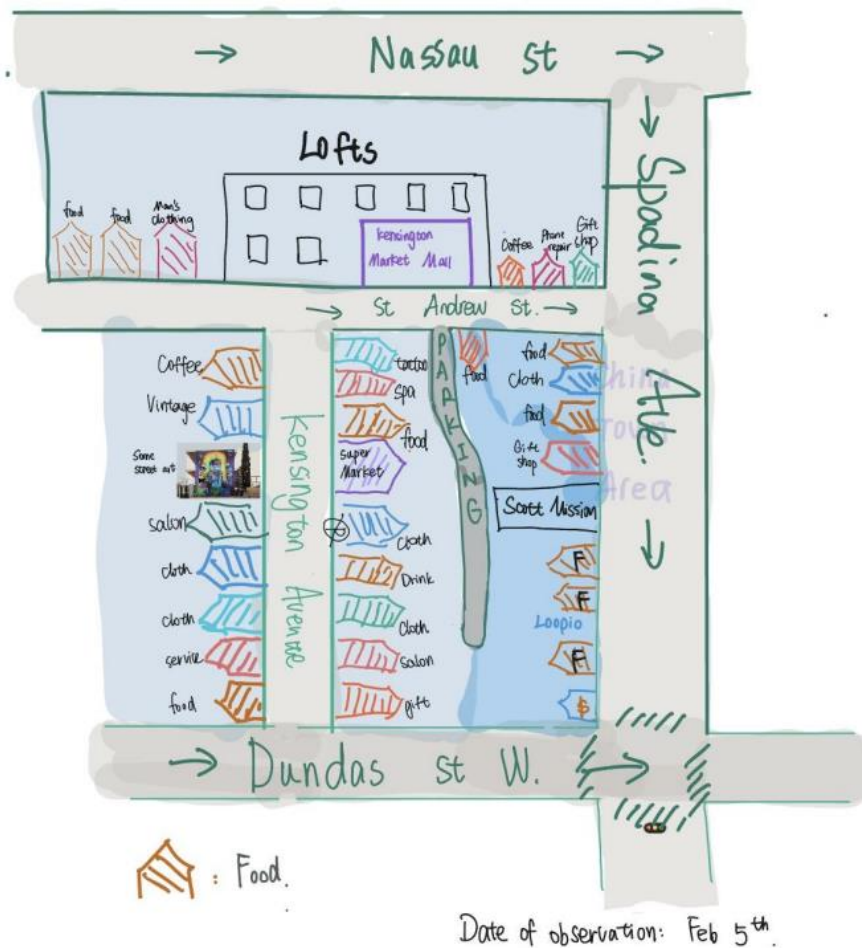Daniel Endale, Haochen Feng, and Victoria McNabb
Term: Winter 2023

Our chosen space exists along the intersections of Dundas-Spadina and Augusta-Nassau, to include the Northwest neighborhood of Kensington Market. This area exists on the cusp of Chinatown, which is also a part of our analysis in this assignment. We visited this space for a second round of field notes at around 2:30 in the afternoon on a Sunday, traffic was dense, and sidewalks were crowded like any other business day. Instead of taking a static position in analyzing our space, we decided to travel along the borders of our neighborhood. We began heading West along Dundas towards Augusta Ave, this is where we started seeing glimpses of street art and graffiti on the walls of buildings – a trademark quality of the neighborhood. As we took a right turn on Augusta Ave., we immediately sensed a calmer environment compared to our initial starting point. At the surface level, it seemed like a quiet residential area (based on the number of single-detached homes) but each of these houses served its own nature of retail. Many houses offered clothing, and some were

coffee shops, as we continued down Augusta Ave, we noticed the regularity in street art presence on the sides of houses and apartment buildings. We also noticed the dominant presence of young adults and adolescents in the space, many of whom were traveling in big groups of five or more, which gives the impression of a tourist destination along with many of the restaurants and antique stores being ethnic based. Many ethnic-based restaurants in our analysis were based on the Caribbean and Jamaica, which we believe speaks to the demographic composition of the surrounding area. That being said, unlike more common tourist destinations, Kensington is not dominated by commercial branding, or performative sightseeing attractions, we were not overwhelmed by the pressures to consume goods, we simply observed a calm conglomerate of independent vendors with an honest representation of what they offer. An important detail about our analysis was the dearth of automobile presence, which is in stark contrast to the neighboring Chinatown. The lack of cars on the roads absolutely contributed to the quietness we observed in the early afternoon, but it also creates a feeling of pedestrian safety in the neighborhood. We eventually arrived at Baldwin Street and took another right, and after walking for about a block we crossed paths with a group of young folks who seemed to be smoking marijuana, which prompted us to think about the blase attitude around cannabis consumption in the neighborhood. Many cannabis vendors exist in the Kensington space, and until just a few months ago Kensington was home to one of very few cannabis consumption lounges for the last 20 years.

In a brief map analysis through Google, we found that Kensington Street has more clothing items stores and more stores. Chinatown, on the other hand, has a lot of restaurants for people who love Asian foods. During the observation, we heard some stores in the Kensington Market area projecting music, and some store owners are putting their products outside for easier showing. In this way, it increases the sense of welcome in the neighborhood for young people specifically. We noticed a lot of groups of people coming and going, visiting the shops, and interacting with the store owners, in contrast to Chinatown which is much less interactive. An interesting observation we made is that the clothing stores in Chinatown are less related to Chinese culture but rather bargain-rate, indistinct clothing. While on the other hand, Chinese restaurants were very explicitly tied to their culture. This is likely due to the target customer-base for these restaurants being largely non-Chinese. We also believe that clothing of Chinese heritage is an exception to this theory, as it would result in some eyebrow raises and suspicion of cultural appropriation. The site of interest in the Chinatown area is essentially the intersection of Spadina and Dundas, and the predictable observation was of more people rushing to and from places, while Kensington Market exhibited a more leisure atmosphere, likely due to the difference in transit and road infrastructure. We believe that we have captured an interesting dichotomy between the

Chinatown and Kensington area within our chosen site, the way these two adjacent neighborhoods can contrast so much while being so close to one another.