



REGENT PARK

A PROGRESS REPORT

spacing

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This document aims to provide a snapshot of the Regent Park revitalization at a significant juncture while setting this enormously complex undertaking against a broader background of the City’s attempts to promote the development of more affordable housing.

The information in this document and the virtual exhibit reflects a range of inputs: a thorough literature review; consultations on scoping with an advisory group consisting of Regent Park residents and agency representatives; interviews with key stakeholders, including residents, policy-makers, development industry participants, and social service organizations; and a data-gathering and evaluation process. This research, including interviews and an accompanying survey, were carried out with approval from the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board. The research and writing team include Prof. Shauna Brail, John Lorinc, Keisha St. Louis-McBurnie and Lena Sanz Tovar.

As part of this Spacing/Metcalf Foundation/University of Toronto progress report, researchers curated an extensive collection of reports, articles, videos and other documents about Regent Park. These have been compiled, organized and indexed, and are available [here](#). The Regent Park Community Resource Library is hosted by the University of Toronto Libraries, and is intended as a community resource for reference and research purposes.

Correction: An earlier version contained inaccurate information about The Daniels Corporation’s response to the RFP for phases 4 & 5. It has been removed.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regent Park revitalization, the planning for which began in 2002, is heading into a rezoning process for phases 4 and 5 in 2022. While phases 1 to 3 were developed by The Daniels Corporation, a tendering process, approved by City Council and Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), awarded the contract to complete the project to Tridel.

The initial 2005 plan involved replacing 2,083 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units and building about 5,400 new units on the 69-acre site, at no additional cost to TCHC. In 2014, council agreed to zoning changes that increased the total number of new units to 7,500, and that figure may yet grow. The estimated population of Regent Park will increase from about 7,500 residents before revitalization to more than 17,000 once all five phases are completed.

As of fall 2021, about 1,350 social housing units have been rebuilt, including 364 new affordable rental and 989 RGI rental replacement units. By the end of phase 3, The Daniels Corporation will have developed 3,571 condo units, 346 purpose-built market rental apartments, 123 townhouses and 332 market seniors' units (for a total of 4,372 dwellings). To date, about 1,170 TCHC residents have moved back into rebuilt subsidized units. Currently, about a quarter of the new apartments are at

below-market rate, while 76% are market-rate housing.

The most recent overall project budget estimates (2017) put the cost at \$1.585 billion, which consists of about \$1.09 billion in transaction proceeds and \$494 million in contributions from the three orders of government.

The revitalization so far has brought millions of dollars in public investments to the neighbourhood, including new parks and community facilities, among them the Daniels Spectrum, an arts and cultural hub co-financed by donations and government grants. These amenities have attracted visitors, spurred donations and supported local/city-wide events.

But over the 15 years since construction began, the Regent Park revitalization business model has proven not to be self-financing, amassing a \$350 million shortfall as of 2019. Further shortfalls are projected for phases 4 and 5, which is expected to have a 75:25 ratio of market to non-market housing. The project, now five to eight years behind schedule, has been delayed by political interference, unstable management at TCHC, and changes to the area's zoning bylaws.

Beginning in 2018, City Council enacted a series of significant changes to its affordable housing policies generally and its approach to TCHC in particular. These include major funding injections to TCHC's state-of-good-repair budget; strategic

shifts in council's goals for revitalization, including the development of net new affordable units; and expanded opportunities for TCHC residents to participate in the planning of the final two phases.

City Council in 2020 also kick-started a long dormant Social Development Plan for the community, whose members are participating in numerous committees and working groups on a range of measures to bolster local governance and engagement. Among these is an active and contentious dialogue about how to allocate the \$28 million in community benefits pledged by Tridel as part of its bid for phases 4 and 5.

Despite many successes, difficult questions about the allocation of community spaces within the new buildings, the creation of jobs for TCHC tenants, and the social relations among pre- and post-revitalization residents continue to circulate within the neighbourhood. Crime, especially gun-related, remains a concern for some residents, while others express a sense of loss about the intimacy of the pre-revitalization Regent Park. There's also been a dearth of timely and easily sourced data about the project from TCHC.

Finally, while the master plan succeeded in re-establishing a hierarchy of streets and public spaces, with connections to the neighbourhoods north, west and south of Regent Park, the buildings themselves remain segregated, with no co-location of social and market units. ■

2,083

TARGET NUMBER IN 2005 OF RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME UNITS TO BE REPLACED

7,800

PROJECTED NUMBER OF MARKET UNITS TO BE BUILT BY THE END OF PHASE 5

1,350

NUMBER OF SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS REBUILT AS OF 2021

7,500 → 17,000

REGENT PARK POPULATION PRE-REVITALIZATION

ESTIMATED POPULATION UPON PHASE 5 COMPLETION

\$1,585,000,000

COST OF PROJECT

\$1.09 billion in transaction proceeds and \$494 million in contributions from the three orders of government

\$182,000,000

PROJECT SHORTFALL AS OF 2019





INTRODUCTION

The Google [street view image](#), captured in 2007 looking east on Dundas, near Sackville, reveals a forlorn landscape — a four-lane arterial lined by squat trees, low-slung brick apartments and parking lots. Just 13 years later, the [same vista](#) has been transformed utterly, with the streetscape bounded by an expansive park with an aquatic centre and the colourful wall of the Daniels Spectrum. In the middle distance, a new high-rise skyline brackets Dundas.

These changes are merely one part of the revitalization of Regent Park, the 69-acre housing complex originally built in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The community was isolated by design from surrounding neighbourhoods; later, gang violence afflicted its tenants. In the late 1990s, Regent Park residents began demanding change. In 2002, Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) responded by embarking on a multi-phase transformation grounded in what seemed like a straightforward financial formula: TCHC would bring in a private partner to build market housing (an estimated 5,400

condos and townhouses), with a portion of the profits invested in the replacement of Regent Park's 2,083 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units.¹

As of next year, this revitalization will have been going on for 20 years; it remains partially completed, with three

of five phases either finished or under construction. To put the timeline in perspective, it took about 20 years — early 1950s to early 1970s — for Regent Park to evolve from an optimistic social housing experiment in “slum clearance” to an impoverished enclave branded a ghetto for recent immigrants by municipal officials.

“Since the start of the revitalization process,” writes TCHC’s former chief development officer Vincent Tong in a forthcoming anthology on affordable housing in Canada, “TCHC has rebuilt approximately 1,350 social housing units.

Of the 1,353 units, 364 are affordable rental (rents at 80% of average market rate) and [the remaining] 989 RGI rental replacement units,” he says.² According to data provided by Daniels, phases 1 to 3, once complete, will have over 4,400 market units, including condos, apartments, townhouses and seniors’ apartments (4,372 are completed or under construction, and one remaining parcel, currently the site of the Daniels’ sales centre, has yet to be marketed and built). At the end of phase 3, about a quarter of the new apartments are at below-market rates, while 76% are market dwellings.

Revitalization has played out in a tumultuous political and economic context: in 20 years, we’ve seen four mayors, three premiers, four prime ministers, three minority federal governments, two recessions, a pandemic and an inexhaustible building boom. For its part, TCHC has gone through six CEOs, as well as at least three major overhauls to its approach to both re-development and capital repairs, the most recent approved by city council in order to accelerate the creation of new affordable housing.

In the meantime, Toronto’s housing affordability crisis has gone from bad to terrible, despite a suite of attempted solutions, ranging from council’s HousingTO Action Plan (2020-2030) to more recent planning reforms meant to increase allowable densities in residential areas and

inclusionary zoning. Federal and provincial housing programs circa 2021 bear almost no resemblance to the policies that existed in the early 2000s. A case in point: in 2017, the federal Liberals unveiled a \$40 billion National Housing Strategy, which has provided \$1.3 billion to the City specifically to reduce TCHC’s capital repair backlogs.

“A 20+ years project is a long time,” Tong observes. “While the goals and objectives were clear when the project started, a decade later, that clarity becomes less prevalent. Many policy-makers who were involved with making the original decisions are no longer involved in project management and execution. Many tenants no longer remember what it was like to live in the old Regent Park, or may only know the new Regent Park moving to the community after revitalization was already underway.”³

Regent Park, moreover, isn’t TCHC’s only revitalization. The agency, which provides homes for over 110,000 low-income people, is overseeing the redevelopment of its next two largest sites — Alexandra Park and Lawrence Heights — as well as smaller complexes in Scarborough, North York and the former City of Toronto; several new ones are in the pipeline.

The last three years, however, have marked a significant turning point. The first three phases of the Regent Park

revitalization were carried out by The Daniels Corporation. But in December, 2020, a new developer, Tridel, was selected to build the last two phases, which extend along Gerrard Street. A rezoning process will begin in early 2022, as the City and the local councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam, will likely be pushing to include significantly more affordable housing in these blocks. According to a 2019 city briefing note, about 690 new RGI units will have to be incorporated into the developments within the final two phases for the City/TCHC to make good on its original promise to replace all the subsidized apartments within Regent Park.⁴

Since 2018, moreover, council has approved major changes in the way it plans city-owned real estate, including TCHC's vast holdings. These reforms aim to leverage public lands for city-building purposes, but they also offer to represent the City's response to sharp criticisms from Toronto's Auditor General about the failings of its affordable housing policy. In 2019, Beverly Romeo-Beehler reported that the project budget estimates as of mid-2017 put the overall cost at \$1.585 billion, which includes \$1.09 billion in transaction proceeds and another \$494 million in contributions from the three orders of government. She also pointed out that TCHC's six revitalization projects, which cost an estimated \$1.9 billion, weren't, in fact, self-financing, but rather experienced a

\$350 million shortfall.⁵ (City officials estimated in 2019 that the final two phases of Regent Park will see an additional \$182 million shortfall. TCHC says the latter figure has been updated but won't release it.)

Finally, there's been a growing recognition that some of TCHC's initial promises about the spin-off benefits of revitalization — namely the implementation of a Social Development Plan (SDP) and the creation of new jobs for area residents — were allowed to languish. While city council in 2019 finally allocated funding to begin addressing the SDP, the details about actual job creation remain sketchy and poorly tracked.

As this community is re-built, new and returning residents of Regent Park — both those living in RGI units as well as the owners of market condos — have been figuring out how to co-exist in a dense neighbourhood that looks and functions completely differently from the public housing community it replaced. There have been achievements and disappointments; new relationships forged and heightened tensions revealed. Some residents feel a sense of loss while others have eagerly moved into new, modern homes. The revitalized Regent Park, as it enters its third decade and final two phases, is very much a work in progress.

— DECEMBER, 2021



A PRE-HISTORY OF REVITALIZATION

Regent Park's origin story is well known. Toronto City Council in early 1946 approved the construction of a new public housing project, dubbed Regent Park North, with derelict row-housing to be replaced by three-storey apartment buildings situated in open space rather than hemmed in by narrow streets and lanes. Regent Park South followed some years later, with high-rise apartments south of Dundas.

The backdrop for revitalization played out in the 1990s, and was influenced by three key factors: the community's desire to push back against both gang violence and police harassment; plummeting government support for affordable housing; and an emerging consensus among planners about the link between urban form and quality of life in such communities.

At the time, Regent Park had become heavily stigmatized, its name short-hand in both the media and political circles for gang violence and drug dealing. Police in 51 Division, in turn, were heavy handed with law enforcement, and a clear racial subtext emerged in conflicts between Black residents and a detachment led by rogue supervisors.

The energy for reform took root in this volatile environment, and some of Regent Park's best-known community groups got their start in the latter 1990s. "It was scary because my kids were young," says an active resident who's lived

in the area for 23 years and dates her involvement in local organizing to that period. "Prior to redevelopment," adds the founder of one of the oldest youth organizations, "even though [Regent Park] had a lack of resources, a lack of space, and the buildings weren't in great shape, there was a lot of community activism, grassroots organizing, events and activities that were organized by residents' groups and small networks. A lot of things happened informally."

While many residents were concerned about safety and frustrated with the deteriorating state of their apartments, others saw Regent Park as a tight-knit community with deep social networks. "Everyone knew each other," says an 18-year-old who grew up there.

The political backdrop played an equally important role. Brian Mulroney's federal Progressive Conservative government began withdrawing from social housing in the late 1980s, and that process accelerated in the 1990s. In 1996, Mike Harris' provincial Tory government cancelled all social housing development, much of it being developed in Toronto, and then downloaded public housing administration to municipalities. TCHC was formed from the merger of three social housing agencies, and became completely reliant on rental income and municipal subsidies for both operating and capital funding. It inherited a huge portfolio of real estate,



including aging properties that had been neglected for years.

During the same period, the U.S. government adopted a new approach to addressing derelict public housing complexes. The Clinton Administration in 1993 approved the “HOPE VI” program, which would see the demolition of some of the most severely degraded housing projects, often built explicitly to segregate low-income Black residents. Displaced tenants received rental vouchers, to be used to find accommodation in the private market, thereby deconcentrating extreme poverty. While U.S. public housing policies attracted scant media attention in Toronto, a few Toronto housing experts cited HOPE VI’s objectives to support the argument that “a successful community needs a healthy balance of market and social housing,” as former TCHC chair Mitch Kosny wrote in a 2005 op-ed in the *Toronto Star*.

Local factors, however, were far more influential. TCHC and city officials wanted to build a mixed-income community modelled on the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, developed in the 1970s by the City of Toronto, with a combination of rental, co-op, condos, and subsidized units. Planners also sought to avoid the urban design mistakes of both St. James Town (extremely high densities with few amenities) and the old Regent Park, whose interior zones had been intentionally disconnected from the local street grid.



Gerrard Street East, 1980s; photo courtesy City of Toronto Archives Fonds 200, Series 1465, File 48, Item 4

TCHC’s earliest plans called for a 40-60 split between rebuilt RGI units and new condos. Although an April, 2003, consultant’s report commissioned by TCHC (“Lessons From St. Lawrence For the Regent Park Redevelopment Process”) cautioned that a concentration of RGI units above 20-25% may prevent private developers from investing in the neighbourhood, other studies suggested that social infrastructure and urban design were vital in developing livable neighbourhoods and that the concentration of RGI units was not a major concern.⁶

Primarily, the revitalization, approved by council in 2005, represented a financial gamble: that TCHC could find a development partner willing to market condos and townhouses in an area known, rightly or wrongly, for its crime problems, and then use the proceeds to finance the replacement of Regent Park’s increasingly derelict apartment buildings. ■

THE NUMBERS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

When first built, Regent Park was home to predominantly working-class white residents, many of whom initially came from the east end communities it replaced. Over time, the area came to include more racialized families and a growing concentration of very low-income households. Waves of newcomers also moved into the neighbourhood.

According to the 2016 census, Regent Park's population stood at 10,803, up 8% from 2011 — a growth rate almost twice the pace of Toronto's in the same five-year period⁷ In some respects, the community's demographics reflect those of the city as a whole. (More recent estimates⁸ put the population at about 13,000.) But in other ways, Regent Park's profile mirrors the neighbourhood's long-standing role as a large site for social housing.

In terms of age cohorts, Regent Park has a larger proportion of youth (age 12-17) and working age adults (age 25-54) than the city as a whole. Residents are far more likely to rent rather than own their homes. While the proportion of immigrants living in Regent Park is similar to the rest of the city, the neighbourhood has a significantly higher percentage of residents who identify as members of a visible minority (70% compared to 51.5%). Relative to the rest of the city, there are somewhat more households where both the mother tongue and the main language spoken at home is not English. While most households have knowledge of English, the five main languages spoken other than English include (in this order) Bengali, Mandarin, Tamil, Cantonese and Vietnamese.

The education profile of Regent Park residents, in terms of highest level attained, is slightly below the city's average. The unemployment rate in Regent Park is slightly higher than for the city overall, and participation rates are lower. There are fewer residents with full-time, full-year work in Regent Park than in Toronto overall.

Although one-person households represent the largest proportion of Regent Park households, the neighbourhood also has significantly more large households — five or more people — than Toronto (15% compared to 8%) — a detail that speaks directly to housing adequacy.

The income statistics demonstrate most clearly the level of economic need in this neighbourhood compared to many others. There are more lower income households and fewer higher income households, with almost 31% recording family income in the lowest decile (31% compared to 15% for Toronto generally). Yet because of the presence of RGI options within Regent Park, the median shelter costs for renters are almost 25% below the city average. Regent Park homeowners, however, have shelter costs that exceed the city-wide average. Four in ten households spend over 30% of total income on shelter, while over one in four live in units that need major repairs or are considered unsuitable.

Also worth noting is the fact that a small but non-negligible number of market units are now listed on Airbnb — 109 as of September, 2020, with 58% renting the whole unit, and the balance offering single or shared rooms. The average rents ranged from \$50 to over \$200.



Regent Street Playground, Regent & St. David Streets, 1913; photo courtesy City of Toronto Archives Fonds 200, Series 372, Subseries 52, Item 152



Corner of Oak and River Streets, 1972; photo courtesy City of Toronto Archives Fonds 2032, Series 841, File 5, Item 6



Corner of Regent and Shuter Streets, 1972; photo courtesy City of Toronto Archives Fonds 2032, Series 841, File 37, Item 11



RIGHT OF RETURN & SOCIAL MIX

The Regent Park revitalization was premised on two social policy goals: one, that area residents would be able to return and move in to newly-built apartments within or near the rebuilt Regent Park; and two, that the redeveloped community would include people from a range of socio-economic groups, including those with the means to buy a condo. That diversity would bring a form of “social mix” that was considered by City officials to be beneficial to all the residents of higher density neighbourhoods within a large urban region.

The “right of return” applied to individuals living in Regent Park prior to 2006, and was considered a basic condition of redevelopment by community activists. It applies in other TCHC revitalization projects as well. This stated goal distinguished the Regent Park revitalization from most other North American and European public housing redevelopment schemes, which either sought to disperse residents or press them to purchase their apartments. Consequently, the Regent Park plan faced a unique challenge: reconstructing the buildings and open spaces while re-assembling a neighbourhood.

TCHC, City officials and former local councillor Pam McConnell stressed that each RGI apartment should be replaced and relocated residents would get a new apartment — a “sharp contrast” to the HOPE VI experience in the U.S.,” concluded Laura Johnson and Robert Johnson in their 2017

book, *Regent Park Redux*.⁹ Still, as Martine August, an assistant professor at the University of Waterloo’s School of Planning, notes, residents had to fight for this right. As one development official put it, residents worried that TCHC wouldn’t make good on the promise. “That was the biggest fear.”

TCHC’s right-of-return policy did come with strings attached. The original six-phase plan, for example, proposed replacing 1,779 RGI units on site, with another 304 RGI units to be replaced in the Downtown East, a City planning zone that extends from Bay Street to the Don River, south of Bloor Street. Displaced residents could move to another TCHC apartment elsewhere in the city. But if they chose to find private accommodations for the duration of the construction process, they forfeited their RGI status and the right of return. Residents who had to move and whose income subsequently grew sufficiently that they no longer qualified for rent subsidies were told they might be able to return to one of the newly-built Regent Park market rental units. But, as TCHC’s relocation agreement warned, “There is no guarantee...”

As of the summer of 2021, TCHC officials say, a total of 1,166 Regent Park households — 56% of the pre-revitalization total — have returned to a replacement unit within phases 1 to 3. There were 375 households that either waived their right to return, moved out of Toronto Community Housing or are deceased.



“Their loss of contact with friends after relocation was exacerbated by the fact that many of their friends had also been displaced and relocated.”

– 2009 study of relocated youth, Phase 1

Some observers describe TCHC’s policy as “pretty weak.” “Residents were told they had the right to return to a new footprint re-imagined as East Downtown Toronto,” according to one scholar who has studied TCHC. “Residents who accepted off-site replacement units built during Phase 1 forfeited their right to return to the footprint of the site. Staff later revised the right to return, saying tenants had to be in ‘good standing’ to be able to return, with varying definitions

of what that meant (can’t be in arrears, can’t be dealing drugs, can’t have ‘anti-social behaviour’). The biggest limit to the alleged Right to Return in Regent Park was that anyone who moved into the community post-2006 was not eligible for it!”

Returning, of course, is only half the story. Tenant experiences during relocation have varied widely. Some moved within Regent Park while others were offered temporary units much further away. One teen moved with her family to Scarborough when she was in Grade 7 and came back in Grade 12. She didn’t like her new school or living in Scarborough, and transferred back downtown to be with her friends. Her mother, who had been very connected to Regent Park networks, including a catering collective, felt the move even more acutely and often travelled back. Another resident, a parent of four who’s lived in Regent Park since 2002, says her children had mixed feelings about relocating: they liked

the old neighbourhood and had friends there. “They didn’t want to move, but they wanted a new apartment.”

A 2009 study involving interviews with 29 youth (ages 12 to 20) who were relocated for Phase 1 confirmed that many residents reported that existing friendships had been severed. “Their loss of contact with friends after relocation was exacerbated by the fact that many of their friends had also been displaced and relocated,” the authors note.¹⁰ In other cases, residents who moved to TCHC apartments located further into the inner suburbs continued to rely on services situated in or near Regent Park. “We continue to see families who’ve been relocated a long way,” the manager of one agency says of Pathways of Education, an afterschool homework program that runs out of the Regent Park Community Health Centre.

Parents, in turn, had to juggle childcare arrangements and work disruptions as the moving dates assigned by TCHC shifted. Temporarily relocated residents interviewed for *Regent Park Redux* (2017) spoke about anxiety, the loss of familiar stores, interrupted religious practices, and, in the case of some children, the stigma associated with having lived in Regent Park. “A community worker who had kept track of the relocated Phase I households, making home visits and providing assistance as required, described a mindset in which some of those households were so focused on returning to a rebuilt Regent Park that they avoided getting to know their new neighbours.”¹¹



Regent Park demolition, 2016; photo by Vik Pahwa

The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that TCHC officials faced difficulties in securing vacant apartments. The agency has no dedicated temporary housing or swing spaces, and also faces chronic problems providing adequate units for larger families. What's more, the city's Auditor-General in 2019 criticized TCHC for using about a tenth of its 1,400 vacant apartments (at the time) for contractors.¹² TCHC officials say they begin "collecting" empty apartments about six months before construction crews demolish older buildings. This process, however, is costly, and the budget for relocation has been added to the overall capital cost.

Not all Regent Park residents had to move away from the area for the duration of the construction. "I'm one of

the lucky ones, I didn't have to move away," says a 32-year-old resident who lived on the third floor of one of the old Regent Park walk-ups and calls her new place "my castle." Others watched the demolition and construction process from apartments situated in the later phases of the project with ambivalence. "It was difficult," observes a high-school student, who felt a sense of dislocation as crews demolished a favorite childhood playground. "Not everyone gets to see this much construction." One resident also points out that the remaining older buildings, which are often infested with cockroaches and seriously run down, have no security features while the newly constructed TCHC apartments do. "A lot of people are waiting," she says. "While we're waiting, at least take care of the older buildings."



Townhouses along Gerrard Street East, 2015; photo by Ryan Raz

The new Regent Park, of course, is a completely different neighbourhood, physically as well as socially. The development of market condos and townhouses was intended to both intensify the area and provide the capital for the replacement of all the old RGI apartments. While early plans envisioned a 50-50 or 60-40 split between newcomers and TCHC tenants, the proportion of market units has risen, which has altered the neighbourhood's demographics.

City officials have long emphasized that "social mix" benefits low-income residents of TCHC and will create a community similar to the rest of the downtown in terms of demographics and socio-economic status. The principle is that more middle-income residents bring social capital and

job opportunities to an area that lacked both, says Ana Bailao, deputy mayor and city council's housing advocate. "We need to integrate even more."

Some scholars, however, question the premise of social mix, dismissing it as a neo-liberal ideology. "Despite the popularity of the social mix approach to public housing redevelopment in both practice and in theory, there is little evidence suggesting that it is merited by socially beneficial outcomes," Martine August wrote in a 2008 paper in the *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*. "Particularly nebulous are the benefits of social mix policies for low-income populations, upon whom mix is often imposed when wealthier people move into their neighbourhoods."¹³

The reality likely lies somewhere in between. There's no doubt some made-in-Regent Park undertakings, like local catering businesses, have tapped into markets created through widening social networks, generally positive media attention, and the popularity of new Regent Park destinations, including the Daniels' Spectrum and various new sports and recreation facilities, such as a public pool and playing fields.

However, the daily experience of social life in the redeveloped neighbourhood is more complex. Residents of both the market condos and the TCHC apartments say there's not a lot of mixing, which is not surprising given that the rebuilt housing is relatively new. Some TCHC residents feel they're looked down upon by wealthier condo owners. Others describe a sense of loss about the more tight-knit community that existed previously. "There are a lot of new people who typically wouldn't be in Regent Park as it was before," observes one woman, who wears a head scarf and feels aware of receiving "dirty looks" for donning "cultural clothing." "There's a sense that you don't feel like you belong."

Perceptions of safety in the revitalized area are also complicated. Some residents report feeling far more at ease. "I do feel a lot safer," says one youth, who recalled witnessing gun violence previously, something he characterized as "a universal experience." A condo owner says she doesn't personally feel unsafe, but adds: "I know so many people who know people who've been killed." Gang activity and shootings persist, observes a long-time TCHC resident. "The

assumption was that when everything is good and shiny, the crime will go away."

Toronto Police Service open data statistics¹⁴ on major crime indicators show that Regent Park's recent rates for assault, break-and-enter and robbery are lower or significantly lower than in other downtown patrol areas, such as the Bay Street corridor, Kensington-Chinatown, the Church-Yonge corridor, St. James Town and Moss Park. Since 2014, Regent Park's homicide rate has varied, with several years recording none at all, and a total of seven deaths over this period, compared to 40 in Moss Park.¹⁵ The neighbourhood did, however, experience a consistently higher rate of reported firearm incidents than other downtown communities.

Finally, the social mix itself continues to evolve, with mounting evidence that income inequality within Regent Park will worsen. Early on, TCHC and The Daniels Corporation anticipated that the ratio of market units to RGI apartments would be about 60:40 (5,500 to 2,083). Over the course of the first three phases, that proportion has increased to 75:25 to account for the fact that TCHC's initial assumption about the revitalization business model — that proceeds from the market housing would pay for rebuilding the TCHC units — didn't pan out. ■



While early plans envisioned a 50/50 or 60/40 split between newcomers and TCHC tenants, the proportion of market units has risen, which has altered the neighbourhood's demographics.



THE SAGA OF A SHAPE-SHIFTING DEVELOPMENT DEAL

Even though the momentum for change in Regent Park started in the late 1990s and TCHC formally announced the revitalization in 2002, actual construction didn't begin until 2006, when the agency selected The Daniels Corporation to carry out Phase 1, a block bounded by Parliament, Dundas, Sackville and Oak Street.

The political and bureaucratic context of the mid-2000s informed how this project began. Toronto, at that time, was in the throes of a sense of crisis about gun violence. Politicians at both City Hall and Queen's Park believed the solutions lay not just in more law enforcement, but also addressing the root causes of crime, and especially youth crime. The Priority Neighbourhoods initiative — which involved partnerships between the City, the province, and the non-profit sector — sought to direct investment in community and social amenities to marginalized neighbourhoods. Transit City, which also dates to this period, envisioned the use of new LRTs to connect residents of low-income or physically isolated areas to the city's broader labour markets as a means of improving living standards and employment opportunities. The provincial Liberal government, at the urging of council, enacted legislation giving the City new legal powers and revenue tools.

TCHC's executive team, under the leadership of then-CEO Derek Ballantyne, reflected the temper of the times. He established a real estate development shop within TCHC; its advisors included veterans of the Ontario government's social housing initiatives from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Because the city's economy was in good shape, the notion of leveraging private development to rebuild derelict subsidized housing was seen to be a progressive and pragmatic approach to city-building, given the lack of financial support for social housing from the provincial and federal governments.

When TCHC initially tendered Phase 1 of the Regent Park project, in 2005, the agency appointed a fairness commissioner, Prof. David Mullan, an administrative law expert and former City of Toronto integrity commissioner, to oversee the process. TCHC initially awarded the deal to Cresford Developments, but the agreement collapsed. Following a second RFP that attracted numerous bidders, TCHC selected Daniels, citing the company's strong record with affordable housing.¹⁶ Because of the project's uncertainty, TCHC offered to act as the banker for the first phase. "The approach was to build the condominium projects first and then sell them," according to a 2017 agency memo. "TCH received little in the way of land value from the development partner but received



For all the upbeat messaging about a progressive-private partnership, The Daniels Corporation faced complicated business risks. There was no precedent for selling condos or townhouses in a public housing complex.

most of the condominium project's return from profit, which is only realized at the completion of a building, including all condo unit sales."¹⁷

After the contract was awarded, The Daniels Corporation and TCHC established a formal partnership. The development itself was carried out through a formal joint venture and a four-person executive management team consisting of two

senior officials from each organization. The Daniels Corporation and TCHC negotiated both profit- and risk-sharing agreements, which included revenues from the leases on new ground-floor retail and office tenants in the market buildings.

When TCHC turned its attention to Phase 2 (bounded by Oak, Sackville and Sumach, and straddling Dundas south to Shuter), both partners sought revisions to the council approved zoning bylaw in order to shift and add density that would allow the development of a community cultural hub and accelerate construction of a new central park. This phase included the demolition of high-rise apartment towers in Regent Park South designed by modernist architect Peter Dickinson.

The City, in turn, unveiled plans to build a new community centre and aquatic facility — investments that dovetailed with council's view that such shared amenities strengthened social cohesion. The project seemed to be evolving well enough that in 2009, council voted to give The Daniels Corporation the

contract for the entire five-phase redevelopment — a 15-to 20-year undertaking estimated to be worth \$1 billion.

For all the upbeat messaging about a progressive public-private partnership, The Daniels Corporation faced complicated business risks. There was no real precedent for selling condos or townhouses within a public housing complex. The uncertainty was compounded, beginning in 2008, by the global credit crisis and subsequent recession, said at the time to be the worst since the 1930s.

To help prime the sale pump, The Daniels Corporation created a financial incentive program for company employees, pre-registered investors and brokers to purchase market condos in a building dubbed One Cole. The company canvassed TCHC about offering the same opportunity to TCHC employees. (Developers frequently use these kinds of tactics.) The agency, however, decided to first solicit the advice of Mullan, the former integrity commissioner. He told TCHC in a six-page memo that preferential purchasing rights for employees was "inappropriate," but added that they could, nonetheless, purchase units at the same price as members of the public, and that such a policy was consistent with the city's conflict of interest guidelines.

Among the eventual purchasers were four TCHC executives, who enrolled in a pre-registered investor program, and five Daniels Corporation officials, who took advantage of a standard insider-purchaser offer. The TCHC officials paid prices similar to three dozen buyers. Besides those sales, 110 Regent Park residents bought condos within the re-developed area with the



Aerial of Regent Park, 2012

assistance of an affordable home ownership program backed by all three orders of government (not all were at 110 Cole).

Through the spring of 2009, these incentive and policy-driven marketing programs succeeded in moving all but 70 of the 294 apartments, and these were put on sale to the general public in June of that year. The success of One Cole offered proof of concept that buyers were prepared to invest in the area, setting the stage for the development of Phase 2.

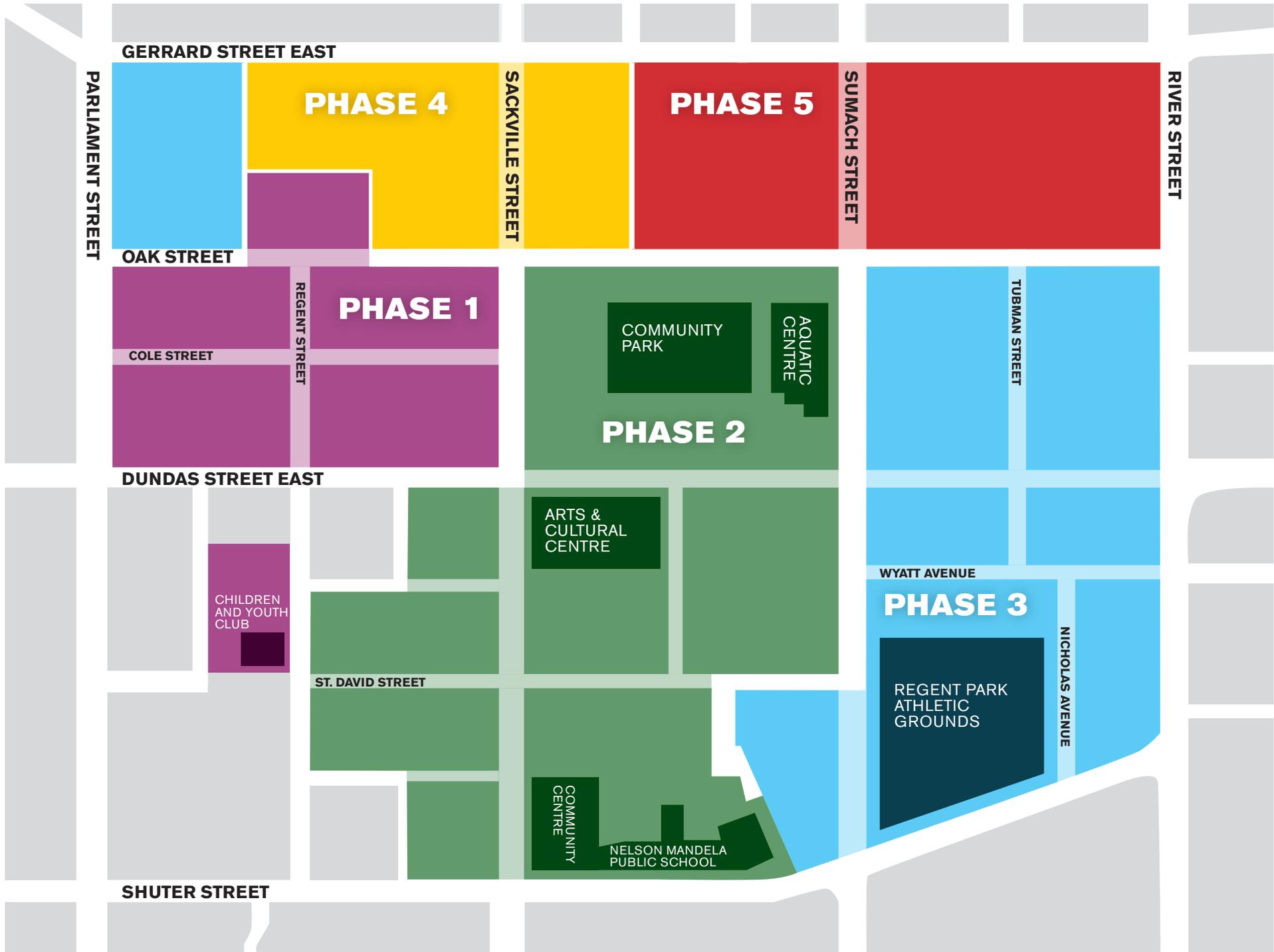
THE ELECTION OF ROB FORD

Rob Ford's election as mayor in October, 2010, radically destabilized both the Regent Park project and TCHC, whose low-income residents, he often claimed, were big supporters of his bid to "stop the gravy train" at City Hall. Decisions made by Ford and his council supporters not only set off a chain

reaction of disruptions and delays that are felt to this day, but also laid, albeit inadvertently, the groundwork for a big shift in the City's approach to social housing.

Ironically, the pretext for Ford's assault on TCHC involved the sale of some of those condos at One Cole. The *Toronto Sun* first reported on those transactions as evidence of sweet-heart deals between the agency and the developer — allegations later shown to be completely unfounded in a review conducted by one of Canada's most esteemed judges.

Citing stories in the *Toronto Sun* and a harsh Auditor General's report, Ford in March, 2011, ousted Ballantyne, by then running Build Toronto and then dismissed the board, triggering a decade of executive instability in North America's second largest social housing provider. TCHC's entire portfolio includes 2,100 buildings housing around 110,000 people.



The effect of firing the CEO and board meant The Daniels Corporation faced extreme difficulty in proceeding with Phase 2. Company officials say TCHC's acting senior management wouldn't sign off on "notice to proceed" certificates, which allow the developer to begin retaining trades and ordering materials and equipment. The delays also impacted residents being relocated. The Daniels Corporation officials repeatedly sought to meet with deputy mayor Case Ootes, appointed by Ford to serve as a one-person interim TCHC board, to expedite the approvals process and seek clarity on the future phases of the revitalization. "In those months, we were completely *persona non grata* with TCHC," according to a Daniels Corporation official.

Yet TCHC's management practices had also come under close scrutiny from the City's former auditor general, Jeff Griffiths, who, between 2010 and 2012, had issued a series of critical reports about the agency's procurement practices, its expenses policies, the way it managed its fleets and finally its oversight of several joint ventures, including three related to Regent Park. Griffiths, in a [2012 report](#), concluded that TCHC officials had failed to properly disclose the activities of these subsidiaries, among them a money-losing clean-energy joint venture called Regent Park Community Energy in which TCHC was a 60% owner. (TCHC at the time also owned a stake in a solar energy firm.) He described the lack of transparency as "inappropriate" and urged council to consider consolidating some of these holdings.

By then, city council had appointed a new board, which hired a new CEO, a veteran public housing administrator from

Detroit. In 2012, the chair, Bud Purves, retained retired Ontario chief justice Patrick Lesage to review those contentious condo transactions at One Cole. His report, made public in August, 2012, vindicated the TCHC purchasers. "I am of the opinion that no executives or employees of TCHC were in a conflict of interest in purchasing these condominiums," Lesage wrote.¹⁸

He also added an overall comment about the pre-Ford partnership between The Daniels Corporation and TCHC, which is worth quoting in full: "Having examined many aspects of this Regent Park Revitalization Project it appears to me that the joint venture for Phase One was a wise business deal for both TCHC and Daniels. In the end, it has been a greater success than either of them budgeted for or anticipated. The Daniels Corporation was prepared to take a risk and has done more than required, in the sense of building a community and getting involved in charitable programs. They have provided a conduit to the commercial partners participating in the Revitalization Project. In my view, TCHC and The Daniels Corporation may be proud of their accomplishment."¹⁹

It should be noted that Lesage's 48-page review, though commissioned by TCHC's board and paid for using public funds, has been removed from the agency's website.²⁰

Despite Lesage's conclusions, TCHC and the City pushed to dramatically alter the terms of the contract with Daniels. Under the resulting agreement, The Daniels Corporation



While this new arrangement shifted financial risk away from TCHC... the decision ironically proved to be far more profitable for The Daniels Corporation and less lucrative for TCHC.



Demolition of the Peter Dickinson Towers, 2015; photo by Timothy Neesam

could proceed with the build-out of Phase 2. However, for Phase 3, situated in the south-eastern quadrant of the Regent Park precinct, The Daniels Corporation would be required to purchase all the properties slated for market condos, as well as density rights, instead of continuing with the joint venture structure negotiated at the beginning of the revitalization.

While this new arrangement shifted financial risk away from TCHC and onto the developer's balance sheet, ostensibly to limit the agency's exposure to a market downturn, the decision ironically proved to be far more profitable for Daniels, and commensurately less lucrative for TCHC. That assessment is confirmed by both the developer and TCHC. "The price per square foot for real estate has increased 36% from 2013 to today," Tong wrote.²¹ "The funding gap has widened, and TCHC was not able to benefit from the upswing in the real estate market. The lesson learned for TCHC has been that in order to

leverage its assets (land) to the fullest, it has to take on some of the risk." (Between 2009 and 2014, Regent Park condo resale prices showed a "slow but steady upward trend," according to Johnson and Johnson.)²²

As for phases 4 and 5 — the north-east quadrant, fronting on Gerrard and River — The Daniels Corporation agreed to forfeit its previous rights to re-develop these parcels. Instead, TCHC would issue a new request for proposals (RFP) and put the offer out to the open market, with The Daniels Corporation permitted to participate in the bidding.

Meanwhile, inside TCHC, the churn in the executive offices has continued, even past the end of the Ford era in 2014, with two CEOs removed for questionable conduct (Gene Jones and Kathy Milsom). The latest CEO, Jag Sharma, was announced in June 2021, and will step in to a job held by acting CEO Sheila Penny, TCHC's chief operating officer.

TCHC's decision to issue an RFP for phases 4 and 5 was reaffirmed by Mayor John Tory and council, with the first steps in the process — a “request for vendor qualifications” — issued by the agency in 2018. That process, according to Daniels, meant the company's officials could no longer continue with community consultations or planning discussions about those subsequent two phases, even though the company had previously developed a master plan that encompassed the entire 69-acre precinct. The RFP was issued in 2019, with The Daniels Corporation and Tridel on the shortlist. TCHC eventually selected Tridel — which is the agency's development partner for another large revitalization project, Alexandra Park — in December, 2020.

According to the TCHC board decision approving Tridel, “the recommended proponent's phasing plan is comprised of sub-phases, which allows TCHC to capitalize on an upswing in the market over time.”²³ The implication is that TCHC has learned its lessons, to use Tong's phrase, about the Ford-era flaws in the way the Phase 3 deal was structured.

TCHC officials expect that Tridel will seek changes to the zoning bylaws to increase the density in those final two phases, a one- to two-year process that will involve extensive community consultation, council approval and possibly an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. The City will likely push TCHC and Tridel to incorporate more RGI units, possibly managed through co-ops, in phases 4 and 5, to address critiques by the Auditor General and others that the Regent Park revitalization hasn't expanded the inventory of affordable

housing in the city. There were also tentative plans to build a new library branch in the area, but the precise location and other details remain up in the air.

While TCHC had faced tough scrutiny about its business practices before the scandal over those condo sales, the disruptions set in motion by the Ford Administration in 2011 have served to delay the completion of the revitalization by five to eight years — a lengthy lag time even by the generally slow pace of Toronto development application processing. The social consequences to the neighbourhood have been substantial. The sluggish pace of redevelopment has meant residents of older TCHC apartments in phases 3, 4 and 5 have had their lives put on hold by the consequences of the political shenanigans from a decade ago.

The impact may also be felt in terms of the socio-economic make-up of the redeveloped Regent Park. Surging condo prices, as well as escalating costs of labour and construction materials during the pandemic, have ensured that the new market apartments planned for in phases 4 and 5 will be affordable mainly to wealthy buyers and investors, thus amplifying the class divisions in a neighbourhood that had already been feeling the stresses of gentrification due to revitalization and other changes in Toronto's Downtown East Side. ■

TCHC officials expect that Tridel will seek changes to the zoning bylaws to increase the density in the final two phases... that will involve extensive community consultation, council approval and possibly an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.



THE POLITICS OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS

From the beginning of the Regent Park revitalization, the City and the developer stressed that TCHC residents would share in the project's economic benefits, in the form of employment created either by the construction or through the new retail spaces — supermarket, bank, coffee shop, etc. — established within the redeveloped precincts.²⁴

As of 2021, TCHC officials say that about 1,600 jobs were filled by residents since revitalization began in 2006, mostly in retail, but also some on the construction sites via training and apprenticeship programs jointly backed by Daniels, TCHC, the City, George Brown College and the Carpenters District Council of Ontario. Daniels, which has run a summer job program for local youth for seven years, partnered with Dixon Hall and the City to carry out local hiring, aiming to ensure that 10% of the Regent Park workforce was local. Since 2015, 129 youth from Regent Park and other nearby TCH complexes received internships, and 44 TCH residents participated in construction apprenticeship programs. But some residents expressed skepticism about such claims. One teen describes repeated and unsuccessful attempts to get a part-time job in one of the new stores. “I always thought that saying I lived across the street was an advantage,” she says, adding that most of the retail staff aren't from Regent Park. “I feel like a lot of promises were broken.”

Those early job creation pledges pre-date the political debate in Ontario about the use of formal community benefits agreements (CBA) in large scale infrastructure or redevelopment projects.²⁵ In the mid-2010s, community and labour activists began pressing Metrolinx to negotiate a CBA that would provide training and jobs on the Eglinton Crosstown transit project to young people living in the priority neighbourhoods traversed by the LRT.

Long used in the U.S. but relatively rare in Canada, CBAs are formal agreements with government agencies or private sector entities to provide communities with various benefits arising from large scale projects, such as jobs, training or new local amenities. Labour organizations are often involved in the negotiations. Urged on by the newly formed Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) and progressive policy advocates, Ontario's then Liberal government was receptive to the use of this approach with its 12-year/\$160 billion infrastructure program (the commitments are typically embedded in procurement contracts). In 2015, the Liberals passed legislation acknowledging the role CBAs play in leveraging the funds earmarked for such projects. The City of Toronto later adopted its own community benefits framework. While still in the testing phase, the City cites the Woodbine Casino redevelopment, the 2016 social procurement policy, and TCHC redevelopment projects as examples.²⁶



In 2018, as it became clear TCHC would initiate a competitive bidding process for phases 4 and 5, members of the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association (RPNA) reached out to TCBN about developing a strategy to press for a more ambitious community benefits package for these final parts of the project. TCBN officials began assembling a network of local partners — eventually known as the Regent Park Coalition — with the goal of injecting “strong language” into the eventual request for proposals. A key tactic, says TCBN, was to obtain a commitment from TCHC prior to the selection of a development partner. The goal, says one local leader, was to secure more benefits. “We had to improve what had happened in [phases] 1, 2 and 3.”

That 2019 City staff report tallied up the contributions made to the community over ten years: \$864,000 from TCHC for outlays on training, events, social procurement and youth engagement and \$7.42 million from The Daniels Corporation in direct and indirect investments in everything from cultural programming to capacity building and community building grants.²⁷ The document states that 582 jobs were created directly for Regent Park residents in construction, retail and administration, while another 1,108 residents found work through a City program focused on the neighbourhood. (The figures are slightly different than those cited by Tong.) “The Coalition,” according to a statement on its website, “believes that stronger outcomes



Construction signs, 2011; photo by Wylie Poon

can be achieved and that a community benefits approach will prioritize local and TCH residents first for the jobs and opportunities that are created through revitalization.”²⁸

The key detail, however, is that neither the City nor TCHC gathered or reported out accurate data on job creation — including statistics on full and part-time positions, wage rates, and temporary jobs — for the first 15 years of the revitalization process, despite all the early promises about local benefits to residents.

Through an intensive negotiation involving RPNA, TCBN and TCHC’s development officials, the agency agreed to establish a four-person working group — two residents from Regent Park’s market homes and two from the TCHC apartments — to participate in the development of the RFP for phases 4 and 5. While the working group members had to sign non-disclosure agreements, the Coalition kept up the pressure by keeping the discussion about community benefits in the spotlight. “We felt

we got the most out of TCHC when they were concerned about their public image,” says a TCBN official.

The result is that the residents involved in the negotiation persuaded TCHC to add language to the RFP requiring bidders to include a community benefits framework to their proposals, which would be awarded points during the evaluation process (the community development plan was worth up to 10 points out of a total of 80 possible points). According to the RFP, any funding in the proposed CBA would go to jobs/training, scholarships and community economic development, with residents — instead of TCHC or the developer — ultimately tasked with deciding how to allocate the money. “The most remarkable achievement of the coalition is that two years ago, we had no say in the language of the RFP and the process for allocating [the CBA],” says one community organizer. “Because of resident leadership, we’ve changed the landscape of community benefits and improved community engagement.”

When the results of the RFP were disclosed in December, 2020, the winner — Tridel — had allocated \$26.8 million for community benefits in its proposal. Through 2021, local organizations held consultations to work out a plan for how the new funding should be spent; TCHC’s community benefits framework requires that a legal agreement must be signed within a year of the finalization of the plan.

While the CBA for phases 4 and 5 seems to be a clear victory for local advocates, some residents express reservations. Pointing out that established agencies operating within Regent Park are better positioned to secure grants, one predicted that

the new funding will set off a scramble. “Everybody’s money hungry,” she says bluntly. But if this resident’s concern is about too much funding, other groups caution that the \$26.8 million may not, in fact, be enough to truly tackle some of Regent Park’s most stubborn issues.

Sharp differences of opinion about how the community benefits funding should be spent have surfaced in recent months, and there’s at present no consensus among the stakeholder groups. One TCHC official notes, for example, that some residents want a portion to go towards “affordable homeownership,” essentially subsidized mortgages that allow financially qualified TCHC tenants to invest in a condo. The Daniels Corporation offered this kind of program in the first three phases, but at a limited scale. The official expects “an interesting and difficult and complicated conversation about home ownership” because the amounts available through even a much larger CBA would only benefit a small number of tenants.

Some advocates understand that an expectations gap remains. In October, 2019, well before the RFP was awarded, the Regent Park Community Benefits Coalition released a “community priorities report,” which itemized five themes, among them more accessible and affordable space for local organizations; funds to subsidize rental apartments in new private Regent Park buildings in perpetuity; and a locally controlled community endowment fund supported by contributions from the developer, TCHC and commercial rents.²⁹ The estimated cost to bankroll all these asks, according to TCBN, comes to about \$80-\$100 million. ■



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE AMIDST CONSTRUCTION CHAOS

Regent Park prior to revitalization consisted not just of families living in apartments and townhouses, but also networks — some formal, others not — of residents involved with cultural activities, advocacy, homework clubs, safety initiatives, etc. Yet unlike many neighbourhoods, Regent Park lacked adequate community spaces and the resources to build sustainable local institutions. Those who organized and convened had to make do, finding unused rooms and scraping together funds. “A lot of things happened informally,” says one veteran, recalling that there was “a sense of making do with what we had.” Social service agencies and churches helped out with space and programming alongside their core responsibilities (e.g., running ESL programs, daycare centres, etc.).

The predecessor agencies to TCHC, in turn, had done little by way of tenant engagement. “Later community initiatives met, at best, half-hearted responses from officialdom in the 1980s and 1990s, and their leaders often found themselves in an adversarial relationship with Regent Park’s management,” write Johnson and Johnson.³⁰ But, as they observed, active Regent Park residents eschewed the confrontational politics that swept through some U.S. housing projects and instead continued to engage, through newsletters and a short-

lived attempt at redeveloping a portion of Regent Park. The momentum from those efforts set the stage for the grassroots revitalization dialogue that surfaced in 2002.³¹

Consequently, from the earliest days of the project, local leaders and residents advanced the argument that re-building Regent Park wasn’t just about new apartments and better urban design. Revitalization, they asserted, consisted of both a physical development plan and a social development plan.

A community consultation process that began in 2004 led, ultimately, to the release and council approval of TCHC’s “Social Development Plan for Regent Park,” in September, 2007.³² Written well before the completion of even the first new building, the document laid out four high level objectives — social cohesion, employment services, community services and facilities, and long-term change management — but its outlook was clearly informed by a sense of the potential for social conflict between new and existing Regent Park residents:

“When people from different backgrounds connect with each other, they can form engaged and equitable relationships,” the SDP stated. “That makes them more likely to work with their neighbours to make the community as successful as possible and support the success of the people in it. Research also shows that without interventions, there



are often divisions between groups of residents in new mixed-income communities based on income, ethnicity, age, ability and length of stay in the community. Those divisions separate residents, create conflicting interests and often result in their working at cross-purposes. Socially inclusive neighbourhoods are the best guard against that kind of divided and self-defeating community.”³³

The prospect of an entirely new set of residents within Regent Park – people with more economic agency and the means to purchase their homes or rent them at market rates – introduced a new dynamic to the problem of representative neighbourhood governance.

The SDP offered a far-reaching program of approaches to build bridges, with 75 recommendations that touched on the activities of a wide range of stakeholders, from the City and TCHC to local social service agencies, the school board and residents’ organizations. These included everything from general statements about the importance of integrating cultural communities and expanding outreach, to highly specific ideas, such as the creation of community gardens. Some picked up on aspects of the physical plan — for example, the importance of properly maintaining the new internal streetscapes created as part of the urban design philosophy — while others outlined detailed instructions to TCHC on

providing replacement spaces for services, programs and community activities within the new buildings.

Yet the SDP, according to one city official, was an orphaned strategy. It wasn’t part of TCHC’s understanding of its

responsibilities, nor did municipal officials take carriage of the plan. So while the SDP was loudly promoted as an integral part of the revitalization, the bureaucratic reality is that it fell between the cracks, and wasn’t retrieved until 2019.

What’s more, the SDP’s recommendations extended beyond the normal jurisdictions of public and social service agencies. The plan delved into the minutiae of neighbourhood governance — a domain that is voluntary and generally unfunded. The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI), an umbrella organization for local networks with an elected board, should play a central role in community governance in post-revitalization Regent Park, the SDP urged. “The development of community associations in Regent Park must respect the structures already in place.”³⁴

The SDP further recommended that the RPNI should work “closely” with TCHC to ensure “coherent planning.” Finally, the report suggested the City and/or TCHC allocate “modest” resources to ensure the implementation of the SDP, and bruited the prospect of allowing the RPNI to develop a funding strategy to allow the organization to “expand its governance functions.” But the RPNI disbanded in 2014 due to leadership and financial issues, “leaving tenants without a working governance structure,” observed a 2019 study on promoting inclusive mixed income communities by researchers at Case Western Reserve University.³⁵

For many years, TCHC — and other public housing agencies — had established tenants’ councils and allowed for the election of building reps as a means of creating more

formal communications channels with residents. But this form of local governance remained tightly managed by TCHC. Tenants, typically lower income, and often marginalized in some way, had limited ability to act either collectively or autonomously. But the prospect of an entirely new set of residents within Regent Park — people with more economic agency and the means to purchase their homes or rent them at market rates — introduced a new dynamic to the problem of representative neighbourhood governance. The shift raised not just the prospect of gentrification, but also hard questions about who gets heard, and why, in a mixed-income community where many newcomers wouldn't face the same kinds of risks that confronted pre-revitalization TCHC tenants (e.g., loss of housing, lack of building security, etc.).

In 2014, following consultations with local residents about how to build community capacity, the City and TCHC announced the establishment of the Regent Park Legacy Trust, endowed with funds raised from the neighbourhood, some donors and various governments and agencies since the 1980s. At the time, the Fund held about \$700,000, and a private donation a few years later brought the figure closer to \$1 million. While the intention was to use the income from the Trust to support local initiatives, none of the funding could be released until the City identified an organization with a formal mandate to disburse income from the trust in a way that is “consistent with the objects of the Trust.” According to the City, “in 2016, a community process was developed and piloted to allocate these resources. In 2021, a planned refresh

of the implementation and engagement processes used to access the Legacy Fund is underway.”³⁶ There is little further detail about how this money has been used.

Of course, significant sums from other sources have flowed into a range of Regent Park community organizations over the years. They target a spectrum of social development issues, from health and culture to education and leadership development. Some came from various government agencies or granting bodies, like the Trillium Foundation and United Way, but Regent Park organizations are also supported by private philanthropy and participant revenues. The largest single investment went to Daniels Spectrum, a \$38 million cultural centre funded by all three orders of government, individual contributors and \$4 million from Daniels. The Spectrum provides affordable studio, office and performance space to a range of local non-profits, such as Native Earth Arts, the Regent Park Film Festival and Focus Media Arts. According to a 2019 City of Toronto staff report, TCHC and The Daniels Corporation have invested \$8.3 million in the community over a decade, with most of the money coming from the developer.

The area's increasingly positive public/media profile, in turn, brought visitors to arts events at the Spectrum, e.g., the Regent Park Film Festival, while also providing a boost to older Regent Park organizations that began to see enrolments grow from beyond the neighbourhood, especially once they'd relocated into modern space in the Spectrum. “We get kids coming from other communities and they're totally

excited about what we have,” says one executive director, who adds that this shift has also meant “changing what we to serve the community.” In a few cases — e.g., Pathways to Education, a highly effective homework/mentoring program launched in 2005, and the Regent Park School of Music — the visibility and associated revenue growth allowed organizations to expand across the city and beyond.

These and many other developments supported one of the core goals of the redevelopment: re-connecting the city and the 69 acres of Regent Park. Amenities such as The Paint Box Bistro and new sports/recreation facilities provided more positive momentum, and the general de-stigmatization made the area’s condos and townhouses much more marketable.

Yet among these more visible indicators of success, some troubling signals emerged. According to a survey of 14 local organizations³⁷ conducted in November, 2020, by Spacing/University of Toronto, two-thirds said rents and operating costs had risen over the course of the revitalization, along with demand for services. For Focus Media Arts Centre (formerly Regent Park Focus, established in 1990), rent grew sharply from \$3,000 a year prior to revitalization to more than \$48,000 for a relocated City-leased space. That outlay proved unsustainable, and Focus eventually moved into much smaller premises in the Daniels Spectrum in 2020.

Thirteen of the 14 organizations surveyed agreed there are unmet needs in the area, but that a growing number of their clients no longer live in Regent Park. “Increasingly,” said

one respondent, “the key communities we serve (BIPOC communities, people who are low-income, people who live in social housing) are found outside of Regent Park.”

What’s more, the City and TCHC lost track of the 2007 social development blueprint, seen as an integral element of equitable revitalization. As has become clear to local advocates, that plan lacked critical ingredients: “While the original SDP identified 75 recommendations,” noted the co-chairs of the Regent Park stakeholders table in a [2019 letter to council](#), “no funding, no action plan, and no effective evaluation and monitoring mechanism was put in place to ensure the plan’s successful implementation.”³⁸

The process for “refreshing” the SDP turned out to be much more broad-based than the one that produced the 2007 document. It included extensive consultations with public and non-profit organizations, as well as residents’ groups (including condo boards and tenants’ councils). Much of what surfaced reflected the experiences, not all positive, of more than a decade of life in a newly constructed community. Some participants focused on the state of Regent Park’s public spaces, and how they could promote or detract from social interaction. Others were highly specific — more access for women’s sports, more security cameras, safety audits, straightforward booking procedures for meeting rooms. An over-riding theme: that this dense but disparate community had to seek out every opportunity to bridge its two defining solitudes: TCHC tenants and the residents of the market housing.



At present, a sense of division, exacerbated by continuing incidents of gang violence, persists alongside all the more positive developments, from popular pre-pandemic cultural events to well-used public amenities.

In spring, 2019, council voted to approve the updated SDP and the city earmarked \$85,000 to hire a manager to oversee the implementation of these efforts through the balance of the revitalization process. By February, 2020, council approved a five-year/\$2.5 million budget allocation designed to finance a range of new priorities in the updated SDP, everything from mental health training to youth sports leagues, a community website and small business supports.

The City unveiled the first set of grants later in 2020, with much of the funding going to grassroots agencies, with the funds held in trust by the Yonge Street Mission and the Centre for Social Innovation. In parallel to the City's process, the United Way of Greater Toronto established a Regent Park Social Impact Fund, which has directed about \$675,000 to various initiatives, many focused on youth. With both the City and the UWGT, granting decisions were made jointly by residents and agencies. (A neighbourhood micro-grants program that's operated since

2017 has also provided \$1,000-\$3,000 stipends to a range of grassroots projects, workshops and events, such as Mothers of Peace, a sewing club, and a community bazaar.)

Some of the new SDP funding landed with the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association, which succeeded the RPNI and whose board is constituted to include equal representation from TCHC residents and those who live in new market units.

The United Way has allocated \$225,000 over three years for staff and grants to local organizations, as well as communications initiatives, such as the creation of a website for the RPNA. The group will be moving into the Daniels' Spectrum and are expected to eventually take on the headlease for a whole floor. As well, \$50,000 in yearly operating funds has been budgeted for an SDP coordinator and other expenses to support various working groups and subcommittees.

Because they are voluntary and unrepresentative, most residents' associations don't receive public or philanthropic funding beyond nominal fees and whatever their members fundraise in order to advocate on development issues. The various parties involved in Regent Park's redevelopment have adopted a much more structured and even bureaucratic approach in order to encourage social cohesion and inclusion, boost resident engagement and influence the allocation of community grants. In the three years since the SDP refresh got underway, a governance group tasked with implementing the vision has been meeting regularly. It includes four "tables," whose members focus on key themes — safety, employment, community-building, and communications. Each is co-chaired by a local social service agency representative and one resident each from TCHC and market buildings.

This complex exercise in local governance, according to both TCHC agency officials and residents, has produced mixed results. One executive director points out that in the past, TCHC residents had scant access to the planning processes that impacted their lives, so the SDP stakeholders' tables provide

an important forum. He says over a hundred people showed up to public meetings to hash out the SDP stakeholders' tables terms of reference and subsequently helped advocate for new funding to support the plan's implementation. "It's a significant achievement," says this source. But, he adds, "It is very challenging to sustain momentum in a community like Regent Park. Some people are under tremendous strain." Needless to add, the pandemic made resident engagement even more difficult.

Others point to the fact that neighbourhood organizations like the stakeholder tables and the RPNA are dominated by relatively small groups of residents and agency officials, raising questions about whether these fora are representative of the broader community's interests. "Ten people are making decisions for the whole community and everyone is going along," says one veteran observer. Another says these groups often fail to use basic transparency practices, such as accurate minute-taking.

A condo owner observes that the RPNA is often divided between owners and tenants. "I find it a challenging group to be part of because there's a lot of disagreement," she says. A long-time TCHC tenant offers her take: "I'm very blunt and I'm very honest," she states. "I speak out and a lot of people don't like that." As this person adds, "We have to get to know each other still."

Amidst all the overlapping engagement processes playing out in Regent Park — the SDP stakeholder tables, the groups advocating for more funding, the training and capacity-

building workshops, and the fractious discussions about the scope of the community benefits agreement for phases 4 and 5 — one point seems clear: that there's a heightened sense of empowerment among many active residents, who no longer want to go cap in hand to TCHC, the City or the developer to access discretionary grants for community-building projects. Given the steadily increasing scale of the funds available — not just the sums allocated recently by the City and the United Way, but also the \$26.8 million in community benefits promised by Tridel for phases 4 and 5 — this heightened sense of entitlement to a share of the wealth created by revitalization seems both appropriate and potentially impactful.

What remains to be seen is whether these investments — among them grants for inclusion workshops and participation training — will foster the *feeling* of community and opportunity sought by residents, or merely create winners, losers and friction. At present, a sense of division, exacerbated by continuing incidents of gang violence, persists alongside all the more positive developments, from popular pre-pandemic cultural events to well-used public amenities. A teen who grew up in Regent Park but moved out during re-development talks about experiencing a new sort of racism informed by gentrification, and the unwelcome sensation of being ostracized in her own neighbourhood. "There needs to be an understanding that there are youth and adults who feel they don't belong anywhere," she says. "There's no conversation, no neighbourly connection between old friends and new friends." ■



THE EVOLUTION OF REGENT PARK'S URBAN FORM

Even though the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood is still seen by many as Toronto's best example of a higher density mixed-income redevelopment, the three large-scale TCHC revitalization projects have little in common with St. Lawrence in terms of urban form. Alexandra Park³⁹ is a fairly conventional example of high-density infill while Lawrence Heights,⁴⁰ which sprawls over 100 acres and is bisected by a highway, is a relatively low-density project, despite its proximity to two subway stops, a regional mall and a major highway interchange.

The restoration of the downtown street grid through Regent Park was the most important urban form/planning decision — one that allowed for the creation of new blocks, street frontages, at-grade retail, public spaces, rear laneways, pedestrian activity, and improved connections to local amenities, from schools to shopping, transit and social services. Jane Jacobs' notion of "eyes on the street" is evident in these choices, although residents interviewed for "Regent Park Redux" had mixed opinions about whether the reconstructed street grid would promote or undermine safety.⁴¹

Over the years, Regent Park's urban design has also come to include more novel features, like a shared street (Regent Park Boulevard, south of Dundas), view corridors (e.g., the T-bone intersection where Regent Park Blvd. meets the central park),

and a mid-block pedestrian pathway that will extend through a development block east of the Pam McConnell Aquatic Centre.

The built form is typical of what's found around downtown Toronto. Several of the market high-rises include retail at grade. In the southern quadrants, developed as part of phases 1 and 2, several blocks are lined by two- and three-storey townhouses which front onto the street and are in some cases served by a rear laneway for parking. For phase 3, The Daniels Corporation also developed a project it dubbed "Field House," which is a cluster of "eco-urban" townhomes fitted out with a range of sustainable elements, including solar panels, triple glazed windows, heat pumps and EV charging.

According to data collected for this project, the market buildings have grown gradually taller over the duration of the revitalization, with an average height of 22 storeys for the ten projects completed by 2018. The average floor space is about 670 sq.-ft, and the unit sizes have stayed fairly constant. But construction costs have risen considerably. The first Daniels Corporation building, at 1 Cole, was completed in 2009 for \$396/sq.-ft. The most recent projects have exceeded \$800, and will likely go even higher for phases 4 and 5, given skyrocketing construction costs. Some residents have expressed concern about the incremental increases in the height and density of the condo towers over the course of the revitalization.



Simply building different income homes in the same neighborhood won't cause the different demographics to magically mix...

As for design, the buildings that have been built to date reflect the work of some of the city's leading architecture firms, e.g., Diamond Schmitt, superkul, and IBI Group/Page & Steele. The architecture of the aquatic centre and the Daniels Spectrum is distinctive, and both have received awards. In keeping with current thinking about affordable housing, the TCHC buildings don't showcase cutting edge or highly eclectic design so as not to draw attention to themselves.

Yet, as "Remembering Regent," a project involving U of T students and Regent Park Focus Diva Girls notes, the developers nonetheless employed signalling to distinguish RGI units from market ones with the colour of street-facing doors. "When you walk through the different town houses in the north side of Regent Park, a few doors are blue, while the rest are brown, but why is that?" asks Huda, one of the Diva Girls. "The brown doors are for the private houses (majority), while the blue is for social housing. Despite the revitalization project's aim to unite low income and middle income residents, the doors are telling a completely different story."⁴²

The coloured doors, she continues, speak to the larger question of how to create mixed income neighbourhoods in which people from different socio-economic backgrounds actually connect at a day-to-day level. "Simply building different income homes in the same neighborhood won't cause the different demographics to magically mix, and the

different doors give even more reason for the groups to not want to approach each other."⁴³

This observation underscores one of the defining features of the urban form in Regent Park, which is that the new buildings are either TCHC-run with exclusively RGI units, or market condos/townhouses; there is no mixing within individual structures. The reality on the ground contrasts with upfront promises: in its 2002-2003 revitalization study, TCHC envisioned "a seamless mix of market oriented and TCHC units."⁴⁴

Co-op housing represents a third way between these two polarities, and is seen as a critical element of the success of the St Lawrence Neighbourhood (not least because when that area was built, in the 1970s, federal mortgage subsidies for co-ops were easily obtained). For phases 1 to 3, however, TCHC did not attempt to involve co-op housing providers in the redevelopment. But TCHC and city officials say they are looking at whether co-ops could be integrated into phases 4 and 5.⁴⁵

While it is entirely possible to incorporate RGI apartments into market rental buildings (a non-profit or a land trust essentially manages a set of affordable apartments within the larger building for a prescribed period), there are more challenges in combining RGI rentals and condos. Typically, anyone who invests in a condo apartment is also a co-owner of the common areas and the building's mechanical systems, which are managed by the condo board. A non-profit housing provider could theoretically buy and then rent



Regent Park running track and new townhouses 2016; photo by Julie Fish

a block of condos at below market rates, yet this practice is uncommon, and discouraged by developers.

TCHC, however, is in the process of revitalizing a smaller site, the Don Summerville complex on Queen Street East near Leslieville. It will feature combined elements, and thus offers potential learnings. Context and RioCan were selected in 2018 to lead the project, which involves demolishing and then replacing 120 RGI apartments. The complex will also include 100 new affordable rental, 188 market rental, and 363 condos.⁴⁶ In this case, the redeveloped complex will look like a single building wrapping around a courtyard. It will have separate entrances, lobbies and elevators for the RGI section, but shared access to the building's gym.

There are no such common building amenities in Regent Park. As is typically the case, Daniels' market condo buildings

have common areas like fitness rooms and roof-top patios, but these are available only to the residents. TCHC tenants, like anyone else, can use the public spaces within Regent Park — the pool, community centre, arts hub, schools, stores, etc. But within the actual apartment buildings constructed in phases 1 to 3, the two sets of residents — TCHC tenants and condo owners — will never mix.

The Don Summerville project, approved relatively recently and now being marketed as Queen & Ashbridge, suggests an opportunity for the City, TCHC and Tridel to find better ways of physically integrating the various forms of housing envisioned for phases 4 and 5 in order to create more opportunities for residents from different backgrounds to encounter one another casually within their own vertical neighbourhoods. ■



CONCLUSION

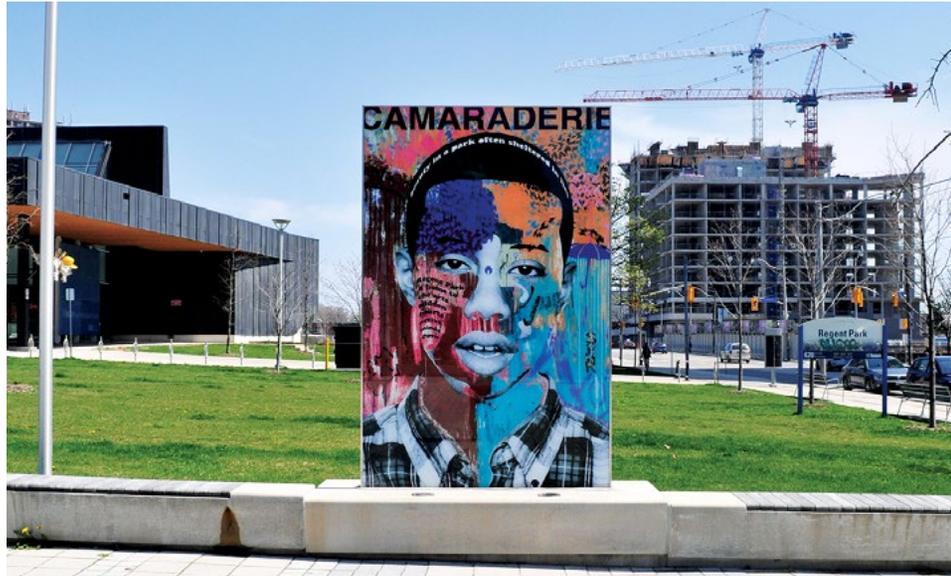
An undertaking as intricate as the Regent Park revitalization represents an extended series of opportunities both seized and rejected. As a community-oriented developer, The Daniels Corporation pushed for changes to the initial plan that produced both higher/denser buildings as a trade-off for more public amenities. On the ground, a small number of energetic advocates coalesced into groups that succeeded in pressing for more substantive forms of engagement and investment. What if another developer had been content to build out the original plan? What if those engaged residents had chosen to invest their time and energy in other activities? There are no answers to these questions, except the observation that the outcome, so far, is by no means pre-determined, nor is the story complete.

While the project isn't finished, there are some conclusions to be drawn about the constantly evolving policy and political backdrop to the Regent Park project, some of which will have relevance to future TCHC revitalizations. Over the past 15 years, the City's unpredictable relationship with TCHC and The Daniels Corporation has played an enormous role in the pace and form of the revitalization. Municipal politics and interference inflicted devastating stress on TCHC, an agency that lives under a political microscope. The resulting uncertainty worked against not just TCHC's financial interests (ironically), but will also serve to create an even wider income/class divide

between the residents of Regent Park's RGI apartments and the people who buy the market units in phases 4 and 5 over the next decade. Were it not for the faux scandal whipped up by Rob Ford and his supporters, the re-development would have been mostly completed by now. The delay added cost and confusion, resulting in higher price points, less financially accessible dwellings and larger shortfalls for the city.

The related problem of TCHC's revolving door leadership is not just collateral damage from Regent Park; its stability as an agency is intimately connected to the nature of its relationship with council and its reputation in the media. The City's relatively recent embrace of an activist approach to affordable housing, plus recent moves to make more strategic use of TCHC lands, means the agency should be less isolated and top-heavy when planning, financing and executing future large-scale revitalizations. Yet if the City intends to improve the accountability and transparency of these efforts, it must compel TCHC to disclose much more timely data on the progress of its various revitalization schemes. (The researchers for this project were frequently thwarted in their attempts to gather basic information from TCHC.)

In terms of the built form, the high-rises that have gone up in Regent Park have experienced the kinds of construction and operational problems that afflict many new buildings in the city — malfunctioning elevators, poor quality materials, and so on. For high-rises serving TCHC residents, including



"Faces of Regent Park" art installation by Dan Bergeron 2016; photo by Julie fish

a significant proportion of seniors, these problems not only negatively impact quality of life, but represent a somewhat ironic twist in a project that sought to replace decaying apartments. The issue of the quality of the buildings erected in phases 4 and 5 should be subject to greater attention from city and TCHC officials.

Lastly, it is critical for Toronto residents and city councillors to ask how the enormous amount of political and investment energy trained on marginalized social housing neighbourhoods affects the lives of individual families that have to endure years of disruption during extremely drawn-out redevelopment processes. Are there more humane ways of redeveloping other TCHC properties? Can the process be streamlined, or fortified against political meddling? And have the much-touted benefits in terms of quality of life materialized for TCHC tenants?

On these questions, the jury is still out. Cohesive communities don't grow overnight. Nor should anyone expect

that revitalization alone will address wider socio-economic issues facing low-income, racialized neighbourhoods; all three orders of government must be involved in finding solutions. For their part, Johnson and Johnson, after a thorough canvas of the project and residents' views, argue that there's "grounds for cautious optimism."⁴⁷

In fact, it's possible that in the not-too-distant future, Regent Park may just evolve into another dense urban precinct — home to thousands of people from a wide range of backgrounds, embedded in countless social networks, some of them connected, others not. The low-income residents of its RGI buildings will benefit from a range of resources in or near Regent Park that didn't exist previously. But while their housing is much improved, residents continue to deal with income inequality, systemic racism, lack of access to labour markets and social services, etc. Those are issues which new buildings and urban design alone cannot solve. ■



ENDNOTES

- ¹ For RGI units, TCHC sets rents at 30% of household income, before taxes. Details of the City's policy are here: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/housing-support/rent-geared-to-income-subsidy/>. TCHC isn't the only subsidized or non-profit housing provider to offer residents RGI leases. What's more, RGI is not the same as "affordable" housing, which the City defines as any housing where the gross shelter cost (rent plus utilities) is at or below average market values as measured by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. More details here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/definitions-of-affordable-housing/>. This definition of affordability — commonly used to add conditions to development applications — has come under fire from critics in recent years and is being revised to align with TCHC's threshold of 30% of household income.
- ² Vincent Tong, "Toronto: Revitalization in Regent Park 12 Years Later," in *Cities and Affordable Housing: Planning, Design and Policy Nexus*, ed. Sasha Tsenkova (New York: Routledge, 2021), 148–61.
- ³ Tong.
- ⁴ City of Toronto, "2019 Capital Budget Briefing Note Regent Park – Update on Status and Costs of Funding Phases 4 and 5 and Social Development and Community Safety Plans," February 11, 2019, <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-126642.pdf>.
- ⁵ Beverly Romeo-Beehler, "Moving Forward Together: Opportunities to Address Broader City Priorities in TCHC Revitalizations." (Toronto: Auditor General, 2019), <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/au/bgrd/backgroundfile-131860.pdf>.
- ⁶ GHK International et al., "Lessons from St. Lawrence for the Regent Park Redevelopment Process," Submitted to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2003, https://preservedstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lessons_from_St_%2520Lawrence.pdf.
- ⁷ City of Toronto, "2016 Neighbourhood Profile – Regent Park," 2018, 22.
- ⁸ Toronto Police Service, "Toronto Police Service: 2014 – 2020 Neighbourhood MCI," accessed October 24, 2021, <https://torontops.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7a0da718559648b8a1146ecbf01db8c4>.
- ⁹ Laura Johnson and Robert Johnson, *Regent Park Redux: Reinventing Public Housing in Canada*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315748993>.
- ¹⁰ Laura Johnson and Rick Schippling, "Regent Park Revitalization : Young People's Experience of Relocation from Public Housing Redevelopment" (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, June 2009), <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/391550/publication.html>.
- ¹¹ Johnson and Johnson, *Regent Park Redux*.
- ¹² Romeo-Beehler, "Moving Forward Together: Opportunities to Address Broader City Priorities in TCHC Revitalizations."
- ¹³ Martine August, "Social Mix and Canadian Public Housing Redevelopment: Experiences in Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 17, no. 1 (2008): 82–100.
- ¹⁴ Toronto Police Service, "Toronto Police Service: 2014 – 2020 Neighbourhood MCI."
- ¹⁵ South Riverdale had 11 homicides; Church-Yonge, 10; North Riverdale, 4; North St. James Town, 1; Bay Street corridor, 14; and Cabbagetown/South St. James Town, 6.
- ¹⁶ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/builder-chosen-for-first-phase-of-regent-park/article18159067/>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-101361.pdf>
- ¹⁸ P. J. LeSage, "Report on Regent Park Condominium Purchases by Individuals Involved with Regent Park Development Corporation," 2012.
- ¹⁹ LeSage.
- ²⁰ The complete document is available on Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/408422-tchc-regent-park-report/408422-tchc-regent-park-report_djvu.txt.
- ²¹ Tong, "Toronto: Revitalization in Regent Park 12 Years Later."
- ²² Johnson and Johnson, *Regent Park Redux*.
- ²³ Toronto Community Housing Corporation, "Board of Directors Meeting Agenda," December 15, 2020, <https://www.torontohousing.ca/events/Documents/Board/2020%20Board%20Meetings/December%2015%202020%20Board%20Meeting/Public%20Materials%20-%20December%2015%202020%20Board%20Meeting%20FINAL.pdf>.
- ²⁴ The City of Toronto released an Employment Plan for Regent Park in 2007, which contained broad principles but no explicit goals/targets.
- ²⁵ Kiran Alwani, "How to Get Community Benefits Agreements Right: Engage and Empower" (The Mowat Centre, 2018), <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/mowatcentre/how-to-get-community-benefits-agreements-right-engage-and-empower/>.

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- ²⁷ City of Toronto, “Supplementary Report - Resourcing the Regent Park Social Development Plan: Update on Investments, Employment and Training,” 2019, <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-139392.pdf>.
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- ³¹ Johnson and Johnson.
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- ³³ Toronto Community Housing.
- ³⁴ Toronto Community Housing.
- ³⁵ Mixed Income Strategic Alliance, “Promoting Inclusive Social Dynamics in Mixed-Income Communities: Promising Practices,” 2019, https://case.edu/socialwork/nimc/sites/case.edu.nimc/files/2019-03/Mixed-Income%20Strategic%20Alliance.RWJF_Promoting%20Inclusive%20Social%20Dynamics%20-%20Promising%20Practices.1.2019.PDF.
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- ³⁷ The respondents included: Fred Victor, Regent Park School of Music, Native Earth Performing Arts, Regent Park Film Festival, All Saints Church Community Centre, Regent Park Islamic Resource Centre, Daniels Spectrum, Yonge Street Mission, Christian Resource Centre, Focus Media Arts, The Neighbourhood Group, Centre for Social Innovation, Centre for Learning and Development, and the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association.
- ³⁸ Paulos Gebreyesus and Lloyd Pike, “Regent Park Stakeholders Table Re: Agenda Item EC8.5, Resourcing the Regent Park Social Development Plan,” 2019, <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/cc/comm/communicationfile-98534.pdf>.
- ³⁹ Toronto Community Housing, “Alexandra Park,” accessed October 24, 2021, <https://www.torontohousing.ca/capital-initiatives/revitalization/Pages/Alexandra-park.aspx>.
- ⁴⁰ Toronto Community Housing.
- ⁴¹ Johnson and Johnson, Regent Park Redux.
- ⁴² Alex et al., “Remembering Regent” (University of Toronto and Regent Park Focus Diva Girls, 2019), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d750c8b85607f636114a528/t/5d75225be584833de359e561/1567957656114/zine-ready-for-printing-1.pdf>.
- ⁴³ Alex et al.
- ⁴⁴ Johnson and Johnson, Regent Park Redux.
- ⁴⁵ Over the past few years, as part of its “Tenants First” housing reforms, the City has been looking to break off parts of TCHC. In early 2018, city council approved a plan to shift the operations of TCHC’s so-called “scattered housing” portfolio — mainly rooming houses and some single-family homes — to co-ops or other non-profit housing providers; the RFPs were issued in 2019 and the transfers will begin in 2022. Then, in the spring of 2021, council endorsed a plan to hive off the seniors housing portfolio from TCHC to address long-standing concerns about safety in TCHC’s seniors’ buildings. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/tenants-first/>.
- ⁴⁶ Toronto Community Housing, “Don Summerville,” accessed October 24, 2021, <https://www.torontohousing.ca/capital-initiatives/revitalization/Pages/DonSummerville.aspx>.
- ⁴⁷ Johnson and Johnson, Regent Park Redux.