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1. SOCIAL INCLUSION IS A CRITICAL PRIORITY

Regent Park residents began the redevelopment effort 25 years ago because they wanted their community to be revitalized not only in terms of physical infrastructure, but in terms of social structures as well. Regent Park residents put a high priority on ending the isolation of their community, which had been cut off from the city and other communities both physically and socially. As a result, the community has experienced adverse impacts on income, employment, opportunity, influence and the basic services most neighbourhoods take for granted.

The current redevelopment process creates a tremendous opportunity to break that isolation and reconnect Regent Park to the rest of the city and its benefits. Research on communities shows that neighbourhoods with mixed incomes have access to a broader range of resources and information that help the community, and the individuals living there, to succeed. Low-income communities have fewer economic resources and their social networks are less likely to connect them to economic opportunities and powerful decision makers. These circumstances are at the root of well-documented ‘neighbourhood effects’ that cause people in low-income communities to get fewer jobs, get less education and face more crime than low-income residents in other neighbourhoods.

However, achieving the goal of reconnecting Regent Park with the surrounding city will require a well-managed process to build social inclusion opportunities that can integrate different groups in the community in a balanced, equitable way. Redevelopment projects that promote social inclusion across lines of income, tenure and ethnicity tend to succeed because those communities are more likely to help all residents achieve improved outcomes in their lives. Neighbourhoods that do not create those connections simply redraw the geographic lines of isolation more tightly, and little is achieved.
1.1 CURRENT RESIDENTS VALUE SOCIAL INCLUSION

Since 2002, Regent Park residents, service providers and grassroots groups have expressed their views on redevelopment through well-documented community engagement programs and community consultations. More recently, residents have raised issues concerning social inclusion at a number of community meetings and consultations. In their discussions, residents have consistently expressed concern about the creation of “two Regent Parks”—one for market housing and one for rent-geared-to-income housing. Participants said that segregating housing within Regent Park is unacceptable and that integrating housing units is critical to the development of a healthy community.

Participants at the Open Space meeting in 2004 also pointed out the need for equal access to resources and services in the new community. They wanted consistent security and maintenance services for all residents and equal access to green space and special amenities. Equal access, they argued, is crucial to the development of this community because segregation will lead to discrimination based on where people live and will further reinforce the stigma that the redevelopment itself is attempting to combat. Residents said that integrated and inclusive communities provide a platform to facilitate positive self-esteem and self-worth for all residents in a community. Integration helps children, adults and families see themselves as equal participants in the community.

1.2 RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE HIGH PRIORITY ON INTEGRATION

Residents’ feelings about social inclusion accurately reflect the findings from best-practice literature on mixed-income communities discussed in Part II. Successfully integrating different income and cultural groups on a balanced and equitable basis is the most important element in the success for a new mixed-income neighbourhood. This requires careful planning to ensure that the necessary systems are in place so that residents can and do interact and have the supports they need to interact on an equitable basis.

1.3 NEW REGENT PARK RESIDENTS WILL LIKELY SHARE THE CONCERN FOR INTEGRATION

In 2006, research was carried out with newer homeowners in the East Downtown. These residents were selected because they were likely to have views similar to those homeowners who would purchase market units in Regent Park in the future. These consultations acted as a “proxy” for the new homeowner group that could not be directly consulted. These consultations included three focus groups held in the East Downtown neighbourhoods and a survey conducted by telephone with East Downtown homeowners.

In the survey, over 75% of homeowners in the East Downtown indicated that they were interested in engaging in integrated community activities in a new mixed-income neighbourhood. This research points to specific areas where social cohesion can be promoted and can lead to effective social inclusion across tenures, incomes and ethnicities in the new mixed-income neighbourhood. These findings are corroborated by the experience of other mixed-income neighbourhoods in the East Downtown, such as St. Lawrence and Gooderham and Worts, where regular integrated services and activities are assets to social inclusion.
By building social inclusion, the new residents of Regent Park can join the current residents as full partners in a diverse community that represents the future of our city.

1.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION IS CENTRAL TO THE MISSION OF RENEWING REGENT PARK

Social inclusion is a widely shared priority, an important mechanism for ensuring the benefits of revitalization and, according to research, a necessary element of a successful mixed-income community.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Stakeholders in Regent Park should place high priority on social inclusion as an objective in all aspects of the work of revitalization because it allows the diverse assets in the neighbourhood to be applied effectively to the shared needs of the community.
2. CASUAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND INFORMAL STRUCTURES PLAY KEY ROLES IN SOCIAL INCLUSION

Neighbourhoods benefit when residents participate in a variety of activities that promote social cohesion. These activities are often not formal neighbourhood-building activities but informal interactions such as using local services, attending garage sales, playing sports, and contributing to local newsletters. In mixed-income communities in the East Downtown, neighbourhood associations or groups of residents from particular condominium or rental buildings organize many of these activities.

2.1 INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

The focus groups with residents in the East Downtown carried out in 2006 indicated that future residents will favour integrated activities that are informal, recreational, casual and opportunity-driven. Focus group participants were not interested in participating in formal community building groups such as service clubs or membership-based organizations; rather, they were interested in casual ways to interact with their neighbours. This finding was reinforced by the a survey of East Downtown homeowners in 2006, in which respondents said that they would be interested in community festivals and other activities but would be less likely to join clubs with formal membership.

In the nearby Gooderham and Worts community, residents participating in focus groups said that they were involved in a range of local activities. Garage sales, theatre productions and photo exhibits drew together a wide range of people from different parts of the neighbourhood. A group from within the buildings helped to develop a library in the community room. Neighbourhood Watch was also an important activity, as was involvement with fellow members of the community on wider city issues. Dog walking was an activity that facilitated conversations among neighbours and a ‘dog-friendly’ building policy encouraged this type of interaction. A newsletter in Gooderham and Worts carried personal information, such as births and weddings, personal achievements and issues of interest to residents. A local developer initially subsidized the local café, rightly anticipating that it would serve as a community meeting point and would create opportunities for social cohesion as residents moved into the neighbourhood. It should be noted that as the market grew, the café was able to become a profitable business.

Activities noted in the nearby St. Lawrence Neighbourhood include community picnics, community festivals and garage sales organized by the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association. There is an annual barbecue that is jointly organized by the management of all the buildings. In the River Street neighbourhood, residents talked about community clean-up activities that they did together when they first moved in.

Regent Park has a rich history of community agency involvement in creating such social activities. Community service providers organize community gardens. Sunday in the Park, for example, is a local festival organized by various service providers and residents. The Regent Park Film Festival is another example of a large public activity that is organized by service providers in Regent Park and serves a community integration function.
These large events and activities would greatly appeal to new residents as well as to current populations and serve as important occasions for social cohesion in the neighbourhood. These established community opportunities can be augmented by smaller and less formal events. Community-wide garage sales like those that occur annually in Trinity-Bellwoods Park can serve such a function. So can sports leagues, cultural festivals, fun fairs and performance nights at local schools. Many communities gather successfully around seasonal celebrations like the Kensington Market solstice celebration, the First Night Celebration in Gooderham and Worts, or the Halloween celebrations in Dufferin Grove Park. Furthermore, interaction need not be event-driven. Casual shopping opportunities, such as those offered by a local café or a weekly community market, also serve this function. These activities can also be augmented considerably by the cultural and religious celebrations discussed in Section 2.3 and 2.4 below. Over the course of the redevelopment, Regent Park will benefit considerably from widespread participation in these informal community-based activities.

In addition to integrating people from different backgrounds within Regent Park, the redevelopment will address the community’s isolation from its neighbours and create access and opportunities for people in nearby neighbourhoods to interact in the Regent Park neighbourhood.

The data from the focus groups and survey conducted in 2006 reveal that residents of neighbouring communities take a great deal of interest in the Regent Park redevelopment. The 2006 survey of East Downtown homeowners showed that many people who do not want to live in Regent Park still want to participate in events and use facilities in the new community. The reduction of barriers and the growth of activities that would appeal to new homeowners in Regent Park are likely to facilitate participation by people in neighbouring communities as well. This broader integration meets goals clearly set by current residents of Regent Park who, since the earliest community consultations on redevelopment, have identified reconnecting with neighbouring communities as a priority. Regent Park will no longer have to function in isolation but will, like most Toronto neighbourhoods, share links, social networks, information and resources with its neighbours.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

Local social service agencies, in partnership with Toronto Community Housing, the City of Toronto and interested individuals, will continue wherever possible to develop activities that appeal to a broad range of residents across income, tenure and ethnicity.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

These programs and activities will, where appropriate, be promoted broadly across the East Downtown to encourage participation from and integration with neighbouring communities.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Stakeholders will make an effort to identify and support the acquisition of the new resources needed to support this programming wherever possible.
2.2 COMMUNITY GARDENS

There are approximately 200 community garden plots currently located in seven sites in Regent Park. These gardens are grown on Toronto Community Housing property through programs organized and facilitated by local community agencies. While the gardens are a source of fresh produce for the households in the neighbourhood and provide recreational opportunities, they also serve a social integration function. Community gardens have been shown, through numerous studies and through pilot projects conducted by the City of Toronto, to be a highly effective means of mobilizing communities and creating community connection. Regent Park gardeners from different cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds get together, plan together, plant together, harvest together and work together on gardens. This bridging function will be important in the new Regent Park.

Residents of Regent Park have also developed a unique role for gardening through the “Peace Garden”, is a memorial flower garden for people killed in Regent Park. It was created and is tended by community leaders in Regent Park with the involvement of youth who are at risk of becoming involved in crime and violence. It demonstrates both a commitment to a healthy community and a type of shared activity that helps to build a healthier community.

There is increasing demand for community garden space that offers valuable new opportunities to build social inclusion through engagement of people from different backgrounds. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is now developing a plan for park use for the redevelopment and will work collaboratively with all stakeholders and with the community to explore opportunities for community gardens. This collaboration should also consider models for the management of community gardens and criteria for the allocation of community garden space.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Parks Forestry and Recreation Division of the City of Toronto should consider opportunities for including community gardens within the development of new park space, and discuss the issue of community gardens including the Peace Garden, in their public consultation on the development of new park space.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Toronto Community Housing and local community service providers will continue to work with Regent Park tenants at a local level to create opportunities, where possible, for gardening and food production in new buildings, which may include spaces in courtyards and balconies and on rooftops.
2.3 CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

2.3.1 CULTURAL COMMUNITIES ARE GROWING THE REGENT PARK AREA

Census data shows steady increases in immigrant populations in private market housing in the Regent Park area. Bengali and Mandarin-speaking residents are residing in increasing numbers in lower-cost rental units in apartment towers in the area and in all forms of housing in the area south of Regent Park. The immigrant population in St. Lawrence rose over 60% in the least 10 years while the population rose only 37%. This continued growth in diversity creates opportunities for cultural connections to play a constructive role in building social inclusion in Regent Park. But these cultural connections will need to be fostered. Ethnicity can link residents from different income groups, but the differences between them will also be substantial. Facilitating cultural activities and cultural networks will need to be a conscious part of the design of community spaces and community programs.

2.3.2 CULTURAL COMMUNITIES ASSIST IN INTEGRATION

As pointed out in Part II, communities based on common culture, language or ethnicity can play an important integrating role across income and tenure. People who share a culture have a lot in common even if their economic circumstances vary, and so are able to link residents across income and tenure. People from cultural and language-based communities who have themselves confronted the challenges of integration often appreciate the need to build on diversity and welcome people from different backgrounds. Consultations undertaken by the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative in 2006 revealed that newcomer and immigrant communities in Regent Park put a high priority on developing and strengthening understanding between different cultural groups and the wider community. Respondents suggested that the recognition of the assets of different resident cultures can help to foster a community that respects difference and works hard to create an integrated and diverse community.

Regent Park residents have expressed a desire to build community solidarity and develop strategies to combat the poor public perception of their neighbourhood. This situation provides many opportunities to increase community-wide engagement and participation. Local events and celebrations such as Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, the Regent Park Film Festival and Sunday in the Park all offer opportunities for cross-cultural engagement as well as a chance for each community to express its pride in its cultural heritage.
2.3.3 CULTURAL COMMUNITIES NEED SUPPORT TO PLAY INCLUSIVE ROLES WELL

In the Community Plan developed by the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI), residents indicated that they would like to preserve their cultural and religious diversity and beliefs, but often struggle to find the opportunities to do this. Residents also indicated a strong desire to overcome persistent cultural stereotypes. In consultations, residents called for a space for various cultural activities. Providing a space where people can comfortably meet together is important; it provides a much-needed cultural outlet and further enables children to learn about and be proud of their own heritage and countries of origin. Finding appropriate space, however, especially for large cultural events like Eid and Diwali, is difficult in Regent Park. An arts and cultural centre could be a place that provides adequate space for different cultural groups to celebrate and share their culture and to celebrate and share in the cultural activities of neighbours.

Residents also advocate for increased opportunities for community gatherings; cultural exchanges; the integration of cultural learning and exchange activities into community events and programs; and anti-racism, anti-oppression and cultural sensitivity training. Such opportunities can lead to the development of local networks and foster socialization.

Consultations also identified a need to develop a mechanism for receiving new residents coming to Regent Park and connecting them to the communities. For example, a welcoming committee could reach out to new residents to orient them and engage them in community events and activities as a means of building trust and introducing communication between established and newer residents.

The integrating role of cultural communities can be facilitated by creating accessible, affordable space for cultural activities. An arts and cultural centre, for example, could provide an opportunity for cultural groups in Regent Park to hold celebrations and other activities.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Toronto Community Housing, the City of Toronto and local agencies will investigate, where possible, opportunities for creating space that can support the integrating role of cultural communities.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Community service providers, cultural groups and RPNI will work together in consultation with Toronto Community Housing to develop a welcoming system that augments the orientation processes already in place at Toronto Community Housing and builds on the inclusive capacity of cultural communities.
2.3.4 GRASSROOTS GROUPS CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL COHESION WHEN ADEQUATELY RESOURCED

Grassroots groups in Regent Park are small resident-driven groups, often providing, convening or organizing services for members of particular linguistic or cultural communities. These organizations can be seen as both social networks and service providers. They deliver various kinds of services to segments of the populations, often because they identify the mainstream community service structure as inaccessible, largely for linguistic or cultural reasons. The grassroots groups enable residents to obtain services and engage with other residents in the area, thereby increasing their range of social connections. The organizers of grassroots services, who are often single-person operations, play leadership roles in their cultural communities as well.

While grassroots groups are a valuable asset to Regent Park, they are not referenced in any of the best-practice literature discussed in Part II, as they tend to be informal and operate below the radar of many research projects. While it is early in the redevelopment and the role of grassroots groups in social cohesion is still unclear, it is clear that these groups need to play a role in planning for the redevelopment. Resource challenges such as space, funding and infrastructure will remain a concern for groups that receive supports from various organizations on an ad hoc basis and that have no access to traditional funding mechanisms because of their informal status. Many groups also lack the infrastructure to meet the demands of mainstream funders. The RPNI and community service providers have begun work with grassroots groups to support their role as key organizations in the community. Ongoing access to flexible space, organizational supports and skills development will help grassroots groups to grow, stabilize and continue to play an increasing role in the health of the community. Ensuring that facilities and resources are available to support that growth is one of the challenges facing the redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Toronto Community Housing will continue to work with and support these tenant-driven grassroots projects, with the goal of making a positive contribution to the overall improvement of community health. In addition, where appropriate, Toronto Community Housing will work with tenants and tenant-driven grassroots projects to develop organizational capacity and to access resources to support overall community health.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Where appropriate, RPNI, local service agencies and the City will continue to work with and support grassroots groups in capacity building and continue to find ways to ensure the participation of these groups in community planning and decision-making structures.
2.4 FAITH GROUPS

2.4.1 FAITH COMMUNITIES ASSIST IN INTEGRATION

Faith groups attract people who share a specific set of beliefs. These groups appeal to people on a spiritual level regardless of their income or background and thereby provide an opportunity to bind a community across income, tenure and cultural boundaries. Faith groups that are active outside traditional places of worship can also provide opportunities for integrating residents from the wider community through faith-based activities such as charitable work. Faith-based groups with access to space can also share that space with other community groups, creating additional linkages in the community as some local faith-based groups in Regent Park do now.

2.4.2 FAITH GROUPS NEED ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The success of the integrating function of faith communities is based in part on groups’ abilities to access affordable, appropriate spaces and facilities and their willingness to engage in activities and dialogues with other faith communities.

Where accessible, public and flexible space is available, faith groups can organize formal and informal gatherings, offer programming and host celebrations that engage people of the faith community as well as the broader community. Locating these activities outside traditional places of worship can foster opportunities for increased social interaction. Faith-based groups recognize the impracticality of the traditional model of reserving a place of worship for the use of a single congregation, and can accommodate themselves to multi-faith space and, in some cases, multi-purpose space, provided that the design of the space meets the requirements of the religious and cultural groups involved.

Access to amenities that support community celebrations, such as kitchens, would assist faith groups in carrying out these functions. Making spaces readily accessible to seniors, in particular, is seen by local faith groups as important. Faith groups were also concerned about providing a central location for the Peace Garden and a shared, cross-cultural space for spiritual reflection.

Faith groups underscored the need for recreational facilities, such as a swimming pool, that accommodate the cultural values of various faith groups, and encouraged planners to engage faith groups in planning and design exercises to ensure that these cultural issues were addressed.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The design of community space operated by the City of Toronto should include the cultural values of faith groups and ethno-cultural groups as a consideration. For example, recreational facilities should accommodate the need of Muslim women to have a degree of privacy when engaged in recreational activities; meeting space should be free of iconography that would be distressing to local groups; and multi-purpose space should be designed to accommodate use as worship space where appropriate.
2.5 SOCIAL INCLUSION IS AIDED BY ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The informal, casual interactions that are so critical to the development of social cohesion and social inclusion are facilitated by the availability of affordable, accessible venues where informal interaction can occur. Little community space is currently available in Regent Park, and residential amenity space is also limited. Various types of housing units and basement spaces have been converted into multi-purpose space for use by social service agencies and tenant-driven community groups to provide both formal and informal services and programming. The redevelopment will include the reconstruction of those spaces, which offers opportunities to improve and expand on that space but will also require relocation during the reconstruction period. The redevelopment will also provide an increase in amenities space. These spaces are designed primarily for the joint use of residents in the building, but can accommodate other uses where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Toronto Community Housing will continue to work with social service agencies who use facilities affected by the redevelopment and are listed in the Strategy for the Provision of Community Services (2005) to find temporary replacement space in Regent Park and assist, where possible and appropriate, in securing permanent space. Toronto Community Housing will provide this support for service providers through the space allocation process outlined in Recommendations 37–42.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The shortage of program space can also be addressed by using the new amenity space created through the redevelopment of Toronto Community Housing rental buildings, subject to the restrictions outlined in Recommendation 43.

2.6 IMPLICATIONS OF PHYSICAL DESIGN

2.6.1 DESIGNING FOR INFORMAL INTERACTION

As noted in Part II, the physical design of a community can have a significant impact on the social interaction of people in the neighbourhood. Communities that are designed to facilitate broad-based social connection contribute to stronger, more successful and more attractive neighbourhoods and also facilitate social inclusion. There are many opportunities to achieve those goals in Regent Park and many of them are included in the Urban Design Guidelines, Development Context Plan and Secondary Plan created for the redevelopment.
2.6.2 INTEGRATION OF HOUSING IS CRITICAL TO MARKET AND RENTAL UNITS

To create a healthy community and a successful neighbourhood, the integration and interconnection of all types of housing, whether owned or rented, is highly desirable. Building design should ensure that appearance gives no indication of the income and tenure of its occupants. Housing of different types should also be mixed together across the community. Entrances and walkways should be positioned to optimize interaction on the street between people from different types of housing. Pathways to different types of facilities should also reflect the goal of street-level interaction among residents of different backgrounds. Ample outdoor recreational space that is accessible and attractive also assists in promoting casual interaction.

Common assumptions about the marketing of private homes suggest that exclusive, upscale housing that appears to be both distinct and distinctively affluent is the best way to attract buyers and increase property values. Research on the creation of mixed-income developments argues strongly against such an approach. Researchers such as Martin Wood note that tightly mixed housing enhances social inclusion, prevents division and conflict, and reduces adverse perceptions of the community (Wood 2003). Preventing disruption and retaining positive perceptions of the community are critical to supporting higher market values for private units.

2.6.3 OPTIMIZING ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES SUPPORTS SOCIAL INCLUSION

Similarly, community facilities should be designed to appeal to residents from all backgrounds. This design promotes casual social interaction and thereby contributes to social cohesion. Facilities from coffee shops to recreation centres have been shown to support positive interaction, and planning in Regent Park should maximize the number of facilities where people from different backgrounds can meet casually.

2.6.4 DESIGNING A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE COMMUNITY

As noted in Part II, attractive and well-maintained communities help to eliminate adverse stereotypes and assumptions, and at the same time, they improve the level of comfort that all residents experience when interacting in the community.
In the a survey of East Downtown homeowners, even people who held negative stereotypes about Regent Park showed a high level of willingness to use well-maintained or new facilities in the area. This willingness declined when homeowners were presented with the option of using run-down facilities. Willingness virtually disappeared when they were offered facilities that seemed less safe. These same opinions have been expressed for many years by existing residents (Meagher and Boston 2004). There are extensive opportunities to create places for all residents to gather and interact, but their success is clearly dependent on maintaining a sense of comfort. Design guidelines for the Regent Park redevelopment reflect this need for comfort, with a high emphasis on design criteria that encourage a feeling of security. These criteria address issues of good lighting, clear sightlines, easily identifiable boundaries between public and private space, minimization of isolated areas, and a commitment to welcoming, human-scale structures rather than intimidating institutional designs.

2.6.5 MAINTENANCE MATTERS

Research in other jurisdictions reinforces the common-sense assumption that the design of comfortable facilities should be supported by efforts to maintain those facilities in a high standard of cleanliness and good repair. Declining buildings, facilities and public spaces rapidly undermine the sense of comfort and confidence that a community gains from good design. Prompt action on maintenance issues, on the other hand, goes a long way toward restoring confidence. These efforts work well when they are accompanied by efforts to prevent graffiti, litter and other signs of declining concern for community well-being. Community cleanups, graffiti transformation efforts and other locally based community improvement programs offer good opportunities to bring people from all backgrounds together to share in the effort to keep their neighbourhood appealing to all. Investment by property owners, both public and private, in supporting community improvement efforts and good ongoing maintenance contributes significantly to the success of the community.

All stakeholders, landowners, tenants, homeowners and service providers share an interest in maintaining Regent Park in a high level of cleanliness and good repair and in supporting the strong features that reinforce a sense of safety. As stakeholders are seen to be making an effort, or are seen to be responding to concerns raised by neighbours, confidence in the community is further increased. Continuing to demonstrate this commitment will always be a key aspect of the success of Regent Park.

2.6.6 INCLUSION OF PUBLIC ART IN REVITALIZATION

Public art programs have been central to successful development and revitalization projects across North America. Toronto Culture’s public artwork commissioning process is designed to promote a public art program which engages the local community at critical steps in the development of a project. Ensuring a high-calibre program for Regent Park will enhance the character and vibrancy of its open spaces for both residents and people who work in and visit the area. The Regent Park Revitalization Public Art Plan identifies key sites throughout the development at which significant public artworks could be commissioned to create focal points, gathering places and anchors within the Regent Park area.
Regent Park stakeholders, including Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto will continue to use the Regent Park Revitalization Public Art Plan to ensure that the public realm includes an art program that fosters creative and social interaction.

**RECOMMENDATION 14**

Toronto Community Housing will continue to use the Regent Park Urban Design Guidelines to ensure that the redeveloped Regent Park looks and feels integrated and provides safe, pedestrian-friendly environments, including spaces for cultural and recreational interaction, and will continue to treat social inclusion as one of the key objectives of physical design.

**RECOMMENDATION 15**

All Regent Park stakeholders, including Toronto Community Housing, the City of Toronto and local service providers, will take responsibility for maintaining and improving their properties at a high standard in order to increase the sense of safety and comfort all residents feel in the community, and will support, wherever possible, initiatives that enhance the physical appearance of Regent Park.
2.7 SAFETY

Research points to safety as a key element of social inclusion. Residents are more likely to become attached to a neighbourhood, invest their time and effort in making it successful, and reach out to their neighbours when they believe their neighbourhood is safe.

Interviews with potential purchasers of Regent Park showed that one of the most prominent impressions people have of Regent Park is that it is unsafe. Even those who already live near Regent Park are concerned about the prospect of living in Regent Park or using local services. Research in the United Kingdom shows that in neighbourhoods that had a reputation for being unsafe prior to redevelopment, the perception of safety must be reinforced throughout the redevelopment and afterwards for the sake of all residents.

That reinforced sense of safety can be achieved by taking specific measures shown to be effective. The elements of design that reinforce a sense of safety are described above in Section 2.6.4.

Safety is also enhanced when people believe that they can have an impact on their community. Some research shows that neighbourhoods where people believe that the community can work together to make a difference experience the greatest improvements in safety in the future. The ability of residents to make changes and set policies that their neighbours support and uphold helps residents to play an active role in promoting security and improving outcomes for the community. These proactive, preventive approaches engage communities and increase commitment to the neighbourhood.

Often these efforts to make the community safer reflect the need to minimize “incivilities”—that is, minor problems that make the neighbourhood feel less secure and more vulnerable, such as graffiti, broken windows, dumping and physical deterioration. Incivilities have a significant impact on perceptions of safety and security. Reducing incivilities (especially through activities that are controlled by residents) has a significant positive effect on safety and the perception of safety.

Managing incivilities involves addressing people’s experience of a neighbourhood. This can often happen through interventions that address problems for individuals and help to make those problems less disruptive. Harm reduction, for example, minimizes the rate at which homeless people, people with mental health issues and people with substance abuse problems go into crisis, and can thereby reduce incivilities without penalizing people facing challenges.

Efforts to promote positive outcomes also help communities feel safer. Providing youth diversion programs that engage young people in positive, healthy activities can play a role in increasing a community’s sense of safety.
Safety is also reinforced by the presence of people who make safety their business. Security personnel and police increase people's sense of safety. In a context such as Regent Park, it is especially important to note that an effective police presence requires police to be responsive to the needs of the community and positively engaged with the broad cross-section of residents.

**RECOMMENDATION 16**

All stakeholders recognize the need to address safety issues through ongoing support for proactive safety strategies such as good design, well-lit and well-maintained public spaces, opportunities for active community engagement, positive police-community relations, crime prevention strategies, youth engagement initiatives, and harm reduction. Stakeholders will work with each other wherever possible to develop and expand those efforts.
3. COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

3.1 RESIDENTS WANT EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS

There is widespread agreement among residents and organizations in the East Downtown that local governance systems matter for creating social cohesion and integration in their communities. Local governance and local democratic processes played an important role in St. Lawrence, Gooderham and Worts, and townhouses along River Street. Neighbourhood associations, condominium boards, and other local committees and groups work as mechanisms through which residents come together to have some influence on the way their neighbourhood works. These structures allow residents a voice in the way their communities are governed—a critical element of social inclusion.

In a telephone survey of East Downtown homeowners, most respondents said that they would be interested in participating in governance mechanisms, particularly governance structures that set policies for the community. Similarly, in consultations with the boards of directors of community-based organizations in Regent Park, participants agreed that strong governance mechanisms are needed in order to ensure that residents have a voice. Likewise, in the 2004 Open Space process, participants expressed a need for the wide participation of both owners and tenants on collective governance bodies such as condo boards and tenants’ associations. Residents said that equal access to participation in local governance structures was a crucial part of creating a mixed-income community. Participants also saw an important need for cross-representation on governance bodies.

These results closely reflect the best practice findings in Part II, which indicate that local democratic governance structures play an important social-cohesion function. There are particular features of governance mechanisms that are necessary to create an overall governance structure that is able to respond to the voices of a large cross-section of the community.

3.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION STRUCTURES SHOULD BE BUILT ON THE CURRENT FOUNDATIONS

Regent Park already has structures in place that support the expression of tenant priorities in their community. One such organization is the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative. RPNI already operates as a neighbourhood association and plays a central role in organizing residents, supporting community service providers in their efforts to reflect tenants’ priorities, coordinating community planning, and promoting diversity, engagement and social cohesion. RPNI has already undergone a transformation from a purely tenant-based organization to one that can include homeowners, business owners, and service providers among its members so as to allow it to play an effective role as a neighbourhood governance leader. The precise form of this role is not yet fully defined - this allows an opportunity for the details to be developed with the broader participation of new residents of Regent Park through an inclusive process.
Another important structure in Toronto Community Housing buildings is the Tenant Council in the Tenant Participation System (TPS). The Tenant Council was established in 2003 and held elections in 2003 and 2006. The Tenant Council is the existing avenue for tenant participation in the management and operation of Toronto Community Housing properties. The RPNI Community Plan notes that any model developed for a system of local governance for Regent Park should incorporate the tenant representatives and Tenant Council. The Tenant Council system also has some flexibility - there are variations in how it is structured and how it works in different Toronto Community Housing developments across Toronto. Regent Park tenants have an opportunity to make choices about how the Tenant Council works in Regent Park over the coming years and to institute these during the 2009 tenant elections.

As RPNI and the Regent Park Tenant Council develop the representation systems that best support the changing community, some considerations that emerge from the literature and from the community engagement processes of the last five years are worth taking into account.

3.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD REFLECT THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF PARTICIPANTS

Consultations with tenants in Regent Park throughout the redevelopment period show their deep concern about their representation in decision making in the future community. Tenants have consistently spoken of fears of being marginalized and sidelined by their more affluent and influential new neighbours. They express a strong desire to ensure that they are fully represented in all governance models and that newer residents not be given a level of power and authority that undermines existing tenants’ ability to shape their own future. Toronto Community Housing also requires that the governance structure enable tenants to participate in the governance of Toronto Community Housing properties in keeping with the bylaws governing the corporation.

In consultations in 2006, homeowners in the East Downtown expressed a willingness to be involved in associations with tenants to jointly guide the future of the community. They hesitate, however, to give tenants enough of a voice to make decisions that might affect the way their homes are run and that might affect their property values.

Creating a structure that includes the concerns of both tenants and homeowners, while at the same time giving each group control over their own circumstances, seems daunting. But such issues can be addressed using models of community governance already in place in the East Downtown.

3.4 UNIFIED COMMUNITY STRUCTURES CAN REFLECT DIVERSE INTERESTS

There are many different governance models that have worked well for communities across the East Downtown.
In St. Lawrence, residents often have local building associations that vary based on the type of building. Co-operatives, condominiums and market rental buildings each have a different structure for their building associations. In addition to local building associations, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) addresses issues and concerns that are pertinent to the community as a whole. Reflecting this broader community mandate, SLNA draws its representatives from building associations in the neighbourhood.

In a similar model, the governance structures at Gooderham and Worts consist of neighbourhood associations with broad community participation as well as boards in each building. The boards are concerned mainly with issues of building management and maintenance, whereas the neighbourhood association is socially focused and carries out some rule-setting functions.

Participants in all of these consultations emphasized the need for fairly small-sized associations in order to facilitate productive interaction between members at the local level. They also recognized the value of larger structures, such as a neighbourhood association, in which they can raise their issues and concerns with others in the community.

### 3.5 POSSIBLE GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR REGENT PARK

Regent Park could benefit from a governance structure similar to that of St. Lawrence. Individual apartment-building or townhouse-block associations can be formed to represent residents in their own building or block. The Regent Park plan indicates that each building or townhouse block will be designed to one form of tenure (for example, renters will be in one building and condominium owners in the building next door). So an association in a Toronto Community Housing building would give tenants a clear voice on matters affecting their tenancy and provide a clear tenant-specific structure for working with Toronto Community Housing. An association in a condo building or a block of market townhouses would give homeowners the power to make decisions affecting the operation of their buildings in order to ensure that their homes are managed according to their preference and continue to be operated in ways that are perceived to protect their investment.

To ensure that neighbourhood-wide issues have a place to be aired, these smaller, building-specific associations could send representatives to a neighbourhood-wide group or a Neighbourhood Forum. This Neighbourhood Forum could provide a mechanism for discussing issues that have an impact on more than a single building as well as issues that affect public spaces and shape the community as a whole.

This model depends on effective participation by three groups: RPNI, already positioned to convene the neighbourhood discussion in Regent Park, could convene the Neighbourhood Forum. The Tenant Council, however it chooses to reshape its structure in Regent Park, should continue to represent all Toronto Community Housing buildings in Regent Park. The homeowners’ and condo owners’ associations in Regent Park could represent the market buildings as they do in other communities in the East Downtown.
These three groups would work together in the Neighbourhood Forum to address the issues that affect them all.

3.5.1 TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING TENANT COUNCIL

Over the next two years leading up to the 2009 Tenant Participation System elections, the current Regent Park Tenant Council will have an opportunity to consider how it wants to function in the new revitalized community. In order to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by revitalization, the Tenant Council should consider how it can engage in all of the functions that can help tenants in Regent Park make the most of the changes in their community:

**Liaising with their housing provider**

The current Tenant Representative position provides a liaison with Toronto Community Housing staff. This includes liaising with building management on issues affecting the building, working with Community Housing Managers to develop Community Management Plans for Toronto Community Housing developments, and working with senior Toronto Community Housing staff to develop policies and priorities on matters affecting tenants across the system. That work would need to continue even after revitalization.

**Establishing a dialogue with homeowners in the community**

Revitalization gives Toronto Community Housing tenants an ideal opportunity to open dialogue with new homeowners in Regent Park and to engage them in tackling local issues. Sending a representative to a Neighbourhood Forum or another community-wide organization can give voice to the views of their building on a range of community issues. Tenant Council members (or their designates) could have an opportunity to raise concerns expressed by fellow tenants in their buildings about issues affecting the whole community.

**Optimizing tenant engagement in the new community**

If the current residents of Regent Park are to fully enjoy the benefits of a mixed-income community, they will likely need support and encouragement to get involved. A Tenant Council with the capacity to reach out to residents in each building and engage them with their neighbours in robust social networks would be a big benefit and is worth considering as a significant role.

These three community engagement functions could either be carried out by a single person or be distributed amongst several different positions within a redesigned Tenant Council. The Tenant Council in Regent Park will, of course, choose a model that reflects its constituents’ needs and priorities, but these three functions could contribute significantly to its ability to realize the benefits of revitalization for all Toronto Community Housing tenants.
3.5.2 HOMEOWNERS’ AND CONDOMINIUM OWNERS’ ASSOCIATIONS

As part of their ownership structures, condominiums have boards that manage the buildings. In some cases, these boards choose to go beyond the required mandate of managing shared funds and administering shared spaces. In St. Lawrence and in Gooderham and Worts, condo associations participate to varying degrees in neighbourhood-wide governance. Some condo boards choose not to participate and instead alternate structures within the condo are formed to link the condo to the community-wide governance system. There are few realistic and effective methods of forcing participation of either kind on condo or townhouse owners, and there are few opportunities to direct the form or structure of their association. However, since participation in community-wide governance is advantageous to the neighbourhood as a whole and to property owners (whose property values depend on the success of the neighbourhood) in particular, efforts to promote voluntary participation are a sensible alternative.

Some developers, such as the Daniels Group (the developer for ownership housing in Phase 1 of the Regent Park redevelopment), provide extensive orientation sessions for new buyers and support the transition to the new homes for as long as one year. These orientation sessions traditionally focus on the workings of the condo corporation boards, the rights and obligations of condo owners, and the legal requirements, financial rules and amenities in the building. However, some developments have included orientations that introduce new owners to the local community.

Orienting new owners to the Neighbourhood Forum and the community governance structure would be advantageous to both homeowners and the community as a whole. Including RPNI in the process of orientation would help to link homeowners with local community structures and leadership. Developers could use their orientation sessions to encourage participation in community governance by providing clear information about the benefits of the governance structure in terms of increased quality of life and the attractiveness of the neighbourhood.

It is not realistic to require developers to provide orientation sessions of this kind. Toronto Community Housing could, however, advise developers of the opportunity and of the benefits of such an orientation.

3.5.3 RPNI AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Founded as a tenants’ organization, RPNI is currently in the process of transitioning into an organization that fully includes all future members of the Regent Park community. This transformation is complex and gradual. As it continues to take shape under the authority of RPNI’s membership and the tenants of Regent Park, it is important to identify some of the directions already identified regarding its role in the governance of the redeveloped Regent Park.
RPNI serves as a single coherent voice for the people who live in Regent Park. RPNI convenes residents, supporters, funders and decision makers in forums that address pressing needs affecting residents, including redevelopment, community services, diversity, employment, education and community safety. In the governance structure outlined above, RPNI could continue to perform those functions and would be able to support the Neighbourhood Forum as the primary venue for such discussions. As a democratic institution in Regent Park, RPNI is led by a board chosen in public elections open to all residents, and operates with a mandate to serve as the voice of the community, promoting a healthy community that is inclusive, diverse, respectful and welcoming.

FIGURE 1: AN OUTLINE OF A COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MODEL
3.6 GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS CAN ADDRESS CONFLICTS

In consultation with residents in other mixed-income communities in the East Downtown, participants said that good governance structures often played a role in addressing conflicts among individuals and setting policies or rules for their buildings. The examples cited tended involve disputes between neighbours regarding issues such as noise, litter and the appearance of the building. Data from surveys of East Downtown residents also indicate that residents would like their local governance mechanism, such as their neighbourhood association, to carry out the rule-setting in their communities.

Research reinforces this impression. Neighbourhoods where conflict resolution mechanisms contribute to the development of collective community norms and that work with residents to make shared policies effective, tend to be successful in creating social cohesion. Not surprisingly, communities with accessible, established forums for resolving conflict—if they are democratic and equitable—do a better job of settling differences than communities where there are no easy avenues to raise issues and where matters are addressed only when they reach crisis proportions.

The dual roles of conflict resolution and rule-setting are currently part of co-operative associations’ and neighbourhood associations’ mandates in the East Downtown. Within co-ops in St. Lawrence, for example, residents are made aware of the community-based conflict resolution and policy-setting processes before they move in, and they can use those mechanisms to deal with disputes with neighbours or problems that require a new building policy.

In neighbourhood associations such as in Gooderham and Worts, residents set common rules through a subcommittee of their local neighbourhood association that residents can use to address issues such as noise, nuisances or other disruptions that affect them. The neighbourhood association’s Rules and Regulations Committee decides on common rules for the buildings. Once the rules are set, residents may propose changes to them. This model is effective not because its rules persist unchanged, but rather because it is a forum that is open for reviews and rule adjustments that reflect the needs and views of the residents. This open, democratic model was widely accepted by the community.

Research also indicates that residents from all backgrounds tend to support accessible, equitable conflict resolution and rule-setting mechanisms - presumably because residents from all backgrounds experience problems, and accessible, equitable mechanisms for solving problems are easier to cope with than head-on conflicts.
The accessibility of the association requires widespread awareness, clarity about its rule-setting and conflict resolution processes, and regular opportunities for raising issues. It also requires open, democratic processes for selecting representatives who are committed to the diversity of the community they serve. Residents’ confidence in the governance model also benefits from their having the opportunity to replace representatives who are not seen to be effective or equitable. Because of these accessibility and equitability criteria, Regent Park could benefit from rule-setting and conflict resolution processes similar to those in Gooderham and Worts. The Gooderham and Worts model empowers an elected subcommittee of the residents’ group to develop rules for their building. Those rules are subject to approval by the residents’ association as a whole. The members of the committee are elected annually to ensure that their work reflects the preferences of the residents.

3.7 AN EFFECTIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD STRUCTURE REQUIRES CAPACITY BUILDING FOR RESIDENTS

As Regent Park residents become more involved in formal governance systems, it will be important to provide tenants with the tools and information they need in order to participate fully. Almost half of all current Regent Park residents are relatively new to Canada, and the model of governance described above may be unfamiliar or even contrary to what they knew in their previous country. Helping all Regent Park residents learn to use the governance system effectively and express their views freely will be an important part of making the system work.

As the convenor of the governance structure and the residents’ association for Regent Park, RPNI will play a prominent role in this capacity building for residents. Toronto Community Housing also provides leadership training as part of the Tenant Participation System. Additional types of skills-development programs, such as public speaking, managing successful meetings, facilitation and organizing, could be provided in a partnership between RPNI and local agencies, but resources will be required in order to offer this training.

Efforts to offer skills-development and capacity-building programs should not be limited to individuals with the existing capacity to seek learning opportunities. People who speak English, have governance experience, and are familiar with advocacy are a limited subgroup of the community. Ensuring broad participation will require efforts to reach out to residents who are not immediately able to engage in governance but can develop the skills they need over time. This will assist in improving succession processes and ensuring the representation of perspectives from all segments of the population. One source of leadership development candidates may be grassroots groups.

Ensuring good governance structures is also an advantage for government bodies. MPs, MPPs and City Councillors are helped by having a clear structure to reach out to when talking with a community. Elected representatives have a stake in that highly effective system and are often heavily engaged in establishing and supporting local residents’ associations. Regent Park has a history of receiving support from elected officials and should continue to draw on that resource as it develops its capacity to create and maintain strong governance systems over the next few years.
3.7.1 EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Encouraging resident participation in a governance system requires not only skills development but also the development of a culture of participation. Engaging residents in these systems works best if it is part of their initial orientation to the community. In Gooderham and Worts, participants pointed to the initial engagement and participatory structure of the development as major factors in fostering good governance mechanisms. In this case, the participation process began prior to residents’ living in the community. After they bought their units, future neighbours organized meetings prior to moving in to make several key decisions about their own building. They used these pre-move-in meetings to develop structures to make decisions about the community and the physical design of their community.

Similarly, in St Lawrence, the most successful governance structures were in co-op buildings where participation in the governance system is part of the initial intake process.

As noted above, the Daniels Corporation, the developer of private market buildings in Phase 1 of the Regent Park redevelopment, engages in similar processes. Beginning with the initial purchase of units, Daniels staff engage with new homeowners to encourage them to become familiar with both the governance mechanisms used in condos and the obligations and challenges of home ownership. Barbecues, hosted outings and get-togethers create opportunities for new residents to socialize with future neighbours and to learn about, participate in, and become comfortable with their new surroundings.

These approaches indicate the value of early engagement of new and returning tenants. This process is not a panacea - there are only so many barbecues that people will attend and only so much information that can be conveyed at any given gathering. But this model has proven effective for the Daniels Corporation and closely reflects the pattern at Gooderham and Worts as well as the preferred re-integration process that Regent Park tenants selected as part of the Tenant Relocation Plan.

3.7.2 ACCESS TO PROPERTY MANAGERS SUPPORTS SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Both the consultations and the literature review emphasize the need to recognize that community confidence in the governance system is dependent on its effectiveness in managing core issues such as maintenance. Property management is a level of governance. Maintenance, the conditions of grounds, and the beautification of prominent places are often among the key issues for residents and residents’ groups. Inaccessible or unresponsive property management can cause frustration and lead individuals to become disengaged in governance mechanisms.

Toronto Community Housing managers and superintendents make a priority of addressing matters raised through the governance mechanisms and would continue to do so as part of their relationship to RPNI, the Tenant Council, the local building associations and the rule-setting mechanisms established by these groups.
3.7.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Participants in the consultations emphasized the importance of good lines of communication through governance structures. Cross-representation and open lines of communication are needed between building associations, condo boards, tenants’ associations and neighbourhood forums so that the different kinds of community participatory systems are connected and can work together. Communications can take many forms, and multiple, overlapping communication processes can help to ensure that as many residents as possible are informed.

Structures such as a Neighbourhood Forum can play one role in that communication process by raising issues from individual buildings with the community as a whole, bringing information from the community-wide discussions back to individual buildings, and working with residents to communicate effectively within the buildings.

RPNI hosts community meetings on key issues. These meetings can facilitate community-wide discussions as part of the neighbourhood’s commitment to open communication.

Toronto Community Housing currently supports tenant-led communication efforts by circulating a regular newsletter, holding information meetings and making periodic presentations. Continuing that newsletter throughout the redevelopment period and broadening its distribution to homeowners as well as tenants would help to improve communication among the residents of Regent Park and to increase residents’ ability to participate in governance and other community-building activities. Toronto Community Housing also hosts community information programs at specific points in the redevelopment cycle. The community could benefit from the continuation of these programs and their development into a regular cycle of communications.

Orientation processes for new residents also provide a valuable opportunity to inform. Toronto Community Housing already undertakes tenant orientation processes as part of the lease-signing for new tenants. For new homeowners, the information can be part of the welcoming process and provided either by the developer, their local homeowners’ association, or other community institutions such as RPNI. Information about the redevelopment process, recent developments in the community, governance mechanisms and facilities in the community help to encourage residents to take advantage of all that the community has to offer and to become more integrated into the community in the process. The orientation process could provide an opportunity for collaboration between RPNI, Toronto Community Housing, their development partners and the community service providers.

The governance strategy outlined above describes many changes, small and large, on the part of several partners. This strategy is more likely to succeed if it is supported by effective communication and coordination among the key participants. RPNI, Toronto Community Housing staff and tenant representatives will need to work closely together, communicate their respective activities, and address both the resources required to support those roles and the timelines for completing each stage of the development and implementation of a governance system.
RECOMMENDATION 17

New governance structures will build on the existing structures, including the Tenant Council and RPNI.

The RPNI, already positioned to convene the neighbourhood association for Regent Park, will continue to play a leadership role in facilitating the development of new community governance structures. These structures should:

• Respect the need for homeowners and renters to have primacy in their own buildings.
• Enable tenants and homeowners to raise the issues that matter to them.
• Allow tenants and homeowners and others in the Regent Park community opportunities to work together on matters of shared concern.

Establish mechanisms for encouraging homeowners and tenants to participate.

Tenant Councils are an integral part of Toronto Community Housing’s Tenant Participation System. They facilitate tenant involvement and engagement in their local communities, Toronto Community Housing and the broader community. Tenant representatives will continue to:

• Advocate for the interests of tenants and participate with management in the local decision-making process.
• Develop links within the community to community organizations, social clubs, advocacy organizations and other civic groups.
• Actively participate in local neighbourhood associations and broader-based stakeholder groups.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Tenant Council in Regent Park will work with Toronto Community Housing to explore any changes to the governance systems in Regent Park and any modifications required to the Tenant Participation System. This process should be informed by the Social Development Plan and should be initiated early enough to allow all parties the opportunity for a smooth transition by the 2009 Tenant Council elections.

RECOMMENDATION 19

RPNI will continue to perform its function as a residents’ association for Regent Park, convening regular open forums on important local issues. As a democratic institution in Regent Park, RPNI is led by a publicly elected board open to all residents wishing to join and operates with a mandate to serve as the voice of the community. It promotes a healthy community that is inclusive, diverse, respectful and welcoming.

RECOMMENDATION 20

In developing new governance systems, residents should take into account the success of models such as the St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association and the significance of issues raised in the research, such as the ability of governance systems to set rules and resolve conflicts.
**RECOMMENDATION 21**

Toronto Community Housing, RPNI and local service providers will explore opportunities to reach out and inform new and returning residents about the benefits of local governance structures and will develop ways to ensure active representation from the full range of communities that will make up the revitalized Regent Park.

**RECOMMENDATION 22**

Toronto Community Housing will continue to support tenants’ engagement by providing skills development opportunities for tenants. Toronto Community Housing will work with RPNI and local service providers to support additional skills development and efforts to ensure equitable participation of the Tenant Council in any new governance structures.

**RECOMMENDATION 23**

During the transition to any new governance system, RPNI (as the local neighbourhood association), and Toronto Community Housing (as the support mechanism for the Tenant Council) will work closely to coordinate their efforts to ensure coherent planning, where appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION 24**

Toronto Community Housing is committed to ensuring that its tenants, community partners and neighbours remain well informed about the redevelopment project. Toronto Community Housing will continue to employ best practices to achieve community awareness and involvement, which will be promoted by providing appropriate information in timely and effective ways to all segments of the community.
4. LOCAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES

Creating an inclusive community is a challenging task; however, Regent Park service providers play several roles that make them uniquely well placed to meet that challenge. Community-based agencies, more than any other stakeholder in Regent Park, have the capacity to shape the opportunities for social interaction, social cohesion and social inclusion.

Regent Park agencies host most community festivals, which are the kinds of opportunities for casual interaction that have been successful in other mixed-income communities. These agencies have the capacity to open up such events to wider communities and promote them more actively to a range of income and tenure groups. This approach would bring more people from different backgrounds together in exactly the kind of casual settings that promote social cohesion.

Community-based agencies are the managers of most local services. Though not all services are appropriate for a broad range of income groups, many are. The services that are most attractive to middle-income homeowners—sports, fitness programs, swimming, libraries and early childhood education—work well in mixed income and tenure groups. Local service providers can choose to modify their current strategies for program design to enable those programs to play a role in social cohesion and social inclusion.

Local service providers in Regent Park have also been longstanding advocates for marginalized groups and work to build capacity within those groups. While social cohesion depends on interaction among different groups, social inclusion depends on making that interaction equitable and balanced. Marginalized and disadvantaged groups are best able to play an equitable role when they are supported by organizations that are committed to capacity building. Local service providers can play this role in a way that is virtually impossible for most other organizations.

Social inclusion across varied income groups within Regent Park is not currently a prominent objective of service providers. Locally based agencies focus on delivering direct service to low-income residents and providing immediate supports to people in distressed circumstances. Focusing on social inclusion will require a review of mandates and missions as well as a revision of program designs, communication strategies and administrative approaches. These changes don’t necessarily take the most predictable form. Agencies seeking to reach a broad range of residents will need to reach out effectively to new middle-income homeowners. But agencies also have to reach some existing tenants more effectively. Right now, services cannot meet existing needs, and some current residents are unable to access services because there is an insufficient supply. Other residents are disconnected by ethno-cultural barriers. Others are detached from the service systems by concerns about safety. Others simply lack information and awareness about the range of programs available. Addressing barriers to participation from new and old groups will be important for reaching and integrating the broad range of residents.
4.1 AGENCIES FACE BARRIERS TO FULFILLING THEIR POTENTIAL ROLE IN SOCIAL INCLUSION

4.1.1 EXISTING SERVICES AND SERVICE NEEDS

Service providers in Regent Park include community-based organizations, grassroots groups in Regent Park, and the City of Toronto. Although they have consistently provided highly effective services, these providers lack the space and resources to expand and develop programs to keep pace with growing and changing needs.

Most of these unmet service needs are not related directly to the redevelopment initiative, as they exist regardless of whether the redevelopment proceeds. But effective planning for inclusion in the redevelopment requires systematically addressing some of the current gaps in service provision.

Some of the major areas of service provision are catalogued here to show the range and reach of services as well as the challenges faced in meeting community needs.

Settlement
In addition to basic settlement services, organizations in Regent Park provide language training, culturally appropriate health services, employment training and opportunities for newcomers, and community-building activities that strengthen understanding among different cultural groups in the community. There are a number of challenges associated with this work, including difficulties in reaching out to socially and linguistically isolated communities and in responding to changing immigrant populations. Most challenging are the shortage of settlement programs, funding limitations, and the narrow criteria which often disqualify Regent Park residents. These constraints force service providers to choose between withholding needed services and subsidizing settlement services from other budgets.

Youth
Community service providers in Regent Park have pioneered innovative youth programs that address issues such as gang violence, high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, and low levels of academic achievement. Community agencies and residents’ groups have worked tirelessly to create a safe and healthy environment. Some of the anticipated challenges identified by agencies during consultations include a higher level of service coordination needed for youth services, the ability of agencies to continue serving vulnerable and marginalized youth after the redevelopment, and the need for both a greater number of youth employment programs and better service coordination for those programs.

Recreation
Community agencies and the City of Toronto provide a range of high-quality recreation programs in Regent Park. Residents who participated in consultations state that facilities for recreational programming in Regent Park need to be better maintained, better staffed, and situated in attractive, safe comfortable settings. Programming needs to be dynamic in its response to the changing populations in the community and needs to be supported by an increase in the number of hours of service. Community gardens, for example, are a popular and beneficial service that should be expanded.
Children and families

Over the years, Regent Park residents and service providers have established a range of targeted and universal programs and services for children and parents. In the more recent past, a focus on the Early Years has resulted in multiple and comprehensive services for the 0–6-year-old population. However, there is a critical need for all service providers regardless of funding base and sector to engage collectively in a long-term process of strategic planning towards improving the coordination and integration of these services.

Families are requesting streamlined and seamless access to information, intake, assessment and referrals to meet specific needs. There are also specific areas where gaps exist and advocacy for increased resources is badly needed. These include inadequate staffing for the Regent Park Developmental Assessment Clinic for children with special needs, inadequate case coordination and case management for families with multiple risk factors and multiple service providers, and waiting lists for many programs such as school-readiness programs and Early Years social work services. In addition, there is a shortage of space and of appropriately trained staff for parenting groups that meet the needs of this multilingual, multicultural community.

While resources for Early Years Services have increased over the past decade, services for school-age children 6-12 years of age have declined. The loss of the “Middle Years” programming will result in increased risks for this population as they head into their teenage years. New funding and local agency leadership is desperately needed to increase both informal drop-in programs as well as structured, targeted programs for school-age children. There is a need to develop a coordinated and integrated service delivery system for this age group as well.

The Parents For Better Beginnings Department of the Regent Park Community Health Centre has taken the lead on establishing a Regent Park Children’s Services Table in 2007. This Table brings together senior management of local agencies, representatives from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the City of Toronto, and the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative in order to begin addressing these issues and needs. The Children’s Services Table will be guided in their work by three policy and strategy frameworks, including the Provincial Government-led “Best Start,” the City of Toronto’s “Best Generation Yet,” and the Regent Park Social Development Plan. The Children’s Services Table will link to and ensure coordination and communication with the organizational and community structures emerging out of this broader plan for Regent Park. While most existing Early Years service providers are committed to this process and work, representation from the Middle Years sector has not yet been secured. As is the case with much of the work identified in the Social Development Plan, increased and adequate resources need to be secured to ensure the success of this work.

Further challenges include the need for more high-quality childcare spaces, case management for developmentally delayed and special-needs children, linguistically diverse staff and increased interpretation services, and physical space to replace or expand services.
Domestic violence prevention

Women who participated in the RPNI consultations identified the need for domestic violence-prevention programming as a priority. Service providers have been working to increase prevention programming in areas of domestic violence and violence against women; culturally sensitive supports for women who experience systemic barriers to education, employment, access to services and programs, and social supports; and solutions to regulations that disadvantage women living in abusive situations.

Health

Regent Park residents continue to have very complex health issues that are often poorly addressed within the larger health care system. A number of community agencies provide health services. The Regent Park Community Health Centre has developed a comprehensive model that includes outreach, primary care, mental health services and community development and harm-reduction supports. Regent Park organizations have placed an emphasis on underserved areas such as mental health, addiction and harm reduction, but resources fall far short of needs in these areas. Children's mental health and children with disabilities are also areas of emphasis for service providers and the community. Services in this area cross service boundaries, requiring connected services between childcare and health care. In consultations, residents felt strongly that a community-wide strategy must be put into place to address parents’ and children's health issues, women's health, the health of young people, primary care access, and seniors' health.

The Province of Ontario has undertaken a transformation of the health care system and introduced Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) with the power to plan, integrate and fund local health services. The need to link with the Toronto Central LHIN has been identified for future service planning and implementation efforts in Regent Park.

Seniors

Though the total number of seniors living in Regent Park is modest, Regent Park has one of the highest percentages of seniors living without any family supports. Social isolation and lack of physical mobility may prevent many seniors from accessing health services. In addition, seniors often face a range of mental and physical health concerns. In many cases, seniors’ health issues are complicated by income challenges. Community agencies have been working on issues of isolation and mobility and advocating for expanded home care services for seniors in Regent Park.

People with disabilities

Community agencies provide an array of services for people with disabilities in Regent Park, including home support, mobility aids, recreation services, and services for children with disabilities and special needs. Consultations indicate that there is a need for increased home support programs, better coordination with the Toronto Community Care Access Centre, case management services, and an overall increase in services for people with disabilities in order to reduce waiting lists for programs.
Services for people who are homeless and under-housed

Regent Park community agencies provide a range of supports for homeless people in the community and in surrounding areas, including mental health, addictions, and outreach programs. With increased resources, these programs could be expanded. Case-management services was one need identified in consultations. Participants in consultations also stressed the need for increased housing supports and employment services for people who are homeless or marginally housed.

Arts

Regent Park is a truly creative community that has developed innovative practices that have been recognized as models for other communities. The variety of theatre groups, particularly in the youth sector, and a number of dance groups have great potential for growth if appropriate space needs are met. Community agencies are aware of the lack of space for arts programming and are partnering to work on developing an arts and cultural space that would provide a venue for further arts initiatives.

Education and literacy

Community agencies provide services in the areas of skills training, vocational training, learning through the school system, and continuous learning opportunities. Regent Park has made progress in developing a groundbreaking model, Pathways to Education, which has significantly decreased the dropout rate of high school students. With additional funding and space, many education and literacy programs could be expanded to serve more people in the community. The lack of culturally and linguistically accessible educational supports for non-English-speaking parents is an emerging issue.

Employment

Regent Park residents rank employment and economic opportunities as one of their top priorities. Service providers in Regent Park currently deliver a wide range of training, employment and employment-readiness programs. Recent studies show that the volume of service falls far below the need and that a wider range of better integrated services is called for. Partners in the employment services, including the City of Toronto, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, RPNI and local service providers have been exploring the possibility of an employment hub that would meet those needs.

Enhancing community safety

Enhancing community safety is not a single program of any organization or agency but is an underlying theme of many projects and activities in Regent Park. The Safe Walk Home program, various youth diversion and youth leadership programs, the work of the RPNI’s Safety and Security Committee, and the various efforts outlined in Part I have all sought to address this issue. Service providers in Regent Park have developed many innovative community safety programs in Regent Park and have also worked with police to develop programs to improve policing in Regent Park and to provide police with the skills and understanding to bring about more locally responsive policing. There is a strong commitment in Regent Park to a proactive and preventive approach to safety that is community-oriented and engaged. Agencies and other stakeholders continue to develop strategies to enhance safety and Regent Park residents assign this issue the highest priority.
Supporting transition

Some areas of service are only newly emerging as priorities and have yet to develop an infrastructure to meet the need. There are few services available to support residents experiencing stress as a result of the transition of redevelopment. While redevelopment is a goal widely shared among residents, change on this scale is a demanding and challenging experience. Residents involved in early phases of the redevelopment report experiencing stress, including strains on their physical and mental health. The experience of growing up surrounded by ongoing construction and relocations for 15 years is one that alters the dynamics of community and can have unforeseen impacts. Agencies have been working to develop multidisciplinary crisis-intervention models for supporting residents experiencing these strains, and early efforts have been welcomed by the community; however, few models exist for this form of support in relocation processes around the world.

4.1.2 Volume of Services

A significant challenge facing the Regent Park community is the inadequate level of service infrastructure. The Community Services and Facilities Study (2004) shows that although a wide array of service providers are located in and around Regent Park, the capacity of most of those services is limited. As a result, the total capacity of services provided falls far short of the needs of this large community. Additional research shows that a large percentage of Regent Park residents do not have access to services in their community. The redevelopment will add more than 5,000 new residents to this strained infrastructure, further increasing the demand for services. Since these new residents will be from backgrounds that are different than those of current residents, they will likely call for a different range of services than is currently supplied. Adding services to address the increased demand is a challenge within the context of space and funding limitations. A survey of agencies in the Regent Park Services and Facilities Study (2004) showed that few agencies had the financial capacity, staffing or space to create new programs.

Fortunately, there is a strong base of service providers in Regent Park with good relationships in the community and consistent experience delivering high-quality, cost-effective services. In Regent Park, the development work does not have to start from scratch, as it does in other communities. The basic infrastructure for service expansion is present; it is only the resources that are absent.

4.1.3 Many Residents Are Cut Off From Services by Language and Culture

One challenge facing the delivery of services in Regent Park is the disconnection of ethnocultural groups from the service infrastructure. The Community Services and Facilities Study (2004) found that families were disconnected from services that were not offered in their language or that could not accommodate their religious or cultural needs. One in seven Regent Park residents indicated that they have been unable to use a local service because of religious, cultural or linguistic incompatibilities. This experience is most acute for Muslim families and Mandarin-speaking residents, who are among the more recent immigrants in Regent Park.
The Community Services and Facilities Study found that agencies do not have the capacity to deliver service in the four most common languages in Regent Park; no language group other than English can access even half of the service providers in their own language. Some agencies have attempted to use translation services to reduce the language barriers, but these are unevenly distributed and have not led to more comprehensive access.

Regent Park agencies are already finding strategies to address this barrier. Agencies and grassroots groups have endeavoured, individually and cooperatively, to change the way services are delivered.

Agencies have attempted to alleviate some of the disconnection felt by residents by engaging in alternative service-delivery modes, such as hiring ethno-specific outreach workers, developing pools of translated materials and arranging on-site interpretation on request.

Agencies have been working with the grassroots groups to help expand their capacity and their ability to meet the needs of their target populations. Grassroots groups add to the service mix by creating informal services oriented toward specific ethno-cultural groups.

Agencies can increase their ability to address these barriers by making grassroots groups an even more integral part of the service infrastructure by allowing them to share some of their space and some of the institutional infrastructure. In exchange, grassroots groups can help agencies to broaden their reach by promoting awareness of the agency's services, helping the agency identify and address cultural barriers, and helping residents to locate the correct service. Established service providers will continue to commit to using qualified professional staff and translators for all formal functions, but grassroots groups enable the providers to expand their informal networks to increase visibility, awareness and comfort for groups who have expressed reservations about using community services in the past.

4.1.4 SAFETY AND INCLUSION CAN BE BARRIERS TO SERVICE USE

The perception of safety affects the inclusion of Regent Park families in the service system. The maintenance of community facilities has been a common complaint among Regent Park residents and a barrier to residents' access to services. In consultations in 2006, residents indicated that they did not feel comfortable using community facilities that were run-down and perceived to be unsafe. This perception is supported by a literature review and is also reflected in interviews with potential new residents. Facilities that are perceived to be run-down, unsafe or unwelcoming risk deterring participants. Lower-income residents, who have fewer options, respond to these concerns by going without the services they need, while more affluent residents tend to travel to alternate providers and participate less in neighbourhood activities.

Regent Park agencies have responded to safety concerns by investing in renovations and establishing new safety policies. The redesign of the Regent Park Community Centre, the renovation of the South Skating Rink clubhouse, and the renovations to the Yonge Street Mission all transformed uncomfortable and unsafe spaces into pleasant, open and reassuring spaces by improving sightlines, lighting and visibility.
Fresh new facilities can help to alleviate safety concerns. Existing agencies located in Regent Park will relocate to newly built space as old facilities are demolished and replaced. An expanded recreation centre will create new service space. A new aquatic centre will add a state-of-the-art facility to the mix. Each of these facilities should be designed with safety concerns in mind in order to increase the comfort of all future clients.

Community facilities have suffered when the perception that they are unsafe emerged. Dealing with those perceptions early on can prevent the loss of clients and disengagement of communities. Regent Park agencies have sought a balance by creating a sense of safety for those residents who are uncomfortable without undermining their relationship with clients who face challenges, have conflicts with the law or simply resemble a widely held stereotype. Open discussion focused on real barriers to safety, coupled with a willingness to address the impacts of proposed measures on others, has produced some very effective results. The redesign of the Regent Park Community Centre followed precisely this process, to great effect. Continuing that practice, and creating more formal mechanisms for raising and addressing concerns about safety at both the new facilities and the older ones, will be a critical part of fostering the ability to attract residents from all walks of life. Attracting residents from neighbouring communities to these new facilities in Regent Park will be an important part of opening Regent Park up to the East Downtown and connecting it more broadly to the City.

### 4.1.5 Service Access and Visibility Are Affecting Service Use

To be effective, agencies have to ensure that residents have access to their services and that those services maintain a level of continuity. Awareness and visibility are important factors affecting residents’ ability to access programs. In previous studies as well as the recent 2006 consultations, residents said they are often not aware of the programs that are available to them in the neighbourhood. Agencies have indicated that their ability to convey program information to residents is compromised by a limited capacity for outreach as well as by the challenges associated with working within a dense geographic neighbourhood. Increased accessibility and visibility of services is clearly needed in Regent Park.

The redevelopment process is expected to further affect the continuity of programs as residents are relocated from their units for two years, disrupting their connection to programs and services. Although most residents will remain in the Regent Park area and Regent Park agencies have been working to improve client support for relocated residents during Phase 1, there is a need for a more coordinated service infrastructure that supports residents in accessing services from their new homes and helps residents navigate a range of services.

The most effective service infrastructure uses outreach but also does more to assist clients in accessing the services they need. A number of studies, including the Regent Park Employment, Skills and Economic Development Study (2005), have underlined the importance of continuity of service. Clients facing multiple barriers often need support in moving through a continuum of services to resolve their full array of challenges. Facilitating that continuum of care requires communication and cooperation across agencies as clients move through a series of services that, together, address their needs.
Cross-agency communication has occurred for many years in Regent Park but has rarely been systematic enough to support reliable cross-agency efforts to sustain continuity of services. Regent Park agencies have begun to explore this more systematic approach in recent years. This systematic cross-agency communication and cooperation should continue to be developed and should be implemented as early as possible in the redevelopment in order to support continuity of service for clients. Continuity can also be increased by exploring new service delivery models that are collaborative, that co-locate services, and that create a more effective platform for outreach. The concentration of service into co-locations can create a street-front presence that increases the visibility of programs and services. The more concentrated those new services are, the greater their visibility is likely to be. Service agencies in Regent Park have already begun to explore the areas where co-location would be most effective, and have also considered changes to operations that enable better coordination of services. Proposals such as interagency program development and collaborative service delivery in some areas, shared intake systems and referral processes, and centralized needs assessments are being pursued.

The effort to develop co-located service delivery sites, or hubs, should continue as a high-priority activity in view of the impact it has on access to services. The efforts to improve coordination of services across service providers should also move forward as quickly as possible.

4.2 AGENCIES CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SOCIAL COHESION, DESPITE BARRIERS

The success of the new Regent Park is dependent on the social cohesion that develops across the different groups in the new community. Services are one of the areas that best bring together people from different backgrounds. Though people may not share common income levels, ethnicity or tenure, they can all play, learn and grow in similar ways. Bringing them together is a complex task and the existing infrastructure is clearly not sufficient for achieving that goal. The challenges outlined above paint a detailed picture of the barriers that exist.

In addition, residents are concerned that efforts to encourage service use across income groups may lead to changes in the current service mix, placing more priority on newer and more affluent residents while the needs of current residents remain unmet. Regent Park, however, already has many advantages in addressing these barriers and is working towards an effective strategy for addressing them further through the process of revitalization.

The strong base of service agencies in Regent Park provides a foundation to build on in addressing the needs of the changing community. The community service providers bring leadership, strong relationships and a keen understanding of the community to the process. These are assets many communities lack.
The services provided by community agencies are another asset. Although not all services are well suited to participation from people of different income groups, many programs work well in mixed environments and appeal to all income groups. Regent Park currently has music schools, fitness programs, parent/child drop-ins, and the Regent Park Focus media arts programs, all of which would be ideal settings for participation by people from different backgrounds. The services that new residents want most, such as fitness centres, swimming, libraries, child care and sports programs, have broad appeal and are good settings for interaction.

As several service sites in Regent Park are redeveloped and reconstructed, there is an opportunity to change the configuration of service space. Co-locating income-specific services and programs can allow people who use different services to meet each other casually through these venues. Locating an employment program and a bank machine in the same building, or an arts program and a settlement program in the same building, create new opportunities for interaction. Co-locating services, using the same entranceways, lobbies, waiting rooms and even dressing rooms, supports cohesion even when the participants are enrolled in programs that do not overlap.

Both in overall planning and in service design, agencies can make social cohesion and social inclusion a significant factor in their transition to redevelopment. While cohesion may not be an objective of the program itself, decisions about location and timing can aid cohesion by expanding interaction between disparate groups. Agencies should take a proactive position by identifying services that work well with participation by different income groups and developing service plans that accommodate them. Similarly, agencies could identify areas where income-specific services are more appropriate and build service plans that reflect the opportunities that exist. Expanding popular programs such as sports, fitness programs, swimming and childcare should be among the early priorities as these generate benefits for all groups and enhance community cohesion. For the same reason, the aquatic centre, recreation centre expansion and childcare expansions should be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Service planning should consider the opportunities for new resources created by increased participation from more affluent residents, but also the importance of creating ways to ensure continued access to service for lower-income families in mixed-income programs as well as programs exclusively for existing residents. Consultations with the current residents of Regent Park show support for a system that reserves spaces for low-income residents.

Grassroots groups, made up of residents who have organized into informal or semi-formal service providers, have also created some new capacity to address the service shortfall within specific ethnic communities. These groups emerged in part as a response to the shortfall in services and are a cost-effective addition to the base of formal services that are particularly sensitive to the needs of specific cultural communities. This emerging resource is hampered, however, by a lack of stability and resources. Increased access to space will make a significant difference to the success of grassroots groups.
4.3 COORDINATING CHANGE

4.3.1 SERVICE PLANNING FOR THE NEW REGENT PARK IS A LARGE, COMPLEX AND DEMANDING TASK

The scope of demographic and social change in Regent Park is enormous. The roles that service providers can play are extensive. The recommendations contained in this report call for even more changes. It is not surprising that many stakeholders feel overwhelmed by the extent of the changes that are occurring in Regent Park. Although there are more and more approaches being developed to compensate for this problem, the challenge is daunting and there are still several obstacles impeding stakeholders' ability to cope with the transition.

As a result, agencies are still in the process of determining how the new context affects their operations. Consultations with agency staff and boards in 2006 showed that the majority of agencies and their boards are reviewing their strategic plans but strategies for addressing this new context are still largely in development, and many agencies are grappling with fundamental issues regarding their role in the new community. These processes should be completed as early as possible to ensure that each organization is clear about which roles it is ready to tackle in the context of change and greater interagency action.

Agencies have identified the shortage of resources available for change management as another key issue. Most stakeholders in the redevelopment face considerable challenges in preparing for it, but few have dedicated resources to apply to it. Finding efficient mechanisms will be critical to minimizing the demand on individual stakeholders.

4.3.2 CHANGE AFFECTS SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS MORE

It is also important to recognize that the rapid changes resulting from redevelopment will be even more taxing for grassroots groups. While their infrastructure is small and easily reoriented, their limited resources severely restrict participation in the change process, making it easy for them to miss critical information and opportunities for input. For these groups, whose resources are already strained, even small changes in plans can make an enormous difference, but their capacity to track those changes is modest. Consultations for the Social Development Plan in 2006 found grassroots groups were concerned that the pending changes to the service infrastructure would leave them behind, disconnecting them further from decisions and resources. They also feared that any decline in available funding would further close their access to supports.

4.3.3 SYSTEMATIC INTERAGENCY STRUCTURES ARE A PREREQUISITE FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

The complexity of the transition exceeds the capacity of any one agency or grassroots group. Joint action by service providers is widely recognized as the only viable option for managing the transition to an effective service infrastructure in the new Regent Park. But structures for planning across even broader groups of stakeholders are underdeveloped. Service providers have not historically had a forum for information sharing, consultation or joint decision making. The Core Committee for the Social Development Plan has played a temporary role to fill that gap, but it does not have a structure, mandate or membership to fully play that role over the long term.
Executive Directors of various agencies have responded recently by establishing an Executive Directors’ Table to develop a viable strategy for addressing the transition. Through the EDs’ Table, agencies have already recognized the need for collaborative planning and action. They have agreed to pursue interagency program development and collaborative service delivery in some areas, shared intake systems and referral processes, and centralized needs assessments. Agencies have recognized that a significant shift in operational strategies will require considerable changes in each organization. Agencies have identified a need for interagency training for staff; cross-agency board discussions; and a governance model for interagency work that includes formalized membership, structured decision making, and interagency training programs. This interagency effort provides one of the key structural foundations for service planning. Agencies will need to move forward quickly on these ideas to be fully prepared to participate in larger planning exercises with Toronto Community Housing as tenants begin to return to Regent Park and new residents move in.

Recent efforts to advance this process have received critical assistance from the City of Toronto. Continued commitments to the moderate resource needs generated by this planning process are a valuable investment and should continue.

The interagency model will need to include the grassroots groups to ensure that they can get the support they need to play the most effective role they can in the community service system in the new Regent Park. Recent interagency discussions have included recommendations to work with grassroots groups to build capacity, support emerging leaders, facilitate services delivery and develop partnerships that engage the communities of Regent Park in the service system.

Interagency cooperation, coordination or service integration will not be enough to prepare Regent Park for the change that is coming. Nor will it be sufficient to persuade funders that the Regent Park process is unique, exciting and promising enough to mobilize the resources needed to make it succeed. The transition to the new Regent Park must be led by a comprehensive service planning effort.

4.3.4 SERVICE PLANNING FOR REGENT PARK

A clear plan will be needed if Regent Park is to create a service system with interagency coordination, systematic engagement across income and tenure lines, coordinated efforts to improve inclusion for disengaged linguistic and cultural groups, increased service levels, and extensive program changes to reflect a rapidly growing and diversifying population. That plan should reflect the priorities set out above and also the core commitment of Regent Park agencies to provide vulnerable communities with the services which reflect their real needs.

A service plan for Regent Park should be developed collaboratively through the interagency process, refined through participation from the grassroots groups, and finalized in dialogue with institutional partners including the City, the school boards and Toronto Community Housing.
4.3.5 A DYNAMIC PLAN

The demographics, dynamics and priorities of Regent Park will change a great deal in the next decade. Plans made now may not be relevant then. Service plans must be dynamic and their status and objectives must be reviewed regularly. Ongoing reviews of service planning should occur as outlined in Recommendations 67–75. Ideally, reviews would occur in conjunction with those elements of the planning approvals process that generate data on demographics and anticipated population changes, such as the Housing Issues Report which analyzes population changes. The review process should assess service systems and future service plans for the Community Service Report, evaluate the effectiveness of the interagency infrastructure, and explore possible changes to the systems already in place.

4.3.6 EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS ARE THE PREREQUISITE TO SERVICE PLANNING

Access to information about planning, design and redevelopment implications was identified as an important need in consultations with service providers in 2006. Agencies see themselves as being able to add value by responding with information on emerging needs and other developments as the redevelopment progresses. To do this effectively, agencies cite the importance of partnership with other stakeholders and of timely information for assessing and understanding changing population characteristics.

These broader service structures will need to be augmented through the participation of institutional actors in Regent Park—specifically, the school boards, the City, and Toronto Community Housing. These institutional partners should join the broader interagency structure in regularly scheduled meetings as outlined in Recommendations 67–75 to ensure that all service planning efforts are compatible.

RECOMMENDATION 25

Services providers will, wherever possible, consider the promotion of social inclusion as a key consideration in program design and planning.

RECOMMENDATION 26

In an effort to promote social integration and social cohesion in the new community, service providers will engage, where appropriate, in broader outreach and in an expansion of the scope of community activities and will plan specific programs and activities to attract a variety of income groups.

RECOMMENDATION 27

Broader outreach and diversified service approaches will include, where possible, reaching out to current Regent Park residents who are disengaged from the service infrastructure and to new residents of Regent Park who are purchasing homes through revitalization as well as to residents of nearby neighbourhoods. This outreach can be achieved through the strategies outlined in Recommendations 28 and 29.
RECOMMENDATION 28

Agencies will, where possible, make the most of growing opportunities to reach existing underserved communities by:
• Expanding efforts to connect to disengaged communities by using approaches such as hiring ethno-specific outreach workers, developing pools of translated materials and arranging on-site interpretation on request.
• Continuing to work with grassroots service providers to help them expand their capacity to meet the needs of their target populations.
• Sharing space and administrative infrastructure with grassroots service providers and sharing in efforts to attract disengaged communities to the services both types of organizations offer.
• Working with grassroots groups to identify and address cultural barriers to accessing local services and to help disengaged residents locate the correct service.
• Combining multilingual service infrastructure for several agencies in one shared location.
• Ensuring that facilities are culturally appropriate for local cultural and religious groups.
• Ensuring that facilities are designed with safety in mind and look and feel safe and comfortable to residents.
• Optimizing the visibility and accessibility of services.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Service providers will, where possible, make an effort to attract new residents and residents from nearby neighbourhoods by:
• Expanding popular programs with broad appeal such as sports, fitness programs, swimming, and early childhood education.
• Broadening outreach and promotion efforts to diverse income groups and beyond the boundaries of the old Regent Park.
• Ensuring that facilities look and feel safe and comfortable.
• Optimizing the visibility and accessibility of services.
• Creating and coordinating programming for popular facilities that attract a broad range of diverse users (such as service hubs, an arts and cultures centre, the aquatic centre, the community centre or childcare spaces) at the earliest opportunity, in order to maximize the ability of new residents to develop attachments to local services from the beginning of their stay in the neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATION 30

Regent Park service providers should find ways to ensure that services are appropriately distributed by reserving spaces in services for low-income, vulnerable or marginalized participants as necessary and appropriate.
RECOMMENDATION 31

Agencies can help residents who are facing serious challenges or who are in distress or crisis to coexist successfully with their neighbours by providing programs such as harm reduction, housing for homeless people, supports for at-risk youth, and initiatives to improve relations between law enforcement and local residents. These programs should continue and expand in a coordinated way in order to address the potential for increased sensitivity and friction as the community diversifies.

RECOMMENDATION 32

Service providers in Regent Park will continue to work together, where appropriate, to plan the service changes needed for the transition to a revitalized Regent Park, including:

• Coordinated planning of services that support social inclusion and engage new residents with existing residents.
• Coordinated efforts to continue to improve services to marginalized residents currently living in Regent Park.
• Coordinated efforts to explore new service models that can better serve a revitalized Regent Park.
• Locating services in shared facilities or hubs, where appropriate, in order to increase the visibility of the service infrastructure.
• Integrating informal services such as grassroots groups into shared service sites or hubs, where appropriate, in order to increase the visibility of services among marginalized ethnocultural groups in Regent Park.
• Using shared facilities as a mechanism for sharing much-needed resources such as multilingual interpretation and ethno-specific outreach workers and administrative infrastructure.
• Using shared facilities as an opportunity to provide services through new collaborative models.

RECOMMENDATION 33

Agencies will need to act quickly on these changes in order to be fully prepared to participate in larger planning exercises with Toronto Community Housing as tenants begin to return to Regent Park and new residents move in.

RECOMMENDATION 34

Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto will explore the possibility of continued commitments to the moderate resource needs generated by the community service planning process.
**RECOMMENDATION 35**

Interagency coordination and integration will, where appropriate, include the grassroots groups to ensure that they have access to the support they need to play the most effective role they can in the community service system within the new Regent Park. RPNI will work with community stakeholders to facilitate this process and to secure the necessary resources required for this work to continue.

**RECOMMENDATION 36**

Stakeholders will work together wherever possible, sharing information openly and in a timely way in order to facilitate a well-informed and effective planning process.
5. FACILITIES

5.1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As noted above in Section 2.5, facilities play a significant role in fostering social inclusion and social cohesion. Many of the functions described above depend on the creation of new facilities. By providing the physical space in which most social interactions occur, facilities are a fundamental component of social inclusion. New facilities can enable service providers to adapt to meet growing community needs. They can attract clients from all backgrounds by locating in high-quality spaces and can provide the opportunity to co-locate services to increase their visibility and accessibility. Grassroots groups can access space to gather, develop, reach out to their communities and deliver basic services. Good facilities serve as an essential component of social cohesion and social inclusion.

The City of Toronto clearly acknowledged the significance of good facilities when it assigned ‘priority community’ status only to communities that have low socio-economic indicators and also lack services and facilities. Community facilities are often the sites where community development occurs.

5.2 REDEVELOPMENT PRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Redevelopment presents a unique opportunity to create and expand facilities. Rebuilding virtually every building in Regent Park and creating considerable amounts of commercial space at street level increases the opportunity to access new high-quality space. Most agencies in Regent Park have identified the need for additional space as a priority. Some agencies have been able to proceed on expansion plans that enable them to increase their program capacity. The redevelopment presents a new opportunity to access thousands of square feet of new space for program expansion.

5.3 THERE ARE BARRIERS TO REALIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW FACILITIES

The expansion of space alone does not ensure the expansion of services or facilities. Several barriers exist to using new Regent Park space to build social inclusion.

5.3.1 RETAINING ACCESS TO FREE CITY AND SCHOOL BOARD SPACE

Service space in school and city facilities is provided through policies that currently only apply to low-income communities. When Regent Park becomes a mixed-income community, it may no longer qualify and those spaces would no longer be accessible for free. Loss of this space would cripple the service sector in Regent Park, removing most of its active recreation space as well as many of the teaching and meeting spaces currently being used.

Fortunately, decisions about this space lie entirely within the hands of Regent Park’s redevelopment partners at the City and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Current polices provide those spaces for free. The City and the TDSB are also in the process of reviewing their access to space policies. Those reviews should be completed midway through 2007.
Sudden loss of access to free public spaces would have a negative effect on the fabric of the Regent Park community, undermining the service infrastructure, eliminating an attractive feature of local facilities and programs, and discouraging residents from all backgrounds from using local facilities.

The City and the TDSB should be strongly encouraged to ensure that the policies resulting from their space-use reviews support stable community access and continued access to free public space in Regent Park, at least until the end of the redevelopment period. The TDSB should also be encouraged to retain the Model School and Inner City designations applied to local schools during the transition period.

5.3.2 REPLACING SERVICE SPACE IN TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING BUILDINGS

With almost all buildings in Regent Park facing demolition, service providers now using space in Toronto Community Housing buildings also face the loss of that space. These facilities face demolition in different phases of redevelopment spread out over 12 years.

However, in its Community Facilities Strategy, Toronto Community Housing committed to replacing existing facilities as required and bearing the capital cost of that replacement. Toronto Community Housing has committed to creating as much as 3000 m² of new space to replace service space, including space for recreational services, that is scheduled for demolition during redevelopment.

The implementation of this commitment still poses challenges. Toronto Community Housing and local service providers require a process for allocating space. Toronto Community Housing and the City committed to supporting fundraising efforts for ‘replacement space’ but this fundraising must draw on traditional funding sources. To compensate for the cost of new space, Toronto Community Housing will also require rent, which it agreed to forego in the past. Demolition and reconstruction happen in two-year cycles, so service providers would have to relocate to new spaces in the phase prior to their demolition to avoid a two-year interruption of services.

Space planning for the new Regent Park will have to take these issues into account and ensure that the plans for space allocation include the processes for arranging replacement space prior to demolition for Regent Park service providers using existing spaces.

5.3.3 INCREASING THE VOLUME OF SPACE

Existing space is insufficient to meet the needs of the community. There is currently no space to accommodate the services needed by the expanding community. Without growth, the service infrastructure of Regent Park will not be able to meet local needs.
Fortunately, the City is committed to developing new space, including an aquatics center and new child care centres. Through the Community Facilities Strategy, Toronto Community Housing has also committed to an addition of 2000 m2 for community facilities provided that there are service providers who are ready to rent the space to offer programs. With new phases of construction proceeding every two years, a steady growth of space to meet the growing community need is possible as long as funding for rental costs can be found.

The development of that space, however, will require careful planning. Service providers often require considerable lead time to raise funds for new space and programs. This is especially true for less-established service providers such as the grassroots groups and other informal and ethno-specific service providers. The new Regent Park will also attract commercial space use to serve the increasing market, putting competitive pressure on the available space and potentially driving up rental costs. The growth of new space in Regent Park will have to occur in a way that allows for long-term planning and for the firm allocation of space to service providers who can commit the funds.

5.3.4 DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Facilities must also change to become more accessible both physically and psychologically. Current services exhibit barriers that undermine the many roles that community services can play in building a healthy community. In addition to the basic criteria for good design outlined in Section 2.6 above, new community facilities can be more effective in building a healthy community if they meet design criteria that promote social inclusion.

**High-visibility locations should be available for services**
Most services should be in well-located, street-related spaces that are easily seen and recognized. Though this may be inappropriate for some services, planning and design criteria that reflect these objectives will make it easier for service providers to pursue high levels of visibility as they make plans for space they can rent in the new Regent Park.

**Large spaces should be available for services**
Planning and design criteria that allow for the creation of larger commercial spaces which could host several services in one location have several benefits:
- Larger, multi-service locations will be used by a wider variety of clients and therefore be more visible to a broader range of people.
- These sites allow clients from one program to “discover” services that they might otherwise not have encountered.
- Larger, multi-service sites enable groups from different backgrounds, including grassroots groups, to share space and, through proximity, to benefit from each other’s knowledge and skills, including cultural sensitivity, linguistic capacity and informal relationships to isolated communities.

**Spaces should be flexible**
Larger, multi-service spaces benefit from having the flexibility to accommodate changing activities. This flexibility is also a benefit for smaller organizations such as grassroots groups which require only part-time access.
Facilities should be barrier-free

Given the presence of a large disabled population in Regent Park, buildings should be designed to be barrier-free wherever possible.

Space should be designed to accommodate cultural access issues

Spaces for community services should be designed to allow for privacy at times when public viewing is uncomfortable to participants. Separate space for men’s and women’s programs should be possible when desired. Large facilities that allow for several services to be located in the same place also assist in overcoming cultural barriers by permitting shared access to cultural and linguistic accommodations.

Space should look and feel safe

Current residents routinely cite their concerns about the maintenance and safety of facilities as a factor in their level of participation in the current service infrastructure. Research among potential purchasers of Regent Park homes indicates that they will be hesitant to use facilities that appear run-down, poorly maintained or unsafe. Engaging the population of Regent Park in shared service infrastructure will depend on overcoming general concerns about the quality of the service spaces by ensuring that they reflect what makes residents comfortable. They should be well-lit spaces with good sightlines, as these design considerations have helped in the past to improve perceptions of safety in Regent Park. They should be clean, well-maintained spaces, as research continues to point to maintenance as a key element in client confidence. They should, as much as possible, be new, up-to-date facilities. Together these characteristics will have a positive effect on the ability of residents from all backgrounds to use Regent Park services and facilities.

These characteristics have the added benefit of improving community cohesion. As noted above in Section 2, casual interaction among people from different backgrounds is a key element of community cohesion. Building visible, accessible, accommodating, safe, welcoming and attractive facilities that offer a variety of services in one location creates the best possible opportunity for those casual interactions and supports the effort to build community across cultural and economic lines.

The redevelopment presents an exceptional opportunity to meet these longstanding needs in the community. New buildings can be designed with the contemporary needs of the community in mind and with attention to the key elements of community building that the existing infrastructure has been ill-equipped to meet.
5.4 PLANNING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

5.4.1 REVITALIZATION CREATES MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW FACILITIES

Finding space for community services has always been an issue in Regent Park. The new Regent Park allows for considerable expansion into new space. The Community Facilities Strategy developed by the City and Toronto Community Housing ensures that residents will have access to no less than 1650 m² of new recreation centre space and up to 1000 m² of additional recreation space scattered through Regent Park, subject to funding. It also allows for a minimum of 1385 m² of space to replace services that are demolished during the redevelopment, as well as new space for RPNI. These are valuable opportunities to develop sites for community services.

5.4.2 A PLANNING PROCESS IS NEEDED TO REALIZE THE POTENTIAL FOR NEW FACILITIES

But the Community Facilities Strategy provides few details about phasing, location, space allocation and design. It provides for a minimum amount of space but offers no guidance on the total amount, the process for arriving at it, or the process for allocating it. There is also no clear process for funding new space. This absence of a planning process created some confusion about space allocation in Phase 1. Working together, RPNI and Toronto Community Housing resolved issues regarding space allocation during that phase and improved the consultative process, but all stakeholders recognize a need for a systematic, reliable and transparent approach in future phases.

5.4.3 AN OPEN, FLEXIBLE AND EVOLVING PLANNING PROCESS

Identifying in advance the appropriate space allocation for the next 15 years of redevelopment would be difficult at best. Space allocation should evolve with the community in an ongoing process that allows for reassessment with each phase of development. The planning process should be designed to reflect an understanding of shared priorities in an evolving way, rather than demanding binding decisions years in advance. The priorities for accessing new space should take into account:

- The need to relocate existing services prior to the anticipated demolition of their space.
- Co-location opportunities and opportunities to develop service structures that link or integrate disparate groups.
- The need to establish key services early on in order to increase the participation of returning and new residents and enhance social cohesion.

Given the potential demand for new space, service providers planning to use new facilities should have a clear strategy for space use, including a description of the activities and the anticipated demand for the services described and a strategy for funding the space.

To ensure that space demands are managed and reflect real needs, other service spaces such as schools and other venues should be taken into account as service providers plan their new space needs.
Toronto Community Housing has developed a process based on these principles that allows service providers opportunities to express interest in developing new service space in each phase of redevelopment. This process provides early notice and sets out clear priorities to ensure that decisions are founded on understandable and transparent principles.

5.4.4 REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS

Toronto Community Housing is committed to working with existing social services agencies and organizations to replace existing space and, where possible, to expand that space to meet programming needs. As noted above, Toronto Community Housing is specifically committed to creating over 2,000 m² of new services space and an additional 1,000 m² of space subject to funding. Toronto Community Housing will develop and allocate that space through a process that allows agencies to make proposals based on their needs and objectives and on information provided to them prior to each phase of redevelopment. In an effort to be responsive to changing needs at all stages of the process, Toronto Community Housing will consult with stakeholders and residents prior to the beginning of each phase's proposals.

Toronto Community Housing will initiate the process in each phase by issuing a formal request for Expression of Interest (EOI), seeking proposals from social service agencies and organizations that have an interest in delivering services and programs in Regent Park.

The parameters of the EOI will provide information about the opportunities to obtain and use commercial space in the upcoming phase of the redevelopment. The information will describe opportunities for conventional space and for purpose-built space as well as the potential locations of available space. Service providers will be able to seek the space they need from among the potential spaces identified.

Where multiple service providers are seeking space, priority consideration will be given to agencies and organizations whose existing facilities are scheduled for demolition in the upcoming phase of redevelopment, in order to enable them to relocate without lengthy interruptions in services. Organizations whose facilities face demolition in a later phase will be given the next highest priority ranking.

Consideration will also be given to proposals that advance the objectives of the redevelopment. Priority will be given to proposals that support social cohesion or social inclusion by creating co-location opportunities, attracting a broad range of users, or helping to overcome barriers to service that residents face.

The goals of the Social Development Plan and ongoing tenant input will provide guidance to Toronto Community Housing during the proposal review process.
The successful use of service space in Regent Park is important to the success of the community. As a result, Toronto Community Housing is obliged to make every effort to ensure that space allocated for services will be used actively and will be sustainable. The proposals submitted by service providers should provide Toronto Community Housing with the information necessary to assess both the viability and the impact of the proposals. Proposals should include information on the proposed use of the space, the proposed space requirements, and a business plan that identifies the strategy for sustaining ongoing operating costs.

Toronto Community Housing will provide details on the anticipated timing of the development process to enable service providers to plan their fundraising. While the redevelopment schedule is flexible and must to respond to changing conditions, Toronto Community Housing will make every effort to issue the EOI six months prior to the anticipated date for lease signing. Service providers would have another year prior to demolition and more than three years before occupancy of the new space, providing a reasonable amount of time to coordinate funding cycles in the event that additional funding should be required to support the new location.

In the situation where a social service agency not currently providing services in Regent Park approaches Toronto Community Housing with a proposal to lease commercial space for programming, Toronto Community Housing will adhere to the same principles outlined above. Proposals will be required to provide information on the proposed use of the space, space requirements, and a business plan that identifies the approach to sustain ongoing operating costs. The goals of the Social Development Plan and ongoing tenant input will similarly provide guidance to Toronto Community Housing during the proposal review process. While Toronto Community Housing will seek opinions, they retain the right to make final decisions.

Toronto Community Housing will continue to work with proposal developers to guide them in understanding cost requirements and factors influencing cost, including estimates on leasehold improvements, operating costs, and any capital costs.

5.4.5 INFORMATION AND SUPPORT CAN ASSIST LOCAL AGENCIES IN PURSUING NEW FACILITIES

Local agencies will be better able to assess what services to develop if they know what services are being planned by others. In addition to interagency planning, service providers will need to know what plans other large institutional stakeholders are making. The City of Toronto is developing new services in the area, including an aquatics centre, the expansion of the community centre, a new childcare centre and employment facilities. The City of Toronto should provide up-to-date accounts of its plans for service facilities in Regent Park. These plans should include the size and function of any planned facilities and the approximate date intended for development.
The TDSB is also reviewing its buildings in the East Downtown and assessing the need for four schools in the area. Changes to the buildings, from reuse to demolition, are all possible. Changes to the policies governing access to school space for community uses are also under way. Planning community facilities is extremely challenging in the context of this level of uncertainty. The TDSB should be encouraged to identify the amount of community access to local schools it will be accommodating during the development period.

Toronto Community Housing should help service providers assess costs for facilities in order to enable service providers to accurately calculate financial needs. Toronto Community Housing should clarify expectations about costs to be borne by service providers and specify which capital costs are borne by the service provider and what financial guarantees Toronto Community Housing will require prior to committing to build services space for agencies in Regent Park.

Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto should also work with community service providers and local agencies to support their efforts to raise new funds for community facilities.

To help set financial targets for fundraising, assessments of the costs for new facilities, based on average gross floor area construction or rental costs, should be provided to service providers.

Lengthy advance notice of the potential dates for occupation of new space would enable service providers to develop their fundraising schedule and implement funding campaigns in a timely way.

Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto should work with RPNI and service providers to present the facilities plan to potential funders. Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto should also participate in targeted opportunities to promote the need for new facilities to individual funders.

5.5 AMENITIES SPACE

Little residential amenities space is currently available in Regent Park; however, new residential buildings will include amenity space in each building. This space is intended for the joint use of tenants in the building. Amenities space is generally used by tenants for social functions, celebrations and recreational activities, but it is also used for meetings. Permanent occupation of that space for other uses undermines that function. But amenities space can be used on a regular basis to provide services and programs of value to tenants. Such uses are common in Toronto Community Housing buildings across the city. Service providers should explore the use of amenities space to provide services that meet tenants' needs.
The use of amenities space is governed by Toronto Community Housing’s Use of Common Space Policy. This policy allows the rental of amenity space subject to specific conditions. Users must make an application, which is reviewed by Toronto Community Housing staff and tenants. Organizations using the space must have appropriate insurance. The local Tenant Council has the power to set rental rates for the use of amenities space and to approve the uses on an ongoing basis. Uses that cease to serve tenants’ needs can be denied access to the space by the Tenant Council.

Amenities space could be an attractive venue for programs that do not need dedicated space. Rental rates reflect tenant priorities and can vary to accommodate services desired by tenants. Services that tenants value are likely to gain both Tenant Council approval and affordable rental rates. The proximity to tenants makes these spaces very accessible and visible within any given building. The location of the amenities space inside Toronto Community Housing buildings also make them potentially effective venues for breaking down barriers between income groups by hosting services that attract local homeowners into Toronto Community Housing properties.

5.6 COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Not all venues that promote social cohesion and social inclusion host community services. Commercial settings are also sites of interaction among local residents. In the Gooderham and Worts development near Regent Park, the opening of a coffee shop helped link local residents together. Local drugstores, banking services and other widely used services are also useful facilities for developing social cohesion. Ethno-specific shopping opportunities can also serve this function if the facilities offer a ‘boutique’ setting that welcomes curious local residents from other ethnic backgrounds.

RECOMMENDATION 37

Toronto Community Housing will provide for replacement space for services in Regent Park by implementing the space allocation processes outlined in the Social Development Plan, which includes:

- Providing a Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) process in order to seek proposals from social service agencies and organizations that have an interest in delivering services and programs in Regent Park.

- Outlining:
  - The opportunities for conventional space.
  - The opportunities for purpose-built space.
  - The potential locations of available space.
  - The anticipated timing of the development process.
  - Granting priority to proposals from agencies and organizations that are immediately impacted by the subsequent phase of development.
  - Granting secondary priority to proposals from agencies and organizations whose access to space will be impacted by a subsequent phase of redevelopment.
• Granting priority to proposals that meet important objectives of the redevelopment process, including co-locations, increased visibility and reduced barriers.

RECOMMENDATION 38

To ensure that space allocations focus resources on service providers with the capacity to deliver needed services, service providers seeking space in new buildings in Regent Park will be required to provide information on the proposed use of the space and the proposed space requirements, along with a business plan that identifies the approach to sustain ongoing operating costs.

RECOMMENDATION 39

While the redevelopment schedule is flexible and must be able to respond to changing conditions, Toronto Community Housing will make every effort to work with agencies that require replacement program space one year before the commencement of demolition and will set a six-month target for the selection process. This timing will give agencies and organizations more than three years’ notice prior to occupancy of the new space, thereby providing a reasonable amount of time to coordinate with funding cycles should additional funding be required to support the new location.

RECOMMENDATION 40

In the situation where a social service agency not currently providing services in Regent Park approaches Toronto Community Housing with a proposal to lease commercial space to provide programming, Toronto Community Housing will adhere to the principles outlined in Recommendations 37–39. New service providers seeking space will be required to provide information regarding the proposed use of the space and the proposed space requirements, along with a business plan that identifies the approach to sustain ongoing operating costs.

RECOMMENDATION 41

The goals of the Social Development Plan will provide guidance to Toronto Community Housing during their review of proposals. Though Toronto Community Housing is seeking input on space allocation priorities, they retain the right to make final decisions about all leases on Toronto Community Housing property.

RECOMMENDATION 42

Toronto Community Housing will continue to work with agencies and organizations developing space-use proposals, in order to provide information to assist service providers in assessing cost requirements and factors influencing space costs.
**RECOMMENDATION 43**

Service providers should explore the use of amenities space within the confines of Toronto Community Housing’s Use of Common Space Policy. This policy permits the rental of amenity space—subject to approval by Toronto Community Housing staff—at rental rates that are at the discretion of the Tenant Council, provided that basic assurances such as insurance are in place and that the programs continue to meet with the approval of the Tenant Council.

**RECOMMENDATION 44**

The City should be strongly encouraged to ensure that the policies resulting from their current space-use review on the part of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division allow for continued affordable access to space and programs in Regent Park.

**RECOMMENDATION 45**

The City of Toronto should provide up-to-date accounts of its plans for service facilities in Regent Park, such as the Aquatic Centre, the Regent Park Recreation Centre expansion, child care facilities, an Employment and Enterprise Hub and any other facilities currently planned. These plans should include the size and function of any planned facilities and, where possible, the approximate timeline for development.

**RECOMMENDATION 46**

Toronto Community Housing will consider, where appropriate, the impact of commercial developments on social cohesion when planning commercial space in Regent Park.
6. FACILITY AND SERVICE FUNDING

The Regent Park redevelopment has the capacity to bring new opportunities and a better quality of life to the people who live there. Achieving this goal depends on the neighbourhood becoming not simply a mixed community, but a cohesive and inclusive community. Developing the relationships and the infrastructure for social cohesion and social inclusion are demanding tasks that will take time, energy and money.

The capacity of local services to support key elements of social cohesion is entirely dependent on funding that meets their changing needs. Almost every element of the transition to the new Regent Park outlined above will impose new costs:

- Some services will need to relocate, preferably to more visible, higher-quality space.
- Service providers will pay more rent for space in Regent Park, which has previously been free of charge.
- Some service providers will need more space for expanded programs, which will lead to increased total rent costs.
- There may be some capital improvement costs to service providers in sectors such as childcare and health in order to adapt new space to specific uses.
- In order to work collaboratively and engage in interagency planning, service providers will need to devote more time to administration, coordination and communication during the transition period.
- Service providers will need to spend more staff time on the development of initial service and space-use plans.

Though these investments represent a significant challenge in the short run, in the long run they will pay handsome dividends.

Research consistently points to positive neighbourhood effects from the establishment of socially cohesive, socially inclusive mixed-income communities, including higher employment rates, higher incomes, better health outcomes, better educational results, and lower crime rates. Such benefits will not only improve the quality of life in Regent Park, but will reduce the cost of health care, social assistance, education and policing.

Funding the transition to that new condition is a key challenge for the new Regent Park. That funding will have to come from many sources, including traditional funders of Regent Park services and new donors that become attached to the community. But it will also need to come from the funders of health care, social assistance, education and policing, who will all benefit from some of the long-term advantages of mixed communities.

6.1 FUNDRAISING FROM INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS

Raising new money is a challenge for Regent Park agencies. They traditionally serve low-income families and draw funding from charities and government funders. Some individuals and corporations across the city make donations to Regent Park service providers; however, they do so as charitable acts to arm’s-length recipients with whom they have little direct involvement.
This income source is limited by the fact that Canadians are modest donors to begin with, giving an average of only $400 per year to charities, much of which goes to religious institutions. Only about one-third of individual donations go to health and social services or philanthropic causes. Corporate donors in Canada, on the other hand, tend overwhelmingly to give to health and education charities and charities that have very high revenues and high visibility, which few Regent Park agencies can claim.

Regent Park agencies have explored many of these fundraising opportunities. The few agencies that have internal fundraising capacity generally raise a modest 3–6% of their budgets from all donations, including corporations and foundations, and less than 1% from individuals in the local area. Some of that fundraising comes at considerable expense.

The new Regent Park will expand opportunities somewhat. Redevelopment will add approximately 4,500 new, more affluent homeowners to the community. Efforts to open Regent Park up to the neighbourhood communities in the East Downtown will bring another 5,000 more affluent residents into contact with Regent Park services. With over 9,000 eligible new potential donors, the fundraising capacity of agencies improves.

The new Regent Park will also have added visibility as the redevelopment proceeds, and for the first time, businesses are included within the community. The Regent Park redevelopment is a highly regarded city-building initiative and has the potential to find a corporate sponsor, as St. James Town found in the Manulife Corporation and other distressed communities have found in IBM. With new corporate opportunities, fundraising levels could increase.

Despite these increased opportunities, private and corporate donations will fund only a small portion of the transition to a cohesive, inclusive mixed-income community. Regent Park agencies can expect to gather only a fraction of the donations made by residents and corporations in the area, and cannot rely on large-scale donations from a major corporate sponsor. Capturing even those donations will require an aggressive and expensive effort. Many agencies lack the internal capacity for the risky, expensive and demanding process of fundraising from individuals. Some services lack the ‘donor appeal’ that is essential to bringing in new money and would be unlikely to gain significantly from soliciting individual donors.

Nonetheless, fundraising remains a useful contribution to the resource base, and expanded fundraising efforts should be one element of the service improvement process. Fundraising drives with concrete permanent outcomes, such as a building drive for capital costs, often appeal more to donors than funding non-capital items, and there are many such opportunities in the new Regent Park. Agencies should explore joint efforts to raise funds, with multiple participants contributing resources and larger agencies shepherding the effort to generate larger donations for facilities and services. These joint efforts could sustain a higher level of visibility and reach and could also help deepen the interagency cooperation needed for a successful transition during the redevelopment.
Residents in nearby communities will also be attracted to using and potentially paying for some services in Regent Park. There are few new facilities available in the neighbouring communities, and the creation of new programs targeted at a wide audience—as well as new facilities such as an aquatic centre and an expanded recreation centre—will be attractive to those residents. The Wellesley Community Centre, which opened recently in the East Downtown, is too far for most people in the Regent Park area to use. But it should be noted that the Wellesley has been an attractive destination for more affluent residents in its area, even though it is a centre located in and created for low-income tenants in St. James Town. New facilities in Regent Park can reasonably expect to attract participation in the same way. Programs run by community-based agencies in Regent Park could draw on those new clients to cover some programming costs.

Applying user fees to more affluent service users while maintaining free service for low-income residents has generally required means testing. Means testing can reduce participation and create barriers to service use and is not a desirable approach for many service providers. But systems can be developed to enable families living in Toronto Community Housing units to pre-qualify for free services, making means testing invisible to users from Toronto Community Housing buildings and removing stigmatizing elements from the process. The City of Toronto is currently exploring such approaches for all its community centres and recreation services, and Toronto Community Housing and service providers have several models available that could facilitate stigma-free user fee systems.

Regent Park residents express reservations about user fee systems and other forms of two-tier services, but they overwhelmingly support such systems if they continue to provide unobstructed access to services. In particular, they support reserving spaces for low-income residents to ensure that spaces will continue to be available when the increasing population of Regent Park expands the pool of potential users.

These strategies—attracting neighbouring residents, instituting non-stigmatizing user fee systems, and creating reserved places for low-income families in order to ensure access—are elements of a mixed-income participation model that allows for broadly available services that capture the costs of serving more affluent participants while preventing the displacement of low-income residents. This approach makes the expansion of programs potentially self-financing, non-stigmatizing and equitable.

While the user fee system can capture some portion of the cost of services, these fees are unlikely to contribute more than a small fraction of the cost of the changes needed for Regent Park agencies. Regent Park agencies that currently collect user fees gain only a very small portion of their overall revenues from that source, and national trends support the expectation that a fee-for-service approach produces limited income.

Regent Park service providers can set up some services, especially popular sports, fitness programs, swimming, and daycare services, to be accessible to people from all income groups throughout the East Downtown. In doing so, some services can obtain modest but necessary funding from user fees.
6.3 FUNDING FROM FOUNDATIONS AND CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

6.3.1 THERE ARE RISKS TO THE CHARITABLE FUNDING BASE IN REGENT PARK

New services will assist middle-income residents as well as those with lower incomes, but charitable organizations tend to focus on communities living in poverty. As Regent Park welcomes middle-income families, its average incomes and employment rates will rise. Charitable organizations may consequently reduce their commitments to Regent Park organizations as the resources of the area grow through redevelopment, though this is precisely the time when agencies need increased contributions to support the transition. Regent Park is also located geographically in the inner city, an area that has become less of a focus for new charitable investments since the recognition of the concentration of poverty in the inner suburbs that led to the creation of the 13 ‘priority neighbourhoods.’ It is difficult to expand programs, change service delivery models and relocate services in this environment.

6.3.2 SOME FUNDERS ARE DRAWN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITY MODELS

Despite the daunting context, it is important to note that funders have been engaged in the redevelopment. Some foundations have already made contributions to organizations like RPNI. Other charitable organizations have contributed expertise and hosted events to explore the opportunities raised by the redevelopment. The City and Toronto Community Housing have also committed new funding.

There are further opportunities to attract new money, but they are specific, narrow areas of funding. Funding is available from some charitable organizations for developing mechanisms to engage residents and develop innovative models for community development. There has also been funding available for developing new, collaborative models of service delivery and for creating strategies for a transition to an inclusive, cohesive mixed-income community. These funding trends are likely to continue, and Regent Park agencies should focus fundraising efforts in these areas. Regent Park agencies will be unlikely to secure funding for simply expanding existing programs or plugging gaps in current services.

Regent Park agencies should also explore their options as a priority neighbourhood. Although Regent Park is not one of the 13 neighbourhoods, the City has designated Regent Park as a priority by virtue of its redevelopment and offers similar supports, including coordinated staffing teams, along with a similar emphasis on funding.

Finally, Toronto Community Housing and the City have also committed to assisting agencies by supporting their fundraising efforts. While this support clearly will not take the form of donating funding directly or becoming a co-applicant for funding, Toronto Community Housing and the City are prepared to convene funders, express their support to funders, and assist in communicating with funders.
6.3.3 SERVICE PROVIDERS CAN DRAW ON ADVANTAGES TO SUPPORT A TARGETED FUNDING EFFORT

Agencies are at the centre of an exciting development in the future of Toronto. Redevelopment processes and systems for creating successful mixed-income communities are an important element in shaping the future of Toronto. There are few, if any, other opportunities in Toronto to participate in important “city building” efforts of this kind. Some funders are eager to support the development of innovative models of service delivery, systems for facilitation, social inclusion, and the expansion of community engagement. Developing, testing and refining these processes is a valuable contribution to the city and one worthy of funding support.

Regent Park agencies should work immediately to create a case for support that funds the following initiatives:
• Developing the collaborative models and interagency structures that support coordinated work across the community.
• Piloting collaborative service delivery in key areas.
• Piloting mixed-income service models, including hub models.
• Testing mixed-income service mechanisms, including non-stigmatizing user fees and reserved placements.
• The costs of transition processes, including relocation costs, site improvements, staff training and program development.
• Supporting the development of skills and capacities for leadership in community governance models.

The complete case for support should be communicated to funders as the basis for funding the transition in Regent Park. Toronto Community Housing and the City should convene a funders’ table to create an opportunity to present the case for supporting the transition. Toronto Community Housing, the City and RPNI should follow this presentation to the funders’ table with a direct and focused campaign designed to attract funders to specific roles in the redevelopment transition and in the creation of models to support community renewal.

Together these efforts should attract the charitable organization funds available for a project of this significance. These funds, however, are unlikely to provide all of the funding necessary to support the transition to social cohesion. Charitable donors tend to be a secondary source of funding for most Regent Park agencies already. New charitable funds are unlikely to grow by large amounts in the current, highly competitive fundraising environment.
6.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

While fundraising and user fees are appropriate measures to ensure that service providers are capturing resources for the transition from every possible source, the role of government cannot fail to be significant in the redevelopment. Governments are currently the number one funders of services in Regent Park, dwarfing all other contributors. Governments are also a key beneficiary of a successful redevelopment. Research into economic efficiency in the public sector has demonstrated repeatedly that investments in recreation (Brown 2001) and community services (Welsh and Waller 1995) produce cost savings to governments that more than offset the costs of the services, often within very short time frames. Outcomes such as higher employment rates, which lower reliance on social assistance, decrease demand on health care and reduce crime rates, have been shown to translate into significant government savings. Unfortunately, the savings accrue primarily to other orders of government and the expenditures belong largely to municipalities and community service providers. Ensuring that governments can achieve the programmatic benefits as well as the financial benefits of redevelopment will require intergovernmental agreements to support the transition to the new Regent Park and to support the role of community service providers in that effort.

Initial steps have already been taken in achieving that intergovernmental cooperation, and continued work in this area is critical to the success of the initiative. Recent work on the creation of an employment, training and enterprise hub reflects that increased commitment to the intergovernmental cooperation necessary to the successful social development of Regent Park.

The City of Toronto’s efforts to establish intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and fund improved community development and social cohesion in Regent Park should be developed into firm agreements as soon as possible. This will help provide a clear sense of the resources that are available when planning the Regent Park service infrastructure.

Delays in concluding agreements will result in delays in establishing service infrastructure, increasing the risk that more homeowners will seek services outside Regent Park, become less attached to their new community and less inclined to contribute to its success.

Intergovernmental cooperation models are outlined in Section 9 and Recommendation 73.

RECOMMENDATION 47

A funding strategy will be developed by RPNI, with the assistance of the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing and community agencies, to secure new resources necessary to enable RPNI to expand its governance functions to support the new governance process.

RECOMMENDATION 48

The City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing will work with local service providers, where appropriate, to promote plans and appeals to governmental and non-governmental funders and to assist in convening funders to build momentum in fundraising campaigns.
**RECOMMENDATION 49**

Expanded fundraising efforts should be one element of the service improvement process. Fundraising drives with concrete, permanent outcomes, such as a “building drive” for capital costs, often appeal more to donors than funding non-capital items. There are many such opportunities in the new Regent Park and these capital drives should become part of the fundraising process.

**RECOMMENDATION 50**

Community-based agencies in Regent Park will identify appropriate circumstances for making some services, especially popular sports, fitness programs, swimming, and child care services, accessible to people from middle- and upper-income groups on a user-pay basis, charging fees that can help to support service expansion.

**RECOMMENDATION 51**

Regent Park service providers will identify mechanisms for ensuring that services are appropriately distributed across income groups (for example, by reserving spaces for key target groups as necessary) and for retaining the current level of service affordability for lower-income families (for example, by offering free access to families with lower incomes).

**RECOMMENDATION 52**

Regent Park service providers should develop a case for support for the innovative models that the revitalization will require them to develop, including:

- Developing the collaborative models and interagency structures that support coordinated and integrated work across the community.
- Piloting collaborative service delivery in key areas.
- Piloting mixed-income service models, including hub models.
- Testing mixed-income service mechanisms, including non-stigmatizing user fees and reserved placements.
- The costs of transition processes, including relocation costs, site improvements, staff training and program development.
- Supporting the development of skills and capacities for leadership in community governance models.

**RECOMMENDATION 53**

Regent Park service providers and all stakeholders should work together to gain the commitment of key funders who are willing to look beyond current funding restrictions and support the new initiatives under way in Regent Park as valuable new efforts for interagency coordination and neighbourhood-based community development.
RECOMMENDATION 54

Governments are also critical stakeholders and significant beneficiaries of the Regent Park redevelopment process and should develop their collective strategy for identifying and fulfilling their respective roles, including their role as funders and facilitators of the process, as outlined in Section 9.4.
7. SCHOOLS

7.1 SCHOOLS HAVE EXCEPTIONAL REACH INTO THE COMMUNITY

Schools play an exceptional role in all communities and in low-income communities in particular. Schools in almost any community are the institution with the greatest reach into the community. Over 87% of Regent Park households have children and more than 60% of those children are school-aged - almost one out of every two households participates in local schools. No other institution in Regent Park has the visibility or scope of relationships that schools have. This easily makes schools the most popular service and the most common connecting point in all of Regent Park. Families with children, and especially families with children attending school in Regent Park, are significantly more likely to access community services. Even services geared entirely to adults, such as adult education, employment training and seniors’ services, are more likely to be used by adults with children in Regent Park schools. Just 37% of childless adults use adults’ community services, whereas more than 53% of adults with children in Regent Park schools access those same services (Meagher and Boston 2003).

Schools have an exceptional ability to link people to services and also to link people to each other. Schools are a frequent meeting place where parents pick up and drop off their children and are also a regular gathering place where parents attend fun fairs, concerts and graduation. As a result, schools form a critical gateway to support services, social networks and social inclusion.

Most importantly, schools have universal appeal. People from all backgrounds send their children to, and become actively engaged in, local schools. Research indicates that this characteristic makes schools one of the most critical sites for connecting groups from different backgrounds. Regent Park has a history of working to engage parents from all segments of the community. For much of the last 30 years, Regent Park schools were among the leaders in developing strategies to engage parents, including providing childcare and conducting active outreach. To ensure that parents from all backgrounds feel welcome and included, meetings have been held in multiple languages with multilingual handouts provided.

7.2 SCHOOLS ARE CRITICAL VENUES

In Regent Park, no household is located more than three blocks from one of the four Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools, and a Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) school is located only a few blocks farther away. The total area of usable community space in local schools dramatically exceeds the space available from any other institutions. Schools also possess specific types of spaces that are hard to acquire and expensive to build, such as gymnasiums, auditoriums and flexible multi-purpose space. Schools can be one of the most important venues for a broad range of activities in the community.
7.3 PARENT COUNCILS ARE A FORM OF GOVERNANCE THAT SUPPORTS SOCIAL INCLUSION

Schools can link parents from different backgrounds through the casual encounters inherent in shared school space, but schools can also build relationships through inclusive processes such as parent councils. The parent council, like the neighbourhood association, is a governance model. Through it, people from different backgrounds can come together and make joint decisions about the issues that matter most to them. They share ideas and concerns and through those discussions are able to appreciate how the issues affect people from a background other than their own. That opportunity to learn and to value the experience of others is critical to social inclusion.

7.4 SCHOOL MANDATES AND FUNDING CAN AFFECT THEIR ROLE

Current funding formulas and government mandates can restrict the role of schools in social inclusion. The funding formula governing schools does not allocate money to keep schools open in the evenings for community use or to accommodate activities organized by local service providers, such as recreation and skills development programs. Without sufficient funding, schools generally have to charge user fees, which minimize the volume of possible use and reduce activities in schools that can connect residents and build social cohesion. Funding shortages also limit the resources available for outreach and engagement efforts that help parents connect to their school.

Tight funding also creates staffing shortages that undermine the stability of programs in Regent Park during redevelopment. Relocation in Regent Park will temporarily remove students from the community for two-year intervals. When enrolment falls in local schools, staff are reassigned to other schools. When the students return to the community, new staff are brought in to accommodate the renewed enrolment. These staff fluctuations will undermine program continuity and diminish confidence in local schools. Parents often seek to remove students from schools that are in flux, seeking stable schools for their children. This instability diminishes the role that schools can play in attracting a wide cross-section of residents to integrated, responsive and effective schools.

7.5 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECT THOSE BARRIERS

Recent changes in funding and mandates have partially reduced some of the barriers impeding the role of schools in enhancing social cohesion and social inclusion. Funding has been obtained to lower user fees. The Toronto District School Board is also reviewing its space-use policies in general, and opportunities exist to improve the way school space contributes to community health.
The redevelopment has also led to a review of the school facilities in Regent Park. Of the four schools in the immediate community, most are older and many are operating below capacity. The TDSB is currently assessing school space needs as well as the best model for accommodating current and future students in the Regent Park area. This analysis could result in significant reconfiguration of school space in Regent Park. While this process creates uncertainty about the future, it also provides the opportunity to produce the most appropriate school space for the newly expanded community.

One Regent Park school, Nelson Mandela Park Public School, has been designated a Model School. The Model Schools are designed to serve as a community resource in distressed neighbourhoods and are part of the TDSB’s Inner City Schools strategy. Model Schools are supplied with additional resources, most notably a community outreach worker. Model Schools are encouraged to apply these resources not only to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for children but also to improve their circumstances outside the school by supporting community development and a healthy neighbourhood.

These various developments could help offset some of the constraints on school mandates and help schools to play a role in social inclusion. Nonetheless, the role of local schools remains somewhat undefined at this stage. Establishing clear policies on how the schools will support the revitalization of Regent Park will help in planning efforts.

7.6 SCHOOLS WILL REQUIRE A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY

Schools are able to play their most effective role in social inclusion when they attract families from many different backgrounds and engage them in many ways. Past experience shows that both tenants and homeowners tend to withdraw from the local schools if they have concerns about the schools’ ability to provide a good education in a safe environment. Surveys among potential purchasers of Regent Park homes show a similar trend among those families. Parents are inclined to send children to local schools, but change their minds if the school in question is poorly maintained or is not demonstrating a commitment to high standards. Maintaining schools in a state of good repair, showing a commitment to quality education, and demonstrating stability are key elements of promoting participation in local schools.

Having adequate childcare facilities and space for community activities also contributes significantly to local schools’ ability to attract participation from local families and to engage them. These features draw more parents into contact with both the school itself and with the parents of other children. In the past, Regent Park schools have hosted cultural events, community programs and public meetings on issues from redevelopment to community safety. Continuing to draw residents into the schools and into contact with the school community will create even more opportunities for social cohesion.
Overall, schools will need strategies to address all of the opportunities and challenges outlined above. Attracting diverse families, opening their doors to connect with the broader community, facilitating diverse and healthy parent councils, and reaching out to a diverse community are complex tasks that will evolve over time. The schools will need a process for coordinating that effort and for coordinating their efforts with those of service providers, community leaders, the City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing. The change management process outlined in Section 9 below provides an attractive opportunity to meet that goal.

**RECOMMENDATION 55**

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) should be asked to identify the amount of community access to local schools they can accommodate during the redevelopment period.

**RECOMMENDATION 56**

The TDSB should be strongly encouraged to ensure that the policies resulting from their current space-use reviews allow for continued affordable access to space in Regent Park.

**RECOMMENDATION 57**

The series of relocations that accompany the demolition of units in Regent Park could cause enrolments to fluctuate in specific TDSB schools with small catchment areas. The TDSB should review enrolment numbers annually to ensure that there is stable staffing in Regent Park schools during the enrolment fluctuations that could accompany the relocation and the redevelopment period.

**RECOMMENDATION 58**

The TDSB and TCDSB should review capital plans to ensure that, wherever possible, improvements to local Regent Park schools are completed as early as possible in the redevelopment in order to build the confidence of new residents in the quality of local schools. Maintenance of school properties in Regent Park should be a priority in school budgeting.

**RECOMMENDATION 59**

Local schools and their boards should be encouraged to provide space on site for childcare facilities wherever possible.

**RECOMMENDATION 60**

Local schools should continue to work with parents, community groups, informal grassroots groups and social service agencies to stay open in the evenings for community activities that involve students, parents and the broader community. Wherever possible, local schools should be encouraged to provide space that is accessible and affordable to accommodate community activities.
**RECOMMENDATION 61**

Local schools and their boards should be encouraged to continue to build on the body of best practices and internal policies to foster broad engagement in the schools, including:

- Providing broad culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach to parents.
- Ensuring that meetings provide childcare, interpretation and food.
- Providing education and orientation activities for parents regarding parents’ councils and how parents can become involved.
- Playing mediating roles where necessary to foster social harmony among community residents from diverse social, cultural and racial backgrounds.

**RECOMMENDATION 62**

The complex and broad role that schools can and should play in social inclusion will require a systematic planning process as outlined in Section 9.2.5.
8. TOWARDS A NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CHOICE AND CONNECTION: AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PLAN FOR REGENT PARK

8.1 INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The goal of revitalization is to transform Regent Park into a mixed-income, mixed-use community that is integrated into the mainstream of city life. Achieving this objective clearly requires more than physical change alone. It also requires investment in people. In the same way that forgotten neighbourhoods typically suffer the consequences of disinvestment, so too do the individuals who live there. In Regent Park, for example, although many residents work, employment is typically in low-paying, precarious jobs; receipt of social assistance and other income supports is comparatively high; and lack of information about employment and other services suggests that real need is likely higher still.

So, while revitalization holds the promise of a fresh start, realizing that promise will require significant and sustained investment in those who now and in the future will call Regent Park home. Employment services represent an essential part of that investment and, as such, are a central feature of this Social Development Plan. The need for a new approach to employment services emerges from broad agreement that current employment and training services in general are fragmented and uncoordinated. Feedback from Regent Park residents demonstrates that they do not feel particularly well served. This chapter provides a description of the key features of the Employment Services Plan for Regent Park. The full plan, along with a supplementary report describing the best practice research which informs it, is contained in the Appendices.

8.1.1 CONTRIBUTING TO REVITALIZATION: AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PLAN FOR REGENT PARK

Over recent years, the City of Toronto, through Toronto Social Services (TSS), has become the primary service manager for employment services and supports to Toronto’s most vulnerable residents. This experience, combined with a long history of developing and delivering a broad range of innovative and successful employment programs and supports, means that the City is best placed to take the lead with regard to employment services for Regent Park residents. The creation of the Employment Services Plan demonstrates that leadership.

In addition, the plan builds on Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in Toronto endorsed by Council in June 2006 which consisted of 65 recommendations and actions for improving social assistance in Toronto. In particular, it identified the need for a broader range of employment services, with closer links to employers, more workplace-based training and access to transitional jobs for those with the most barriers to employment. It also identified the need for greater coordination and integration of services. In implementing immediate changes to employment and training services where possible, and advocating and laying the foundations for broader changes to support these aims, this plan furthers this work.
The Employment Services Plan is built on two emerging strategies. First, there is a growing consensus regarding the need for an approach to employment services that addresses both the new realities of the supply side of the labour market and the often overlooked needs of the demand side. On the supply side, employment services need to adopt mixed approaches with a continuum of services available to meet the complex and diverse needs of poor and working poor individuals. A full range of employment services must include strategies for preparing for employment, transitioning into employment and advancing in employment. On the demand side, traditional approaches to employment services have often failed to provide many workers with the skills and experience employers need. Developing partnerships with employers provides in-depth knowledge and understanding of the needs of specific industries and sectors. Engaging employers in designing employment and training initiatives helps to open up pathways to better-paying, higher-quality and more stable jobs.

In seeking to better connect demand and supply, the Employment Services Plan draws on the expertise of key stakeholders, including government, community and employers. For example, acknowledging the key role of economic development in revitalization, the City’s Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division has identified enhanced ways of supporting self-employment, entrepreneurial skill development, small businesses, and community economic development initiatives.

Second, concentrated urban poverty and disadvantage is leading to greater interest in spatialized or ‘place-based’ policies. Place-based policies target specific neighbourhoods, or communities, for integrated services that respond to the unique needs of particular places. The emphasis on place-based policies reflects a movement away from traditional top-down, issue-specific policy approaches, to locally-driven, comprehensive strategies. In Toronto, a place-based approach underpins both the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy and the City’s Community Safety Plan. Both focus on how residents, neighbourhood groups and governments can find solutions to neighbourhood issues and challenges.

The Employment Services Plan for Regent Park draws on such place-based and comprehensive strategies to outline a new approach to employment services.

**BENEFITS TO RESIDENTS**

The Employment Services Plan will provide residents with a number of benefits, including:

- More accessible and better coordinated services that provide connections to employment, skills development and educational opportunities within the community and across the city;
- Stronger and closer ties to employers;
- Pre- and post-employment services based on the different needs of each individual;
- A range of services to meet the complex and diverse employment and social support needs of different groups within the community (e.g., vulnerable populations, precariously employed, foreign-trained professionals);
- A “one-stop” Employment, Training and Enterprise hub based in Regent Park;
- Highly trained hub staff focusing on employment and career direction rather than simply finding a job; and
• Access to, and coordination of, economic development services that are currently delivered across the city to build local capacity and to support the creation of local business and social enterprise.

Before describing the content of the plan, it is important to clarify what it does not address. It is beyond the scope of the plan to change the broader economic and social policy areas which shape what revitalization can realistically achieve. Policy areas such as child care, adult and post-secondary education, housing, services for newcomers, minimum wage rates, transport, and tax policy all have a crucial role to play in supporting the goal of sustainable employment. In these areas, the plan reinforces the City’s role as an advocate for the wide range of policy changes that are necessary to address barriers to sustainable employment for Regent Park residents, as well as all residents of Toronto. In addition, revitalization will not create enough jobs to meet the needs of all residents. And, given the realities of the construction sector, many of the jobs initially created will be short-term or temporary.

Nevertheless, there remain powerful reasons for optimism. Revitalization is helping to forge closer collaborations between key stakeholders, including residents, community agencies and employers, as well as orders of government. At the same time, a fast-changing policy environment, including new federal-provincial agreements related to workforce development, is creating opportunities to better align programs and services and focus on neighbourhood-driven and inclusive approaches. These changes provide an unprecedented opportunity to transform the provision of — and access to — employment and training services in Regent Park.

Learning from best practice research, the plan sets out a vision of Regent Park as a neighbourhood of choice and connection: a mixed income community which provides people with both a place to start and a place to stay as it links residents to the broader opportunities of urban life. While this requires a long term commitment, it also requires immediate actions. The plan reflects this by acting in the short-term and building for the long-term. By laying the foundations for the delivery of more stable, sustainable and dynamic employment and training services, it makes a vital contribution to revitalization in Regent Park.

8.1.2 CREATING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH CONNECTION

The notion of connection — in many ways the missing piece in the employment and training services puzzle — is the consistent theme running through the Employment Services Plan and underpinning the strategies within it. In attempting to build opportunity through connection, the plan details four key objectives:

• To enhance services to individuals that connect residents of Regent Park with employment, skills development and educational opportunities;
• To enhance services to local employers in the Regent Park area and beyond that connect them to existing and future opportunities for economic development and resident employment;
• To develop a new service delivery approach to better connect services to residents and employers; and
• To build a stable, sustainable and dynamic approach to employment and training service delivery by connecting all orders of government, the Regent Park neighbourhoods and the broader social service network.

At the heart of the plan is the concept of an employment, training and enterprise hub. While there are a number of ‘one-stop’ initiatives in Toronto, their programmatic focus means that many Regent Park residents are excluded. Moreover, there is no ‘door’ to these services within Regent Park. By contrast, the hub will provide a true one-stop service, built upon an ethos of individualized, client-centred service needs, rather than a silo-based approach to services. The hub will have a physical presence in Regent Park, creating a readily identifiable and accessible focal point for all employment, training and enterprise services. But more than a ‘front door’ to services, the hub will act as a ‘connecting point,’ with the physical location further connected through networks of people, agencies and technologies.

For local residents, the hub will act as a gateway to a broad range of employment and training services: from outreach, assessment and referral to case-management and job coaching, and job retention and advancement. It will also bring together the experience and skills of various service delivery agencies, providing opportunities for the knowledge-sharing, cross-training and synergy key to developing innovative solutions to employment barriers that stretch beyond narrow program boundaries. Finally, reflecting a more integrated approach, it will provide a range of services to assist employers and to support economic development.

As such, the hub is integral to the development of an integrated approach to services. It will provide a tangible means by which to make necessary changes to how services are designed, managed, funded, and delivered in the future. It not only brings together, but connects, services, people and providers in a whole new way, and provides both a new approach and a means by which to build a stable, sustainable and dynamic service delivery environment.

Bringing such a project to life will raise significant challenges. It will demand fresh thinking and greater flexibility on the part of those who fund and deliver services. It will involve considerable change as old roles and responsibilities are restructured and new ones are redefined. However, neither maintaining the status quo nor waiting for revitalization to bring its own rewards are viable options. In the absence of a coherent framework, the pressures of short-term funding, the limitations of one-off projects and the constraints of narrow program eligibility will continue to prevail. And while greater resources are certainly required, new resources alone will not address the duplicated and fragmented nature of services or the lack of employer involvement. Instead, there is a pressing need for new service configurations, new structures and new mandates. The Employment Services Plan takes the first steps in that direction.
8.2 DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PLAN FOR REGENT PARK

The goals and objectives outlined in the plan are shaped by a number of factors. First, and most importantly, they reflect the needs and wishes of local residents for more accessible, effective and coordinated services. Second, they learn from and build upon the lessons of best-practice. Third, and finally, they capitalize on the unique opportunities presented by revitalization and a fast-changing policy environment. Each of these factors is discussed more fully below.

8.2.1 IDENTIFYING SERVICE GAPS IN REGENT PARK

In some senses, Regent Park is well-served by agencies, with approximately 50 organizations and/or programs providing employment-related services in and around the area. These agencies fulfill a critical role in meeting the wide range of employment and social support needs of disadvantaged individuals. They also provide invaluable “on the ground” knowledge of services and the daily challenges faced by local residents.

However, reflecting the funding and policy constraints agencies operate within, most are small and are mandated to provide only a limited range of services. Moreover, many serve specific groups such as youth, immigrants or women, while other services are limited by program eligibility. The result is that services only reach a finite number of people, they are subject to frequent change because of short-term funding or shifting priorities, there is an absence of coordination, and there is no continuum of services for individuals. This fragmentation makes it difficult for those needing services to know where to go, and prevents residents from receiving ongoing and consistent case management, crucial in establishing a plan towards sustainable employment.

These issues are well-known within Regent Park, as is the need for greater local coordination and integration of services. For example, a recent review in the East Downtown area (Public Interest, 2005) found that while the area is relatively well-served, there is also significant fragmentation with:

• some services only available to specific populations;
• some services heavily duplicated in different programming streams;
• some services entirely absent or are severely limited; and
• some services available only outside of Regent Park (Public Interest, 2005).

The review suggested the need for significant changes in the nature of services available to individuals and employers, as well as to the way they are delivered. A survey of 350 local residents (as well as agencies, government and businesses) found strong support for an integrated model of employment and training (Public Interest, 2005). Residents stressed the need for more information about available programs, demonstrating the need for more outreach and a central focal point. Residents also articulated a desire for broader program coverage, a full range of pre- and post-employment supports to encourage work, including child care, increased access to enhanced English language training, and stronger ties to employers. These recommendations are consistent with key lessons from best practice research.
Within the context of revitalization and broader workforce development strategies, the best practice literature reveals a number of key lessons, both in terms of the broader environment and specific services and delivery mechanisms. At a general level, the literature demonstrates a significant shift away from traditional, top-down, issue-specific approaches, to locally-driven, comprehensive strategies. In this context, the literature offers a number of lessons, including the need for:

- more coordinated and connected approaches with “joined-up” thinking and actions from orders of government;
- local design, development and delivery, with actions firmly rooted in local circumstances, and local flexibility to focus on improved outcomes rather than rigid rules;
- partnership-based approaches to designing and delivering policies;
- demand-led strategies with closer ties to employers; and
- a client focus rather than a program, funding or agency focus.

More specifically, the literature suggests the following approaches are particularly beneficial:

Integration: Service integration — essentially simplified and streamlined access to services — is key to improving service provision. Integrated approaches provide strategic co-ordination, joint funding and operational integration in the form of information, location and expertise sharing.

Continuum of services: Individuals require a service continuum which provides appropriate services to support their progression to sustainable employment. These include employment and training services that build on existing skills/experience and match labour market needs, as well as a broad range of other assistance focused on debt management, addictions and accommodation issues. Services are also needed for newcomers and others facing multiple disadvantages.

The importance of case management: Case management is increasingly recognized as a successful way of tailoring individual routes out of poverty and unemployment. It provides access and supports enabling residents to move through a series of steps to employment, such as employment assessment and counselling; career decision making; access to education and training; workplace-based work experience; and job search, placement and job retention.

Transitional employment programs: Transitional employment programs are designed to meet the needs of those with multiple barriers to employment, as well as assisting places of entrenched poverty and high unemployment. They provide temporary, waged employment in realistic work environments with continuous support to assist the transition to work. Research suggests that if well-targeted, well-designed, and time-limited, they generate additional net employment and earnings, and produce significant benefits in low-income communities.
Engaging employers: In isolation from employers, training may do little to improve the job prospects of individuals. Best practice research suggests a number of strategies for engaging employers in revitalization efforts. For example, involving employers early is critical to long term success, targeting specific employers can broaden engagement by connecting to otherwise inaccessible networks, and a single point of contact is essential to streamline the plethora of programs, with varied rules and requirements, aimed at employers.

Overall, the research shows that the design, development and delivery of employment and training services need to be planned and managed locally. But successfully implementing this kind of approach also requires that policies are “joined-up” with provincial and national agendas. This means that all orders of government need to be engaged in, and supportive of, a more coordinated approach.

8.2.3 THE CHANGING POLICY CONTEXT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES

Recent policy changes raise the prospect of greater coordination and enhanced local management, planning and delivery of employment and training services. The 2006 provincial Budget Speech, for example, announced a Jobs and Skills Renewal Strategy which promised a comprehensive plan providing access to new employment supports and training.

Prior to this, in November 2005, three distinct agreements were finalized between the federal and provincial governments. The Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) enables the Province to assume an expanded role for the design and delivery of labour market development programs effective January 1, 2007. Although the municipal role remains to be defined, the LMDA does recognize the role of service managers, such as the City of Toronto, in local employment service coordination and planning. Programs that currently run under LMDAs are focused primarily on EI-eligible clients.

The Canada-Ontario Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA) is a co-managed agreement between Service Canada and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The LMPA was created to help fill in gaps in the labour market and to assist people who are ineligible for employment insurance acquire workplace skills. The agreement is meant to set out shared labour market goals and objectives for Canada and Ontario, establish joint priorities and investment levels, and establish mechanisms for strategic planning and broad collaboration.

Finally, the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement establishes the framework for a long-term partnership between Canada and Ontario with respect to immigration. The agreement recognizes the role that municipalities, and specifically Toronto, can play in the planning and delivery of services to newcomers.
Collectively, these and other policy changes provide the possibility of developing and implementing a continuum of training opportunities and resources that combine the best elements of Employment Supports offered under Employment Insurance, with other federal, provincial, and municipal employment, training and immigration strategies. There remains a strong need to build local capacity, including the need for appropriate funding to provide the range, quality and level of supports and services that residents require. But given these opportunities, Regent Park is well positioned as a flagship project able to take advantage of this new policy environment.

8.3 DESIGNING AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PLAN FOR REGENT PARK

Based on a combination of listening to local needs and learning from best-practice literature, the Employment Services Plan advocates a new approach to employment services in Regent Park. It also details a number of key goals and objectives.

8.3.1 A NEW APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN REGENT PARK

Best-practice research increasingly emphasises the concept of labour market readiness or ‘distance’ from the labour market as a useful way of identifying and responding to service gaps. The Employment Services Plan adopts this approach to identify, organize and allocate appropriate services around individual needs, rather than strictly demographic or other more siloed and programmatic categories. Table 1 provides an example of how the approach is used, highlighting the characteristics and service needs of three broad groupings of residents:

- Those who are employed or are ready to enter or re-enter the labour market.
- Those who are close to the labour market.
- Those who are distant from the labour market.

This assessment suggests that a number of gaps exist in service provision in Regent Park and, in fact, may exist across the city.

Responding to these gaps, the Employment Services Plan identifies the need for two interrelated service strategies:

Individual paths to employment offer the specific services an individual needs to pursue sustainable employment. These include outreach services to identify the most excluded; case management to provide employment assessment and counselling; access to education, training and workplace-based work experience; and self-employment services and supports.
A continuum of services meets the employment and social support needs of different groups. Vulnerable populations (homeless, economically inactive) will benefit from specific employment and training services and ancillary supports. Others who are distant from the labour market will benefit from customized, employer-led job skill training projects such as Transitional Jobs. Those who are currently employed, perhaps in precarious employment, will benefit from universally accessible job placement services, job retention and advancement services and job coaching. Foreign-trained professionals and newcomers will benefit from centralized access to information on credential and language assessment services.
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<tr>
<th>DISTANCE FROM THE LABOUR MARKET</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>SERVICE NEEDS</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICES (REGENT PARK)</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICES (CITY-WIDE)</th>
<th>CURRENT GAPS (REGENT PARK)</th>
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<td>EMPLOYED, READY TO ENTER/RE-ENTER LABOUR MARKET</td>
<td>Recent work experience</td>
<td>Labour Market Information</td>
<td>Ontario Works Job Placement Services</td>
<td>Job clubs</td>
<td>One access point for employment assistance, information and referral services and recruitment services for employers</td>
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<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>Employment Placement services/Job search support</td>
<td>Employment Resources Centres</td>
<td>Universal access to services such as screening and matching, and retention and advancement</td>
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<td>Basic and Continuing Education</td>
<td>Labour market integration for internationally trained individuals</td>
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<td>Intensive employment preparation</td>
<td>Employment Assessment Programs and Supports</td>
<td>Access to workplace skills development</td>
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<td>High levels of unemployment and economic activity</td>
<td>Intensive case management</td>
<td>ODSP Employment Supports Program</td>
<td>Vocational assessment services</td>
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<td>High levels of benefit receipt</td>
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<td>Youth at risk employment programs</td>
<td>Information on Post Secondary and longer term training</td>
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<td>Basic Education</td>
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<td>Exposure to work environment through internships and co-op placements training</td>
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<td>Employment Assessment Programs and Supports</td>
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<td>Capacity for social purpose enterprises</td>
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Figure 1 shows these two service strategies in relation to the hub and lists the broad services and functions which are described in more detail in the discussion of the hub below.

**FIGURE 1 SERVICE STRATEGIES**
8.3.2 OBJECTIVES AND KEY GOALS

To create opportunity through connection, the Employment Services Plan outlines specific strategies in four areas. Each of these areas has a clear objective and a number of specific goals, with both short- and long-term actions to help achieve them.

Serving Individuals

The prime objective of enhancing services to individuals is to connect residents of Regent Park with employment, skills development and educational opportunities. The key goals are to:

- Ensure that employment opportunities can be accessed by current and future residents;
- Develop a strategy to connect to the broader labour market and service system;
- Provide the full range of services required to meet the employment service and skill development needs of the whole community, including potential entrepreneurs;
- Provide the continuum of services each individual requires to progress towards and advance within the labour market; and
- Provide the right mix of services as the community changes over time.

Immediate steps consist of activities such as increasing outreach to connect with the most excluded, developing individual service plans and identifying opportunities for work experience. In a concrete example of the kinds of closer working relationships essential to future coordination, the City of Toronto, through Toronto Social Services (TSS), has based a number of staff in the offices of the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI). Staff are providing a range of services, including career information, access to benefits and service planning.

In addition, a recent service information fair for foreign-trained professionals showed how a coordinated approach could improve access to quality education and training, allowing the creation of a database of local qualifications and skills to inform service provision and successfully link residents with both employers and service providers. TSS is also exploring opportunities for a pilot transitional employment program for residents distant from the labour market.

As the hub approach evolves, many residents will benefit from extended hours of operation as well as access to information, advice and services (in English as well as other languages). A case management component will be incorporated into service delivery to assist residents to identify individual goals and routes to employment. Closer working relationships with local agencies, colleges and the broader employment services network will help to identify service gaps and address obstacles that impede progress towards employment. Finally, the enterprise services located at the hub will provide individuals with opportunities to explore their suitability for self-employment (small business), as well as having on-site access to the full range of Enterprise Toronto services.
Serving Employers: Supporting Enterprise

In enhancing services to employers, the central objective is to connect residents to employment and training opportunities which result from revitalization, as well as wider labour market opportunities. Activities in Regent Park will connect with broader, city-wide initiatives capitalizing upon closer relationships with bodies such as the Toronto Board of Trade and employer and business sector associations which will, in turn, further promote opportunities for Regent Park residents. Similarly, community agencies, as well as the City of Toronto itself, are significant employers in the Regent Park community and provide possibilities of further employment and training opportunities for local residents. The key goals are to:

- Establish a process that ensures skills development and employment services opportunities are informed by and linked to local employers;
- Improve relationships with local and sector-based employers to increase “demand-led” employment and training opportunities;
- Provide local employers with a single point of access to local labour; and
- Provide and enhance local Community Economic Development (CED) capacity that supports agency-sponsored business ventures, fostering local employment, training, and skill development.

Detailed knowledge of how business sectors and industries operate on the ground in terms of recruitment and hiring practices is crucial to formulating successful training and employment strategies. In part, this knowledge flows from closer and ongoing relationships with employers. A number of pilot projects (including deconstruction and a pre-apprenticeship) have already successfully recruited local residents and enhanced their employability. These projects also demonstrated the need for a more coordinated approach to training, especially the need for a demand-led approach that tailors training opportunities to local labour market needs.

The initial focus of services to employers has targeted work with Daniels Corporation (the developer in Phase 1) and new, large commercial tenants such as a supermarket and a bank. While the creation of such commercial spaces will generate employment opportunities, ensuring that the benefits flow to local residents requires actions and tools such as a commitment to local hiring. A number of examples demonstrate this commitment. For example, Toronto Social Services has established an Employment Liaison worker to coordinate support for Daniels, their associates and other local employers who are seeking to hire local residents and to connect to community agencies and broader job development initiatives such as the recently established Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE) and initiatives targeted at New Canadians. In addition, as local Business Improvement Areas (BIA) are expanded to include the new commercial components of the redevelopment, or as a new BIA is formed, Economic Development will help foster local hiring by these new retail establishments. An assigned Economic Development Officer from the City will also work with the TSS Employment Liaison worker to facilitate relationship building between employers and the hub.
A newly-established Regent Park Employment Committee, which emerged out of the Core Committee of the Social Development Plan and consists of key stakeholders such as Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Daniels, is identifying needs and opportunities in the first phase of revitalization. Toronto Community Housing is currently working with Daniels to ensure that a significant proportion of the employment generated in this first phase is filled by local residents. Multiple strategies will be developed to respond to the employment opportunities that result. In some instances, general recruiting will be appropriate. In others, recruitment will be targeted at youth and/or foreign-trained professionals. As many of the opportunities created through revitalization will be temporary, bundling certain types of opportunities will provide options to develop customized, demand-led training programs which reflect genuine labour market needs, but also provide access to work-based opportunities that expand skills and experience.

Over time, these actions will facilitate more effective ways of responding to emerging employment opportunities, a better understanding of business and commercial needs in the local area, and an Account Management system to serve employers. Best practice research shows how a lead employer (such as Daniels in Phase 1) can be effective in acting as a catalyst for other employers to become involved. This broadening of employer involvement will further widen the employment opportunities available to residents.

**Economic Development Services**

A demand-led strategy also requires an economic development component to build local capacity and to support the creation of local business and social enterprise. Actions such as a preferred vendor bidding process would demonstrate this commitment while at the same time helping to nurture community enterprise. Addressing the relative lack of economic activity in Regent Park requires easier access to, and coordination of, economic development services that are currently delivered across the city. As well as providing a local focal point to raise awareness of these services, the hub will also offer a range of services. For example, it will support entrepreneurial skills development which is increasingly recognized as an effective means of enhancing both individual employability and business development. The hub will also support self-employment, small businesses pursuing growth, and established businesses, as well as community economic development initiatives.

**Self-Employed:** Individuals who are self-employed or interested in becoming self-employed will access similar services to those available at Enterprise Toronto, such as small business information with “take-away” materials, seminars (including self-evaluation), and business plan development and consultations.

**Growth-focused small businesses:** Economic Development staff associated with the hub will link small businesses that wish to exceed the scale of self-employment to appropriate resources within Economic Development or the broader Toronto business community (Board of Trade, industry networks and associations).

**Established Businesses:** Service to established businesses will primarily involve promoting the hub to employers and improving effective labour market exchange between business demand for employees and the hub employment services described in the body of this report.
Community Economic Development (CED): Local interest has been expressed in several CED initiatives, including non-profit businesses developed with RPNI, business incubators and social purpose enterprise, which have the potential to offer transitional employment opportunities for residents. The skills and experience required to support these projects are spread across several City Divisions and agencies. Bringing these groups together will help to evaluate the feasibility of projects based on existing and potential resources (such as staff, finance and space). Economic Development staff will assist the community in preparing feasibility studies on the viability of economic development activities in the East Downtown. Small Business staff could provide a similar role assisting Toronto Community Housing to consider options for encouraging local business enterprise. Finally, staff from Economic Development’s Business Development and Retention unit will facilitate relationships with employers, provide liaison with Economic Development’s sector specialists, provide advice about the training and skills required by employers, and participate in program development linking supply and demand.

An Employment, Training and Enterprise Hub for Regent Park
The key objective of the Employment, Training and Enterprise hub is to establish a more effective employment services delivery approach in Regent Park that better connects services to people. To achieve this, and in contrast to other “one-stop” approaches, the hub will:

- Provide access to highly trained staff, rather than a self-service model;
- Serve all residents, rather than a single, low-income population, helping to reduce the stigma associated with certain programs and services;
- Provide employment and career direction rather than simply help to find a job; and
- Provide a range of concrete supports to meet individual and employer needs.

Figure 2 shows the range of services that will be offered and highlights the improved connections that will result. The hub will provide the following key services and functions (the Employment Services Plan describes these in detail).

Core Service Delivery: This will include a broad range of employment services and entrepreneurial supports for individuals, such as individual assessment, career information and planning, case management, job retention, and self-employment assistance. The hub will also provide human resource and recruitment support for employers in the form of customized training program development, screening and matching, and financial incentives and wage subsidies. Many of these services are currently absent in Regent Park.

Itinerant Services: Space in the hub will be provided for co-location and on-site employment service delivery partnerships. Service providers such as Youth Employment Toronto, local community employment service agencies, adult education providers and enterprise and business planning services will use the hub to target services to local residents. Services will be available on a regular basis (the frequency dependant on local needs at any given time), creating a dynamic and responsive service delivery environment that is flexible to the needs of residents.
**Outreach Services:** As an essential community service, the hub will also provide a range of outreach services such as onsite agency marketing, orientation and outreach for various agencies including community employment services, self sufficiency support organizations (health and social supports), and recruitment and referral services.

**Program Management and Integration Support:** Finally, the hub will also offer program management and integration support, providing a forum for local planning, partnership development, and identification of changing service needs. Information, communication and technology, such as a web presence providing a virtual hub, and case management tools, with joint case management protocols and shared technologies, will be built over time. The hub will assist inter-agency staff development and capacity building, while common performance indicators and support of ongoing evaluation will ensure that services are based on "what works". This ongoing evaluation will help to inform and adjust the plan as it evolves and to address key issues such as the most appropriate scale of delivery (i.e., what area can be realistically served while maintaining overall goals and service quality).
To make progress in this area, an Intergovernmental Working Group has already been established with representation from the federal government (Service Canada), the provincial government (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) and the City of Toronto (Toronto Social Services). This group will identify policy, funding and accountability issues that need to be resolved or ameliorated to enable integrated delivery.

The Regent Park Employment Committee will help to identify service and programming needs, ensuring that the planning and delivery of services reflects current and future labour market needs, as well as the broad range and depth of services that residents require. Finally, the Downtown East Community Development Collective (DECDC) which operates to identify, promote and develop economic opportunities in the community has for some time been working to identify ways of harmonizing agency roles. The DECDC will continue to play a role in supporting the various initiatives in the Regent Park community.

Long-term benefits and outcomes of this new approach will include: increased service and program management capacity through investments in staff and technology; a physical hub that provides a more coordinated employment service delivery system; the rationalization of available resources and funding; increased flexibility to manage programs aimed at specific issues/target groups; and comprehensive employment assistance supports.

8.4 MOVING FORWARD: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

8.4.1 APPROACH

Transforming service delivery — and effectively supporting the hub concept — also requires progress in one final area, namely the creation of a more stable, sustainable and dynamic service delivery environment. The key objective in this final area is to establish a more effective employment service delivery approach in Regent Park by connecting all orders of government, the Regent Park neighbourhoods and the broader social service network. To achieve this it will be necessary to:

• Develop organizational structures and processes to effectively identify and deliver services;
• Broaden and deepen partnerships with key stakeholders to facilitate increased integration and coordination of services;
• Advocate for policy and funding changes that respond to changes in service need and sustain employment service provision over time;
• Further enhance service coordination and integration through shared objectives, joint planning and pooled resources; and
• Implement ongoing evaluation to ensure service delivery reflects both best-practice and "what works" locally.

A number of critical issues need to be addressed to ensure progress.
The case for improved connection reflects renewed attention to issues of integration and coordination in numerous jurisdictions. Pressed by issues such as globalization, budgetary constraints, community expectations and technological change, governments of all orders have identified the need for new services and new organizational structures. As social problems become more multifaceted, cooperation among many players is required to solve them. No single player or government can solve them alone.

Working together opens up the possibility of new ways of developing policies, designing programs and delivering services. It leads to increased recognition of the need for all orders of government to be engaged and committed to best achieve shared goals, as well as increased understanding of the need for broad partnerships, with an especially vital role for the community in helping to shape policy development and program delivery. Above all, the focus has to be on the local design and delivery of employment and training services as only locally-driven approaches will truly fit the local context and meet local needs.

8.4.2 CREATING A TASK FORCE

Given the complexity of the issues to be addressed, as well as the need for creative solutions, new forms of structures and processes are clearly required. An unprecedented opportunity to do so now exists in Regent Park. Although a number of alternatives are suggested in the best practice research, from advisory committees to special purpose bodies, in this instance the need for a broad partnership could be achieved through the creation of a task force.

Task forces have proven particularly effective at solving difficult problems and developing complex, integrated approaches. With strong support from key decision makers, a clear mandate and timeframe, good protocols for interaction and strong team skills among members, a task force will be able to deliver a clear direction on how best to secure a more stable, sustainable and dynamic service delivery environment in Regent Park.

A number of steps have already been taken to increase collaboration among different stakeholders. The development of an Intergovernmental Working Group and the Regent Park Employment Committee is helping to identify service and programming requirements, ensuring that the planning and delivery of services reflects current and future labour market and service needs.

The Regent Park Employment Committee is operating as an interim forum through which local partners — including funders, employers and service delivery agencies — can work to develop new initiatives contributing to employability. But determining a locally appropriate structure that can move towards a stable, sustainable and dynamic approach requires broader input still.

Membership of a task force for Regent Park could include representatives of the three orders of government; Toronto Community Housing Corporation; Toronto District School Board; developers/contractors; Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative; George Brown College; community agencies, including members of the Downtown East Community Development Collective; academics; Regent Park residents; and service users.
Recognizing that residents and service users are key stakeholders, and ensuring that they are able to participate fully in the task force (as well as in other key committees) by providing the supports (e.g., childcare) which may be necessary to facilitate this, will help to ensure that the Regent Park community derive maximum possible benefit from the employment, training and enterprise opportunities that result from revitalization.

The task force would perform a creative advisory role, focusing in particular on key issues such as:

- Delivery
- Infrastructure
- Service Management
- Decision Making

Figure 3 highlights these broad areas and some of the critical issues that would need to be addressed in each. The findings of the task force in these areas will provide a clear and shared direction for moving forward in Regent Park. Making progress along this new path will require both the commitment of all stakeholders to a new approach, as well as the means to support and sustain it. Most significantly, there is a need to rapidly identify and develop a suitable physical space for the hub within the revitalization of Regent Park.

Related to this, there is also a need to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated, including appropriate funding from all orders of government, to bring the hub concept to life and to provide the range, quality and level of supports and services that residents require. With a task force helping to set a new direction, and with these commitments in place, the connections envisaged in the employment services plan will begin to deliver real opportunities for the residents of Regent Park.

**FIGURE 3: KEY COMPONENTS OF A NEW APPROACH**
8.5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the Employment Services Plan is on improving the provision of, and access to, employment and training services for current and future residents of Regent Park. Reflecting the belief that these actions must both build for the future and also address immediate needs, the plan identifies a number of ways through which opportunities can be created, including:

- connecting individuals to services and jobs;
- connecting employers to those seeking work;
- connecting service delivery through the concept of a hub; and
- connecting residents, agencies, employers and government within a more stable, sustainable and dynamic service delivery environment.

In these ways, residents will benefit from enhanced employment and training opportunities, both in Regent Park and across the city.

To build on the actions that are already being taken and to support the longer-terms goals that have been described, the Plan makes a number of key recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 63

Key stakeholders, including residents’ organizations, community agencies, employers and the Federal and Provincial Governments, endorse the concepts and strategies incorporated in this Employment Services Plan that:

- The City of Toronto lead planning and management of employment services and supports, in collaboration with community stakeholders, for Regent Park;
- Federal and Provincial Governments work with The City of Toronto to ensure that the employment services and job skills programs that they oversee are accessible and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of Regent Park residents;
- An employment service task force be created which will advise the development of an employment, training and enterprise hub for Regent Park; and
- Stakeholders commit to an inclusive community planning process which enables residents/service users to participate fully in the employment service task force.

RECOMMENDATION 64

To ensure that the proposed Employment Services Plan delivers the maximum benefit anticipated for local residents, stakeholders, particularly funders, commit to ongoing evaluation and learning, with the aim of:

- Informing and adjusting the plan as it evolves; and
- Addressing key issues such as the most appropriate scale of delivery (i.e. what area can be realistically served while maintaining overall goals and service quality).
RECOMMENDATION 65

The City and Toronto Community Housing, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will continue to advocate for a range of broader policy changes that are necessary to address barriers to sustainable employment for Regent Park residents, as well as all residents of Toronto.

RECOMMENDATION 66

In implementing the plan, the task force must ensure that residents/service users receive maximum benefit from the revitalization through:

• A continued commitment to local hiring/participation for the employment and training opportunities made available; and
• A commitment to support local businesses and social enterprises through actions such as preferred vendor bidding when applicable.
9. CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE REGENT PARK REDEVELOPMENT

9.1 A CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Social Development Plan is a change management framework. In previous chapters, the Social Development Plan has recommended goals, strategies and actions in each of the areas of social inclusion. These actions are based on the best practices identified in research and by the priorities, preferences and constraints set out by stakeholders. In short, they are based on the best information currently available for the social development of Regent Park. These actions, in essence, represent a shared agenda and provide a work plan for moving forward in the short and longer terms.

The redevelopment, however, will continue for over a decade. Ideas, priorities, communities and experiences can change a great deal over that time. To be an effective change management strategy, the Social Development Plan must be embedded in a process that can adjust to unanticipated outcomes and changing circumstances. This process should provide for regular reviews of the progress that stakeholders are making and should generate recommendations for adjustments required to accommodate changing needs, changing circumstances and new information.

The Social Development Plan should be viewed as a process as much as it is a plan - and that process requires structure. The structure outlined below will help support implementation of the Social Development Plan in Regent Park.

9.2 STAKEHOLDER PLANNING TABLES

The Social Development Plan affects each stakeholder group in different ways. City of Toronto providers face different challenges and opportunities than community-based service providers, grassroots groups or schools. Each stakeholder group requires opportunities to work together with others in similar circumstances, in order to assess and refine their work in the implementation of the Plan.

The Social Development Plan should bring together stakeholders who share a perspective and a set of common roles in supporting social development and social cohesion in Regent Park. The structure best suited to the Regent Park setting involves creating a set of stakeholder working groups, as follows:
- A Community-Based Service Planning Table
- A Grassroots Development Network
- A Project Management Team for City Services
- An Employment and Enterprise Reference Group
- A Regent Park School Planning Table
- The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative’s Community Tables

The City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing and RPNI would coordinate these groups, provide support and facilitate the progress in their respective areas of action.
The planning tables would not be decision-making bodies. They are designed to enable all parties to exchange ideas, raise issues and coordinate activities on a purely voluntary basis. Participants at each table are predominantly independent organizations and they will continue to make their own decisions.

9.2.1 COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE PLANNING TABLE

The Social Development Plan Process should bring together key decision makers from community-based service providers. The development of interagency processes, including coordinated service planning, service co-location and service integration, will benefit from an ongoing and regular discussion among their leadership.

This table would have responsibility for the key initiatives outlined above in Section 4, including interagency coordination in service delivery, developing integrated planning systems, increasing service visibility, broadening outreach to underserved groups, developing opportunities to improve social cohesion through the service system, and developing service hubs where they can assist in improving service delivery and service access.

This table would also support sub-tables on key issues. The Community-Based Service Planning Table would, for example, link to the Children’s Services Table currently being developed to coordinate the efforts of diverse children’s service providers and integrate their strategic planning efforts to better serve children ages 0–12.

This table would also analyze the impact of redevelopment on service delivery during each phase of the redevelopment by tracking changes in the capacity of the services to address growing needs, the demographics of participation, and any unanticipated issues emerging in the field of service delivery.

The table should be attended by key decision makers from each organization, preferably Executive Directors of established, local community-based service providers who deliver funded services inside Regent Park. Participation is optional for all agencies, but this table would be the primary point of contact between service providers and Toronto Community Housing, the City and other stakeholders in the Regent Park redevelopment.

This table should meet monthly to review new program development; identify trends in participation rates; review opportunities to develop new services; reach out more effectively; engage disengaged communities; develop systems that enhance interagency cooperation, coordination and integration; and review reports on the progress of redevelopment. RPNI should convene and facilitate this table.
9.2.2 A GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

This network enables grassroots groups to share ideas and develop strategies for enhancing the skills and resources of members, thereby enabling members to establish more stable projects and better resources. This table would also identify opportunities to engage more grassroots communities in creating and developing resident-based programs and services. Grassroots groups would also be responsible for conveying information about underserved groups in Regent Park to other Social Development Plan stakeholders.

In the near future at least, the Grassroots Development Network will need to operate with the support of RPNI and established service agencies in order to ensure adequate resources, support and continuity. This table should meet monthly to ensure steady progress on these issues by creating opportunities to raise and address unanticipated challenges quickly. RPNI will assist the grassroots groups by linking them to the other service planning tables and supporting their participation in the Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table.

9.2.3 A PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR CITY SERVICES

One approach to priority communities is to convene Neighbourhood Action Teams that bring together staff from City divisions and departments to serve communities directly, and ensure that City services are coordinated as effectively as possible to meet community needs.

A different approach was developed in Regent Park because of revitalization. An inter-divisional team of City services, both hard services and community services, has been meeting since 2003 to manage the development application for Regent Park revitalization. For the past six month, this City team has shifted its focus to implementation issues such as planning for community services and capital needs and has been renamed the Regent Park City Project Management Team.

The Project Management Team has representation from the Affordable Housing Office; Children’s Services; City Planning; Corporate Finance; Culture; Economic Development; Legal; Facilities and Real Estate; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (Social Housing); Social Development; Finance and Administration; Social Services; Toronto Building; and Technical Services, as well as Toronto Community Housing and RPNI.

This Team provides an excellent foundation for service coordination and planning of City services in Regent Park. This table has responsibility for some of the key initiatives outlined above in Sections 4 and 5, including improvements in some aspects of service delivery, increasing service visibility, broadening outreach to underserved groups, and developing opportunities to improve social cohesion through the service system.

The Project Management Team will continue to meet monthly to ensure steady progress on these city-building initiatives.
9.2.4 AN EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND ENTERPRISE REFERENCE GROUP

As described above in Section 8, Regent Park’s economic success depends on an integrated approach to employment, training and economic development which links together the mix of local, municipal, federal and provincial employment, and economic development organizations.

An Employment, Training and Enterprise Reference Group would be responsible for continuing the work of developing an Employment, Training and Enterprise Hub, managing the work of the hub and monitoring the successful implementation of the hub’s activities, as outlined in Section 8 above.

In support of the development of the hub, this group would review program needs in the community, program capacity relative to the growing local needs, trends in participation rates, demographics of participation, and the emergence of underserved groups.

The partners at this table should include Service Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Toronto Community Housing, and City of Toronto Social Services. It would also include local community service providers who are involved with employment and can reflect local issues and priorities.

The Employment, Training and Enterprise Reference Group will work together to develop strategies that reflect coordinated responses to the employment and economic development needs of the community, along with approaches that can grow and change with the evolution of the community.

This group should meet monthly to ensure the effective development of the hub and its establishment as an accessible, effective tool for economic development and employment for all communities in Regent Park. This table will be convened by City of Toronto Social Services.

9.2.5 A SCHOOL PLANNING TABLE

School boards operate critically important facilities in Regent Park and deliver one of the most widely used services in the area.

The School Planning Table would participate in the existing review of the physical plant in the Regent Park area to determine the community’s needs. By working to coordinate interschool efforts and by identifying opportunities to better deploy resources, this table will have an enormous effect on Regent Park. This table should confer on strategies that shape issues such as access to school space, fluctuating enrolments, and the role of the School Community Outreach Worker (SCOW).

Parent Councils, local trustees, SCOW staff, Model School administrators, plant operations staff, principals and area superintendents should be involved in this table.
This table would be focused on broader policy issues with fewer implementation responsibilities, and could therefore meet quarterly. It should be convened by the City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing in coordination with TDSB, TCDSB and RPNI.

9.2.6 REGENT PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE

RPNI will play a central role in managing the implementation of the Social Development Plan. As a social planning organization that already convenes residents and agency leadership, they are well positioned to play the role of convener for a number of tables and initiatives that will be necessary in the community. RPNI will continue to convene, consult and engage residents (primarily through the initiatives of its working committees and its role in local governance) to ensure that the broader community is heard throughout the process and that the tables remain informed by the wants and needs of the community. RPNI also works to ensure that specific subgroups such as youth, newcomers, seniors and people with disabilities are heard throughout the process. RPNI’s role is rooted in the planning and consultation they have already undertaken with residents and in the priorities that residents have set through the planning process.

RPNI will convene and provide support to all of the community-based tables: the Community Services Planning Table, the Grassroots Development Network, the Neighbourhood Forum, and any joint planning tables that might be formed between them. RPNI will convene the service planning tables or hub-development tables which evolve from this process.

9.3 COORDINATION ACROSS THE SECTORS

9.3.1 A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STAKEHOLDERS’ TABLE

To be effective, the Social Development Plan should also bring stakeholders together to integrate the work of the many tables and to identify cross-sectoral opportunities and issues. The Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table should be a site for sharing information, harmonizing their respective plans, and working together on the broader analysis of the social development needs of Regent Park. The Stakeholders’ Table should consist of all of the stakeholders identified in Section 9.2 above, along with Toronto Community Housing’s redevelopment staff, the local Community Housing Manager, and the Health Promotion Officer.
9.3.2 THE STAKEHOLDERS’ TABLE IS NOT A DECISION-MAKING BODY

Like the other tables in the Social Development Plan process, the Stakeholders’ Table is not a decision-making body. Each participating stakeholder group retains its autonomy and independent authority. The decisions of the Stakeholders’ Table do not prevent Toronto Community Housing, the City, or any community service agency from making their own decisions. The Stakeholders’ Table is intended as a forum for voluntarily sharing information, identifying issues, considering opportunities, conferring on resolutions to problems, and coordinating action. The transparency provided by the Stakeholders’ Table enables participants to make their own plans in full knowledge of what other stakeholders are doing and how they are executing their own work related to the Social Development Plan. It also provides an opportunity for dialogue about those choices and for encouraging others to make compatible choices.

This Stakeholders’ Table does not attempt to represent all activities that occur as part of the redevelopment. Stakeholders in Regent Park will engage in formal and informal ways to advance the community's well-being but happen outside the specific recommendations of the Social Development Plan. Those processes are equally important. Communities that lack robust informal processes miss valuable informal opportunities to make improvements. Participants in the Stakeholders’ Table are expected to identify ways in which their other activities impact on the Social Development Plan, but are not expected to refrain from those activities.

9.3.3 COMMUNICATION

Communication is a critical ingredient for any major transition. Unanticipated changes, shifts in the pace of progress, and emerging opportunities all need to be conveyed to partners. In the absence of effective communication, stakeholders may make decisions based on inaccurate assumptions. Lack of communication can result in errors, confusion and sometimes tension among stakeholders.

The Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table and the other tables and groups that will carry out the Social Development Plan should be sites for open, accurate and timely exchange of information. Information about opportunities and challenges, and shifts in timelines, processes, priorities and resources should be shared with other stakeholders. Stakeholders should seek to keep their partners informed on an ongoing basis and, in the absence of Stakeholders’ Table meetings, they should seek out other communication opportunities to ensure that all partners are well informed.

Communication with residents is as important as communication among stakeholders. Regent Park has a well-developed informal communication network that conveys information quickly. When accurate and timely information is not made available, rumours and assumptions circulate instead.
Each stakeholder group has opportunities to deliver information to residents. Using those opportunities in a coordinated way would dramatically increase the reach and impact of communications efforts. Stakeholders should work together, at the Social Development Plan Stakeholders' Table and at other times, to coordinate communications with residents, identify information needs, develop messages and exploit effective delivery means at their disposal.

### 9.3.4 REGULAR MEETINGS

During the early phases of the planning and redevelopment, the Stakeholders' Table should meet quarterly to review the work of its member tables and to identify emerging issues that require comprehensive planning. RPNI and the City's Social Development, Finance and Administration Department should jointly support and coordinate this work.

At regular meetings of the Regent Park Social Development Plan Stakeholders' Table, each issue-specific table should present a brief update and information which includes:

- Activities of the table and its members since the previous meeting.
- Progress to date in implementing the recommendations affecting their sector.
- Emerging issues affecting their work, their clients or the implementation of the Social Development Plan.

Participants should provide written reports in advance, if possible, to permit efficient, decision-focused meetings. Reporting on the progress of members is important to the process, but the Stakeholders' Table meetings should focus on identifying any changes to the implementation of the Social Development Plan experienced by the Tables or planned by any of their participants. The Stakeholders' Table should discuss any areas of concern or potential revisions to the Plan. Issues that arise can be dealt with by the Stakeholders' Table, referred to the other member tables or referred to working groups struck to address these issues.

The Stakeholders' Table members will also be able to identify pressing issues that cannot wait for a quarterly review and to request emergency meetings through RPNI or the City (as conveners of the table) to deal with critical matters.

The Stakeholders' Table will also be responsible for administering the Social Development Plan as a whole, monitoring its own functions and identifying changes that should be made to the Social Development Plan and its own operations.

### 9.3.5 SEMI-ANNUAL REVIEWS

During much of the redevelopment, the Stakeholders' Table can continue to meet quarterly to explore implementation of strategies based on the initial plans in the Social Development Plan. However, those regular meetings should be punctuated by meetings at key development stages that present an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in a full review of the Social Development Plan and how it is unfolding.
These review meetings should coincide with the cyclical phases of development. As currently planned, the redevelopment will happen in six phases, and each phase will plan and develop a separate segment of Regent Park.

In each phase, planning, demolition and construction occur in sequence and take approximately three years to complete. But planning for the next phase can begin while the current phase is still under construction, allowing new phases to start every two years in overlapping phases of development.

Toronto Community Housing has already identified a point early in the planning stage as the logical point for stakeholders in Regent Park to make decisions about new facilities through the Expression of Interest (EOI) process outlined above in Section 5 and in Recommendations 37–46. That same point in planning is a logical opportunity to review progress in other aspects of social development and to identify any need for revisions.

The review meeting should be held in each phase approximately four weeks after the EOI process is begun, to enable stakeholders to prepare concise accounts of plans and issues.

Review meetings should consist of four elements:
• Each stakeholder will outline any necessary changes to the Social Development Plan as a whole resulting from the last completed phase of redevelopment.
• Each stakeholder will provide an overview of their plans for the coming phase of redevelopment.
• Each stakeholder will identify the impact they expect those plans to have on the Social Development Plan as a whole.
• All stakeholders can discuss any implications of the plans presented.

Review meetings, like all meetings of the Stakeholders’ Table, are not a decision-making process but rather an opportunity to share and discuss information.

9.3.6 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND SHARED OUTCOMES

The physical revitalization of Regent Park has the support of all orders of government - the City of Toronto, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. All orders of government must work with community and resident stakeholders to realize positive change in Regent Park.

The City of Toronto has actively supported the revitalization effort through planning approvals and through a range of funding decisions. Most recently, the City of Toronto established a Revitalization Secretariat to guide the city’s ongoing engagement in revitalization efforts in Regent Park and beyond.

The Federal and Provincial Governments have supported the revitalization agenda through a range of measures, including funding for new affordable housing.
Work is continuing in an effort to address projected capital funding shortfalls. Officials from all three orders of government and Toronto Community Housing continue to meet regularly, as part of a Regent Park Intergovernmental Steering Committee, to receive progress reports and monitor progress.

With the revitalization process now underway, attention must urgently turn to achieving positive social outcomes for existing and future residents. Governments currently make the largest investments in services to people in Regent Park. These investments make it possible for residents to access quality child care, community health care, recreation facilities and services, social assistance, and unemployment assistance, to name just a few services. Governments also support a range of community agencies that help to deliver these and other vital social services.

To ensure healthy social outcomes, in addition to the physical revitalization, it is essential that the three orders of government maintain and enhance the delivery of services to the residents of Regent Park. Recent work on the creation of an employment, training and enterprise hub reflects the increased commitment to inter-governmental co-operation necessary to the successful social development of Regent Park.

Ultimately the goal is to ensure that all residents, current and future, have access to good quality public services and equality of opportunity in Regent Park and beyond. It is proposed that the three orders of government enhance existing efforts and work closely with other stakeholders to develop and plan the future for social infrastructure and service investments in Regent Park.
9.4 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

9.4.1 CIRCULATING INFORMATION

Throughout the redevelopment, residents should be updated on the progress of the project. If possible, Toronto Community Housing’s newsletter or other communications tools should continue to circulate in order to regularly inform all tenants, including those who have been relocated. After Phase 1 is complete, the circulation should be expanded to homeowners to connect them to the processes occurring around them. This information should continue to inform Regent Park residents about the progress of the redevelopment process, including any changes in plans, approaches or timing. Any newsletters should continue to be provided in the major languages of Regent Park in order to ensure that the information remains accessible.

9.4.2 REGULARLY SCHEDULED OPEN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

On an ongoing basis, Regent Park residents will be provided with information on the redevelopment process and opportunities to raise concerns through RPNI and through tenant representatives in the Regent Park governance structure.

Residents in Regent Park should continue to have access to information meetings at key stages in the redevelopment, such as decisions on building designs, the beginning of construction, or key review stages.

In addition to these ongoing opportunities, all residents should be invited to participate in the discussions that occur at the end of each phase, to assess the impact of the development at each phase, to analyze future needs, and to identify the changes that need to be made to address unanticipated outcomes. These meetings should be arranged through RPNI or through one of the governance mechanisms established in Regent Park. These meetings should include relevant information from the Stakeholders’ Table review meeting and any other material that informs residents about progress in implementing the Social Development Plan. RPNI should ensure that resident input is brought back to the Stakeholders’ Table to be included in the planning decisions made by all participants in the Social Development Plan.
The relationship between the organizations is depicted in the Relational Map below.

**RECOMMENDATION 67**

Stakeholders who share common roles and perspectives in supporting social development and social cohesion in Regent Park will meet regularly. These stakeholder groups should include:

- A Community-Based Service Planning Table should be established to link service providers in a coordinated service planning process, as outlined in Section 9.2.1.
- A Grassroots Development Network should continue to meet to link grassroots groups in Regent Park and support their growth and development, as outlined in Section 9.2.2.
- A Project Management Team for City Services should continue to coordinate City services in Regent Park, as outlined in Section 9.2.3.
- An Employment and Enterprise Task Force should be established to advise on the development of an employment hub in Regent Park and analyze employment program needs, as outlined in Section 9.2.4.
• A Regent Park School Planning Table should be established to link schools in planning policies that support social inclusion, such as space use, community outreach and managing transitions, as outlined in Section 9.2.5.
• The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative should continue to coordinate social planning and community representation in Regent Park, as outlined in Section 9.2.6.

RECOMMENDATION 68

A Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table will be established to bring together all of the stakeholder groups described in Section 9.3. The Stakeholders’ Table will meet quarterly to provide a general forum for members of different stakeholder groups to share ideas and address issues that affect the social development of Regent Park across sectors, as outlined in Section 9.3.

RECOMMENDATION 69

The Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table will operate as a consultative body rather than a decision-making body. It should function as a forum for sharing information, seeking input, identifying issues, considering opportunities, resolving problems and coordinating action voluntarily. The participants in the Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table should identify how their activities impact on the Social Development Plan and identify emerging issues that could affect the success of social inclusion efforts. Each participating stakeholder group retains its autonomy and independent authority. Issues that arise can be dealt with by the Stakeholders’ Table, referred to the other member tables, or referred to working groups struck to address the issues.

RECOMMENDATION 70

The Stakeholders’ Table will hold review meetings on a semi-annual basis to assess the impact of the last phase of redevelopment on the social development of Regent Park as well as to explore plans for upcoming phases and assess their impact on social development. The review meetings will be synchronized with the planning stage of each phase of redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATION 71

The Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table should also be responsible for administering the Social Development Plan as a whole, monitoring its own functions, and identifying changes that should be made to the Social Development Plan and its own operations.

RECOMMENDATION 72

Stakeholders will, wherever possible, work together through the Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table and other mechanisms to ensure open and timely communication about ongoing development and emerging issues.
**RECOMMENDATION 73**

The three orders of government should, in consultation and co-operation with existing stakeholders, develop a “Social Investment Charter” that outlines the principles for ongoing co-operation and helps to guide current and future social investments to serve the residents and community of Regent Park.

**RECOMMENDATION 74**

Stakeholders will work together wherever possible to develop effective, efficient, broad-reaching communication strategies to ensure that residents have access to up-to-date information. RPNI will work to arrange regular update meetings for residents as necessary in order to create consistent opportunities for residents to obtain accurate information about ongoing developments and emerging issues.

**RECOMMENDATION 75**

The Social Development Plan Stakeholders’ Table will be convened by the City and RPNI by the end of 2007 and will address matters including clarifying proposed membership, communications processes, work plans, funding strategies and other issues required to convene this body and its subsidiary tables.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


