer or two and that's it. We don't even want more than that. We fought hard to get the license and we're keeping it (Respondent 16).

Having a variety of restaurants to dine at in a neighbourhood like The Junction can help contribute to the area's overall success. Restaurants tend to draw people into a neighbourhood, and can encourage people to remain there for a longer period of time. This provides people the

opportunity to become more familiar with the existing businesses and services that are also located in the same neighbourhood (Pedicini and Giovis 2010).

### **The Business Owner**

Since the early nineties, various business owners along Dundas Street West have played a prominent role in pushing for the revitalization of The Junction. When one respondent, a former city councillor and long-time Junction resident, was asked what factor he thought allowed The Junction to make such a turnaround over the last decade, he said, “The commitment of the small business owners who were local, and really cared about the place. As you can see, it’s really been their vision that has driven it, not the vision of the residents”

(Respondent 2). This respondent was not the only person that believed

the neighbourhood’s gentrification was led by the retail sector. Another respondent, a local business owner and resident, believed that the business owners not only lead the

neighbourhoods’ gentrification, but their efforts also attracted many of the newer residents to the neighbourhood

I believe it’s retail first. I think amenities like Crema (Figure 14) and Sweet Potato (gourmet/organic food store), those had to be here in order for people to start moving here... I think after just getting a higher end coffee shop changes everything. So I think that in this case it was retail (Respondent 8).

City of Toronto council minutes, along with a number of newspaper articles, echo the claims of the respondents regarding their efforts in ending prohibition and revitalizing the neighbourhood. Minutes of the Council of the City of Toronto on February 2, 1998 listed the people that appeared for deputation regarding the liquor referendum for The Junction. The



**Figure 14 - Crema, a local coffee shop, now sits in what used to be an empty building that was formally a bank.**

people that attended the meeting all played a major part in pushing to end of prohibition in the neighbourhood. The attendees included the owners of Shotx Sports Bar, Lynett Funeral Home, The Flamingo Banquet Hall, Vesuvio Restaurant, and McBride Cycle (Toronto, “1997” 186).

### **Indicators of gentrification**

In order to help determine whether or not a neighbourhood is experiencing gentrification, a list of indicators can be used to examine the changes the neighbourhood has and/or is experiencing. These ‘gentrification indicators’ can be used to help assess and analyze both the long and short term changes that have taken place in the neighbourhood. This provides us with a ‘measuring-stick’ that can be used to help gauge whether or not a neighbourhood is experiencing gentrification. For the purpose of this paper, I will analyze and critique neighbourhood demographic data and various changes to the built environment in order to get a clear and concise representation of the progress of the neighbourhood’s gentrification. Referring to both physical and demographic indicators is important because gentrification is a long-term process that can take decades to complete. In some cases, demographic data alone might not illustrate whether or not a neighbourhood is experiencing gentrification because it might still be in its ‘transitional’ phase or the demographic data might not yet be available.

### **Demographic Snapshot**

As stated in the methodology section, the City of Toronto’s ‘Neighbourhood Profiles’ statistics information is used because these stats are compiled on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis; providing me with the most accurate account of any demographic changes that have taken place in The Junction since 1996. Utilizing the information that is readily

available, six potential indicators of gentrification will be analysed. These indicators include the neighbourhood's population by age, household tenure, structure types, building age, household income and average dwelling value between 1996-2006 (stats from the 2011 census are used if available).



Figure 15 - Map of census Neighbourhood Profile 90 (Toronto).

The Junction is located within the boundaries of area (90) in the City of Toronto's Neighbourhood Profiles, and is bound by Northland Avenue to the north, Runnymede Road to the west, Annette Street and Humberside Avenue to the south and the CNR/CPR rail road lines to the east (Figure 15). When analyzing The Junction's demographic statistics it is worth noting that not all of the categories support or disprove the presence of gentrification.

## Population

When analyzing the total population by age group, the neighbourhood's overall population has grown by over two thousand residents between 1996 and 2011 (12,030 people in 1996 to 14,010 people in 2011), but the population spread has stayed somewhat consistent. This is unusual for a gentrifying neighbourhood because gentrification usually involves a large amount of housing reconversion that sees multi-tenant households convert back to single family households. The construction of the Heintzman Street condominium tower created 643 new household units, and brought in just over one-thousand

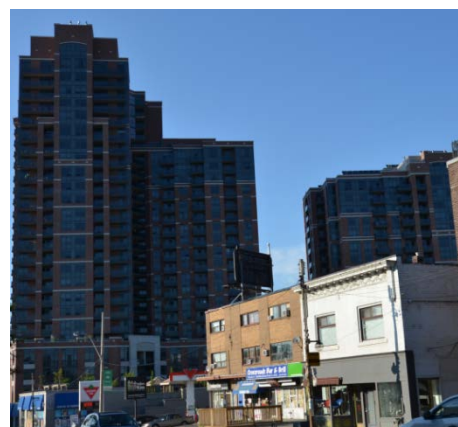


Figure 16 - The 6430-unit Heintzman Street (Options for Homes) condominium towers.

new residents to The Junction (Figure 16). A number of town homes built on a small section of the former Toronto Stockyards site (North West section of neighbourhood census area) was another possible contributor towards the population increase of the neighbourhood.

When examining the various neighbourhood age cohorts, another non-conforming trend emerges. Between 1996 and 2011, the neighbourhood saw a slight decline (4.2 percent) in the amount of children (18.2 percent in 1996 to 14 percent in 2011) and a slight increase (five percent) in the working-age population (from 59 percent in 1996 to 64 percent in 2011). Youth aged 15-24 and seniors aged 65 and over have changed less than one percent between 1996 and 2011 at 12 percent and nine percent respectively. There has not been a drastic shift in any age category, which is unusual because gentrifiers typically consist of single and or young childless couples, and are generally understood to be in the 25-35 year age category (Mathews 2856). The population data alone does not exhibit the typical population shifts associated with the gentrification of a neighbourhood, as there has not been a drastic fluctuation in the working age category. It is important to note that although the largest single group of residents is in the 30-34 year age category; this was also the case back in 2001. This demonstrates that there is no significant jump in this category, which is usually expected when gentrification occurs.

One of the key attributes that makes a gentrifying neighbourhood attractive for re-investment is the presence of a Victorian era housing stock (Caulfield 1994; Ley 1996). An old housing stock can give a street/neighbourhood a sense of history, while also creating a juxtaposition of different architectural styles that work together to make the street/neighbourhood unique (Caulfield 191). Although The Junction has its share of older homes (Figure 17), the neighbourhood is mostly made up of structures that were built after 1946. Out of a total of 7,020 buildings, 255 were built prior to 1946 and 620 were built between 1946-1960.



**Figure 17 - One of the century homes found in The Junction's residential pockets.**

The majority of the neighbourhood's structures (5,445) were built between 1961-1980. With roughly 3.6 percent of the buildings in the neighbourhood being built prior to 1946, the neighbourhood's Victorian housing stock is significantly lower than other gentrified neighbourhoods in Toronto. Trinity-Bellwoods for example has a total of 4,405 buildings built prior to 1946 making up 67 percent of its building stock, and North Riverdale features a total of 3,600

buildings that were built prior to 1946, making up 72 percent of its housing stock. Considering the notion that in the past gentrifiers (Ley

1996; Caulfield 1994) were attracted to neighbourhoods' featuring a large Victorian housing stock, how could a neighbourhood like The Junction undergo gentrification if one of the key elements that attracts gentrifiers is missing?

Household tenure and shifts in the neighbourhood's property rental and ownership percentages can be another indicator of gentrification (Mathews 2857). Typically, when gentrification occurs and a working class population is displaced from a neighbourhood, property owners will either renovate their properties in order to increase the rents or they will capitalize on the rising housing values and sell their properties outright. In The Junction, the percentage of property ownership has steadily increased over a 10 year period (46.5 percent in 1996, 50 percent in 2001 and 55 percent in 2006) and the percentage of renters has steadily decreased (53.6 percent in 1996, 50 percent in 2001 and 45 percent in 2006). This steady increase in home ownership indicates that The Junction neighbourhood could be gentrifying (due to the increase in home ownership and the decrease in rentals), though it should be noted that this is a trend that is

common throughout Toronto and not just The Junction. Home ownership in Toronto has steadily increased from 58.4 percent in 1996 to 63.2 percent in 2001 and to 67.6 percent in 2006.

Household income is another popular statistic that gentrification scholars have used to determine whether or not a neighbourhood's residents are being displaced (Mathews 2857). As a neighbourhood gentrifies, it tends to attract new, more affluent middle class residents. This statistic is a particularly good indicator used to judge if a neighbourhood is experiencing gentrification. As a working class population gets displaced with middle-class professional workers, the income of private households in that neighbourhood increases. There are a few noteworthy changes that have taken place in The Junction's household income level statistics since 1996 (Table 1).

Profile 4 - Income	1996	Toronto	2001	Toronto	2006	Toronto	2011 (3 of 4 tracts)
Private Households by income	4,620		4,745		5,280		4,570
Under \$10,000	570		385		385		235
\$10,000 - \$19,999	795		525		530		385
\$20,000 - \$29,999	595		500		530		335
\$30,000 - \$39,999	505		555		525		420
\$40,000 - \$49,999	535		445		445		415
\$50,000 - \$59,999	585		445		500		325
\$60,000 - \$69,000	335		305		335		570
\$70,000 - \$79,000	275		355		340		
\$80,000 - \$89,999	210		290		280		
\$90,000 - \$99,999	145		190		245		610
\$100,000 and over	375		740		1,165		1300
Average household income - \$	\$42,482	53,869	57,710	69,125	67,303		
Median household income - \$	34,608	40,443	45,983	49,345	53,543		
Average gross rent \$					875		
Average value of dwelling \$		198,150		251,508		351,941	

**Table 1 - Household income distribution of Junction residents 1996 – 2011 (from the Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles database and the National Housing Survey Database (2011))**

Between 1996 and 2006 the largest increases in household income took place in the under \$10,000; \$10,000-\$19,000; and 100,000 and over categories (with the largest deviation taking place in the \$100,000 and over category). When analyzing this statistic, it can be argued that The Junction is experiencing a very typical form of gentrification. The largest jump in household income in the Junction was in the \$100,000 and over category (375 to 1,165 households between 1996 and 2006). Simultaneously, the poorest residents living in The Junction (making \$19,999

and under) shrank from 1,365 households to 915 households between 1996 and 2006 and rental properties were reduced by 8.6 percent in the neighbourhood. As Neil Smith's (1979; 1987) rent gap theory explains, the reduction in the poorest households in the neighbourhood could have been caused by the conversion of rental housing to owner occupied housing, thus forcing some the poorest residents in the neighbourhood to find rental properties elsewhere. On the other hand, analysis of the data also reveals an interesting deviation from this assumption. The sharp rise in households earning \$100,000 and over could be explained by the 1,980 new residents that moved into the area (from 1996-2006) and the poorest households could have been forced out of the neighbourhood due to the general rise in property values city wide. The Toronto Real Estate Board's historic statistics shows that the average sale price of houses city-wide rose from \$198,150 in 1996 to \$351,941 in 2006 and again to \$497,301 in 2012 (TorontoMLS Sales and Average Price).

Between 2001 and 2006, The Junction's neighbourhood census profile illustrates how the neighbourhood experienced a 1.7 percent increase in households making less than \$89,999 (73 percent of total households); while also experiencing a 63 percent increase of households making \$90,000 and over (26 percent of total households). This data suggests that between 2001 and 2006 The Junction experienced very little to no displacement regarding the neighbourhood's poorest households, yet it simultaneously experienced a significant increase in households making over \$90,000. The increase in households making over \$90,000 could be partially associated to the Heintzman Street condo tower development, which created 643 new household units in the neighbourhood, as well as the elderly out-movers who can be replaced by middle-aged income earning households.



Although there is no neighbourhood profile available for 2011, I have gathered census data from three of the four census tracts that make up the neighbourhood profile (5350106.00, 5350105.00, 5350101.00) from the 2011 National House Hold Survey. The fourth census tract (5350100.00) is on a list of 'suppressed' census tracts which means the data is not accessible. In 2011, households making less than \$89,999 totalled 59 percent, down 14 percent from 2006; and households making more than \$90,000 made up 41 percent of total households, which was a 15 percent increase from 2006. Even though there are approximately 1315 households missing from the suppressed census tract (5350100.00), the neighbourhood's total household population making over \$90,000 a year ballooned from 1,165 households to 1,910 between 2006 and 2011. This 60 percent increase in households making over \$90,000 is significant because it indicates that wealthier households continue to move into the neighbourhood, but, without the data from the suppressed census tract, the neighbourhood's overall displacement of the households making \$89,999 and under is relatively unknown.

For The Junction, the sharp rise in high income households and the fall of low income households cannot, on their own, determine if a neighbourhood is in fact experiencing gentrification, as there are too many unknown variables involved in this overall shift of wealthy and poor residents.

### **Neighbourhood Assessment**

It might be difficult to spot a neighbourhood that is experiencing the early stages of gentrification. Indicators including the renovation/restoration of homes and the changing tenure of shops and boutiques are subtle changes that can sometimes be overlooked. There are, however, a number of gentrification indicators that can be found within a neighbourhood's built environment that usually appear well before any measurable demographic trends/shifts occur.

This is mostly due to the multiyear gaps between census data collection and their availability to the public. As indicators in the built environment appear first, they can be used to help measure the short-term changes that take place during the initial stages of gentrification. These short-term indicators of gentrification can include but are not limited to: the renovation of homes, businesses, parks and public spaces; changes in the types of businesses, services offered and an increased presence of police/public safety.

Unfortunately, The Junction's BIA business registry only dates back to 2006, so part of this list was compiled with information provided by a number of interviewees that lived in the area prior to the year 2000. Various newspaper articles from over the years have also been utilized to complete this section. Three interviewees noted that prior to Dundas Street West's revitalization, The Junction had a negative reputation. One respondent who attended a local high school described the neighbourhood as having "an aura that you shouldn't go there, [because] it was potentially dangerous" (Respondent 11). Three more respondents reinforced this notion noting how the neighbourhood faced serious drug and prostitution problems in the late 1980's and 1990's (Respondents 5, 9, 16). When asked what the neighbourhood was like prior to the year 2000, one respondent explained "When you were waiting at the bus stop there were prostitutes walking around....I remember seeing junkies all the time, it was pretty crazy" (Respondent 9). Another respondent described how there were "prostitution and drug deals on the street. There were people who were afraid to walk up and down [Dundas]" (Respondent 16). Moreover, in 1997 Michael Grange reveals that "the prostitution and drug trades have flourished on the darkened streets" of the neighbourhood (Grange A2). A series of articles written between 1992 and 2004 all noted the presence of prostitutes and drug dealers that were visible at night in the neighbourhood (White B01; Wilkes GT02; Grange A2; Ness 1; Small A2).

Aside from the perceived presence of danger, the neighbourhood also had a number of other issues to contend with. One respondent noted how

Right when prohibition ended, when I moved into the area there were only three restaurants in the neighbourhood, and they were here beforehand functioning as take out restaurants. There were a lot more cash stores. There used to be five to six, and now there's one or two....a lot of laundry mats closed down also (Respondent 12).

In a Toronto Star article written in 2004, Henry Calderon, Head of the West Toronto Junction Team stated that when he first took the job back in 1998, seventy-five of the 360 buildings (20 percent) that lined Dundas Street

West were vacant (White B01). A respondent noted that out of “the stores that were open, a lot of them were low end discount/clearance stores, pawn shops, money stores and pornography shops (Figure 18). Not the kind of businesses that encourage other kinds of businesses to come” (Respondent 16).



**Figure 18 - Four remaining examples of businesses made up a majority of the Dundas Street West retail strip.**

Other business found along the Dundas strip included: low end appliance stores, TV repair shops, and multiple cash lending stores. The neighbourhood lacked a number of amenities including: coffee shops, banks, grocery stores, clothing stores, restaurants and parking (Coyle A5).

Dundas Street West has been described by multiple interviewees as looking “gritty and rundown” prior to the neighbourhood’s revitalization. The overhead wires that hung above the sidewalks and storefronts made the strip look messy and chaotic, diverting attention away from the Victorian Era façades that line the strip. The façades of the buildings along the strip also added to this gritty feel because a number of them were in need of restoration and renovation, a result of years of neglect and high vacancy rates.

It has been roughly ten years since the Dundas Street West revitalization and the ending of prohibition, and some gentrification indicators have emerged throughout the retail and residential pockets of The Junction. Many of Toronto's major newspapers have claimed that The Junction is one of the city's premier 'up and coming' neighbourhoods; indicating the rising popularity of the neighbourhood in the eyes of the real-estate market (Ireland G4; Borzykowski R5; Livingstone GT2). In April of 2012, a Toronto Star article titled, *Housing hot spots in the city*, explained how The Junction's business strip featured some of the trendiest furniture and antique stores in the city (Moorhouse U6, H21). The article also commented on how the neighbourhood also saw one of the strongest year-over-year price hikes in the GTA with a 16.3 percent gain for single-family detached homes and 21.5 percent gain for semi-detached homes in 2012 over 2011 (U6). In October of 2010, The Globe and Mail included The Junction in an article entitled *Five on the Rise/Hot Neighbourhoods*, referring to the fact that The Junction no longer needed to be branded as 'Upper Bloor West Village' because The Junction was creating a reputation of its own (Ireland G4).

### **Retail and Residential Indicators**

New businesses and services that have opened in The Junction over the last five to ten years exhibit some of the strongest gentrification indicators found within the neighbourhood's built environment. It is important to note that all the services listed below can, and have been found in other gentrified neighbourhoods across Toronto including the recently gentrified Queen West neighbourhood (Ruggiero 2012). These businesses cater to middle and upper class residents because they often sell niche goods that require higher levels of disposable income.

Businesses like art galleries, specialty bake/food shops, high end cafes and espresso bars are all examples of businesses that cater to middle and upper-classes.

Although The Junction’s art scene is not nearly as strong as the one found in the West



**Figure 19 – One of three art supply stores located in The Junction.**

Queen West neighbourhood, a number of art-related businesses have opened in the neighbourhood over the last ten years. As noted earlier, artists and their artwork were used in the mid to late nineties to try and bring new life

back into the neighbourhood. In the world of gentrification,

artists can be key players that unintentionally start a neighbourhood’s gentrification (Ley,

“Artists” 25). They are the ones that initiate some small renovations via sweat equity, and can

begin changing the social character of the neighbourhoods they inhabit. Jon Caulfield states that

bohemians and artists act like a ‘Trojan Horse’ that begins the initial processes of gentrification

(Caulfield 126). In total, The Junction features four art supply stores and three art galleries.

Notable galleries and art supply stores include Latitude 44, The Telephone Booth, Articulation

(Figure 19) and Above Ground.

High-end specialty food shops found in gentrified neighbourhoods sell items like three-dollar cupcakes, five-dollar donuts, in-house made chocolates, organic and fair trade goods and other niche food related items. In these speciality shops, the ingredients used in the menus tend to add a

premium price to the products offered, catering directly to the middle and upper-classes.

The Junction features four speciality food shops (Figure 20) including Delight chocolate



**Figure 20 - Three examples of the specialty food and drink store located in The Junction (Tea Blendz, Delight chocolate shop and Junction Fromagerie).**

(which only sells in house made chocolates, fudge and ice-cream), The Junction Fromagerie (which sells a variety of specialty cheeses), Bunner's (a bakery that specializes in vegan and gluten free baked goods) and Sweet Potato (a speciality grocery store that features a number of organic and locally produced goods).

One of the services that have made The Junction a destination neighbourhood in



**Figure 21 - Various Junction furniture and upholstery shops include New Hope Interiors, Mjolk, Metropolis and For Your Interiors.**

recent years are the one of a kind, furniture, upholstery and antique shops found along Dundas Street West (Figure 21). These shops display a number of high end antiques as well as new and reclaimed furniture, and a select few offer custom modifications and

construction. Dundas Street West is home to

ten furniture stores and seven antique shops. Notable furniture shops include Forever Interiors (which specializes in building custom made furniture from reclaimed materials), Post and Beam (reclaimed architectural details and fixtures), New Hope Upholstery (Re-Upholstering Custom, Antique & Modern Furniture), Electric Revival (Antique lighting specialists) and Mjolk (high end designer furniture from Scandinavia and Japan).

Gentrified neighbourhoods often have a selection of independent, usually organic and fair trade coffee shops in the form of espresso bars and independent cafes. These cafes offer exotic blends of fair trade and certified organic coffee, lattes and mochaccinos and also offer fresh baked goods to consumers. The higher prices (three to six dollars) and exotic drinks found in these cafes (Lattes and Mochaccinos) cater to higher income earning

residents. The Junction is home to eight independent coffee shops including Crème, Locomotive, Little Fish, Full Stop and Agora.

Since the 1990's, Starbucks has been considered one of, if not the leading indicator of commercial gentrification (Kennedy and Leonard 8). The high-end pricing makes this coffee shop one that is exclusively tailored to the professional middle and upper-classes. The introduction of Starbucks in The Junction (Figure 22) was not the 'be-all end-all' of the independent coffee shops located there, as Locomotive and Crème are both located directly across from it. One respondent made an interesting comment about the impact this upscale coffee shop has had on the neighbourhood since it moved in.



**Figure 22- The Junction's Starbucks location which is located directly across the street from independent coffee shops Crema and Locomotive.**

It's up to the market. The market is the residents who live there and give the businesses their business. If a place like this [Crème] can succeed versus a Starbucks then it's a vote of confidence from the residents that say we want to support different businesses (Respondent 13).

During my numerous visits to the neighbourhood, Crème continually attracted a larger number customer base than Starbucks, thus supporting some truth to the respondents statement.

While walking through a gentrified neighbourhood, the experienced 'spotter' can detect a number of clues that are subtly located around various houses and properties. Pastel colours, bamboo blinds, clean and tidy front yards and wrought iron fences (Figure 23) are all subtle indicators that can suggest gentrification is evident. There are a number of reasons why people are attracted to these specific neighbourhoods. Some of which



include the desire to live in areas with some history, a rejection of the mass production of the suburban dwelling and an attempt to seek a clear and or unique identity (Caulfield



**Figure 23-** Pictured is a home that displays various gentrification indicators (rod iron fence, contractor sign, building permits, professional landscaping and freshly painted façade trim.

like they have been maintained well.

Notwithstanding that the exterior façades are in good condition, there are indicators that renovations are taking place in the neighbourhood. Building permits are visible in front windows, numerous lawns are pegged with contractor signs, and large construction bins are commonly found in front driveways. There have also been adaptive reuse projects in the neighbourhood that transformed two old churches

into a number of trendy lofts. One resident describes what he has observed with regards to renovations and building projects that have recently taken place in The Junction:

On our street there are about seven projects underway, I counted seven bins and building permits. People are doing the classic renovation adding a third story, adding a main floor family room out the back. The house across from us was bought by a builder, and he left the structure standing but completely gutted the inside, and I think it's on the market now for one-point-five million. The house three doors up tore it right down except for two walls and now it's a large three story modern structure that looks almost like an office building. It's angular, with lots of exposed wood and glass. I have seen a few of these go up, the very modern

1994). A number of housing styles can be found in The Junction including Victorian era, gothic revival, workers cottage, queen anne, bay and gable, second empire, and the arts and crafts movement (Figure 24).

Today, the majority of the homes in The Junction have clean and tidy front yards, and most homes look



**Figure 24 -** These examples of the various housing styles found in the neighbourhood.



ones, lots of glass, steel, which is amazing on a street. It's nice to have a variety of homes. Or you see an infill project where a builder will come in, tear down a bungalow and build a traditional two story home. That certainly is increasing... Along Annette they have taken two churches and turned them into lofts, which is amazing because I didn't even know you could do that. Further down they tore down what once was a small Dominion store at Annette and Jane, and now there is a small in build there of a few little townhouses (Respondent 13).

The biggest changes to The Junction's built environment have taken place along the Dundas Street West business strip. Today, the main retail strip (located between St Johns Road and Keele Street) has a vacancy rate of approximately five percent. Of the 226 storefronts that line this section of Dundas Street West, twenty-two sat vacant, and eight of those twenty-two store fronts had building permits in their windows (Figure 25). This means that the vacancy rate has dropped from twenty percent in 1998, to just five percent in 2014. The higher occupancy rate and the BIA-assisted façade improvement program have provided a number of landlords the opportunity and incentive to renovate and repair the façades of their buildings, thus making the entire strip more aesthetically pleasing. The burying of the overhead hydro lines and the installation of new light posts and sidewalks in 2000 also contributed to the overall visual appeal and revitalization of the retail strip.

The diversity in building types provides an opportunity for a number of independent businesses to "set up shop" along the street because the varying degrees and conditions of the storefronts allows for a range of rents to be charged to the businesses. These storefronts also unintentionally prohibit bigger chain-stores from entering the



**Figure 25 - A recently shut down cash advance location, is being replaced by a trendy juice bar. Business tenure changes like this show how commercial changes taking place in the neighbourhood resemble those associated with gentrification.**

neighbourhood because the floor space those large chain-stores require is not available in The Junction.

Upgrades to parks, increases in street furniture, neighbourhood branding and police patrols (Table 2) can also be indicators of gentrification that gradually take place over many months and or years and are hard to observe when you are not a resident of the neighbourhood.

	Yes	No	Very Little	Less
<b>Changes to the Built Environment</b>	13			
<b>Increase in street Furniture</b>	7	1	5	
<b>Increase in neighbourhood branding</b>	13			
<b>Upgrades to parks and public spaces</b>	6	4	3	
<b>Increase in police patrols</b>		10		3

**Table 2 - Results of five questions respondents were asked about the various changes the neighbourhood has experienced in recent years**

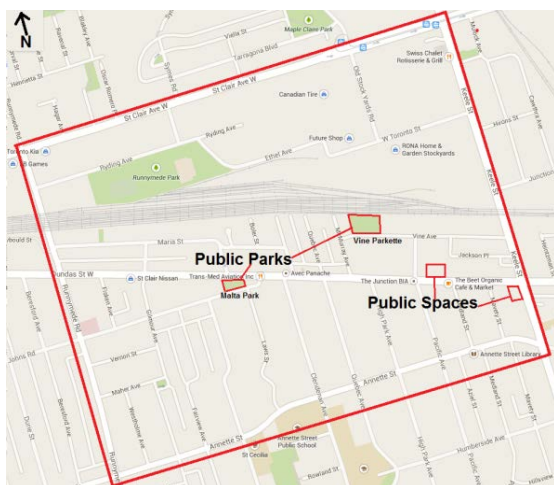
These factors are all expected to be present when a neighbourhood becomes gentrified but in the case of The Junction it was not so clear cut. All thirteen resident respondents felt that there has been an increase in neighbourhood branding because “The Junction” no longer refers to the rough and rundown neighbourhood that it once was. One respondent gave his thoughts on the neighbourhood’s recent increases in neighbourhood branding:

Now it’s trendy Junction, every time a unit is for sale in our building it’s listed as move into the trendy junction. It’s going from the place where you can’t live, to the place that you want to live. And it’s really being targeted as an urban hip environment like the way Queen Street used to be. So there really branding it. They brand everything. I told everyone when I moved in here that I lived in High Park, now I say I live in The Junction, but up until a year ago I would say oh, I’m up in Bloor West (Respondent 1).

Newspaper articles have also mirrored this sentiment (Ireland G4).

The results of the next three questions were not as clear cut as the first. When asked if respondents noticed an increase in street furniture, seven said yes, one said no, and five said very little. The BIA did admit that there have been only small improvements with regards to adding street furniture to the neighbourhood but I was told that it was something that they were still trying to get funding for.

When respondents were asked if they noticed any upgrades to public parks and public spaces (Figure 26) five said yes, four said no, and three said very little. After visiting the public



**Figure 26 – The location of The Junction’s two public parks and public spaces (Google Maps).**

spaces and parks located in the neighbourhood, I was able to understand why the respondent’s answers varied so much regarding this question. The Junction’s two parks (Malta Park and Vine Parkette) both look like they have been renovated within the last few years (Figure 27). Unlike a number of parks found throughout the city, parks located in gentrified neighbourhoods tend to go above and beyond the

basic necessities. Chain link fences are replaced with wrought iron fences, the grass is regularly cut and they usually feature a number of child-friendly play areas. Malta Park, located at Quebec Avenue and Dundas Street West, was part of a 1.6 million dollar streetscape redevelopment program that was launched in 2001. It was outfitted with a number of benches,



**Figure 27- Vine Avenue Parkette**

new fencing and a new children’s play area (Toronto 2001). Similar to Malta Park, Vine Parkette also look well-tended. A basketball court, two new kids play areas, a wading pool, gardens and black wrought iron fences were all featured in the small park.

On the other hand, the neighbourhood’s two public spaces do not display the same level of attention that the public parks have received. Both located on Dundas Street West, the neighbourhood’s two public spaces are empty and unwelcoming. Both spaces lacked basic

amenities and various respondents noted that they wanted to see more public art or other historical (train/rail related items) displayed in these spaces (Figure 28). The lack of attention



**Figure 28 - Public Space located between Pacific Avenue and Medland Street that featured a train station style platform and benches.**

regarding the neighbourhood's two public spaces reinforces the notion that the neighbourhood is still transitioning, and that gentrification has yet to reach a stage of maturation.

When asked if respondents noticed any

increases in police patrols in the neighbourhood, ten respondents responded with no while three went as far as saying that they noticed a reduced police presence over the years. As neighbourhoods gentrify and more middle-class residents move in, focus shifts to keeping those residents safe, or at the very least, making them feel safer by increasing police patrols in the neighbourhood. One respondent, who is also a member of The Junction's residents association, noted the decreased presence of police patrols stating that

I would say significantly decreased because we lost our police station. People have a feeling that police are not around as much. I know that crime has not increased at all since the police station moved. We have very few crime complaints. In a year we might get ten complaints to the residents association (Respondent 12).

When asked this question, multiple residents cited the police station's relocation as one of the reasons why they felt there was a decreased police presence in the neighbourhood. The Residents association, BIA, and local councillor all noted that crime was not a major issue for The Junction anymore.

With a plethora of gentrification indicators present in The Junction today, it is my opinion that The Junction is experiencing a form of gentrification. With the closing of the stock yards, the ending of prohibition, the revitalization of the Dundas Street West retail strip, the

presence of artists/art and the century old housing stock; it was only a matter of time before signs of gentrification would be visible in a neighbourhood bordering Toronto's inner-city. For the most part, various indicators of gentrification can be found throughout The Junction's retail and residential pockets. Although, it is apparent that the phenomenon has not yet reached a state of maturation. There is no question that The Junction is experiencing the effects commonly associated with gentrification, but as I investigated this notion further, it became apparent that the neighbourhood is experiencing a form of gentrification that does not conform to the normal processes associated with this phenomenon. In the next chapter, personal interview data will be used to explain how The Junction could be experiencing a new form of gentrification that has not yet been experienced by a neighbourhood in Toronto's inner-city.

## **Chapter IV**

This chapter examines the processes and understandings of gentrification that are playing out in The Junction neighbourhood today. A number of tensions unfold concerning the nature and extent of gentrification within The Junction which do not conform to other perspectives of various gentrified neighbourhoods. What emerges is a particular form of gentrification that reaffirms some of the elements outlined in Hackworth's (2002) discussion of third-wave gentrification, while simultaneously challenging certain assumptions regarding identities, definitions and strategies of the phenomena.

While gentrification may produce forms of exclusion (though increases in a neighbourhood's property values) and displacement (through the decrease/removal of the neighbourhoods rental housing market), it is by no means a linear, homogeneous process. The patterns of gentrification that emerge in The Junction are not grounded in processes of revanchism. They are not the result of an emergence of reform politics, or of a middle-class rejection of the suburbs, nor are they a direct result of municipally led reform strategies. The Junction's transformation follows a template that works towards an inclusive, more "user-friendly" form of gentrification that places emphasis on neighbourhood improvement and community participation and involvement over resident displacement and neighbourhood exclusivity.

In the next section, various narratives associated with gentrification (displacement, revanchism, municipal led gentrification) are explored and analysed in order to understand the processes that are unfolding in the neighbourhood today. Following this, an overview of three consistent themes (regarding community-driven gentrification, strategies of gentrification and spaces of gentrification) that have emerged through interview, document and observational research in The Junction will be discussed. These themes will then be examined through three

specific spaces in the Junction. The three spaces include the residential area surrounding Vine Avenue, the Dundas Street West retail strip and 60 Heintzman Place, the area in which Options for Homes (a non-profit housing agency) has built a condominium tower housing 643 units.

### **Processes of Gentrification in The Junction**

Since the early 1970's, various Toronto neighbourhoods have experienced different processes of gentrification. Different factors including deindustrialization, the growth of post-industrial economies, shifting inner city demographics, the acceleration of reform era politics, and the rent gap thesis have all been used to explain why various Toronto neighbourhoods have been gentrified over the last fifty plus years. Toronto has experienced various types of gentrification including those based on consumption and production led examples introduced during gentrification's second wave, and new-build and municipally led forms which emerged during gentrifications third wave (Hackworth and Smith 2001). Gentrification is a process that can take decades to complete. Although The Junction is gentrifying, the neighbourhood has not yet reached a state of maturation. Within The Junction, three known by-products associated with various gentrification narratives have not yet surfaced. These by-products include the displacement of the original residential population, revanchist ideologies, and a strong municipal-led push for gentrification.

One of the major consequences associated with gentrification is the displacement of the neighbourhood's original (usually) working class population. There are a few factors attributed to the displacement of the original residents in a gentrified neighbourhood. They include: the conversion and subsequent loss of available rental housing to owner occupied housing, increases in rent due to renovation of the rental property, increases in rent due to the neighbourhood's

overall upgrading, and in some cases revanchist ideologies that force the original population out of the neighbourhood (Caulfield 1994; Ley 1996; Atkinson 2000). Within The Junction, displacement of the neighbourhood's original residents does not seem to be a major issue regarding the neighbourhood's gentrification narrative. While conducting interviews, a number of respondents believed that there was very little displacement taking place within the neighbourhood. Multiple respondents noted that they have noticed minimal resident displacement since moving into the neighbourhood. One respondent stated that "If you're a renter, yes, people have been displaced due to increasing rents, if you're an owner then displacement has been less drastic, but it still happens" (Respondent 11). Three other respondents said that many of the people they have noticed moving out of the neighbourhood were elderly, and two of those three respondents said that the previous owners of their homes were seniors that could no longer keep up with the day-to-day maintenance of their properties.

Within the last fifteen years, revanchist gentrification has been a consistent theme regarding the gentrification of inner-city Toronto neighbourhoods (West Queen West and Parkdale are two more recent cases). Caulfield (1994) believes various gentrified neighbourhoods in Toronto during the 1970's-1980's experienced emancipatory gentrification. In summary of his work, he states that gentrification in Toronto was seen as a process that united residents in the central city, while creating opportunities for social interaction, tolerance and cultural diversity (Caulfield 1994; Lees, Slater, Wyly 2009). However, not all gentrified neighbourhoods in Toronto have experienced this type of gentrification. Tom Slater (2004) believes that the resettlement of the middle-class in the Parkdale neighbourhood created problems for a large number of low-income tenants that inhabited the neighbourhood prior to its gentrification (Slater 1198). Lack of profits for landlords, NIMBYism (referring to the "not in



my backyard” mentality) and new zoning restrictions were all responsible for significantly reducing the availability of low-income rental housing in the neighbourhood thus displacing many of the neighbourhood’s poorest residents (1198).

In The Junction, residents are openly embracing and displaying a strong sense of community pride and togetherness, showing positive support for the neighbourhood’s gentrification. When asked what element respondents loved most about living in The Junction, seven of the fifteen respondents replied with “the community” (Respondents 12, 1, 17, 8, 7, 10, 19). A number of these respondents commented on the great community feel and the fact that everyone knows everyone in the neighbourhood, creating a village-like atmosphere. One respondent explained how that the neighbourhood is experiencing “community driven gentrification”, saying “you’re not just a small cog in the big machine, you go out, you meet your neighbours and you recognize those neighbours in the local coffee shops and stores” (Respondent 19). For the purposes of this paper, community-driven gentrification will be defined as a form of emancipatory gentrification that is readily supported and initiated by the majority of the neighbourhood’s inhabitants (both residents and business owners) that looks towards improving, rather than radically changing various aspects of the community.

One of the catalysts that assisted The Junction’s gentrification was the municipally led streetscape improvement program that was completed in 2001. The intentions of improving the streetscape on the city’s end were simple; they wanted to attract developers to the neighbourhood so that large scale investments could be made by the private sector, in turn boosting the neighbourhoods overall housing stock, property tax base and total resident population. Although this was the intention of the city, the developers never came. One property, 60 Heintzman St, was purchased by a developer with the intention of building a large scale condominium complex

on the property. After the developer released the plans for the condominiums, community backlash and lack of support forced them to transfer the property over to Options for Homes, a non-profit development corporation that builds affordable homes that are marketed and sold below market-value. Since the options for homes plans were approved in 2006, only one other mid-rise condominium developer (DUKE located at 2803 Dundas Street West and slated for completion in 2015) has attempted to build condominiums in the neighbourhood. Two churches on Annette Street have been converted into a limited number of condo-style housing units, but these can be considered adaptive reuse projects because the exterior of the buildings have gone mostly unchanged, and the interiors have been reconfigured into living spaces.

### **Community-Driven Gentrification**

During interviews, multiple respondents made references towards the strength of “community” that makes The Junction the neighbourhood it is today. During an interview, one respondent made reference to how the community has embraced both the positives and negatives regarding the businesses and services located in the neighbourhood:

It’s softer [regarding gentrification]. And there are things like the woman’s shelter. These things are just being incorporated. There not being forced out, they keep up with their façades and they place them right in the middle of the neighbourhood, and there is no clash (Respondent 8).

This is an important break from typical gentrification narratives. Middle-class in-movers have been known to partake in various forms of NIMBYism regarding undesirable people, housing, and services (Figure 29) that

existed in the neighbourhood prior to and after their arrival (C. Smith 2010, White 2011). In recent years, cases of NIMBYism have forced social services out of gentrified neighbourhoods,



**Figure 29 – One of the neighbourhoods counselling and health services locations.**

creating heated battles between community members, workers/clients, and government officials. The attitude towards undesirable services such as methadone clinics or homeless shelters has sparked community conflict and spawned NIMBYism in various gentrified neighbourhoods including Corktown (C. Smith 2010) and Parkdale (White 2011). When asked what residents and business owners would like to see change in the neighbourhood, not a single respondent mentioned the removal of local social services in the neighbourhood, further emphasising the neighbourhood's break from typical gentrification narratives. One respondent explained that The Junction was experiencing a sort of "community-driven gentrification" that has allowed the neighbourhood to place itself in a comfortable position that's not quite on the upscale level of Yorkville or Queen West, but it is also no longer perceived as a dangerous neighbourhood either.

Community identity figures prominently in The Junction residents' understanding of gentrification, as a number of respondents saw themselves as tolerant, community-minded people. One respondent commented on how the neighbourhood's gentrification has been more in line with revitalization

because people of all backgrounds are still welcome, you see the used refrigerator stores turning into relatively inexpensive restaurants that people can afford...there are still affordable shops, but the junction itself is much more interesting (Respondent 2).

Another respondent brought up the revitalization versus gentrification debate referencing the absence of major resident displacement

Is the area truly gentrifying the way Queen West or Cabbagetown experienced, or is it gentrification lite, like a really strong revitalization, because you're not yet losing the residents that were here before the process began. There not so much being forced out, yet you did touch on the fact that there is a lot less rental housing in the area (Respondent 12).

Another aspect of community identity emerged in 2006 that challenged perspectives that may simplify collective action among gentrifiers themselves. Instead of passively accepting

residential renewal and intensification, or supporting revanchist policies of exclusion, residents in The Junction have challenged developers that have attempted to build in the neighbourhood, calling on them to build affordable housing options for current and future Junctionites.

A number of respondents who have moved into the neighbourhood over the last few years saw themselves as gentrifiers. When respondents were asked who they believed initiated the neighbourhood's gentrification (Figure 30), multiple respondents noted how "It's a chicken or the egg kind of thing, which came first" (Respondent 12). Although every respondent acknowledged that the neighbourhood was experiencing gentrification, with a select few referring to the area's transformation as more of revitalization, none of them believed their actions were creating tensions for the neighbourhood's poorer residents.



**Figure 30 - Although it is difficult to pin-point who is directly responsible for a neighbourhood's gentrification; the retail business owners and local BIA seem to be largely responsible for kick-starting The Junctions gentrification.**

It is interesting to note that two respondents said that they moved into the neighbourhood because they felt The Junction has a diverse, multicultural population (Respondents 6 and 2). One respondent who has lived in the neighbourhood for twenty-five years noted how he needed "to be in a neighbourhood that has economic diversity as well as cultural diversity" (Respondent 2). After analysing the language based neighbourhood demographic profiles for The Junction for 2001, 2006, 2011, the neighbourhood is actually situated below the city-wide average, with sixty percent of the population speaking English as their first language. The top three non-official mother tongue languages in 2011 were Portuguese (5.7 percent), Spanish (3.6 percent), and Vietnamese (3.0 percent), and the top 20 mother tongue languages made up only 29.8 percent of

the neighbourhood's population. It is almost as if the neighbourhood's multiculturalism is played out through the diverse range of ethnic restaurants that line Dundas Street West (Figure 31), rather than through the people who actually live in the neighbourhood. This ends up putting a “middle-class” twist on the true multicultural identity of The Junction.



**Figure 31 - Four Examples of the various ethnic restaurants that can be found within The Junction (Indian, Japanese, Thai, Mexican) are featured here.**

Another aspect of community identity that challenged perspectives that tend to simplify collective action among gentrifiers themselves occurred in 2006. Rather than accepting residential renewal and intensification policies, or supporting revanchist policies of exclusion; residents of The Junction challenged developers to build more affordable housing in the neighbourhood. When developer Nexxt bought land on Heintzman Street to build two luxury condominiums, the community made it known that they were not in support of the proposed development. One community member was quoted saying “I didn’t want units to go to professionals with cars, where people didn’t patronize local stores” (Greer N1). The problem with the development in the community’s eyes was that it was going to attract the wrong type of homebuyer to the neighbourhood (young, childless, middle class professionals they felt would do their shopping and eating downtown). In response to community opposition, Nexxt eventually dropped its proposal for the site and passed the project on to another developer, Options for Homes (N1).

Options for Homes is a non-profit housing agency that is known for building affordable homes on less desirable lands, while also creating and strengthening existing communities. When

an employee of Options for Homes was asked how their model of home building might not necessarily add to a neighbourhood's gentrification, they replied with:

The main reason it does not [further gentrify a neighbourhood] is that we are selling homes at or below the price of the area. So if you're putting homes in that are less expensive than the current homes in the area, you are doing the opposite, your allowing for more blended income in the neighbourhood. Whereas generally speaking, new homes are sold at a premium above what else is going on bringing in wealthier and wealthier people which is exactly the term for gentrification...so we tend to stabilize the area and add to the social mix, and so we do the opposite of gentrification, we average down an income group for the area (Respondent 21).

Unlike the previous developer who originally purchased the land, Options for Homes actively seeks community members' concerns and recommendations regarding their developments. When the community learned that Options for Homes eliminates costly extras (including various amenities like pools, and gyms) and sells their condo suites at cost (below market value), community members quickly backed the new development plans (N1). When Options for Homes went to the Committee of Adjustment to get the city's approval for several site variances, not only was there no community opposition towards the plans, but thirty residents that were present at the meeting told city officials that they supported the extra height and density requisites that were put forth by the developer (N1). The result of this community support for low cost, affordable housing can be seen as a break on typical gentrification narratives, or at the very least, as an effort to modify them to be more inclusive of lower income residents.

### **Strategies of Gentrification**

The Junction BIA along with the municipality have utilized a number of gentrification strategies that closely resemble those outlined in Neil Smith's and Jason Hackworth's thesis on third-wave gentrification. Three strategies have been employed by both the municipal government and subsequent government agencies with regards to kick-starting gentrification in

The Junction. The first strategy employed by The Junction's Business Improvement Association (BIA) regards their efforts to mobilize a façade improvement program. The program was intended to try and increase retail development and property values along Dundas Street West by making the business strip more inviting and visually appealing. Second, municipal reform strategies were used to help end prohibition in The Junction, thus allowing the sale of alcohol in the neighbourhood, which helped promote further retail development. And lastly, a local municipal intervention was undertaken that introduced a streetscape improvement program which featured large capital investments that were used to help revitalize the Dundas Street West retail strip.

Unlike in other recently gentrified neighbourhoods (like Parkdale), the local BIA played a major role in initiating gentrification in The Junction. Beginning in the late 1990's and carrying through until the mid-2000's, the BIA was responsible for a number of initiatives that were aimed towards making Dundas Street West more aesthetically pleasing for prospective business owners in an attempt to curbe the high vacancy rates that plagued the neighbourhood through the 1980's and 1990's. Their goal was twofold. Not only did they want to attract new business owners to the neighbourhood, but they also wanted to make The Junction an attractive destination that would attract residents from around the city to visit, eat, and shop. Today, it seems like the BIA has succeeded in achieving both their goals. Multiple respondents made reference to how The Junction is now a destination neighbourhood for Torontonians with one respondent stating that

there is still a few vacant stores and whatnot that have outlived their usefulness, and indeed art and restaurants is something they are marking and doing very well within the junction, and they can have that as their cache and that can make it a destination for the city... and also, it has become a destination for people that live in other parts of the city (Respondent 20).

Another respondent made a similar comment stating that “It’s a destination spot because it’s got such a niche collection of stores. Especially in the antiques department” (Respondent 9). Antique and furniture shops including New Hope Upholstery, Post & Beam Reclamation, Metropolis and Mjolk have all worked together to make The Junction an antique and furniture destination (Figure 32). Other niche businesses that have helped make The Junction a destination neighbourhood includes various art supply shops and galleries including Smash, Above Ground, Articulation and Wise Daughters. Vacancy rates have also decreased dramatically over the last fifteen years, and today, they sit around roughly five percent.

The municipally led initiatives that were undertaken in The Junction were done so in a way that worked with the “user friendly” style of gentrification that the neighbourhood is experiencing. The Junction experienced municipal intervention that strongly contrasted the municipal intervention that was recently undertaken to help gentrify Parkdale, a mixed use neighbourhood located just a few kilometers south-east of The Junction. The strategies employed by the municipal government in Parkdale were revanchist in nature (Whitzman 2006) in that through regulatory change, they removed a large number of low income rooming houses in the neighbourhood, displacing thousands of the areas poorest residents by replacing the rooming houses with marketable, middle and upper class single family homes (Whitzman 2006). The key to the municipality’s involvement in gentrifying Parkdale was displacing the poorest residents in order to make the neighbourhood more attractive for the middle and upper class in-movers.



**Figure 32 - Some of the furniture related business that have helped make The Junction a destination (Mjolk, New Hope Upholstery, Metropolis).**



In The Junction however, the strategies employed by the municipal government were based on regulatory change, a need for private sector investment and the revitalization of the neighbourhood; rather than the displacement of the residents living there. Through the use of a nineteen million dollar Community



**Figure 33 – These four pictures (left side is before, right side is after) show the full extent of The Junctions revitalized streetscape. Note the removed hydro lines and the new street lights that were installed.**

Improvement Plan, The Junction’s Dundas Street West retail strip was revitalized by taking down and burying the overhead hydro wires, poles and transformers, installing new street lights and replacing all existing sidewalks within the CIP area (Figure 33) (Toronto, “By-Law 1997-0264” 6). A façade improvement program was also introduced to assist business owners (financially) in renovating the exteriors of their storefronts along Dundas Street West (3). A City of Toronto planner explained the impact of the CIP stating how

There was a large infrastructure investment in terms of burying the hydro lines. That was a huge catalyst to creating a space and streetscape revitalization along the junction because that work involved burying the hydro lines and redoing the sidewalks, and that gave the area an element of newness and freshness (Respondent 15).

The CIP not only helped revitalize the neighbourhood, but it also spoke to the municipal interests of the ward and the City of Toronto with regards to attracting private sector development to the neighbourhood.

An increased police presence was another strategy associated with the municipal intervention and gentrification of Parkdale (Whitzman 2006). In The Junction however, the local police station (located on Keele Street just south of Dundas) was recently relocated east, out of

the neighbourhood and onto the opposite side of the train tracks on Davenport Avenue. When asked if residents have noticed any increases in police patrols, thirteen resident respondents replied with no, and three of those thirteen said that they noticed a decrease in police patrols in The Junction in recent years. These aspects of intervention initiated by the local municipality and BIA reflect processes associated with third-wave and emancipatory gentrification. The Junction's gentrification exhibits forms of liberalization and reinvestment in the neighbourhood rather than displacement and or restricting access to public space that has been experienced in other neighbourhoods in the city. It is through these themes that The Junction's recent gentrification challenges other contemporary perspectives on gentrification. The Junction's gentrification narratives have placed emphasis on neighbourhood improvement and community participation over resident displacement and neighbourhood exclusivity, thus avoiding the revanchist narratives that have played out in Parkdale's gentrification. The neighbourhood's strategies, community identity, and defiance of typical definitions of gentrification have all worked together to create a softer, more "user friendly" form of gentrification that has worked to create a strong, thriving local community.

### Three Spaces

Three different spaces located in The Junction will be analyzed to further my understanding of how the narratives of gentrification have played out (Figure 34). The first

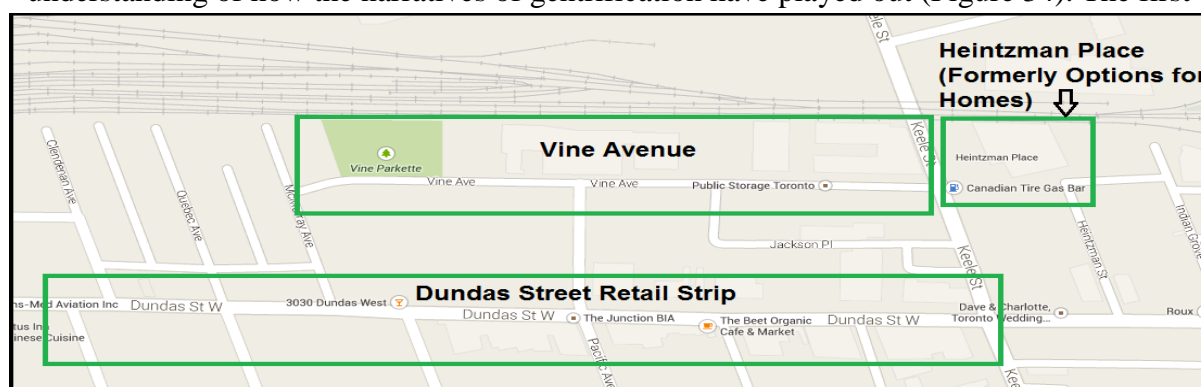


Figure 34- Map of the 'Three Spaces' (Vine Avenue, Heintzman Place and the Dundas Street retail) (Google Maps).

space, the residential pocket surrounding Vine Avenue, will look at the definitions, explanations and identities of gentrification present in The Junction. The second space, the Dundas Street West streetscape, demonstrates how the various strategies of gentrification have been applied and utilized in the neighbourhood. The last space, 60 Heintzman Street, the location of the Options for Homes development, displays the breaks and modifications that have made the neighbourhood's gentrification more "user friendly".

### **Vine Avenue Residential Pocket**

Vine Avenue is a residential/commercial-industrial street that is located between Dundas Street West to the south, and the CPR railroad tracks directly to the north. Vine Avenue and the surrounding residential streets speak to the definitions and explanations regarding gentrification, and serve as good indicators of the residential changes taking place within The Junction today. One respondent gave a good description of what Vine Ave was like in the years leading up to the neighbourhood's streetscape revitalization stating that "Streets like Vine were very working class, low income" featuring "small row houses" (Respondent 2). He went on to explain how

Vine Avenue was a place where people of modest means lived...It was very much a working class neighbourhood...you could tell that in the late 80's and early 90's that people living there didn't have much money for maintenance (Figure 35) (Respondent 2).

Today however, Vine Avenue looks and feels radically different than it did twenty years ago, speaking to the neighbourhood's transformation and subsequent gentrification. All the front yards are



**Figure 35 - Unlike the residential streets located south of Dundas Street, Vine Avenue and the surrounding residential street feature mostly attached with some semi-detached and fully detached properties. Houses like the ones in the above picture (located on Vine Avenue) are examples of the working-class houses respondent two referred to during his interview.**

clean, tidy and well maintained with small patches of grass, garden and stonework now lining the entire street. The homes all appear to have received some form of renovation within the last five to ten years. Homes that have been “whitepainted” (Figure 36) all look like they have received fresh top coats of paint as most do not show any signs of flaking or peeling. Furthermore, when asked about the displacement of residents in the neighbourhood, Respondent 2 stated “I would say it’s [displacement] starting. I see houses being bought by younger couples and being renovated. I see it happening north of Dundas, where it has never happened before” (Respondent 2).



**Figure 36- Tidy yards and a freshly painted exterior (left house) are now a common sight on Vine Avenue.**

Signs of gentrification also spill over to the Vine Avenue Park located on the north side of the street. The park is well maintained, features a black wrought iron fence, two brand new kids play areas, a basketball court and a wading pool.

Indicators of gentrification along Vine Avenue are not limited to the residential homes and parks either. One of the commercial buildings are currently awaiting zoning approval that would allow Sweet Potato, an organic grocery store currently located on Dundas Street West, to move into the building at 108 Vine Avenue (Figure 37) from its current location on Dundas Street. This change of uses from employment industrial to retail is another indicator that the neighbourhood is currently experiencing gentrification. The conversion of commercial to retail speaks to the neighbourhoods changing demographic population.



**Figure 37 – The building that Sweet Potato wants to move into on Vine Avenue.**

A similar situation occurred just north of the site on the other side of the train tracks when the Toronto Stockyards shut down in the early 1990's. Commercially zoned land was rezoned and replaced with a large network of retail storefronts that now occupy the former stockyards site. Although it is on a side street, the retail gentrification that has occurred along Dundas Street West is now spilling over into the larger commercial spaces on Vine Avenue. Replacing possible well-paying, commercially zoned employment lands with minimum wage retail businesses suggests that the local population surrounding the site is one that no longer works in, or relies on blue collar jobs for employment.

Those working-class residents who populated this area less than twenty years ago have now been replaced with what seems like middle class in-movers. This is not to say that the working class population was displaced by the in-movers. What is visible here is a less hostile transition of a neighbourhood's resident population, from working to middle class, based on the closure of major source of employment, which was then followed by a wide availability of low cost housing and the neighbourhood's subsequent revitalization and gentrification.

### **Retail Streetscape**

The Dundas Street West retail strip exemplifies the ways in which gentrification strategies have been used to help gentrify The Junction. Over the last fourteen years the Dundas



**Figure 38- An example of one of the businesses that took part in the façade improvement program.**

Street West retail strip has undergone dramatic changes thanks to municipal investment and the continued work of the BIA and local business owners. The look and feel of the strip has changed dramatically over the last twenty years, thanks in part to the efforts of both the streetscape improvement program and the



façade improvement program (Figure 38). The CIP renewal program can be seen as part of the municipality's strategy to help gentrify the neighbourhood; making it more attractive and appealing for private investment. This demonstrates the municipalities efforts to not only improve public works and the neighbourhoods overall infrastructure, but it also illustrates how they used that opportunity to improve the aesthetic values of the streetscape itself.



**Figure 39- Indy Ale House is one of the newest restaurants in the neighbourhood. Inside they serve numerous pub style dishes and they even brew a variety of different beers on site.**

The specialized businesses that have made The Junction a “destination” in recent years are now part of the neighbourhood’s new streetscape and identity. One respondent commented on how “cafes are serving four dollar coffees, ten years ago that would not have worked in The Junction. A number of those coffee shops were previously vacant store fronts” (Respondent 13).

Businesses like Post & Beam, Metropolis, Corner Store, Articulation, Delight Chocolate, Hole in the Wall, Curry Twist, Indy Ale House (Figure 39) and 2020; have all worked together to make the neighbourhood a destination that draws in consumers from across Toronto. One respondent commented on how the plethora of new businesses have affected the neighbourhood commenting on how “restaurants can pull people both from within and outside the community; it’s always a good thing because they will sustain business in the community. I think they are very helpful” (Respondent 15). In the early 1990’s, the retail strip was said to have a vacancy rate as high as 20 percent, yet through the gentrification and reinvestment, The Junction now has a vacancy rate of roughly five percent (White B01). Local residents are, for the most part, pleased with the transformation of the Dundas Street West retail strip. A respondent commented on how “The

night life here is unreal. I never go to Queen Street or Ossington anymore. I'm always here"

(Respondent 9). Another respondent stated that

What has really impressed me is that a lot of the businesses in The Junction have architecturally maintained the same look and feel that the neighbourhood has always had which is part of its allure (Respondent 13).

A number of restaurants (Curry Twist, The Beat, Vesuvio's and Indy Ale House), furniture related stores (Post & Beam, Milk and Smash), and art related businesses (Articulations, Above Ground, Telephone Booth) now line the retail strip signalling the near completion of the retail transformation that the neighbourhood has undergone since the CIP's completion.

One aspect of the revitalization that has not yet come to fruition is the arrival of condominiums. Over ten years have passed since the CIP's completion and only one condominium complex has been built with a second about to break ground (Figure 40). This makes The Junction an outlier regarding the intensification of neighbourhoods that have taken place across Toronto since the 2006 Official Plan was released. Although The Junction was not one of the areas identified in Toronto's Official Plan for intensification, it was one of the neighbourhoods that were included in the Toronto Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study. Over saturation of the condominium market across Toronto (Fleming 2011), the incremental condoization that has taken place just south of The Junction along Bloor Street, and the collective community resistance and efforts that led to the development of the affordable Options for Homes condominium could all be partly responsible for this lack of intensification in the neighbourhood.



**Figure 40 - DUKE, which is about to break ground, is only the second condominium to be built in The Junction since the infrastructure improvements were completed thirteen years ago (Urban Toronto).**

## Options for Homes

The Options for Homes condominiums can be considered one of The Junction's breaks from the typical gentrification narratives that exist in the neighbourhood today (Figure 41). As



**Figure 41 - Both of the Heintzman Street (formally Options for Homes) condominium towers, which are comprised of 643 affordable condominium units.**

explained previously, the tower came to be when the original developer dropped its plans for a luxury condominium after strong community resistance forced them to abandon their proposed plans. The development proposed by Options for Homes was an affordable, low cost, amenity free condominium tower that placed

emphasis on affordability as opposed to luxury condominium units. The community's unique identity was revealed when a number of Junction residents attended the development hearing and told city officials that they were in favour of the towers extra height and density requests; highlighting the support for affordable housing in the neighbourhood (Greer N1).

It is with this community support for affordable housing that The Junction breaks away from typical narratives associated with gentrification. The neighbourhoods support for this development displayed a strong collective action to ensure accessibility, which is usually not part of typical gentrification narratives. With regards to the community's support for the development and accessibility, one respondent representing Options for Homes stated that

We have something to offer the community that they tend to want to support...When your go to a community to keep the price of housing inexpensive or trying to offer the opportunity first to the relatives who want to get into the neighbourhood who can't afford it any longer...you have something to talk to the neighbourhood about. And so every time we go we basically are offering an opportunity to get friends and relatives into the neighbourhood that couldn't afford it previously (Respondent 21).

Rather than a revanchist style response to the introduction of an affordable condominium tower in the neighbourhood, the community embraced the development with open arms stating that



they wanted to find more ways to include affordable housing in the neighbourhood (N1). This emancipatory style response was successfully undertaken because the community was able to rally together, successfully replacing luxury condominiums with an affordable alternative.

Although the condominium tower is less than a two minute walk from the intersection of Dundas Street West and Keele Street, it could be argued that the site is slightly disconnected from the rest of The Junction due to the fact that the building is surrounded by vacant/rundown retail lots and a gas station. A storage facility, parking lot, gas station, two antique



**Figure 42 – The various businesses and spaces that surround the Heintzman Street condo tower.**

stores, a Chinese restaurant, barber shop and overstock clearance/buy/sell storefront surround the condominium tower along Keele Street (Figure 42). Although the site might feel slightly disconnected from the neighbourhood to an outsider, one respondent who lives in the building did not feel as though this was the case. During the interview, he reminisced on how the surrounding area changed after the building was completed

I bought off plan seven and a half years ago and it was fighting. People said I could not live in The Junction. When I moved in, although it was still a little rough, there were health food stores, a yoga studio, and a palates studio. I saw restaurants opening up within a month of us moving in. Having the condo occupied. Within six to eight months seven new businesses moved within a one block strip of us, and within the last two and a half years it's been completely revitalized. There are still a few areas that are a bit rough on the east side of Keele, though, It's amazing, and I feel completely safe now too (Respondent 1).

Even though the condo was built and sold by a non-profit corporation, the situation still leaves things a little bit murky. The units are still based on private ownership, which makes things a bit more complicated regarding the buildings overall level of affordability. Residents living in the building still need to pay their monthly mortgages, and although the building is

considered to be affordable, not everyone will be able to actually afford it. This places emphasis on middle-class values and on private ownership, but none the less, it is still a break from typical gentrification narratives because the overall commercialization of chic living, along with the consistent increases in the neighbourhoods housing market, have been pushed aside and replaced with more affordable housing options.

Though the use of interviews, observational data and specific sites located in The Junction, various tensions concerning the nature and extent of gentrification in the neighbourhood have been explored. The Junction's gentrification is unique because it does not conform to past theoretical perspectives regarding gentrification in Toronto. What has emerged is a form of "user friendly" or "community driven" gentrification that places more emphasis on neighbourhood revitalization and community inclusion, as opposed to resident displacement and neighbourhood exclusivity. Resembling the processes associated with third-wave gentrification, The Junction has thus far challenged certain assumptions regarding identities, definitions and strategies of gentrification. A strong community identity, municipal efforts that placed emphasis on neighbourhood revitalization over resident displacement, and the neighbourhoods proximity to downtown, have all worked together to break away from the typical narratives that usually dominate a neighbourhoods gentrification. Although the processes associated with The Junction's gentrification may not yet be complete, the neighbourhood has been able to successfully breakaway from the "negative" narratives associated with the process, replacing them with a more "user friendly" form of gentrification that is both inclusive, and community oriented.

## **Chapter V**

Through the course of this project, gentrification and the various narratives of gentrification unfolding in The Junction have been examined in order to bridge a literature gap that exists regarding the neighbourhood's recent transformation.

In order to complete the research required for this project, a case-study approach was utilized so that an in-depth understanding of The Junction and its gentrification narratives could be realized. Semi-structured interviews, various documents, census data and field site observations were all used to assist me in answering my research question. An analysis of various gentrification theories was conducted in Chapter II, highlighting the ways in which gentrification has evolved over the years. In Chapter III, factors responsible for The Junction's gentrification were scrutinized and various gentrification indicators found with the neighbourhood's demographic data and built environment were explored. Chapter IV worked to outline the processes, understandings, strategies and tensions concerning the nature of gentrification playing out in the neighbourhood today.

The closure of a major source of employment (Toronto Stockyards and Canada Packers) just over twenty years ago initiated The Junction's transition from a mostly working-class to an increasingly middle-class neighbourhood. The continued efforts of the business community, BIA and local residents brought about a number of changes that have assisted this transformation. Artists and their artwork, the ending of prohibition, a streetscape improvement program and a diverse variety of restaurants and storefronts, have all worked in conjunction with one another to revitalize and subsequently gentrify this west-end neighbourhood.

The resulting efforts of these groups have culminated in a form of incremental gentrification that has kept the overall look and feel of the neighbourhood the same, allowing the neighbourhood to break away from standard definitions of the term. Comprised mainly of

elements associated with third-wave gentrification, The Junction is in the midst of experiencing a more inclusive, “user-friendly” form of gentrification which places emphasis on neighbourhood improvement and community engagement over resident displacement and neighbourhood status. Important breaks from typical gentrification narratives have surfaced, including the inclusion of more affordable housing, but elements of traditional narratives are still present. Middle-class values regarding drug users and prostitution are still present amongst residents, but an acceptance of local neighbourhood’s social services acts as another break from typical narratives.

Gentrification is a process that can take decades to complete. Although the neighbourhood is currently experiencing a more user-friendly form of gentrification, the process has not yet reached a full state of maturation. This can be somewhat problematic because even though the neighbourhood is experiencing a user-friendly form of gentrification today, this might not be the case five, ten or fifteen years down the road. The closure of the Toronto Stockyards, along with deindustrialization that took place in and around The Junction, provided the neighbourhood with a surplus of affordable housing that has since been filled. Demographic data suggests that the amount of low income residents in the neighbourhood has remained somewhat consistent leading up to 2006, but it is hard to determine whether or not this group of residents will be pushed out of the neighbourhood in the future. Continued growth of the neighbourhood’s rent gap could persuade more home owners to sell their homes, and more landlords to increase rents, thus further displacing low-income residents with middle, and possibly even upper-class in-movers. Factors concerning The Junction’s overall affordability can also be affected externally by city-wide housing trends. With housing prices steadily rising since the mid-nineties, Toronto has become less affordable with regards to shelter costs (both owning and

renting). If these trends continue, external factors could ultimately be held responsible for pricing-out and displacing low-income residents living in The Junction today.

Seeing that The Junction is still in the midst of being gentrified, it is essential that this case-study is revisited in the future as the neighbourhood's gentrification reaches a state of maturation. A number of Junctionites believe that the neighbourhood will continue its current course of gentrification well into the future, but urban processes like this can be hard to predict. If The Junction continues on its current course, the neighbourhood could become a prime example of a more inclusive, open-ended form of gentrification and urban revitalization.

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Form

**Date:**

**Name of Participant:**

**Study Name:** The Gentrification of The Junction: Who are the Gentrifiers

**Researchers:** Anthony Ruggiero, 11 Yorkleigh Ave, 416-837-2466

**Purpose of the Research** – To investigate the residential and retail changes that have taken place in The Junction (related to the effects of gentrification), and to discover who the gentrifiers are, and why they chose to live in The Junction. This research is part of my MES Major Research Paper.

**What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:** *You will be required to take part in a 1-on-1 interview about the recent residential and retail changes you have experienced within The Junction, interviews can last between 20 minutes to 1 hour.*

**Risks and Discomforts:** We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. You have the right to not answer any questions, and you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:** *Your participation will help add to the academic work on understanding the processes of gentrification in Toronto, and will be one of the few academic works to date that focuses on The Junction.*

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

**Confidentiality:** Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, **your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.** The interview will be recorded with an audio recording device, and then later transcribed. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility, and the digital copies of the interview will be stored in an encrypted folder that will require a password to access. Only research staff will have access to this information. The data will be stored for up to two years, and once the two year period has elapsed, the data will be destroyed (digital data will be deleted, hard copies will be shredded and disposed of). Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

**Questions About the Research?** If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. John Saunders either by telephone at (647)-208-1476 or by e-mail ([johns@yorku.ca](mailto:johns@yorku.ca)). This research has been reviewed and approved by the FES Research Committee, on behalf of York University, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Research Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail [ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca)).

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in The Gentrification of The Junction: Who are the Gentrifiers conducted by *Anthony Ruggiero*. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Waiver of Anonymity**

I wave my right to remain anonymous, and agree that the researcher may identify me by my real name.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **Interviewee Characteristics**

In order to investigate the factors, actors and consequences involved in the gentrification of The Junction, nineteen separate one-on-one interviews were conducted with various residents, business owners, city staff members and local Junction organizations that live in, and or frequent the neighbourhood on a regular basis. In total, thirteen of the twenty-one respondents lived in, and or frequented The Junction regularly. Four of those thirteen residents also had businesses in The Junction, all of which were located along Dundas Street West. The remaining eight interviewees included: two business owners, a city councillor, a City of Toronto planner, a representative from The Junction BIA, a representative from Options for Homes and a representative from The Junction Farmers Market.

### **The Residents**

The stereotypical gentrifier tends to be attracted to older housing styles located in inner-city neighbourhoods; they tend to be single, are in their twenties to mid-thirties, and are employed in a serviced-based, white collar jobs in and around the cities CBD (Mathews 2856). One of the goals of this paper was to investigate the types of residents that live in The Junction to see if they fit this stereotypical mould.

Of the thirteen residents that I interviewed, eleven of them lived within the set boundaries of The Junction; and two of the three non-Junction residents lived less than 1.5 km from the heart of the neighbourhood. The average age of the eleven Junction residents was 40.5 years, with the oldest interviewee being 55 years old and the youngest being 25 years old. This average age is higher than the typical average age cohort (30-35) associated with gentrification, but these numbers include residents that have lived in the neighbourhood prior to the completion of the



revitalization and gentrification. When focusing on the residents that moved into the neighbourhood after the revitalization efforts were completed, the average age distribution changes significantly. Six of the thirteen resident respondents moved into the neighbourhood between 2003 and 2010 (four moved-in in 2010, one in 2003 and one in 2004). The average age of those six respondents is 27.6 years old; which is not only twelve years younger than the average age of all the interviewed residents, but it also fits in with the average age cohort of typical gentrifiers and second-wave gentrifiers.

The respondents living in The Junction did not fully demonstrate the same job characteristics typically associated with gentrifiers either. Occupations of the residents living in The Junction can be placed into two groups. For the most part, the first group of residents that lived in the neighbourhood prior to 2003 were mostly employed in white-collar jobs. This group of residents (which will be referred to as “long term residents”) were all employed in white collar jobs, most of which were located downtown.

Residents	Age	Marital Status	Children	Occupation	Year/House	Street Name	Education	Own/Rent
Respondent 1	49	Single	0	Interior Design	25 Years	Heintzman St		
Respondent 2	55	Married		Lawyer	1992	Gothic Ave		Own
Respondent 3	62	Married	2	Professor	1991	Glenwood Ave		Own
Respondent 4	52	Single		Business Development	1988	Annette St		Own
Respondent 5	58	Married	5	Executive	1957	Woodland Heights		Own
Respondent 6	55	Single		Library Manager	2001	Medland		Own
Respondent 7	34	Married	2	Art Dealer	2010	Dundas	BFA	Own Store
Respondent 8	27	Married	2	Owens Furniture Store	2010	Dundas		Owens Store
Respondent 9	25	Single		Owens Clothing Store	2010	NA	BA	Rents Store
Respondent 10	30	Married	1	Owens Articulations	2010	Quebec Ave		Rents Store
Respondent 11	39	Married	1	Student	2003	Hook	BA +BFA	Own
Respondent 12	36	Married		Mechanical Design	2004	Laws St		
Respondent 13	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na

As can be seen, with the exception of the interior designer, all of the long term residents’ jobs are white-collar based, and located in and around the CBD (except for the library manager who works in The Junction). The occupations of the second group of residents that moved into the neighbourhood after the completion of its revitalization (which we will call the ‘gentrifiers’)

displays a trend that goes strongly against the norm associated with typical gentrifiers and their occupations. Of the six residents that fit in the “gentrifiers” category, none of them worked downtown, and only one was employed in a white collar job. As can be seen in the chart, four of the six “gentrifiers” own their own businesses in The Junction, one is a university student, and one is a mechanical designer that works in North Etobicoke. This breaks away from the typical occupations associated with gentrifiers because none of them work downtown, and only one is employed in a white-collar job.

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