

REGENT PARK SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



PART I: CONTEXT

SEPTEMBER 2007

Toronto Community Housing



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REGENT PARK SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PART I: CONTEXT

1. THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: A CHANGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

In July 2003, Toronto City Council approved the plan for revitalization of Regent Park. This approval opened the way to a period of significant transition and change. Council gave direction for Toronto Community Housing, with the support of the City's Social Development, Finance and Administration Division, to create a Social Development Plan for Regent Park to help address issues of transition and social inclusion.

The redevelopment of Regent Park will replace existing housing but will also bring in new market housing. This will add to the existing population of Regent Park. It will also add to the diversity of the population, introducing a broader mix of income and tenure. This can provide significant advantages to the people now living in Regent Park. The resources of their community grow with the growing diversity of their neighbourhood, creating the potential for new relationships and new opportunities. However, without an effective strategy for capitalizing on those opportunities and resources, the risk of social stress grows as well. Realizing the opportunities and averting social tensions will become critical new roles for the various participants in the Regent Park community, including residents, Toronto Community Housing, the City, and local community-based agencies.

Tackling these new roles requires forethought and planning. The changes to Regent Park will be occurring over a 15-year span, so the plan must be a thorough and dynamic change management framework that adjusts to circumstances that will change over time.

Change management is about “planning for people”. It is about creating the tools, mechanisms and structures to help guide the 15-year neighbourhood and population transition and

to monitor and adjust the plan as circumstances change or unanticipated developments occur.

1.1 A PROCESS BASED ON PARTNERSHIP

The key stakeholders have been partners throughout the redevelopment process and have been engaged in creating the Social Development Plan process. Toronto Community Housing, the City of Toronto, the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative, community agencies, and Regent Park residents have come together to creatively participate in the planning process for the Social Development Plan.

The need for a Social Development Plan was first articulated by tenants of Regent Park, and tenants continue to be engaged and to provide leadership in the process. Toronto Community Housing has taken carriage of the process and has facilitated the production of the plan. The Social Development Plan process is proceeding in the context of other place-based community development strategies like Neighbourhood Action, convened by the City through the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division.

1.2 ROLE OF THE REGENT PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE

The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI) is a social planning body in Regent Park. Formerly known as the Regent Park Resident Council, RPNI was formed in 2002 to advocate and protect the interests and assets of residents and to work in partnership through its committees and other means to identify, assess, address and evaluate issues brought forward by the community. It is a voice of the residents that provides a vision for the changing community. As the neighbourhood changes, RPNI has the capacity to work with relevant stakeholders to identify the evolving needs of all of the residents of Regent Park and to advocate for effective action to address those needs. RPNI will act as a single voice for the new homeowners, tenants and businesses as the neighbourhood becomes diversified through the redevelopment.

These partnerships are consistent with a long history of collaboration in Regent Park. Throughout many challenges, Regent Park has shown that when tenants can engage with partners such as community service providers, housing providers and the City in order to deploy their collected resources to benefit the whole community, exceptional innovation and extraordinary success generally follow. This illustrates that broad-based partnerships linking Regent Park tenants with diverse partners form an effective tool for community improvement. In the following section, this history is explored in detail and provides valuable insight for the Social Development Plan.

2. A HISTORY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN REGENT PARK

2.1 PHYSICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN REGENT PARK

Regent Park has undergone many transitions since it was built more than 50 years ago. The successes of the community have reflected the resiliency of residents and the willingness of institutions and others to be responsive to community direction. Regent Park has always consisted of families working hard to improve their lives, contribute to their community and provide better opportunities for their children. Whether under-employed, raising children or coping with physical or mental health problems, residents have faced the added challenges of poverty, racism and relentless negative stereotyping of the community where they live. Residents and local agencies have a long history of working in partnership and supporting one another to address these challenges and to bring about positive and substantive changes at individual, community and systemic levels.

This chapter outlines the history of Regent Park, some of the successes achieved by residents and community agencies in spite of significant flaws in neighbourhood design and structure, and the process used by residents to initiate redevelopment.

2.1.1 INITIAL CONSTRUCTION

Regent Park is one of the oldest and largest public housing developments in Canada. It is a 69-acre public housing community in downtown Toronto that houses approximately 7,500 residents in 2,083 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units. It was developed in two phases. North Regent Park was built from 1948 to 1957 as a low-rise and townhouse development that occupies the area north of Dundas Street. South Regent Park was built between 1957 and 1959 south of Dundas Street and is composed mostly of high-rise buildings and townhouses.

Regent Park was built as a ‘slum clearance’ project and was very popular with residents, politicians and media for the first few years of its existence. Before the redevelopment, the area was popularly known as Cabbagetown because the predominately Irish residents often grew cabbages in their front yards in an effort to subsist in the face of severe poverty. The new neighbourhood was given the name “Regent Park” to reflect the increased green space and the presence of Regent Street in the new development. It was widely regarded as a new beginning for the residents and for the area.

2.1.2 DESIGN

The housing was constructed in the 1950s as a social experiment. The community was composed entirely of subsidized housing and the buildings were oriented to look inward, disconnecting Regent Park from its neighbouring communities. To some extent, demographics drove the design, as the local population of large Irish Catholic families produced a public housing development with a large proportion of 4- and 5-bedroom units. Thirty percent of Regent Park’s 2,083 units are four bedrooms or larger.

To a greater extent, however, the design was driven by intellectual fashion. In keeping with

the “Garden City” mode of planning prevalent at the time, the designers created a ‘pastoral’ setting, which focused inward and was cut off from the noise and aggravation of city life. The development was entirely residential, a bedroom community utterly free of commercial uses, with a large supply of unclaimed open spaces around the buildings.

Regent Park is an early example of planning based on theories rather than on the patterns of use established by residents. In the contexts that emerged over the next 50 years, the theory underlying the inward-looking ‘pastoral’ design began to show its weaknesses. This design cut Regent Park off from the rest of the city and consequently from the many benefits of city life. The grievous impact would be felt for the next 50 years.

2.1.3 CHANGING STRUCTURES

In the 1960s and 1970s, public housing in Toronto began to grow. Following their first 2,000 units in Regent Park, the Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) expanded its housing inventory by adding new units on new sites across Ontario. In response to this growth, OHC centralized its administrative offices in a single location. This was a good idea in theory, but residents knew better. Residents thought on-site management had been a key part of the success of the community. They believed that it mattered to have someone around who knew the neighbourhood and could make changes that met its real needs. They protested the creation of an “absentee landlord,” marching in the streets to show their commitment (Zapparoli 1999).

Despite some initial successes, tenants watched as management gradually became more and more remote from the community, reducing its presence outside office hours and decreasing tenants’ power to make changes.

2.1.4 CHANGING POPULATIONS

The first tenants of Regent Park were mostly Irish or British families and almost all residents spoke English. Only two-parent families were allowed to live in Regent Park; singles and single-parent families were barred. There was a minimum and a maximum income level required to qualify for a unit. Only 20% of the households could be receiving social assistance and 80% had to be working families (Zapparoli 1999).

While management was becoming more remote, the challenges of urban poverty were becoming more complex. As early as the 1970s, the employed two-parent families who made up the early Regent Park were disappearing. Two families in five had no work and only one adult in four had a high school diploma. By the 1976 census, one family in seven was headed by only one parent.

People were staying longer in public housing, too. Rather than moving in and out like a revolving door, people in Regent Park were building a community with strong ties to their neighbourhood and to each other. But they were also facing longer-term poverty. Affordable housing was not simply something people needed temporarily while they got back on their feet; it was something people needed in increasing numbers across the province on an ongoing basis.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Regent Park underwent a dramatic shift in population. Today, Regent Park is home to people speaking more than 70 languages. Sixty percent of Regent Park residents are immigrants, one-third of them having arrived in the last five years. One-quarter of residents arrived during the last five years and another quarter arrived in the five years before that. Regent Park is currently about 15% Bengali, 10% Tamil, 10% Vietnamese and 8% Chinese.

According to Statistics Canada, Regent Park is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country. Less than 150 households have annual incomes greater than \$30,000. Incomes remain low, but over 40% of households earn most of their income from employment, while dependence on social assistance has settled back down to the 40% level.

2.1.5 ADDRESSING SPACE AND DESIGN

The design of Regent Park omitted room for service provision and adequate recreational spaces, so makeshift solutions were adopted to meet this demand. Community programs were wedged into vacant apartments and townhouses, creating a patchwork of small service providers scattered across the community. A few small stores were slipped into a low-rise building, but little employment and service came from so small a commercial area. Recreation space was created in a complex on Sackville Green, but there was still too little space to meet the great demand. Residents' concerns about the design of Regent Park were getting louder.

One aspect of the design caused the most concern: Regent Park had been intentionally constructed to turn away from the city create a separate, inward-looking space. However, this design also had the unforeseen consequence of cutting residents off from the benefits of the city. The absence of through-streets meant that residents had trouble getting normal municipal garbage pick-up, ordering pizza or giving directions to visitors. People who did not live in Regent Park rarely had a reason to go there, and thus little interaction between people from different backgrounds occurred. Moreover, the abundant, open green spaces made it hard to tell where public space ended and private space began, so they quickly became a no-man's land and often fell to uses that did not benefit the community. Regent Park provided better buildings for the people who lived in the shanties of the East Downtown, but had not accommodated how residents connected to each other both inside and outside the neighbourhood.

2.2 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZING

2.2.1 RESIDENT ORGANIZING

There is a strong history of grassroots, tenant-led activism in Regent Park. As early as the 1960s, Regent Park residents came together to address issues of concern in their community. This section describes a few examples of resident-driven initiatives.

REGENT PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AND REGENT PARK TEEN ASSOCIATION

The Regent Park Residents' Association (RPRA) and Regent Park Teen Association (RPTA) were strong and very active resident groups that organized social and cultural events and activities and initiated innovative programs and services from the 1970s to 1990s. At various times they worked with staff seconded by local agencies or funded for short-term positions. These resident-led groups initiated exceptional grassroots advocacy and action related to issues such as inadequate housing, housing maintenance, income and food security, the need for a community centre run by residents, and barriers facing youth who sought employment as community workers in Regent Park.

The Teen Association successfully brought youth from diverse backgrounds together, provided a safe and welcoming drop-in space, organized camping trips and retreats, and initiated the annual multicultural Block-O-Rama festival in 1980. Block-O-Rama is a festival based on a Caribbean tradition, and the noon-to-midnight event offers daytime activities geared to all ages and an evening musical program geared to youth.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

One of the most important tenant struggles was the fight to build the Regent Park Community Centre. For 17 years, tenants signed up to pay a \$2 monthly surcharge on their rent to raise money for the community centre, raising \$17,000. The community first proposed the idea of a Community Centre run by and for residents in 1969. By 1974, the advocacy work of the Regent Park Community Improvement Association (RPCIA) resulted in new landscaping, new ice rinks and the Jody Phillips Pool in North Regent. The recreation centre was built in 1986, but it took 17 years and countless volunteer hours and processes before the residents' vision was realized.

After already investing endless hours of advocacy and negotiation to build the centre, the residents faced further lengthy processes with the City and OHC related to operational and programming control, a role which the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Division ultimately assumed. The community centre is an example of residents advocating and working long hours to bring resources into Regent Park.

COMMUNITY WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM

The community worker training program grew out of the frustration residents experienced when local youth failed to gain employment as community workers in Regent Park. Jobs continually went to workers from outside the community, the rationale being that such candidates had more experience or education. The RPRA decided to take action so that Regent Park youth had the same qualifications and opportunities as others, believing that those within the community understood the needs and could identify solutions better than anyone else. At the time, the RPRA identified that only about 6% of young adults in Regent Park had post-secondary education and that youth unemployment reached as high as 70%. In early 1982, the RPRA approached George Brown College's Community Services Division and the Harry A. Newman Foundation to support their vision of education and employment for their own community members.

The project was highly successful, with most of the youth securing employment in social service positions soon after graduation, some in Regent Park and others in agencies across the city. Many graduates of the program are still working in the social services field today.

The project not only benefited those involved but also encouraged others to follow in their footsteps and go on to post-secondary education. The RPRA demonstrated a vision of community succession long before it was popular and possessed the courage and tenacity to see that vision through. With few or no resources of their own, they provided leadership and hope to the community, stimulated economic development in the form of employment, and laid the groundwork for George Brown College to further develop the Community Worker Diploma Program, which continues to this day.

SOLE SUPPORT MOMS' GROUP

The Sole Support Moms' Group evolved out of the RPRA in the early 1980s to publicize and advocate for the needs of single mothers and to support women who were raising children alone. The group's creative and dedicated women engaged in advocacy to increase the Family Allowance, challenged the 'spouse in the house' searches undertaken by social assistance workers who were looking for evidence of undeclared men living with single mothers, and took action relating to access to nutritious food.

Their Nutrition Project was a tangible and proactive means of increasing access to food, especially fruits and vegetables. This group started the first-ever organic community garden in 1984 on land donated by the Metro Toronto Housing Authority. They organized regular 'pick your own' trips to farms throughout the summer and fall for single moms, kids and senior citizens. They also established a free fruit-and-vegetable depot at 65 Belshaw Place. Other activities organized by this group included community potluck dinners at Park Public School and community cultural dinners featuring Jamaican, Asian and vegetarian menus. Long before community gardens, food banks and anti-poverty groups began addressing nutrition and income issues on a broader level, Sole Support Moms initiated practical approaches to food access, making a great impact in their community.

THE DREAMERS' ANTI-VIOLENCE WORK AND PEACE GARDEN

In 1995, a few courageous mothers and grandmothers, feeling compelled to take public action in response to an increase in violence affecting their community, started the Dreamers. Violent incidents involving guns were becoming more frequent and several Regent Park families were directly or closely affected by the deaths of loved ones through gun violence. The purpose of this group is to develop and implement strategies for violence prevention and to engage the community's support to promote "love, peace, unity and justice for all." Over the years they have held peace marches, vigils and memorials.

Since 1995, the Dreamers started an informal memorial to the young men of Regent Park who lost their lives through violence, planting flowers and erecting a small handwritten cardboard sign in front of the community centre at 203 Sackville Green. Despite the impermanence of the cardboard memorial, it lasted there untouched for many years. In the spring of 2005, exasperated with the slowness of bureaucratic processes that delayed their dream of establishing a permanent Peace Garden memorial in Regent Park, the Dreamers decided to move ahead on their own. One weekend, they claimed a location next to All Saints' Square, started digging in and invited young men in the community to assist. In a few short days, the location and beginnings of the garden were in place and the local and citywide groups supporting them pulled together to support their leadership. Today the Peace Garden is a large, well-established and beautiful sanctuary in the heart of the community.

The Dreamers have been recognized for their contributions to anti-violence work across the city. With no funding, staffing or resources of their own, they have made a difference in Regent Park.

2.2.2 INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY AGENCY INITIATIVES

Regent Park service providers have pioneered a number of initiatives and have a significant history of innovation in service provision. Community agencies in Regent Park have worked closely with residents over the years to plan and implement programs that meet the community's current needs as well as responding to the changing community.

The following are examples of innovative community agency initiatives that have addressed individual and systemic issues, involve residents in programs seeking to break cycles of disadvantage, and are generated in partnership with residents. These programs have also sought to provide employment and economic opportunities for residents, have had the commitment and support of senior management in organizations, and demonstrate partnership between community agencies, residents and other stakeholders.

BLACK PERSPECTIVES

In 1982, Dixon Hall supported the development of a Black cultural arts program known as Black Perspectives, which was initiated by a community worker named Charles Smith in response to organizational and community tensions at the time. The agency was struggling to shift its focus from serving the declining population of White children and youth living south of Shuter Street to addressing issues facing the newer population of Black youth in Regent Park. The program acknowledged the alienation and cultural void experienced by the growing Caribbean youth population in Regent Park by providing opportunities for creative cultural expression. Both participants and the broader community of Regent Park benefited from the success and positive outcomes of the program. Racism and tension between the West Indian and White population at the time was a growing concern. The program acknowledged the diversity of the Black Diaspora within the community and the value in bringing together their various perspectives.

Starting with creative writing workshops for youth, the program grew to include music, spoken word, dub poetry, visual art, photography and video production. In addition to supporting cultural expression by young people from the community, writers, musicians and poets were brought in from across the city to work with and mentor Regent Park youth. A book of poetry, *Sad Dances in a Field of White*, was published in 1985, and photography and painting exhibitions were held in the warehouse space.

As the program evolved over the years, participants brought their friends to join them and by 1989, while Black youth from Regent Park remained the focus of the program, others from across the city were welcomed. Black Perspectives was innovative and culturally relevant and opened doors to careers in the arts far beyond Regent Park. The program played a role in reducing tensions between cultural groups, as public performances were enjoyed by everyone and ameliorated cultural alienation which otherwise may have led to more negative experiences. Many successful artists producing work today had their start in Black Perspectives.

MEDIA ARTS: FOCUS COMMUNITY COALITION

Regent Park Focus Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse began as a demonstration project in 1991 funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. It is one of 22 projects in Ontario, with nine located in low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto. The Media Arts Program has evolved over the years into a dynamic, multidisciplinary initiative that both provides training to youth in media skills and employs Regent Park youth residents in part-time and full-time media production roles. Youth receive hands-on training in print and broadcast journalism, photography, videography, website design and development, and webcasting.

Through the use of media technology, Regent Park Focus provides a supportive environment where youth share in decision making, feel a sense of belonging, meet professionals in the field, and engage with other youth in positive activities. They explore controversial and current issues from an anti-oppression framework, express their points of view on these issues through various media and engage the broader community and all youth in thoughtful dialogue. Currently the program includes “Catch Da Flava,” a website, newspaper and radio show that is broadcast live weekly from Regent Park on CKLN 88.1.

PARENTS FOR BETTER BEGINNINGS

Parents for Better Beginnings (PFBB) is an example of a project that has been dramatically influenced and shaped by Regent Park parents in ways that were not anticipated by the coalition of service providers initially involved. PFBB was started in 1991 as one of eight research demonstration projects in Ontario with a handful of parents and a coalition of local and citywide agencies. Its purpose is to reduce the incidence of children with serious emotional and behavioural problems; promote the optimal social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children; and strengthen the capacity of parents and the local community to address the needs of its children. The focus is on children up to six years of age and their families, as well as on community issues that affect children and families.

In 1991, a coalition of more than 40 parents from diverse backgrounds in Regent Park formed a Parent Advisory Committee for PFBB and sustained their involvement and influence until the early 1990s, two years after PFBB merged with the Regent Park Community Health Centre. Within broad program parameters, each project was required to tailor its programs to local needs and to involve parents in decision making. Regent Park parents exercised their influence on hiring practices, service delivery, connecting community safety concerns with childhood development and on how research was conducted.

PFBB was one of the first organizations in Regent Park to consistently translate material into multiple languages, provide interpreters for all meetings, offer service in 12 languages and educate local service providers about the need to provide high-quality childcare versus babysitting for meetings or events. Together with local residents, PFBB initiated anti-racism education in the early 1990s with assistance from staff at six agencies. They developed anti-racism policies that were adopted not only by PFBB but by other providers in the community.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTION ALLIANCE - REGENT PARK (SCAARP)

SCAARP started in September 1999 as a broad coalition of community agencies and local schools who meet monthly. The coalition has engaged participation from a variety of front-line and senior management staff. While SCAARP has increased coordination, integration and networking amongst its members, it also has a commitment to move beyond these functions and engage in advocacy and action.

Accomplishments include developing a Regent Park Code of Conduct for children and youth, which was adopted by all SCAARP members and posted throughout their organizations. The aim is to express and reinforce desirable conduct and ensure that schools and agencies are consistent in their responses when an individual's behaviour results in suspension or a temporary removal from activities. SCAARP organized several "Take Back the Park" anti-violence marches and consulted with the City and police on redesigning outdoor environments using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) approaches and changes to the environment and lighting around the Regent Park Community Centre on Sackville Green. They also developed protocols between the police at 51 Division and schools during incidents that posed safety risks to children.

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS WORK

Regent Park residents have voiced concerns with the policing of their community since the 1970s and have been engaged in many formal and informal initiatives to address their concerns since that time. Since the early 1980s, resident groups, community members, local agencies, the City and police bodies have met to address issues related to policing in Regent Park.

In the mid- to late 1990s, police-community relations reached a critical point in what has become known as the "Riot in Regent Park" outside the Regent Park Community Centre. The scale and severity of the physical confrontation between the police and residents shocked both the community and the Toronto Police Services and brought historical conflicts to public attention, resulting in a series of initiatives that eventually led to improvements in relations.

The following points highlight some of the work related to police-community relations leading up to the Building Bridges work that began around 1997-98:

1976: The Liaison Group on Law Enforcement and Policing proposed "Project 51" to deal with poor police-community relations by establishing dialogue, but the initiative failed due to a lack of community involvement.

1982: The Regent Park Committee Against Police Harassment formed to address problems and reported to the Regent Park Teen Association.

1985: The Office of the Public Complaints Commissioner released the Regent Park Report documenting the history of police-community relations and recommending the formation of a Regent Park Police-Community Advisory Committee.

1992: The Coalition Against Police Violence (CAPV) conducted its Street Health study of health status and barriers to health for Toronto's homeless and disadvantaged people, and found that 10% of the 458 respondents reported assaults by police. CAPV requested that the Police Services Board, the Office of the Public Complaints Commissioner and the Solicitor General conduct a full inquiry into the reported behaviour of police.

- 1994: The report *Uniform Treatment – A Community Inquiry into the Policing of the Disadvantaged* interviewed 140 people between March and May 1994, including social service workers and police. The report documented problems with the complaints system and with systemic barriers between disadvantaged people and police, and made recommendations to Metro Toronto Police, the Police Services Board, the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner, and the Government of Ontario.
- 1995: The Metro Toronto Police conducted an Environmental Scan, developing service goals and objectives that included more decentralization, stronger partnerships with the public and service agencies, and ongoing communication both internally and with the public. Police worked with Community Police Liaison Committees, agencies and neighbourhood groups to collaboratively identify the areas of greatest need for police enforcement. The police training, education and development unit also developed a process for training in neighbourhood policing.
- 1996: The Report on a Study to Identify and Address Police-Community Issues in Regent Park was funded by the Police Services Board.

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS WORK: 1997-98 TO PRESENT

This work to improve policy-community relations has not been named or publicized in the same ways that programs seeking participants are. It does not operate within specific locations or times and does not have dedicated funding. But the approaches and activities undertaken have been identified as a model that can be learned from and should continue to receive support. This work does not directly target gun violence or criminal activity, but has indirectly contributed to a reduction in violent crime and has facilitated communication, increased mutual respect and understanding, reduced the two groups' stereotyping of each other, and provided programs and supports for at-risk youth.

In 1996–97, three community workers and their senior managers from Parents for Better Beginnings (PFBB), Regent Park Community Centre (RPCC) and Dixon Hall agreed to support a process that would shift their work from responding to crisis to a focus on prevention. The Toronto Police Services, the Police Services Board, the City of Toronto's Parks Forestry and Recreation Division, Regent Park Community Health Centre, and PFBB have worked together in a very successful relationship. The results of this work have included a variety of initiatives to formalize community-oriented approaches to policing in Regent Park.

SAFE WALK HOME PROGRAM

This program was initiated by SCAARP in 2000 to address concerns about children walking to and from after-school programs without supervision. It was inspired by an informal but effective practice that Dixon Hall's Children and Youth staff had initiated in the 1980s in response to the safety of children crossing major intersections to attend programs. Safe Walk Home adapted this concept to current needs, including hiring Regent Park youth as 'safe walkers.' This approach not only ensured children's safety but also provided an economic incentive to low-income youth at a time when increases in negative activities were creating fear and pressure in the community. The Gerrard Kiwanis Club eventually assumed coordination of the program with funds from the Trillium Foundation and the United Way of Greater Toronto. Until June 2006, more than 300 children a day were walked from schools to local programs and back home when these ended. The program has allowed children access to safe, high-quality after-school programs and provided part-time employment to dozens of

Regent Park youth. In June 2006, the Safe Walk Home Program was the proud recipient of the Mayor's Community Safety Award. As of September 2006, funding to continue the program is not secure and discussions between political representatives, funders and the coordinating agency are in progress.

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Pathways to Education program is a groundbreaking initiative that helps youth from Regent Park stay in high school, graduate, and move on to other opportunities—whether at university or college, in the skilled trades, in other training or in the workforce—that will help lead them to satisfying lives as contributing members of the community. The program involves advocacy through staff support, academic and social supports through tutoring and mentoring, and financial support through public transit costs and bursary money set aside for post-secondary expenses.

The program aims not only to improve the life prospects of individual students, but also to transform a community through its children. After several years of research and planning, the program started in the fall of 2001. With initial resources of just \$2,000, a two-week supply of bus tickets for 115 Grade 9 students, and four courageous staff and 60 volunteers, the program succeeded. In the 2005–06 school year, approximately 700 students were enrolled, and the program had more than 280 volunteers and an annual budget of \$2.5 million. When Pathways started in 2001, the dropout rate for Regent Park high school students was 56%; as of 2006, it has been reduced to 14%.

In 2006, Pathways Canada was established by Regent Park Community Health Centre as a separate entity to support the development and replication of this model on a national level.

2.3 THE REVITALIZATION OF REGENT PARK

Residents and service providers have been advocating for change in Regent Park for many years. The fundamental design flaws and high level of resident organizing have made redevelopment a key issue in the community since the early 1980s. Proponents of redevelopment have reflected the previous 50 years of Regent Park history, in which residents and community agencies have worked together in partnership to advocate on behalf of people who live there.

One of the first redevelopment proposals was for the northwest quadrant, north and west of Oak and Sackville streets, and was spearheaded by the Regent Park Northwest Steering Committee. This proposal was developed in conjunction with a plan to redevelop the lands owned by the Toronto Christian Resource Centre. Local activists, outside allies, developers and community service providers worked together to create a model for redevelopment that used the value of undeveloped land in Regent Park to fund the renewal of the housing along with improvements to the planning and design of that part of the neighbourhood.

After several years of pursuing this model, the proposal shifted to a parcel in the northeast quadrant of Regent Park. This latter proposal was led and driven by the Regent Park Northeast Redevelopment Working Committee (established in July 1995), comprised primarily of residents who worked on the proposal from the mid-1990s.

The Regent Park Northeast Redevelopment Working Committee took the lead in advocating redevelopment with the landlord and with all three orders of government. Until 2001, the Ontario Provincial Government was the owner of Regent Park through the Metro Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA). The Provincial Government and MTHA were engaged in a redevelopment process with the community for almost eight years. But during that time, financial constraints on the project prevented any significant progress. Several announcements of imminent redevelopment accompanied the unfulfilled provincial development plans; all resulted in disappointment. This was not an unfamiliar experience for the Regent Park community.

At that time, the Regent Park Northeast Redevelopment Working Committee and MTHA saw the need for redeveloping the whole of Regent Park in a phase-by-phase approach. In order to continue its campaign for a redeveloped Regent Park, the Committee became a subcommittee of the Regent Park Residents' Council (the predecessor of the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative), calling itself the Revitalization Committee to encompass the physical and social changes the redevelopment was to bring. This committee's role was to continue to embed the revitalization process in a broader tenant engagement that reached all parts of Regent Park. At the same time, the Government of Ontario transferred ownership of all provincially owned social housing to municipalities. In Toronto, this led to the formation of Toronto Community Housing, a municipally owned housing company. At the time of the creation of Toronto Community Housing, Toronto City Council indicated its enthusiasm for the redevelopment process that had, by then, been abandoned by the Provincial Government. Within a year, Toronto Community Housing was actively engaged with the Regent Park Residents' Council's Revitalization Committee in revitalizing Regent Park.

2.3.1 DEVELOPMENT, AND TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Toronto Community Housing recognized the lessons from the history of Regent Park. Redevelopment based on the ideas and ideals of outsiders was bound to fail. If redevelopment were to work, it had to be embedded in a full-fledged revitalization of the community, rooted in the community and driven by the residents as partners in the process. In 2002, in partnership with the Regent Park Residents' Council (later RPNI), Toronto Community Housing initiated a comprehensive community engagement process.

The process was designed to break with past experiences in which Regent Park residents would get assurances about their participation and real progress only to be disappointed. The new community engagement process set out to create a plan for the redevelopment of Regent Park that delivered on the commitment to inclusion. Everyone wanted to ensure that confidence was sustained through an ongoing, effective process that would result in a community that was revitalized physically, socially and economically. People wanted a process that supported an informed resident population empowered to engage effectively in building the future of their community. To that end, Toronto Community Housing employed a fully integrated, fully inclusive process for developing the new Regent Park plan. They wanted to ensure that there was a community process that succeeded where the others had failed.

The community engagement process began in July 2002. The engagement had three specific goals:

- To ensure that the community had a distinct voice in the planning process.
- To strengthen existing and emerging community infrastructure through the consultation process.
- To assist Toronto Community Housing staff in building new and effective long-term relationships with residents.

Over 1,000 people from all linguistic and cultural backgrounds participated in the first phase of engagement, and that participation continued to be just as high and broad throughout the community engagement process.

Toronto Community Housing hired Public Interest, a community engagement firm, to staff the community engagement process. Public Interest worked with local groups to identify community members who could play a leadership role in 'animating' a community engagement process. The Public Interest team trained the 'community animators' to coordinate discussions within the community on topics affecting the redevelopment. Animators worked with user-friendly consultation tools to guide discussions and organize responses for analysis. Using this process, community residents gathered information on the design of the new Regent Park, the commercial activity of residents, and residents' service needs and potential relocation issues.

This community engagement process, rooted in the work of RPNI and informed by community animators who both knew their own communities and responded to the priorities of the community, provided the basis for a new Regent Park plan.

Their ideas, priorities and preferences can be seen in *Community Engagement and the Regent Park Redevelopment* (Meagher and Boston 2003). The themes from that document are reflected in the following chapters as the basis of the Social Development Plan.

2.3.2 COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT

Alongside the Toronto Community Housing community engagement, several processes were put in place by service providers, tenants' groups and grassroots groups to start planning for the redevelopment process.

TENANT ORGANIZING

The residents of Regent Park have always had much to say about their community. Residents have been active in Regent Park since its inception, most notably when they fought for employment in the new, modern social housing facility, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s when, as activists on the Regent Park Residents' Association, they fought for a safe community and recreation space for children and youth.

Since the beginning of the revitalization process, several grassroots, resident-driven groups have emerged as a direct result of the lack of access to services required by their communities. Often operating on a completely volunteer basis, many groups are looking for supports to build their respective capacities to serve their communities.

THE REGENT PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE (RPNI)

The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (formerly known as the Regent Park Residents' Council) was formed in 2002 to advocate and protect the interests and assets of residents and to work in partnership through its committees and other means to identify, assess, address and evaluate issues brought forward by the community. RPNI's vision is "to create a Regent Park where everyone belongs, is heard and is celebrated." The agency's mission is "to provide leadership in building and sustaining a healthy and vibrant community."

A Tenant Participation System was created by Toronto Community Housing in 2003 to formalize representation between Toronto Community Housing tenants across the city and the corporation itself. Although the initial thinking was that the Regent Park tenant representatives and RPNI would merge into a single organization, it made more sense to create a new, broader structure for the evolving neighbourhood, while the tenant representatives assume the responsibility for communication and issue resolution with Toronto Community Housing on day-to-day operating issues such as maintenance and security. The RPNI would then have the capacity to respond to the evolving needs of all of the residents of Regent Park—the new homeowners, tenants, and businesses—as the neighbourhood is diversified through the redevelopment.

RPNI sees its role as convening, consulting, collaborating and communicating with the residents and current stakeholders in order to support engagement opportunities in Regent Park and to foster new opportunities to fill existing gaps and meet future needs. It serves as the social planning body in Regent Park over the course of the redevelopment, a convener of working groups on various arising issues, and a change promotion agent for community services.

2.3.3 SERVICE PROVIDER PLANNING

With the proposed redevelopment of Regent Park, the service agencies attempted to engage in the process. Although some agencies had their own conversation with Toronto Community Housing and the City, for the most part the initial engagement was done through the School Community Action Alliance – Regent Park. In the spring of 2003, Toronto Community Housing’s community engagement staff visited the boards of directors of each agency in Regent Park to discuss the impacts and implications of the redevelopment.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ACTION ALLIANCE – REGENT PARK (SCAARP)

SCAARP is a network of school representatives, community agencies and residents. SCAARP works to ensure that programming in the community is progressive, educational and relevant to the residents in Regent Park and the surrounding communities. SCAARP has also been instrumental in assisting residents in developing a safer community.

The SCAARP structure facilitated some of the initial agency planning for redevelopment: in fact, the support of the Regent Park Residents’ Council came through the participation of the Executive Directors as part of the SCAARP structure. The agencies agreed to take on the following roles in service planning: Dixon Hall to support employment; the Regent Park Community Health Centre to support health and safety; Yonge Street Mission to support education; and the Christian Resource Centre to support diversity and settlement.

SCAARP spent most of its meetings in 2003–04 seeking to address the issues related to the redevelopment and revitalization. There were two key moments. First, in December 2003, the agencies were invited by Toronto Community Housing through its consultants—Ideas that Matter—to a conversation at Enoch Turner School House. In a formal sense, this was the start of the collective agency planning for revitalization, as the scope and implications of the redevelopment began to become concrete. Second, in March 2004, Ideas that Matter hosted a gathering at the Central YMCA with stakeholders interested in Regent Park. Out of that gathering, a number of working groups were formed. In preparation, SCAARP developed a strategy and identified a number of issues that the committee wanted to have underscored regarding access to programs for Regent Park residents.

The development of the secondary plan and the Community Services and Facility Study provided a further opportunity for the agencies to engage with the redevelopment process. In July and September 2004, two meetings were held with SCAARP, Toronto Community Housing and a representative from the City’s planning department.

OPEN SPACE: A CONSULTATION PROCESS

In October 2004, SCAARP hosted a service providers’ meeting called “Open Space” with Toronto Community Housing to talk about the Social Development Plan. From this meeting, a group of service providers agreed to work on a planning team for a wider community event catering to service providers. This led to the Open Space meeting in December 2004.

The Open Space consultation process involved 13 sessions that ranged from community safety to childcare provision to youth issues. Following the Open Space meeting, the members of the planning group were invited to become the steering group or “Core Committee”

for the Social Development Plan. The Social Development Plan Core Committee has also transformed over the two years it has been meeting.

CHANGING LANDSCAPES

Sixteen service providers engaged in ongoing discussions at Changing Landscapes, a network of agencies that worked together to coordinate local services and develop more effective initiatives for the community.

The process began when some of the executive directors of Regent Park agencies began meeting to talk about service delivery. Through these dialogues, they became aware of a conversation about a potential tripartite agreement under discussion between the City and the Provincial and Federal Governments. In addition, from the discussions coming out of the Toronto Summit Alliance and the United Way regarding strong neighbourhoods, a changing funding landscape and service delivery expectation began to emerge.

Changing Landscapes was formed by RPNi when it was approached about hosting and leading an ongoing conversation with service providers regarding these challenges. The first gathering had a number of guest speakers, including Francis Lankin from United Way and Shirley Hoy from the City of Toronto.

In November 2005, a group of service providers participated in a presentation to the federal government funding table. Changing Landscapes has expanded to include other agency staff members and continues to meet regularly.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' TABLE

A number of agency leaders continued the Changing Landscapes discussions at a number of different levels. The executive directors of Dixon Hall, the Yonge Street Mission, the Christian Resource Centre, K Club, the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative, Regent Park Focus and the Regent Park Community Health Centre began meeting to inform themselves and their boards about the redevelopment. The group met with a number of people from the City and from Toronto Community Housing. This group also hosted a meeting with the chair and CEO of Toronto Community Housing and the chairs of their own boards.

More recently, the Executive Directors' Table has been expanded to include East End Literacy and Central Neighbourhood House and has since grown outside of the Changing Landscapes process. It continues to meet monthly to develop strategies for collaboration. In October 2006, the Executive Directors' Table initiated a series of planning sessions. They discussed service provider planning in relation to the redevelopment and the new residents who will be arriving in Regent Park at the end of Phase 1.

2.4 SUMMARY

Regent Park is a neighbourhood rooted in transition and change. Its successes are a model for accommodating change in conscious, coordinated ways that reflect the priorities and understanding of the people who live there. The systems for social development that emerged for informal resident action have evolved into stable community-based services. The protests resulting from resident disengagement have led to active and creative community engagement policies. Although sometimes only gradually, Regent Park has consistently responded to complex needs through tenant-led change and has benefited from the process of community engagement.

3. THE CONTEXT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN REGENT PARK

Throughout its history, Regent Park has shown that engaging residents in the development of initiatives designed to address their needs is the only route to success. The history of Regent Park has shown the community to be continually devising innovative and effective tools to tackle the barriers they face. The issues, challenges and opportunities have changed over the years, but the dynamic and vigorous efforts of the community have continued to mark a path forward, and when the residents have been able to engage decision makers, funders and their housing providers in pursuing that path, their successes have been impressive.

Today, Regent Park finds itself facing specific challenges that reflect the demographics of the community and the political and social context in which they find themselves.

3.1 CITY-WIDE CONTEXT

During the recent terms of Council, the City of Toronto has placed increasing emphasis on identifying vulnerable neighbourhoods and targeting resources to improve outcomes for their residents.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy was approved by Toronto City Council in October 2006 and is a civic strategy for neighbourhood building and for promoting strong and healthy communities. It is grounded in initiatives such as the City's Strategic Plan adopted in August 2000, the Social Development Strategy adopted in December 2001 and the Community Safety Plan and Neighbourhood Action process adopted in March 2004. The Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy also responds to identified Council priorities related to strengthening at-risk neighbourhoods.

3.1.1 STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH

This strong neighbourhood approach advances the City's ability to monitor the health and well-being of neighbourhoods and to prioritize neighbourhoods for investment. The strong neighbourhood methodology combines measures of socio-economic health and well-being with measures of geographical access to community services and facilities. The methodology provides a clear picture of which neighbourhoods lack the civic structures and community services identified as basic requirements for a strong and healthy community. Using this innovative approach, 13 of Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods were identified as having a higher degree of social need and poorer access to necessary social services and facilities.

3.1.2 REGENT PARK AS A PRIORITY COMMUNITY

Regent Park is not defined as one of the 13 "priority neighbourhoods" because it does not meet the criteria regarding a relative lack of community services and facilities. Having been identified as an area of high need for many years, Regent Park is served by a strong, active network of community-based services.

The current redevelopment process provides a new focus on Regent Park and the neighbourhood building initiatives that will strengthen the community, and is a priority for the City of Toronto. The development and planning process for the Regent Park Social Development Plan, led by the City and Toronto Community Housing over the past three years, is an example of a different approach to the Neighbourhood Action process within a community with a significant, mature service sector.

The City of Toronto has also recently made targeted investments and commitments in Regent Park, including support for social planning and community-based strategic planning, a child care centre in Phase 1 of redevelopment, and a pool in early Phase 2.

3.1.3 REGENT PARK AS A MODEL

The Social Development Plan engagement process was expanded beyond City services and those delivered by community based agencies—it included a broad range of residents, businesses, faith groups, representatives from the education, child welfare and health sectors and other local stakeholders. Regent Park will serve as a model for other large-scale neighbourhood-based redevelopment in communities of high need.

3.1.4 GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The Social Development Plan creates a common agenda with agreed-upon issues, community objectives and a set of neighbourhood strategies that will form a Plan of Action over the coming years of redevelopment. The Plan of Action will allow the City and Toronto Community Housing to take advantage of opportunities and will facilitate the creation of “synergies” in the areas of investment of resources, using resources differently, and creating efficiencies in delivery systems.

Implementing the Social Development Plan, however, will require the financial and decision-making involvement of all orders of government. The City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing will not be able to implement the Social Development Plan without the cooperation and financial support of the other orders of government.

3.2 SNAPSHOT OF THE CURRENT NEIGHBOURHOOD

Regent Park is the oldest and largest social housing complex in Canada. Built in the late 1940s, the complex was expected to be the answer to creating a healthy community, replacing the slums that had occupied the boundaries of Regent Park prior to the creation of this “Garden City” model housing complex. This section provides an overview of the current neighbourhood, drawing from information in the Regent Park Community Services and Facilities Study (2004, pp. 8–16).

In total, there are approximately 7,500 known residents in Regent Park living in 2,083 rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) units over an area covering 28 hectares (69 acres). The population comes closer to 10,000 when we include the uncounted population within the community (homeless people, undeclared family members and guests).

CHANGING POPULATION

There is considerable fluctuation in the population of Regent Park as families of various sizes move in and out. Prior to the redevelopment, approximately 13% of the units changed tenants every year; therefore, population changes can be significant. A single occupant in a one-bedroom unit can be replaced by a couple; a three-bedroom unit can hold anywhere from three to six people. Recent occupancy levels have been either static or decreasing. However, these rates can change rapidly depending on who enters the community from the Social Housing Connections waiting list.

ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE AND IMMIGRATION

New residents are increasingly recent immigrants, with 25% of the population arriving in Canada during the past five years. Almost 2,000 new immigrants arrived in and around Regent Park in the last five years, and over 2,000 arrived in the five years before that. More than half of the newest immigrants in the Regent Park area arrived from mainland China and Bangladesh. Immigrants from Vietnam, Somalia, Jamaica and Sri Lanka compose the majority of the remainder. Today, 63% of residents speak a language other than English as a first language. The most striking aspect of language data in Regent Park is the sudden emergence of the Bengali-speaking community. The Bengali community barely registered in the 1996 census but now dominates the language groups. The Tamil-speaking community continues to be a large presence in Regent Park, but most other language groups are declining in population and are playing smaller roles in the community.

AGE

The Regent Park population has a high proportion of households with large numbers of children relative to the rest of the Toronto population. There is a very high proportion of children 14 years of age and under in Regent Park (37%) compared to the city average of 17.5%. In total, 56.4% of the population are youth aged 24 and under. But census tracts that include Regent Park have experienced a sharp decline in youth population (15–25 years of age) over the last 10 years.

According to Toronto Community Housing, seniors make up only 4% of Regent Park residents, and frail seniors (those aged 75 and over) make up less than 1% of Regent Park residents. An examination of the last 10 years of census data in tracts that contain Regent Park

reinforces the identification of a trend toward residents leaving in their later years. The number of 55- to 65-year-olds residing in Regent Park in 2001 was approximately 36% fewer than the number of 45- to 55-year-olds living in Regent Park in 1991, suggesting that many of the older adults living in Regent Park in 1991 moved away. The trend deepens for older age groups, with 55% fewer 65- to 75-year-olds in 2001 than there were 55- to 65-year-olds in 1991. A similar decline in the St. James Town neighbourhood suggests that low-income seniors are not choosing to take apartments in the inner city at the same rate as they have in the past.

Though they represent a modest percentage of the population, the large total number of seniors concentrated in a few buildings and the large proportion of them who live without family supports or other resources make them a population that requires special attention.

INCOME

Regent Park (North) remains in the lowest-income census tract in Ontario, ranking seventh among all urban census tracts in Canada in 1990 and the only census tract in Ontario with an average family income of \$20,645, which is more than 50% below the national average of \$50,091. The second lowest-income census tract in Ontario contained Regent Park (South), with an average family income of \$26,912. In 1990, 68% of residents in North Regent and 60% of residents in South Regent lived below the Statistics Canada low-income cut-off. A decade later, this proportion had increased to 77% of residents in North Regent; while the rate remained the same in South Regent (60% of residents in South Regent lived below the low income cut-off in 2000).

Though virtually all Regent Park families fall below the poverty line, there is also a significant proportion of working families. Toronto Community Housing tenant records for residents of Regent Park indicate that 36% of households derive their primary income from employment, with an average of \$20,793 per family coming from that source. Over 100 working families in Regent Park earn incomes below \$10,000 per year, due in part to low minimum wages and the preponderance of part-time and casual work, especially for women in Regent Park. Only 45% of families in rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units in Regent Park receive income from social assistance; they average \$11,770 from that source.

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Regent Park is composed primarily of large families. Thirty percent of all units in Regent Park have four or more bedrooms. Over 40% of households have four or five members, who make up approximately 49% of the population. More than 10% of households have six or more members and 2% of households have eight or more members. Statistics Canada data indicates that family size is growing in low-cost rental accommodation across the East Downtown as seniors move away and are replaced by families who are better able to afford inner-city rents. Demographic shifts and immigration patterns appear to be reinforcing the trend to larger families in RGI units in the East Downtown.

Lone-parent families now account for 37.3% of all families in the census tracts that include Regent Park. This is a significant decrease from 1991, when lone-parent families made up 47% of families in these tracts. The economic circumstances of female-led lone-parent families (which make up 90% of lone-parent families in Regent Park) remain poor, with average

household incomes of \$18,161, or just over half the \$35,823 average income for couple-led families.

EDUCATION

Statistics Canada data suggests that education levels are fairly high in Regent Park and are rising. According to the 2001 census, 25% of Regent Park residents over 20 years old have been to university and 17.8% have obtained at least a Bachelor of Arts degree. Almost 50% have completed high school and only 13.8% failed to enter high school at all. All of those numbers are significant improvements from a decade earlier, when almost twice as many people failed to enter high school (25.6%) and just over one-third as many had earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (6.2%). These sharp increases likely reflect changes in immigration patterns; the Canadian immigration point system favours well-educated candidates and newcomers to Regent Park are far more likely to have a university education than in the past.

3.3 REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Toronto Community Housing proposes, over a 15-year period, to replace all existing buildings in Regent Park with new RGI housing and additional market housing. Toronto Community Housing estimates that more than double the existing 2,083 units can be accommodated on the site. The actual number of new units will depend on their size and the built form selected. The proposed plan for Regent Park reintroduces much of the original street pattern and reconnects the area with surrounding neighbourhoods. A key feature of the proposal is a large park fronting on Dundas Street. An additional park is proposed adjacent to the Nelson Mandela Park Public School grounds.

Regent Park will fundamentally change as large numbers of new residential units are added. When the redevelopment proposal is realized, people with a variety of incomes and housing needs will be living in Regent Park. There will be townhouses and condominiums, market housing units and co-ops. RGI and market units will be integrated within blocks and in some cases within buildings. In addition, much-needed commercial space, spaces for community economic development and services, and live-work opportunities will be developed. This mix of people and uses will create a neighbourhood typical of many Toronto communities.

Based on the best information available at this time, this report assumes that once redeveloped, Regent Park will have approximately 5,100 residential units, of which approximately 1,770 will be social housing replacement units provided for within the Regent Park Secondary Plan area. Any social housing units that are not replaced within that area are required to be replaced in the designated east downtown area. In addition to the social housing, 3,300 units of market for-sale housing will be built along with a target of creating an additional 700 affordable rental units as part of the development program. A target of up to 300 units of affordable home ownership has also been identified, subject to the availability of funding.

The redevelopment will be undertaken in six phases over a 12- to 15-year period. The phasing of redevelopment will allow a more orderly relocation of households affected by the redevelopment in Regent Park and the private market absorption of the new market units.

Each phase includes a planning process, relocation of residents, demolition and construction of buildings and facilities, and the return of tenants and the arrival of new homeowners moving into the new buildings. The relocation, demolition and construction stages of each of the phases are expected to be completed within two years, with each subsequent phase starting once the preceding phase is complete. The planning for each new phase will overlap with the construction period in the previous phase, to enable the demolition and construction cycles to proceed without lengthy interruptions.

URBAN PLANNING PROCESS AND THE 'HOLDING' SYMBOL

The urban planning process required by the City of Toronto sets out several mechanisms for monitoring the redevelopment of Regent Park. The 'Holding symbol' on development is one of these mechanisms. The Holding symbol means that the development of the land cannot begin without City approval. Lifting this holding symbol requires that Toronto Community Housing meet a number of technical requirements in order to build the next phase. Among those requirements are documents and reports that assess the success of Toronto Community Housing initiatives undertaken in the previous phase, assess the emerging shape of the community and report on strategies for moving forward.

Three specific documents are discussed here, as they provide valuable information about each phase of redevelopment. The information in these documents is important to phase-by-phase planning for all stakeholders involved in the redevelopment.

1. HOUSING ISSUES UPDATE

Before each phase, Toronto Community Housing has to provide a Housing Issues

Update, which describes how many units of each type of housing have been built in order to ensure that the redevelopment strategy is proceeding according to plan. The Update also reports on the proposed housing and, in particular, monitors and ensures the replacement of social housing units and rent-gear-to-income (RGI) subsidies.

2. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Urban Design Guidelines outline the built form for the overall redevelopment and provide an update within each phase that guides the resolution of urban design issues presented by the unique circumstances of each phase. The Guidelines suggest that the requirement for an update will be satisfied through a Development Context Plan prepared for each phase. In Phase 1, the Development Context Plan addresses matters such as building setbacks and step backs, the design of the local parkette adjacent to the future Christian Resource Centre development, streetscape standards, a tree preservation and planting plan, the location of tall buildings permitted in the phase by the zoning bylaw, and access to parking and service areas for the blocks in the phase.

3. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGY UPDATE

Another condition of removing the holding symbol from future phases will be to monitor and update the Facilities Strategy. At the beginning of each phase, Toronto Community Housing will produce a Community Facilities Strategy Update that describes what community facilities are being created in the upcoming phase and how these facilities are meeting the changing needs of the community. Before the Hold is lifted for each phase, the Community Facilities Strategy Update will catalogue exist-

ing community facilities, unmet facility needs and plans for addressing gaps in facilities over this phase and future phases. The update will also be informed by the implementation process and experience related to the Social Development Plan.

RELOCATION

Recognizing that relocation is among the greatest concerns for Regent Park residents, Toronto Community Housing developed its relocation strategies through a community engagement process. But any relocation, no matter how carefully devised, is stressful for residents. Toronto Community Housing, the City of Toronto and community agencies have worked on an ongoing basis to try to mitigate some of the challenges associated with relocation. There are many people from many backgrounds in Regent Park whose life experiences will make moving even more stressful than would be the case otherwise.

Residents' relocation during the redevelopment is disruptive to social networks and to the social support mechanisms upon which they rely. Relocated tenants need assistance and support to go through the transition. This includes a continuum of service provision that allows residents to receive the same services or similar services when they move into their new neighbourhoods and that foster re-connection to support services when they return to Regent Park.

Fluctuations in population also add instability to the neighbourhood. With changes in population and high turnover rates during the redevelopment, service provider planning based on demographics is more difficult. Information on the relocations and timelines along with advanced planning for population movements are helpful in offsetting some of the planning difficulties during the redevelopment.

The Policies and Practices for the Regent Park Relocation (2004) address a number of these issues, including a system for letting tenants move close to home if they prefer, and providing ongoing support and connection to service provider organizations in Regent Park or in their new community.

The Tenant Agreement for Regent Park was developed through community consultation and addresses a number of key points. Residents can choose to be relocated to a different unit in Regent Park or to a Toronto Community Housing building in another community. At the completion of each phase of redevelopment, all relocated residents have an absolute right of return to Regent Park. Residents may also choose to stay in the community to which they have relocated. Toronto Community Housing ensures the right of return by tracking the number of tenants who choose not to return in order to ensure adequate numbers of units for returning residents. Toronto Community Housing will make arrangements for residents' moves and will hire movers to help them move. The costs of reconnecting utilities and other moving costs will be paid by Toronto Community Housing.

At the end of each phase, tenants will move back in and new condo and townhouse owners will also move in. Both groups will be adjusting to living in Regent Park, to living with each other, and to accessing and building support networks in the community. These move-in times provide an opportunity for community engagement with all residents in the phase, as well as valuable chances for cross-tenure community building.

THE PHASE 1 RELOCATION

In 2005, Toronto Community Housing began the relocation process for Phase 1 in Regent Park. About 370 households, or 1,160 people, were relocated over nine months.

Households moved to the following areas:

Regent Park: 40%

Surrounding neighbourhoods: 48%

Other neighbourhoods: 8%

Left Toronto Community Housing/rent-geared-to-income housing: 4%

No households were evicted through the relocation process in Phase 1. Throughout the Phase 1 relocation there was a reference group that provided ongoing and immediate feedback to the Relocation Office.

Toronto Community Housing will conduct evaluations of all the relocations in order to build upon lessons learned in each phase.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES RESULTING FROM REDEVELOPMENT

4.1 NEW RESIDENTS

The Regent Park Community Services and Facilities Study (2004) looked at population changes in rental and market-rate condominiums in the East Downtown between 1991 and 2001. The following sections are based on information from the Community Services and Facilities Study (2004, pp. 54–60). The projections have been adjusted to reflect some minor changes in the development planning.

The study found that in new townhouses and condominiums in Toronto's East Downtown, family size tends to be small, with few children, and new developments tend to be targeted to higher-income households seeking property ownership opportunities. Assuming that new apartment-form buildings in the Regent Park area are occupied by households similar to those in most of the East Downtown during the last 10 years, new apartments in Regent Park will have an average household size of 1.5–1.6 persons. Making the same assumption about houses and townhouses, new house-form units in Regent Park will have an average household size of 2.5 persons.

CHILDREN

In apartment-form market housing, trends are strongly toward condominiums housing young adults and few children. For instance, the new townhouses at Queen and River Streets and the newer residents in Treffan Court match the Cabbagetown trend—only small numbers of children are moving in, and most population growth in the area is from higher-income couples with no children. The population of adults rose at three times the rate of the population increase for children.

Children under 15 years of age were close to seven percent (6.8%) of new residents between 1991 and 2001 within the census tract south of Regent Park and in close proximity to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood (located two census tracts immediately south of Regent Park). Seven percent is assumed to be a fair assessment of the average population of children in the new Regent Park apartments.

New house-form buildings have a household size of 0.9 persons more than apartment-form buildings. Assuming, at the highest extreme, that all of these additional family members are children, house-form dwellings could be assumed to have a 17% proportion of children, an estimate well in excess of the average for census tracts that include a significant number of market house-form dwellings.

YOUTH

Youth 15–24 years of age represented slightly more than four percent (4.1%) of new residents arriving between 1991 and 2001 in the two census tracts immediately south of Regent Park, where apartments overwhelmingly dominated all new dwellings. Therefore, new apartment-form buildings in the Regent Park area are assumed to attract a population of which only about 4% are youth. Youth populations in the areas directly south of Regent Park have fallen sharply over the period of development (down 17%), suggesting the absence of an

overwhelming influx of youth into that new market housing. A generous estimate of the youth population in new housing could be arrived at by taking the average youth population for predominantly house-form census tracts in the area—which are consistently in the 9% range. It is also worth noting that in the two census tracts that include Regent Park, the youth (15- to 25-year-old) population fell by 9.1% and 2.9% respectively.

SENIORS

Senior citizens over age 65 accounted for close to eight percent (7.9%) of population growth between 1991 and 2001 in the two census tracts immediately south of Regent Park, where apartments overwhelmingly dominated all new dwellings. Therefore, new apartment-form buildings in the Regent Park area are assumed to have a seniors population of 7.9%.

In the census tract where house-form dwellings were the largest part of development growth, seniors populations have fallen sharply over the period of development (down 21%), suggesting the absence of an overwhelming influx of seniors into that new market housing. The comparatively high seniors population in adjacent neighbourhoods reflects an aging-in-place phenomenon in Cabbagetown that would not necessarily affect new market housing in the East Downtown, making it difficult to accurately assess the seniors population. Taking the East Downtown average as an arbitrary tool, however, would provide a seniors population of 10% of the total population of people living in house-forms.

ETHNICITY, IMMIGRATION AND LANGUAGE

The number of new Canadians settling in and around North Regent Park and in Moss Park has remained high. South Asian Muslims and mainland-Chinese immigrants have replaced East Africans as the fastest-growing groups. While the East Downtown as a whole has a varied immigration pattern, there is a higher concentration of Filipino, South Korean and Eastern European immigrants north of Wellesley Street in St. James Town.

The East Downtown has become a centre for growing Tamil and Bangladeshi populations. These groups may be drawn to new lower-cost market units in the area. This trend is reflected in the steady displacement of Anglophones from the Regent Park area. New immigrants continue to settle in Regent Park, arriving primarily from non-English-speaking nations. English as a home language fell by 28% in South Regent Park and by 50% in North Regent Park over the last 10 years. While immigration has slowed somewhat over the last five years, there remains a steady increase in families whose first language is not English, along with a steady departure of English speakers.

INCOME

Sharp increases in the highest income categories have been occurring for the last 10 years in almost all areas in the East Downtown. Over the last five years, a steady decrease in the number of households earning \$20,000 or less has occurred in all communities. New development has generally been targeted to higher-income households seeking ownership opportunities. Wealthier individuals purchase single-family resale homes.

According to Statistics Canada, the creation of 170 new dwellings in the census tract that included South Regent Park coincided with the addition of 175 households with incomes over \$60,000. These new dwellings were predominately townhouses. In St. Lawrence, the

creation of 755 new apartments coincided with an increase of 580 households with incomes over \$60,000. The households occupying new market units in Regent Park are anticipated to have incomes in excess of \$60,000 in most cases.

4.2 ONGOING POPULATION SHIFTS DURING REDEVELOPMENT

The existing population in Regent Park consists of 7,500 people living in 2,083 units that will all be replaced. The new population occupying market accommodations is projected to be a total of 5,102 people, with 4,426 living in apartment-style dwellings and 676 living in house-form dwellings. When the redevelopment is complete, the total population of Regent Park is expected to increase to about 12,500, an increase of 40%.

These increases in population occur at the end of each of the six phases, leading to an average increase of 850 new Regent Park residents in market housing every two years. At the same time, about 1,250 Toronto Community Housing residents will be moving back into their newly rebuilt units. But almost immediately after these 2,100 new residents move in at the end of a phase, about 1,250 Toronto Community Housing residents are to be relocated at the beginning of the next phase, some of them to units within Regent Park. Added to the 13% annual tenant turnover rate in Toronto Community Housing units, the shifts in population will occur as a result of both the influx of new residents in market housing and the changes in tenant population.

While these population changes are significant, fluctuations in demographics are expected to be comparatively modest due to the phased structure of the redevelopment. The only group that undergoes significant growth in each phase is English-speaking adults aged 25–50 with household incomes over \$60,000 per year. Shifts in ethnicity, home language, and numbers of children, youth, and seniors are gradual, relatively consistent and are unlikely to have significant interim implications for service planning or neighbourhood activity.

For instance, assuming that 225 (19.4%) of the 1,160 tenants relocated in Phase 1 are youth aged 15–24, and 35 (4.1%) of the incoming residents in market housing in Phase 1 are youth, the overall number of youth moving into Regent Park at the end of Phase 1 is about 260. However, considering that a similar number of youth will be relocated at the beginning of Phase 2, this overall increase in youth population occurs gradually.

Key spikes in population and demographics will occur in the months between phases, when new and relocated residents have moved in but when the phased relocation has not yet occurred.