

Finch

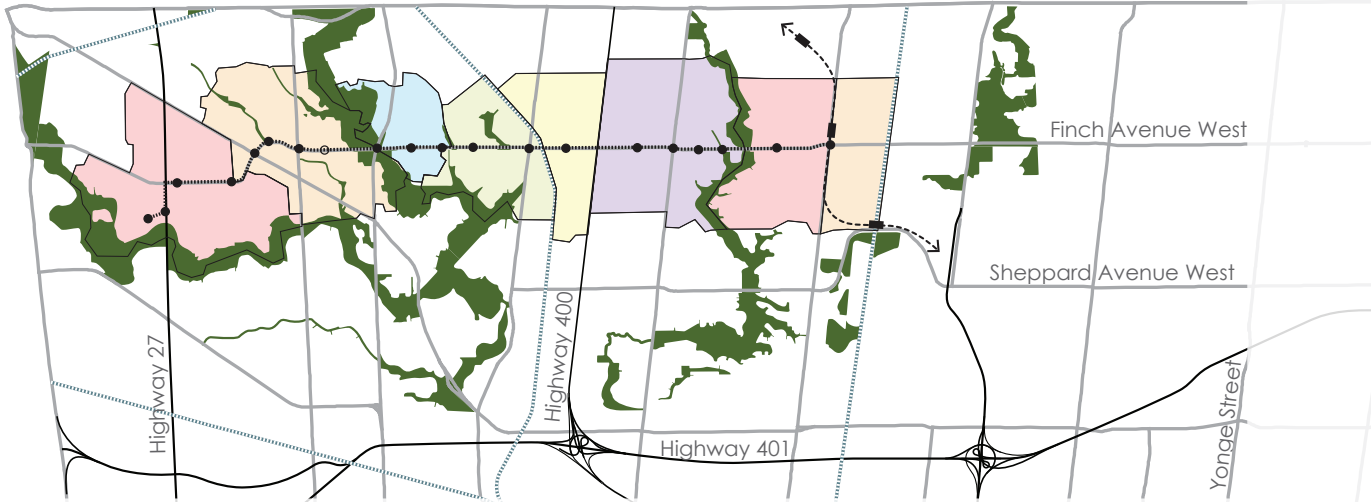
Avenue West Light Rail Transit

Corridor Profile

Excerpt



Introduction



The Context

This Profile was undertaken in consideration of committed investment in rapid transit along the Finch Avenue West corridor, roughly between Keele Street in the east and Humber College in the west. Metrolinx is funding the design and construction of a Light Rail Transit (LRT) line that will run along Finch Avenue West between these easterly and westerly limits (see map).

This Profile focuses on the existing demographic, employment, and physical conditions of the corridor. This Profile presents the corridor in eight segments based on a number of criteria (see appendix for rationale). Findings contribute to a better understanding of the corridor and the many communities along it.

Profile Contents

This Profile provides information about the existing conditions and recent changes throughout the corridor. Specifically, the profile discusses:

- who lives along the corridor
- what jobs exist along the corridor; and
- trends in each.

The Profile is intended to act as a research tool and input into future planning along the corridor, to help leverage investment in the new light rail transit infrastructure. Hence, it is intended as 'the facts', with limited interpretation of them. The contents of the Profile include maps and diagrams used in city planning and urban design research. The following is a basic explanation of some of them:

Location

The Finch Avenue West Corridor is located in northwest Toronto. The corridor follows the planned Light Rail Transit (LRT) line roughly from Keele Street in the east, to Humber College in the west.



The Finch Corridor

Parcel fabric: 'parcels' are individual lots or property, such as the land that a single family house may sit on, or the lands occupied by a shopping mall. The 'fabric' of parcels is the patchwork that they create when looked at over a large amount of space.

Figure ground: A figure ground map depicts only the built environment, which includes all buildings, and is a useful tool for understanding the relationship between built and unbuilt space. Built space is depicted in black, unbuilt space is shown as white.

Interface: An 'interface' map depicts the interfacing of Finch Avenue West with its surrounding context. The interface is the edges of the public space along the corridor, and its surrounding context. Generally, a more 'active' interface consisting of main doors and windows makes for a more vibrant, inviting, and pedestrian-friendly avenue (people come and go, and can see onto the street from buildings). This type of interface also serves to animate the street, and helps to make it safer. Conversely, an interface of blank walls and opaque fencing has the effect of creating a more sterile and isolating street environment.

The Finch LRT corridor is approximately 11 km in length. Finch Avenue West bisects two of Toronto's significant natural resources: the Black Creek Valley, and the Humber River Valley. These natural areas are assets for local communities and the city at large.

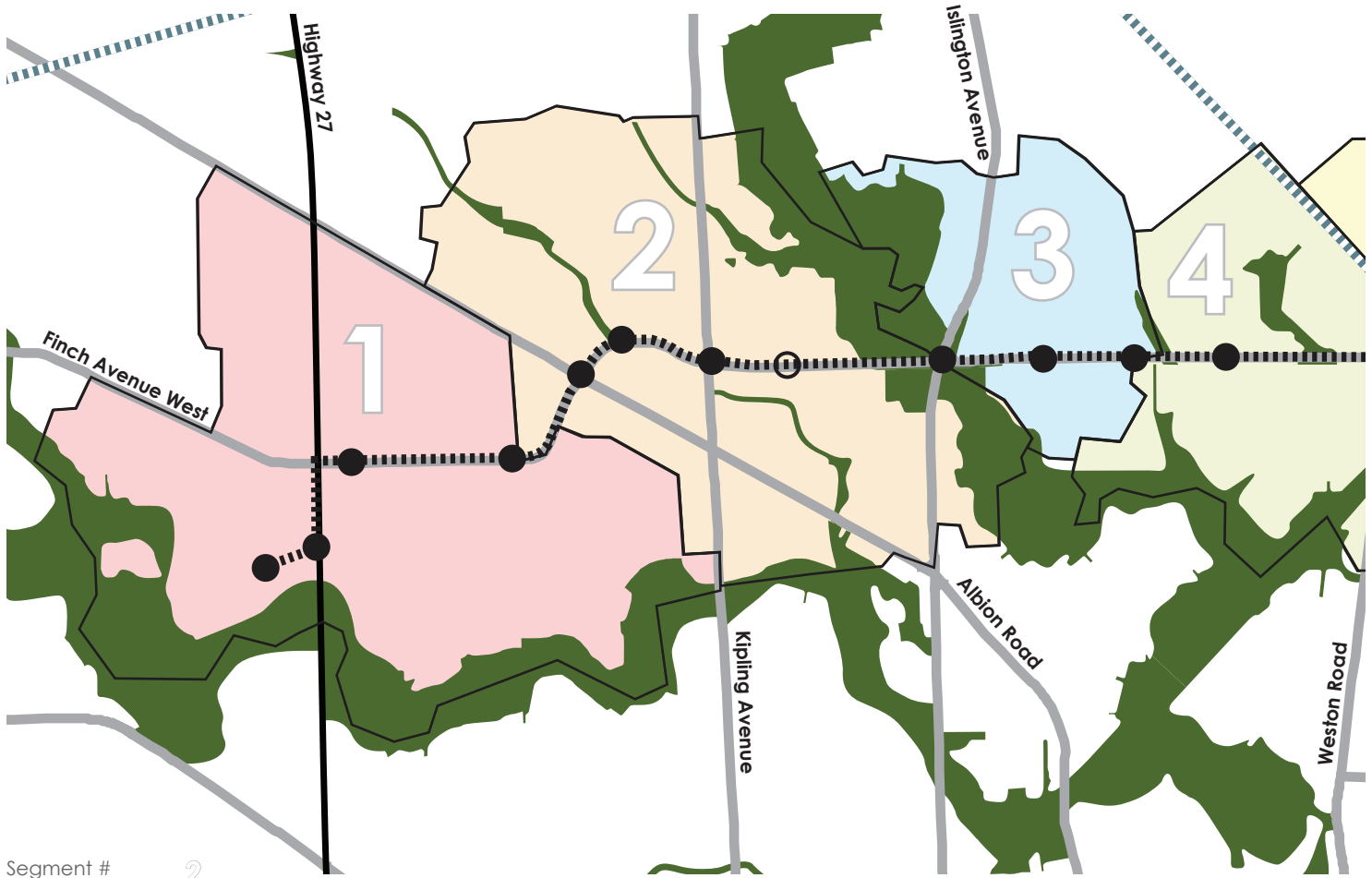
Finch Avenue West can be defined by a series of nodal land uses and built form, with concentrations of retail uses at Jane Street, Weston Road, and Kipling Avenue/Albion Road. Similarly, there are concentrations of tall buildings (mainly residential apartments with rental tenure) just north of Finch Avenue West along Kipling Avenue, Weston Road, around Jane Street, and in other pockets spread throughout the corridor. Low-rise residential neighbourhoods make up a large portion of the geography of the corridor as well.

Finch Avenue West is an important place of employment with office, retail, and institutional uses located along the corridor. Many jobs are located in three main Employment Areas along the corridor (at Keele Street, Weston Road/Highway 400, and northwest of Finch and Highway 27). These areas contain a large proportion of manufacturing, warehousing, and office uses. Overall, Finch Avenue West contains almost 3% of the

Finch Corridor

11km
corridor
length

2,454
hectares



- Segment # 2
 - LRT stop*
 - LRT route
 - Subway
 - Rail corridor
 - Highway
 - Major street
 - Designated open space
- * hollow circle indicates potential LRT stop

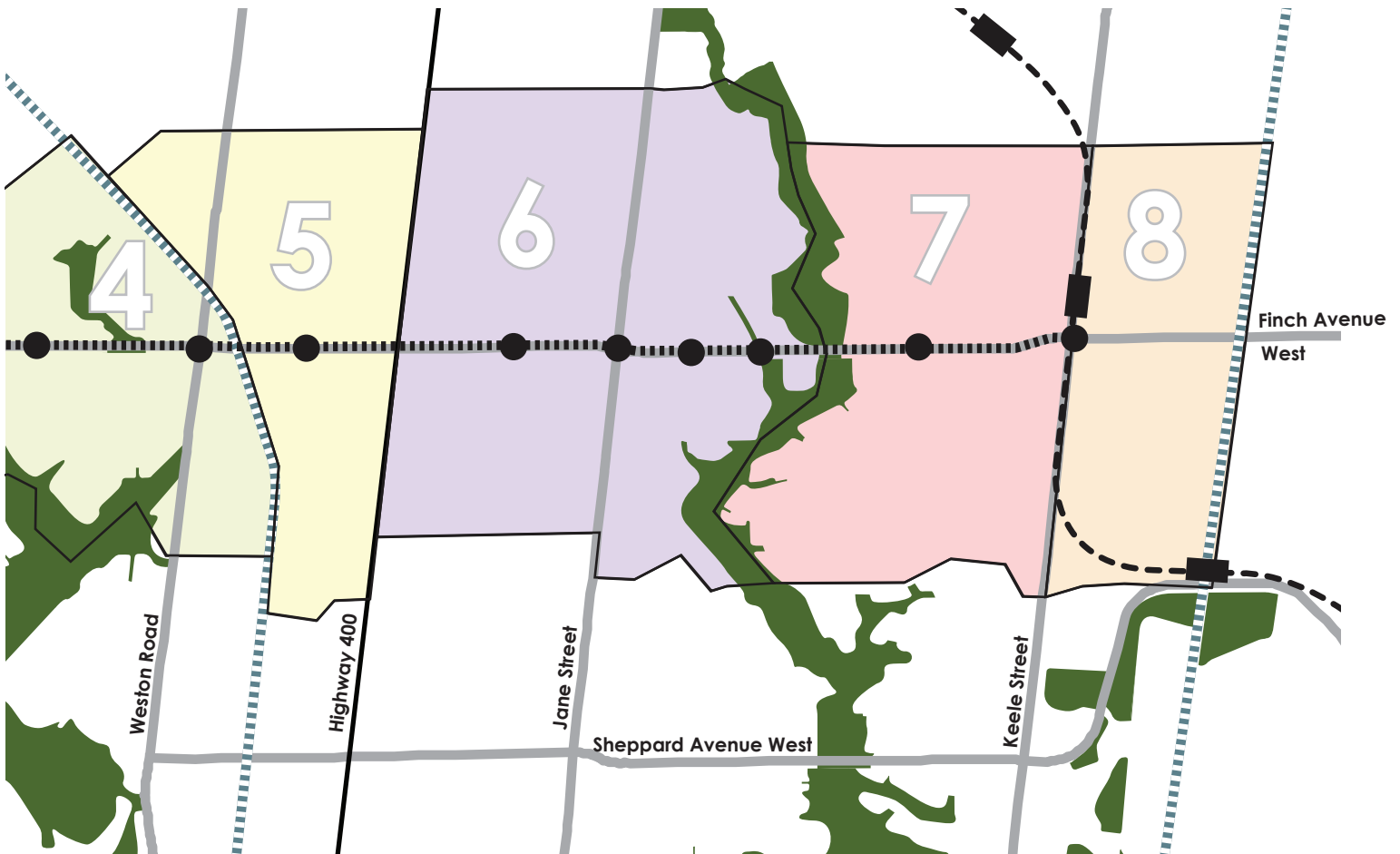
38,322
jobs

111,359
people

2
ravines

44,000
daily ridership
Finch bus
(#36)

15+
malls &
plazas



7
neighbourhood
improvement
areas

4
post-secondary
institutions

3
council
wards

city's total employment.

A number of the city's large post-secondary educational institutions are along, or are relatively close to, Finch Avenue West. These include York University (whose Keele Campus is located north of the corridor between Jane and Keele Streets), Humber College, The University of Guelph at Humber, and Seneca College's Yorkgate Campus. In addition, the Humber River Regional Hospital is anticipated to be repurposed in late 2015 near the LRT line and Highway 400.

Population diversity is a defining characteristic of the corridor. The most recent census data show that 61% of the population are immigrants to Canada, compared to 49% for the city as a whole. The corridor also tends to be younger than the rest of the city, with a high proportion of persons under 19 years of age.

Today, Finch Avenue West has higher than average socio-economic needs. Seven of Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) cover most of this Profile's study area. NIAs are areas which fall below the Neighbourhood Equity Score. For more information about NIAs, see Appendix B.

Along its length, Finch Avenue West is a wide arterial road with a planned 36 metre right-of-way, and has a largely semi-urban feel. Buildings often have generous setbacks from the street, with many parcels reverse-lotted to Finch itself. The impact on the public realm is many opaque fences fronting on the street. This interface, combined with large swaths of wide landscaped buffers, and parking lots, results in a more inactive and lesser animated avenue experience.

Private automobile usage is high along Finch Avenue West, and is reflected in the data on work-commute-modal-share. Car dominance along the corridor is supported by existing street and block patterns, a circuitous road network, poor quality pedestrian and active transportation environment, and a lack of pedestrian connections. The nodal layout, and physical distance between destinations may also account for high rates of car usage.

Corridor Population & Employment Trends

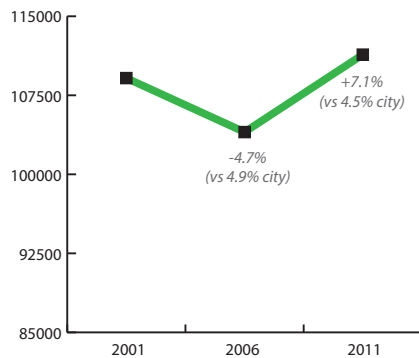
The population of the city of Toronto increased fairly consistently over the last two census periods at rates close to 5% (between each census). This differs from the Finch corridor; the population of which has fluctuated over the same time periods. Between 2001 and 2006, the population of the Finch corridor dropped by 4.7%, but then recovered between 2006 and 2011 via an increase of 7.1%. The population of the corridor consists of a high proportion of immigrants

to Canada, and also tends to be younger than that of the city, with a higher proportion of people under 19 years of age.

Over the last two census periods, the number of jobs increased along the corridor, and at rates well above that of the city. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of jobs along the Finch corridor increased by 6.8%, whereas the city as a whole saw an increase less than half

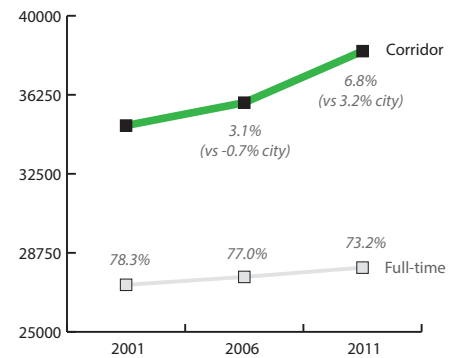
Population

The population of the city increased over the last two census periods, whereas the population of the corridor fluctuated. Source: Census



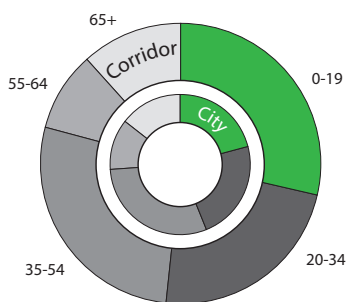
Jobs

The number of jobs increased over the 2001 and 2011 period, though the proportion of full-time jobs has dropped. Source: Toronto Employment Survey



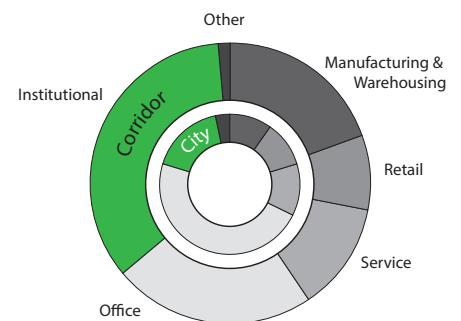
Age Distribution (2011)

The corridor tends to have a younger population than the rest of the city, with a high proportion of the population under 19 years of age. Source: Census



Jobs by Sector (2011)

The corridor has a high proportion of jobs in the institutional, and manufacturing and warehousing sectors, compared with the city as a whole. Source: Toronto Employment Survey



that rate at 3.2%. The increase along the corridor is attributable mainly to the institutional sector. However, the proportion of full time jobs decreased over the same time period, from 78.3% to 73.2%. Compared with the city, the corridor has proportionately more jobs in manufacturing and warehousing, and in the institutional sectors, and less in the office sector. The total number of establishments has remained around 2500 from 2001-2011.

Put together, the number of people and number of jobs form the density of the corridor. There were about 61.0 people and jobs per hectare along the corridor in 2011, which is a slight increase from 2001, when the density was about 58.7.

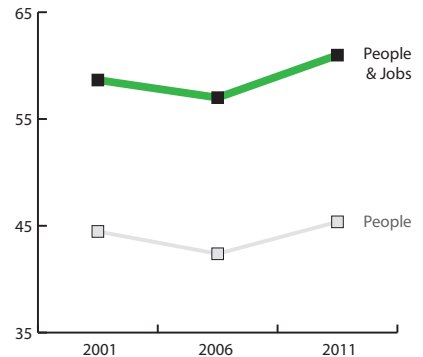
Private household income is below the city average, with the gap widening between the 2000 and 2010 period. Despite the increasing gap, the proportion of low income households is declining faster than the city average.

Home ownership rates are just below the city average. The city trend toward a higher proportion of ownership was mirrored by the corridor from 2001-2011.

The average area worker commutes to work via personal automobile, with more than 58% of commuters driving to work via personal automobile. A further 34% take transit.

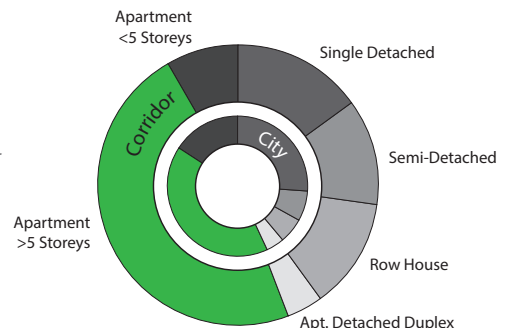
Density (People & Jobs / Hectare) (2011)

The density of the corridor has fluctuated (due to population fluctuation). Source: calculated using Census & Toronto Employment Survey



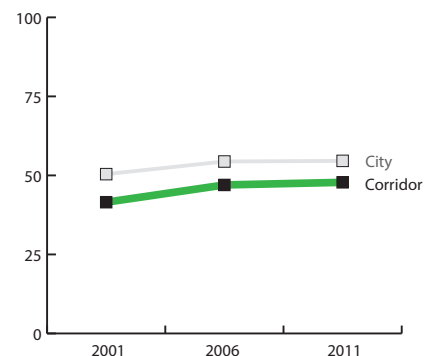
Housing Type (2011)

The corridor's housing mix is similar to that of the city, though with a higher proportion row house units, and apartment units in buildings over 5 storeys. Source: Census



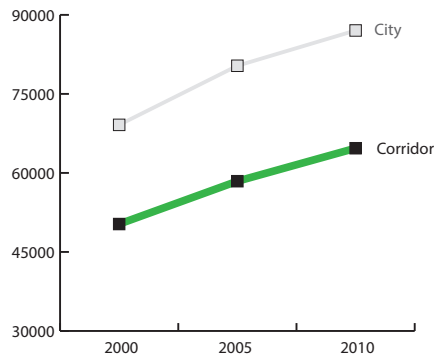
Tenure (Ownership)

Home ownership rates are above that of the city, but declining, unlike the other areas of the corridor. Source: Census



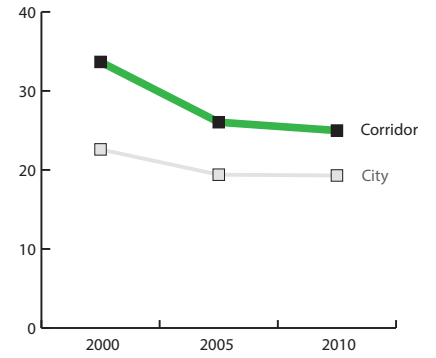
Private Household Income

Private household income is lower than that of the city, with the gap widening in the 2000 to 2010 period.
Source: Census



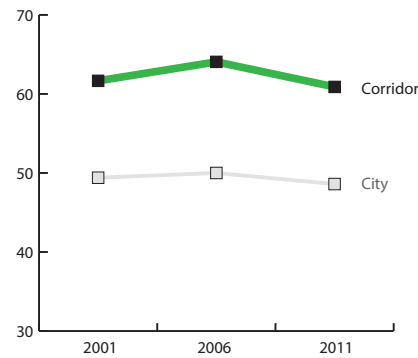
Proportion Low Income

The proportion of low income households was similar, though slightly above, the city average.
Source: Census



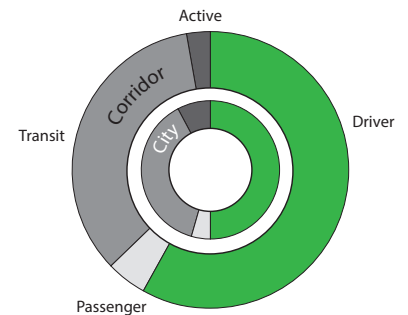
Immigration

The area has a high proportion of immigrants to Canada. Source: Census.



Modal Split (2011)

The majority of trips to work are taken by driving to work in a personal automobile. The rate along the corridor is higher than the city average.
Source: Census



Jobs

| | Mfg | Retail | ServiceOffice | Instit | Other | Total | |
|------|-------|--------|---------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2001 | 10685 | 3935 | 5042 | 7163 | 8149 | 700 | 35674 |
| 2006 | 9900 | 3939 | 4439 | 7169 | 9805 | 625 | 35877 |
| 2011 | 7496 | 3303 | 4766 | 8931 | 13376 | 450 | 38322 |

Employment Establishments

| | Mfg | Retail | ServiceOffice | Instit | Other | Total | |
|------|-----|--------|---------------|--------|-------|-------|------|
| 2001 | 337 | 508 | 578 | 758 | 148 | 36 | 2365 |
| 2006 | 332 | 570 | 591 | 832 | 178 | 39 | 2542 |
| 2011 | 321 | 528 | 612 | 838 | 206 | 40 | 2545 |



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