Lessons From St. Lawrence For The Regent Park Redevelopment Process

Submitted to The Toronto Community Housing Corporation

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1. Introduction

This report explores the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. As an example of a recently developed, mixed-use, mixed-income, inner city Toronto community St. Lawrence provides valuable lessons for Regent Park revitalization.

Literature on neighbourhood redevelopment planning both for HOPE VI programs in the United States and for urban revitalization strategies in Canada provide useful information on what constitutes appropriate income mix, urban design and amenity planning goals in redevelopment initiatives. However, most of these studies stress that redevelopment success is dependent on a range of local socio-economic, political and market conditions thereby making it difficult to borrow models from other cities when developing a redevelopment framework. Consequently, we have decided to explore the strengths and weakness of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood in order to provide insights on how successful re-development might be achieved in Regent Park.

The following paper provides a brief overview on neighbourhood re-development literature and then focuses specifically on literature that highlights the strengths of St. Lawrence neighbourhood according to local planners, architects and community groups. This overview is complemented by findings from a focus group that was conducted with St. Lawrence residents to understand their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the area. Finally, this paper provides recommendations for guiding the redevelopment of Regent Park towards a stable, mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood.

2. The Regent Park Revitalization Plan: An Overview

The goal of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan, completed in December 2002, is to revitalize Canada’s oldest and largest public housing project that covers an area of 28 hectares (69 acres) with 7,500 residents in 2087 units. The plan was developed through an extensive community engagement process including workshops, focus groups and one on one meetings conducted in seven languages.

The plan recommends the complete reconstruction of the neighbourhood that was originally designed as a largely self-contained area with no through traffic, surface parking lots and buildings located in open field setting. In this layout the units looked out onto undefined, neither public nor private open spaces with little reference to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The plan also recommends a focus on community building, not just real estate development and housing. The strategy proposes to reintegrate the neighbourhood with the rest of the City by introducing streets, creating large new park spaces and aligning buildings along the streets. Finally, the strategy incorporates initiatives for mixing incomes and tenures; generating employment opportunities; enhancing education; promoting culture; respecting and building on diversity; and providing community services.

3. What Constitutes a Healthy, Mixed-Income, Mixed Tenure Community?

A key component of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan was to analyze the income and tenure mix that was considered the most successful in other redevelopment case
studies. An overview of recent literature on community development and urban regeneration in Canada and in the United States highlights a range of opinions on what factors contribute to a healthy community that fosters social interaction and community economic development.

Key findings in recent writing on neighbourhood redevelopment indicate the benefits of planning for a mix of incomes, tenure types and uses in inner city neighbourhoods. While some reports speculate that a concentration of rent geared to income (RGI) units above 20-25%\(^1\) may prevent private developers and businesses from investing in the neighbourhood, other studies suggest that social infrastructure provision and urban design interventions are vital in developing livable neighbourhoods and that the concentration of RGI units is not a key concern.

This literature also highlights the fact that successful examples of mixed neighbourhoods, which include a mix of deep subsidy units with market units, seamlessly blend this range of units so that it is difficult to differentiate RGI from market units. Most research on income mix and community development argues that social interaction and economic development are context dependent making it difficult to transplant successful examples from one city to the next\(^2\).

### 4. Why the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood

Because successful redevelopment initiatives from the US and Canada are contingent on local politics and economic issues, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation requested us to look to a successful Toronto example for guidance. In terms of best practices in recent neighbourhood regeneration and community development, Toronto’s St. Lawrence neighbourhood provides an excellent framework for policy and planning interventions in Regent Park. According to a range of literature on the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, the area exemplifies best practices in planning that incorporates:

- a broad mix of housing tenure and types for a range of incomes;
- a range of amenities and community services; and
- an open and democratic planning framework shaped by collaborative processes including planners, community organizations and all three levels of government

By emphasizing social mix in St Lawrence, planners did not seek to impose social engineering, but provided an opportunity for a full range of social groups to live together in the neighbourhood. This planning direction meant the area avoided developing into either an exclusive wealthy community, accessible to only certain high-income groups, or an area with a “housing project” atmosphere\(^3\).

This social mix was achieved by strategically planning for a wide range of housing types, household sizes and tenures. Regardless of the high land values, 16% of non-profit and

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\(^2\) Galster, George, *Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on Opportunity, Deprivation and the Housing Nexus*, Housing Studies, Vol. 17, 2002

\(^3\) Hulchanski, David, *Planning New Urban Neighbourhoods: Lessons from Toronto’s St.Lawrence Neighbourhood*, (Vancouver: UBC Planning Papers, 1990)
for-profit units were designed with grade access for families. Tenure types include 39% condominium apartments, 30% non-profit co-operatives, 27% private non-profit, and 4% ownership townhouses. This unit mix includes three-storey family townhouses on tree-lined interior roads surrounded by medium rise (seven to ten storey apartments) on busier streets. This mix provides a transition between low income residents receiving housing assistance and their wealthier neighbours who can afford to buy condominiums and privately owned townhouses.

The mix of housing types in St. Lawrence is complemented by vibrant economic activity, including employment activities shopping and restaurant facilities located at the St. Lawrence market and on Front Street and the Esplanade. Community spaces and services, including a new community center, also add to the mix of uses and activities in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood’s design is considered successful because it retains the character and scale of the surrounding buildings. The buildings are aligned along roads to encourage street related activity, reflecting an extension of Toronto’s nineteenth century street pattern.

A key to the success of St. Lawrence was the openness and democratic nature of the planning process that facilitated decisions reflecting the complexities of neighbourhood dynamics. The planning process encouraged community participation through the creation of a working committee comprised of a range of stakeholders representing community members, planners and City officials to assist with not only urban design issues, but in determining the location and design of elementary schools, shops, restaurants, a health clinic, and a health club. The human scale approach to the site plan and building form and the goal of developing a socially mixed neighbourhood also helped create a stable, mixed-income community.

The St. Lawrence planning process also included the collaboration of federal, provincial and municipal governments. Funding and support from the federal government created both a land-banking system for the area and non-profit housing programs. The province of Ontario played a role providing no-interest loans and subsidies for new housing. The private sector also played an important role in building the individual private and cooperative housing developments. In addition, this sector designed, financed, and constructed the market housing in the area.

5. The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood and the Proposed Regent Park Neighbourhood: A comparison

5.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic make-up of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood is significantly different from the current Regent Park neighbourhood. While Regent Park has a significant number of children, much larger than the City average, the St. Lawrence neighbourhood has a larger senior’s population that requires housing, programs and services. The St.

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4 Hulchanski, 1990
5 Hulchanski, 1990
6 Queen’s University School of Urban and Regional Planning, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence, a report from the CIP/ACUPP Case study series
7 Hulchanski, 1990
Lawrence neighbourhood also houses a larger proportion of younger adults from between 20 and 40 who may live in smaller units either as couples or singles.

**Figure 1 – Age Breakdown: Regent Park and the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood**

Source, Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Regent Park</th>
<th>St. Lawrence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 19</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 79</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.2 Neighbourhood Turnover**

While the turnover rate in Regent Park stays at about 12%, according to TCHC staff there is a large (2,300 plus) waiting list for market units in non profit buildings in St. Lawrence, while the Co-operatives generally have closed waiting lists due to their popularity. Windmill Line, New Hibret, David B Archer Co-ops, all have closed waiting lists.

**5.3 Open Space and Streets**

The proposed Regent Park neighbourhood, as described in the Regent Park Revitalization Plan will share similar characteristics in size and design to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood making it possible to replicate some of the successful examples in re-development policy direction.

As Table 1 illustrates, the proposed Regent Park Neighbourhood and the St. Lawrence neighbourhood will have similar site plan characteristics in terms of the percentage of the area devoted to parks, open space and streets.

**Table 1 – Open Space and Streets for the Proposed Regent Park Neighbourhood and St. Lawrence Neighbourhood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proposed Regent Park</th>
<th>St. Lawrence Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In hectares</td>
<td>As a %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Site Area</strong></td>
<td>28.09</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and Open Space</strong></td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Streets</strong></td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>22.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence and The Regent Park Collaborative Team: The Regent Park Revitalization Study
5.4 Unit Mix

As previously mentioned, the mix of non-market, market and RGI units in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood provides a range of housing options for people from various socio-economic backgrounds. Table 2 compares the mix of RGI and market units for the proposed Regent Park neighbourhood and the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, based on currently available information. The range of RGI units in Regent Park, based on the need to replace the existing number of RGI units in the vicinity of Regent Park, is likely to be higher than in St Lawrence. On the other hand, the percentage of private market units is likely to be higher in Regent Park than in St Lawrence.

One of the significant differences in the likely tenure mix between the two neighbourhoods, based on currently available information, is the large percentage of independent non profit and cooperative housing developments in the St Lawrence neighbourhood, reflected in the figure for “assisted housing”. The elimination of federal housing programs geared to developing these types of units has left a gap in the funding available for the creation of this aspect of healthy community building.

Table 2. Income Mix: The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood and the Proposed Regent Park Neighbourhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Units</th>
<th>Units/Ha</th>
<th>Net Density (FSI)</th>
<th>% RGI Units</th>
<th>% Assisted Units*</th>
<th>% Private Market Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence</td>
<td>4,129</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Regent Park</td>
<td>4,775</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence and Regent Park Collaborative Team, Regent Park Revitalization Study

*Assisted includes market rentals in non profit and cooperative buildings as well as RGI units

6. Learning from St. Lawrence: A Focus Group

On April 2, 2003 the Regent Park Collaborative Team conducted a focus group with ten St. Lawrence residents representing the St. Lawrence Resident's Association, the local Business Improvement Area, the Condominium Ratepayers Association, staff from the St. Lawrence community center, senior's and youth organizations. The goal was to develop a deeper understanding of the daily experiences of residents living in the area and to explore their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the neighbourhood. The discussion focused on these issues, as well as what changes people would like to see in the area. This information, along with St. Lawrence neighbourhood literature, provides insights on how to develop successful, mix-used, mixed-income neighbourhood in inner city Toronto.

6.1 Workshop Key Themes

The residents who participated in the focus group raised several points that highlighted their perceptions about the strengths and limitations of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. These points are reflected in the following categories.
Strengths

Vision and Planning Process

- There was a clear planning vision for neighbourhood and stakeholder involvement from the beginning.
- There was flexibility built into the planning process that allowed the area to respond to changing demographics and economic conditions as it evolved.
- The creation of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association was key to fostering a strong sense of community involvement and commitment.
- There has been ongoing political support from city councilors and representatives from other levels of government.

Connection to Other Communities

- The proximity to downtown, the St. Lawrence Market and the pending Gooderham and Worts development provides a solid context for the neighbourhood to build on and evolve.
- As new buildings are build in the surrounding areas the residents of these buildings are joining the St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, expanding its boundaries.

Neighbourhood Stability

- The presence of non profit cooperatives and condominiums in the area, based on management models involving residents in maintenance and other decisions, encourages commitment and neighbourhood stability.
- A strong presence of seniors in the area provides for ongoing stability across generations.
- Streets are safe, well–lit at night providing a sense of security.
- The seamless blend of rent geared to income units and market units, many in the same buildings provides for a degree of integration and stability with residents wanting to stay.

Community Involvement

- There is a strong resident commitment to civil society including the residents association and other community based organizations.
- The strong concentration of cooperative housing units and condominium associations provides a base for community interaction and local governance.

Stores, Services and Economic Development Opportunities

- St. Lawrence market and the surrounding shops and services provide unique retail opportunities and destinations for St. Lawrence and city-wide residents.
- The new Gooderham and Worts development will provide specialty stores and services and create employment opportunities for residents.
- Some of the larger employers in the area like Loblaw’s provide well-paid, union employment for local residents.
Weaknesses

- Lack of children’s play areas.
- Lack of recreational spaces for seniors.
- The turnover rate in condominium units rented out as hotels and in some RGI units could undermine other aspects of stability.
- The availability of larger units is limited for people who are current residents but need and want to move into another unit in the area, because of changes in family circumstances.

What could be changed?

- Provide more recreational space for children.
- Provide a multi-use space that is primarily for arts and public gatherings.
- Promote more unique boutique like shops to attract people to the neighbourhood.
- Provide more “everyday” shops like clothing and hardware stores to serve residents and provide local jobs.

A Clear Vision

Focus group participants confirmed that the St. Lawrence neighbourhood’s success is rooted in the clear planning vision established from the beginning. Part of this vision was to encourage collaboration in all levels of the planning process as architects, planners, city councilors, residents’ organizations and community based agencies all provided input to shape the plan. As a result, the planning direction the neighbourhood positively reflects the thought that went into developing diverse architectural, urban design and community development goals.

The focus group participants also believe that institutional support from local city councilors, municipal policy makers and planners were an important part of working towards this vision. For example, the local city councilors have played an important role supporting the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) from the beginning. According to residents, the struggle to develop their local community center community center benefited immensely from the municipal level political support it received as an SLNA-led initiative.

Connections to Other Communities

Another part of the success of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood vision is how the neighbourhood has successfully associated itself with the dynamic neighbourhoods that surround it. For example, the nearby St. Lawrence Market provides the neighbourhood with a unique shopping destination and an identity that draws people to live, work and shop in the area. The developing Gooderman and Worts neighbourhood will also add to the unique identity. St. Lawrence residents have already participated as stakeholders in the planning process of this up and coming arts-oriented neighbourhood and will benefit from the specialty stores, cafes and services that can provide employment and draw people to utilize the existing amenities along Front Street and the Esplanade. In addition, as the neighbourhood has matured, residents from the newly developed buildings in the area have become affiliated with the St Lawrence residents Association, expanding the boundaries and influence of the original neighbourhood.
Flexibility

The residents in the focus group discussed how the St. Lawrence neighbourhood development process maintained a degree of flexibility that allowed the area to evolve to meet demographic and economic changes over time. For example, the community center was built after the local residents’ association initiated its development, making it more of a community led initiative. Furthermore, many local businesses evolved as the area continued to develop. Some of the focus group participants stated that this level of flexibility has provided residents with a sense of involvement in the process of defining and fulfilling neighbourhood needs. One resident stated that this was preferable to one “monolithic bureaucracy” determining the neighbourhood’s direction.

Neighbourhood Stability

Neighbourhood stability and community involvement were raised as two key features of the success of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. The residents stated that many features in the neighbourhood reinforced a sense of commitment to staying in the area, building networks and engaging in community activities. One resident characterized St Lawrence as “a move in neighbourhood, rather than a move on neighbourhood.”

The local network of civil society type organizations is important for supporting the sense of neighbourhood stability in the area. These groups include the St. Lawrence Residents Association, the senior’s group “Circles of Support”, school based organizations, the Advisory Council for the Community Centre and various other youth and children’s organizations. Meeting and recreation centers (like the community center), play grounds and meeting rooms in co-ops are vital in providing these community groups with venues to meet and socialize. According to the residents, these facilities are particularly important for seniors, children and youth in the neighbourhood.

Residents also consider the amenities available in the neighbourhood as well as the area’s urban form as important for fostering this sense of stability. An example mentioned includes the sense of safety created by the active street life in the area. The stores and coffee shops along Front street and the Esplanade and Crombie Park’s various sitting and play areas were all raised as examples of local spaces that bustled with activity making the area feel safe day and night. One resident, a single older woman, highlighted this sense of safety created by the active street life as a key reason for moving into the area. According to her, safety is a major concern for seniors in the neighbourhood.

The quality of urban form and the seamless blend of housing cooperatives, RGI units and market condominiums were generally regarded as urban design features that added to the neighbourhood’s sense of stability as well. One resident mentioned that the building heights along the linear Crombie Park made the area attractive, while others found the side street townhouses added unique a character to the area. In short, the area’s appealing physical appearance reinforced the residents’ sense of commitment to staying in the area.

Community Involvement

Focus group participants unanimously agreed that the St. Lawrence Resident’s Association, the senior’s group “Circles of Care” and other organizations reinforce a
healthy sense of community involvement in the neighbourhood. Some residents even argued that this level of community engagement is vital to the health of the neighbourhood and is an underlying factor making the area a success.

According to focus group participants this healthy level of involvement is directly linked to the large number of cooperative housing and condominium associations in the neighbourhood. They feel that the co-op philosophy encourages community engagement in each individual board level. People then bring this level of involvement to the larger neighbourhood association. This level of involvement spills out from the individual buildings into governance organizations for the community as a whole. Condominiums are also run by resident management boards for individual buildings fostering a sense of commitment to working together and responsibility for community health.

This community engagement model provides opportunities for various age, income and ethnocultural groups to participate. As the co-ops are constituted of residents representing various socio-economic groups, a wide range of people are represented in building and neighbourhood level local decision-making processes. The co-op groups also provide a smaller milieu for groups to gain confidence before engaging with the larger neighbourhood. This is especially important for ethnocultural co-ops where new immigrants gain the necessary confidence in community participation in their own building as a stepping stone to taking part in broader discussion and involvement.

Room for Improvement

Maintaining a level of services and space to meet the needs of various residents has proven to be a challenge according to some residents. Some residents mentioned that the neighbourhood lacks an adequate number of play areas for children, especially for upper level, competitive field sports; while market condominiums closer to the St. Lawrence Market require more access to greenspace. Furthermore, as more senior's move into condominiums in the area, there may be a need for more recreation and meeting areas designed to meet the needs of this age group.

Some residents also felt that there is currently a lack of quality stores in the area to draw people to shop in the area and to provide employment opportunities for residents. While some residents argued that boutique style stores would welcome people to the neighbourhood, others argued for more straightforward local services and stores that sell work clothes, hardware and other daily needs at affordable prices.

Some residents also mentioned the lack of live-work opportunities in the area. These opportunities included work spaces in walking distance of the neighbourhood to actual work places within housing units. However, one resident mentioned that he was concerned that live-work spaces might encourage people to come and go around the clock creating disruption for adjacent residents.

Another perceived threat to stability in the area were market condominiums rented out as hotel rooms. According to focus groups participants, both high-end condominiums that are purchased then leased for short term stays are often places where people stay for short periods of time and tend to not engage in the community, thereby possibly create a more fractured sense of neighbourhood instability. This could apply equally to one hundred percent rent geared to income (RGI) unit buildings.
The desirability of the neighbourhood has also resulted paradoxically in a negative impact on the sense of stability for some residents. Because the area is popular and waiting lists for units are long, it has been difficult for current residents to move into larger (or smaller units) if there is a change in their household size. This has made it difficult for seniors to move into smaller units when their children move out or for couples to find larger spaces if their families expand. It is also difficult to find affordable ownership units in or near the neighbourhood for people who have saved money and want to move from a co-op to a market unit.

7. Lessons for Regent Park Revitalization

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood’s strengths and weaknesses highlighted in journal articles and reinforced in the focus group provide some interesting insight into how to shape the policy and planning direction for a revitalized Regent Park. In order to develop a successful neighbourhood in Regent Park, it is crucial that the re-development plan works towards the following goals:

- Developing an identity and vision
- Fostering linkages
- Creating a flexible framework
- Creating economic opportunities
- Planning for community stability
- Fostering community involvement

7.1 Developing an Identity and Vision

In order for successful revitalization to occur in Regent Park, it is important that the process of community engagement both within and adjacent to Regent Park continue to evolve and that every effort be made to get developers, architects, resident’s groups, local community based agencies and organizations to buy in to the re-development vision. In order to engage this diverse range of stakeholders, collaborative workshops and forums will be key for sharing knowledge and concerns, much as was done in the preparation of the revitalization Plan.

Nearby residents and business groups need to be engaged as well in developing and maintaining this vision by collaborating with the Regent Park Resident’s Association and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Of course, this process will bring groups with divergent interests and concerns, but it will also provide opportunities for developing dynamic plans that encompass economic development, housing and social infrastructure goals.

Developing this vision is tied to creating an identity for an evolving and changing neighbourhood. It is important to recognize how Gooderman and Worts and the St. Lawrence Market help link the St. Lawrence neighbourhood to dynamic inner city amenities and spaces. The Regent Park revitalization process can borrow from these ideas and aim to develop unique spaces not only for residential and commercial space, but for arts, recreation and education. For example, the concept of the Open University bordering the central park space in the newly developed neighbourhood could create another identity for this already dynamic, multicultural neighbourhood.
7.2 Fostering Linkages

The St. Lawrence neighbourhood is not isolated on its own, but is linked to dynamic neighbourhoods and services. As a consequence residents from nearby neighbourhoods are drawn to services in the area. In turn an active street life has been created in the park, on the Esplanade and the retail strip along Front Street, which increases a sense of safety for all ages. Urban design features are integral to developing and fostering this vision.

Linear parks and walkways that draw people into the neighbourhood to amenities and services and foster linkages to the neighbourhoods surrounding Regent Park need to be a priority to develop this sense of street life and safety. In addition it will be important to forge links to existing activities and amenities in surrounding neighbourhoods throughout the redevelopment process. Some of these include Riverdale Farm, the Don River and its Trails, the Parliament Street commercial area north of Gerrard Street, linkages along Parliament Street south to Gooderham and Worts, St Lawrence and the Waterfront, linkages to some of the dynamic changes taking place in the Queen River and Corktown neighbourhoods and linkages to the Cabbagetown Historical District.

7.3 Creating a Flexible Framework

A flexible planning framework that provides clear planning direction, but allows the area to respond to economic and demographic change will be a crucial feature of the redevelopment direction. This will provide a contrast to the well intended but top-down, bureaucratic paradigm that determined the original planning direction for Regent Park in the 1950’s. Although these planning goals were based on innovative models for that time period, the rigidity of the neighbourhood’s physical design and policy orientation has made it difficult for the area to respond to change. As a result, it has been impossible to plan for a changing mix of uses in the single-use building landscape.

Current TCHC initiatives to foster resident participation in building governance and maintenance are examples of attempts to develop more flexible models. However, the layout of the neighbourhood hinders substantial change and innovative interventions. The concentration of RGI units also makes it impossible for the private sector to develop housing and establish small businesses in the area.

The Regent Park Plan provides a skeletal framework that acknowledges the importance of a vibrant mix of uses and leaves spaces for amenities and services. The plan anticipates that services and amenities will develop according to market and demographic shifts as well as neighbourhood needs. This borrows from the processes that lead to the development of services and amenities in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.

In fact, in the St. Lawrence community, the community center developed after the Neighbourhood Association was formed and had developed the capacity to collaborate and lobby for their needs. According to St Lawrence focus group participants, many businesses in the neighbourhood evolved after the area was developed.

It will be critical for the process of building the new Regent Park neighbourhood to create structures, institutions and organizations to act as conduits for change and to allow the
neighbourhood to evolve. In addition, it will be essential to allow for flexibility in building design to accommodate changes in unit size if appropriate, as is the case with houses in many traditional Toronto neighbourhoods, as well as flexibility in uses to allow for live work possibilities and economic activity that responds to market changes. It will also be critical to provide for opportunities to engage with planning for community services and amenities that respond to changes in the neighbourhood.

7.4 Creating Economic Opportunities

The previously mentioned, popularity of the St. Lawrence Market and the innovative plans for the Gooderman and Worts neighbourhood provide examples of the possibilities of economic development in the Regent Park neighbourhood. The services and amenities that develop over time in the revitalized Regent Park can provide employment opportunities for local residents while providing residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods with unique local destinations.

Encouraging not only the development of unique retail spaces, but also a range of local employment opportunities and community economic development initiatives will be vital in redevelopment plans. The TCHC can partner with Human Resources Development Canada, the City of Toronto Economic Development Department, local business and resident associations and community based agencies to develop local strategies to encourage community economic development. These can include:

- business incubator programs;
- employment training and local business start up programs;
- façade improvement programs for businesses located adjacent to the existing neighbourhood;
- needs assessments to explore how businesses and services could benefit from Regent Park’s locational advantage;
- relationship building to link real estate and the financial industry to promote area opportunities and successes;
- “hire local” initiatives with new businesses;
- and support for youth entrepreneurs and new immigrants with small business grant/loan programs.

Toronto has a variety of innovative programs it can draw from including: Artscape’s creative programs to promote live-work spaces with community economic development initiatives in the arts; various incubator projects that provide space for industries including textiles, catering and food production; and neighbourhood regeneration initiatives like the South Riverdale Revitalization project that promotes small business development, the arts and community capacity building.

However, it is not just the opportunity to capitalize on arts, cultural and local entrepreneurial activities that will be important for creating an economically diverse and healthy neighbourhood. Some the participants of the St Lawrence focus group emphasized the importance of also having opportunities for traditional relatively high paying employment opportunities that were created when some of the large supermarkets and other employers moved into the area. These have provided unionized positions for a number of residents and have contributed to the diversity and range of

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8City of Toronto, 2001, Building Community Wealth in South Riverdale: A Strategic Plan
options available for people. As part of the revitalization effort in Regent Park it will be useful to explore opportunities to enter into partnerships with larger employers and to ensure that space is set aside for these opportunities to take shape.

These types of initiatives are beneficial to both the neighbourhood and the entire city in numerous ways since they improve the quality of life for Regent Park residents by: providing employment and skills development; decreasing car dependence by promoting work opportunities close to home; developing interesting niche markets to attract shoppers to the area; and fostering the building of neighbourhood capacity for residents who work and live in the area. These initiatives will go along way to making Regent Park residents feel more committed to staying in and engaging with the neighbourhood.

7.5 Planning for Community Stability

The focus group revealed several reasons that make the St. Lawrence neighbourhood a stable community where people would rather “move in” than “move on.” In order to encourage this sense of stability, urban planning, economic and social policy interventions need to all contribute to this goal. While the community economic development initiatives mentioned above are a vital contributor to neighbourhood stability, so are urban planning interventions to design safe, well lit, walkable streets and parks that provide a mix of uses encouraging active street life. Ensuring that all public spaces including streets, parks and other public areas are designed to the highest possible standards will be a key element towards providing this sense of stability.

The residents of St. Lawrence stressed that both an excessively high concentration of RGI units and condominiums utilized as hotels or short term accommodation can contribute to transiency and threaten a sense of neighbourhood stability. Policy interventions need to be implemented that discourage condos from being used as hotel rooms. Recent court decisions seem to have addressed this issue at least for now but additional measures may need to be taken. On the other hand, steps that promote rent to own programs to facilitate home ownership could provide with some tenants in RGI units with the opportunity to move on and to develop an ownership stake in the community. The success and importance of housing cooperatives as a model for facilitating tenant engagement in management of housing needs to be examined to determine how it can be adapted to the new Regent Park neighbourhood. One option would be to ensure that tenant management models for all social housing be concentrated on individual buildings, with separate and independent organizational structures for each building over a certain size. Another option would be to explore how the new Federal Provincial housing program could be used to facilitate the development of new cooperative type developments by community organizations, church groups, unions etc.

With respect to the concentration level of RGI units in the new Regent Park, it is evident that in order to address the issue of providing relocation units for tenants in the first phase of development, new units will need to either be built or acquired off site or through rent supplement programs. This would allow for a dispersal of some RGI units over a wider area and a de-concentration of RGI units on site. As the development proceeds, it would be useful to explore whether some RGI units can be located in non RGI buildings on site so that the number of exclusively RGI buildings is reduced. Based on all the available evidence, all of these measures, resulting in a de-concentration of
RGI units on site and within buildings, would contribute towards creating a healthier community providing for a mix of units, tenures and overall neighbourhood stability.

7.6 Fostering Community Involvement

Both the planning process during the preparation of the Revitalization Plan and the recent creation of the Regent Park Residents Council represent important initiatives towards greater community involvement in local affairs by residents of Regent Park. In addition, a policy framework has already been established to foster community involvement in the management of Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings.

The recent Community Management Plan outlines steps for developing governance models for community housing units that includes organizational support and systems that require significant resident participation. The TCHC can work closely with the Regent Park Residents Council to establish building-based organizations that develop capacity at the block level and feed into a larger community governance framework. The TCHC models for community participation will also be helpful for new co-operative housing units and market condominium associations that may develop in the neighbourhood.

However an important consideration will be the need to acknowledge the changing nature of the community as new market and other forms of housing are added. The character of the area will change and the nature of the community representation will need to change as well. This transition cannot be managed, it must instead be accommodated through new structures that are allowed to evolve as the community grows.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Many of the points addressed in this report were previously explored in the December 2002 Regent Park Revitalization Plan. The principles identified in that report, which form the basis for much of the planning work, include statements about involving the community in the process, building and recognizing cultural diversity and creating a diverse community with a mix of uses, incomes, housing and building types.

The recommendations contained in the December report propose:

• that the principles be adopted as the foundation for work on future phases;

• that every effort be made to achieve a diversity of built form, design, tenure uses and mix of incomes through the revitalization process;

• that the community be fully engaged in the process; and

• that community agencies in the vicinity of Regent park and the surrounding neighbourhoods be consulted as part of the revitalization process.

The recommendations below expand on additional points that emerged through the research described in this report including the discussions with the residents of the St Lawrence neighbourhood.
Recommendations:

1. That the Toronto Community Housing Corporation create a working committee composed of resident representatives of Regent Park, representatives from the surrounding community organizations, community based agencies, local business organizations and representatives from the architectural and planning professions to advise on the revitalization process.

2. That in order to develop interventions to strengthen economic development opportunities in Regent Park, the TCHC establish an economic development advisory committee for Regent Park revitalization to include resident representation, local business associations, community based agencies, the City of Toronto Economic Development Department, Human Resources Development Canada and other business representation as appropriate.

3. That in accordance with the implementation proposals outlined in the Toronto Community Housing Corporation’s report on tenant management, every effort be made to create effective tenant management structures for both existing and new buildings or appropriately scaled groups of buildings in Regent Park based on the principle of “community housing units”.

4. That TCHC explore with the City of Toronto the opportunity to use the new Federal Provincial Housing Program to create non profit and cooperative housing developments as part of Regent Park revitalization with participation by religious based organizations, community agencies, labour unions and multi cultural communities.

5. That TCHC pursue the possibility of integrating its RGI units into non-RGI buildings as much as possible as part of the Regent Park revitalization initiative.

6. That TCHC work with the City and its other partners through the revitalization process to provide for the highest quality design and finishes for public spaces including lighting, street furniture and playground facilities in the new Regent Park.

7. That TCHC request the Regent Park Residents Council to explore opportunities for involving new residents in community activities as the redevelopment proceeds.
Bibliography

Galster, George, *Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on Opportunity, Deprivation and the Housing Nexus*, Housing Studies, Vol. 17, 2002


*Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence, 1990*

Appendix 1: St. Lawrence and Regent Park Neighbourhood figures

1. St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Figures

1.1 St. Lawrence Assisted Units Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unit Totals</th>
<th>Actual No. of Subsidized Units</th>
<th>Rent Geared to Income Units as % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase A</td>
<td>1588</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase B</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase C</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>4129</td>
<td>1159</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence*

1.2 St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Unit Mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Assisted Housing Units by Phase</th>
<th>Market Units by Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Subsidized Units</td>
<td>Subsidized Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence*

1.3 St. Lawrence Open Space figures (In hectares)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phase A</th>
<th>Phase B</th>
<th>Phase C</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Parks</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Open Space</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Open Space</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>4.11 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Lanes</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Streets</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Roads</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Streets</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>5.58 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Site Area</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>22.73 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Directions for New Urban Neighbourhoods: Learning from St. Lawrence*
### 2 Regent Park Figures

#### 2.1 Apartments/Mixed Used Buildings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 B</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>AS A %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RGI UNITS</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Units</td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,978</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,418</td>
<td>1,479</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Regent Park Collaborative Team, Regent Park Redevelopment Study, 2002

#### 2.2 Townhouses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>REGULAR UNITS</th>
<th>STACKED UNITS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 B</td>
<td>4 B</td>
<td>3B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGI UNITS</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Units</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Regent Park Collaborative Team, Regent Park Redevelopment Study, 2002

#### 2.3 Proposed Site Plan Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m²</th>
<th>Sq. ft.</th>
<th>In acres</th>
<th>As a %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Area</td>
<td>280,992</td>
<td>3,024,671</td>
<td>69.43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Parks</td>
<td>14,092</td>
<td>151,690</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Parks</td>
<td>3,479</td>
<td>37,449</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>22,859</td>
<td>246,060</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>8.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>9,947</td>
<td>101,072</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Parks</td>
<td>51,154</td>
<td>550,635</td>
<td>12.64</td>
<td>19.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets</td>
<td>62,010</td>
<td>667,442</td>
<td>15.32</td>
<td>22.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Ice Rink</td>
<td>4,767</td>
<td>51,314</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Area</td>
<td>162,186</td>
<td>1,745,812</td>
<td>40.07</td>
<td>57.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Regent Park Collaborative Team, Regent Park Redevelopment Study, 2002
### 2.4 Built Form – Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>In m²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment/Mixed Use Buildings</td>
<td>310,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential GFA (included amenity areas etc.)</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses</td>
<td>111,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>444,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Average Density</strong></td>
<td>1.58 FSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Average Density</strong></td>
<td>2.71 FSI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Regent Park Collaborative Team, Regent Park Redevelopment Study, 2002*