



Shaping Our Community Together

Our Social Development & Action Plan for Lawrence Heights





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This document was done in collaboration with:
Toronto Community Housing
Social Development, Finance and Administration, City of Toronto
The Social Development Plan Steering Committee
& Other community groups



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Shaping Our Community Together

Our Social Development & Action Plan for Lawrence Heights



Introduction

Welcome to **Shaping Our Community Together: Our Social Development & Action Plan for Lawrence Heights**. In July 2010, Toronto City Council directed Toronto Community Housing and the Social Development, Finance and Administration to work with the Lawrence Heights community to create a Social Development Plan to support the Lawrence Heights Revitalization Plan.

We understand that the physical environment and social connections within our community will change. The Community Steering Committee compiled our thoughts, visions, and actions for the residents of Lawrence Heights. This Social Development Plan (SDP) is a road map for our neighbourhood's revitalized future.

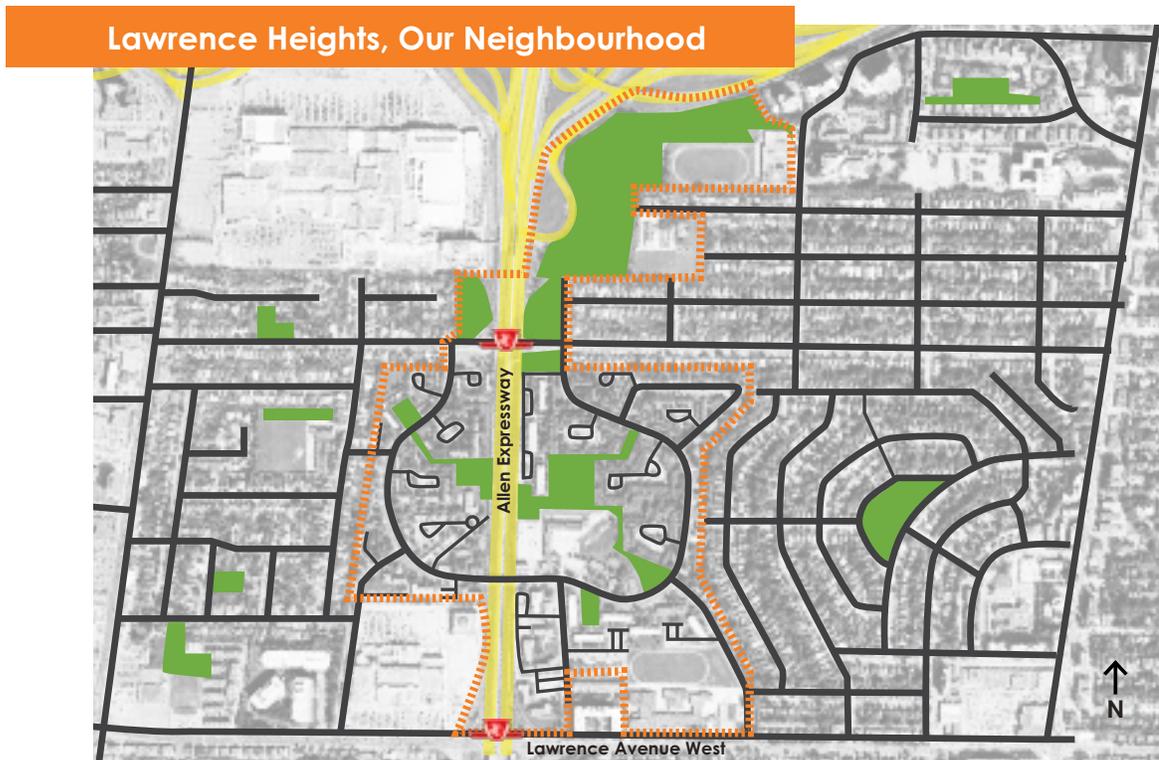


Figure A

Brief History

The Lawrence Heights neighbourhood was planned during the 1950's and construction was completed in 1962. Instead of becoming a complete and connected neighbourhood Lawrence Heights was divided upon construction of the Allen Expressway in 1964. The Allen Expressway's bisection of the community creates a sense of isolation from the rest of the city. Over the years, our residents have overcome many setbacks while maintaining a strong sense of community; the time has come for more positive investment and growth to occur within our community.

Today, we are creating a new vision for our community and our neighbours focused upon making the Lawrence Heights revitalization vision a reality. In doing so we have identified the strengths and challenges that our community faces. These will help guide our vision, principles, and actions as we move forward through the revitalization process.

Our Strengths

The strong sense of community in Lawrence Heights is one of our greatest strengths. The combination of active, interested, and well-educated residents, as well as our extensive opportunities for community engagement has created a thriving group looking to take on leadership roles as our community undergoes change. Our other strengths include:

- Our local spaces and services bind the neighbourhood and community together;
- Many agencies have a strong influence within Lawrence Heights;
- Green space is plentiful throughout the neighbourhood, with many trees, parks, and community gardens encouraging community interactions and active lifestyles; and
- Courtyards and meeting rooms are frequently used for community events.



Our Challenges

Our residents face major challenges such as social exclusion and isolation - realized through stereotypes, prejudices, and other misconceptions about the neighbourhood. Other challenges include:

- Rent-geared-to-income housing is the only housing type in the area available to our residents, which limits the housing choices available to us;
- Fences and other physical barriers isolate and segregate our neighbourhood from the surrounding communities and the city;
- The design of streets and buildings do not reflect safe urban design principles; and
- Chronic underemployment in one of the biggest issues facing our community.



Our Vision

We see the revitalization of Lawrence Heights as an opportunity to redefine our community and shape our future for our children, our families, and our connections with the rest of Toronto.

In our vision, we see Lawrence Heights as a proud community built for the betterment of the environment and our residents. This diverse community will be enhanced through better facilities and services geared to help all members of the community succeed.

Support will be needed from government agencies, residents groups, community services, and other agencies to help empower the neighbourhood during and after revitalization.



Our Principles

The Social Development Plan Community Steering Committee created four principles to frame our Social Development Plan. These principles will help maintain focus on the goals of building a collaborative and socially inclusive community within Lawrence Heights. Our goal is to:

Build a healthy community that offers all residents equal opportunity, respect, and empowerment.

- H** A *Healthy* and welcoming community that is supportive to all residents, with a sustainable environment and a thriving economy;
- E** *Equal* opportunities to benefit from community assets and services, free from discrimination and oppression;
- R** *Respect* for all community members by community members; and
- E** *Empowerment*, so that all members are able to participate in our community's decision making.



Our Actions

Six Actions have been identified to help our community realize the goals of our Social Development and Action Plan.



Building a Village within our City – Our Community's Connections

Our Community's Connections are the ideas, activities, and practices that bring our community members together. Those connections form the bond that strengthen us and keep us resilient against the many challenges we face.



Building a Strong Community – Our Community's Services

Our Community's Services are the key services that are delivered through partnerships with organizations that offer a range of programs that support our quality of life; they are offered by agencies, publicly funded schools, child care centres, community health centres, libraries, community recreation centres, and employment and human services.



Step up! We're all part of the solution – Our Community's Safety

Our Community's Safety is the sense of comfort, security, and confidence that all people have in our neighbourhood. As we aim to increase community well-being, access, involvement, and ownership, we are motivated to establish programs, events, and activities that improve our community's safety together.





Beyond Bricks and Mortar – Building Bridges and Making Connections – Our Housing

Revitalization brings us an opportunity to improve Toronto Community Housing's rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. It is a chance to create a healthy and vibrant mixed-use and mixed-income community where our residents have access to quality housing, services, and facilities. We envision a neighbourhood where everyone feels like they belong.



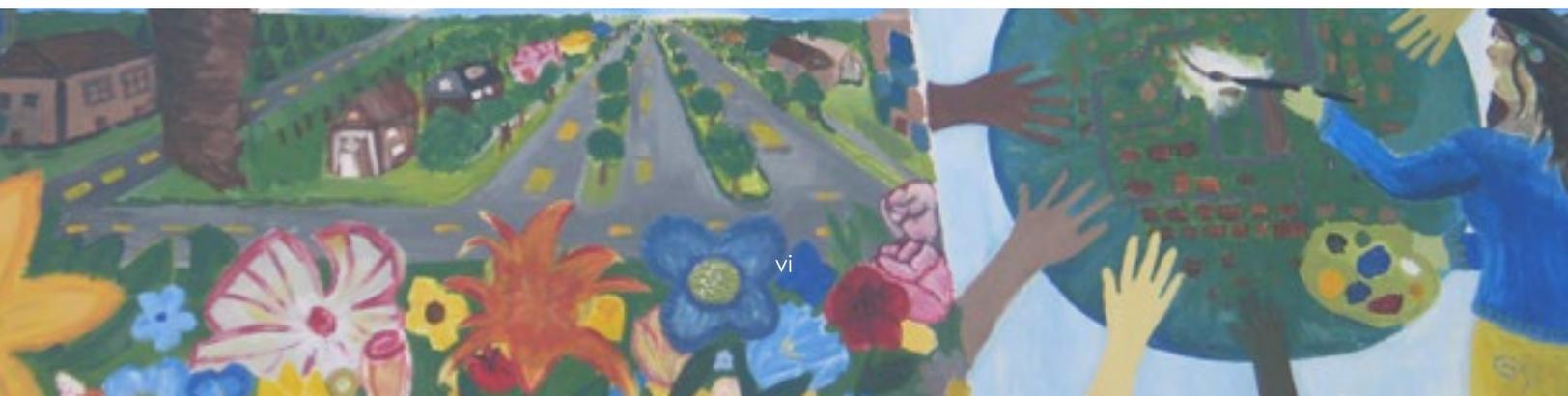
Building a Healthy Community – Our Green Spaces & Physical Infrastructure

Green Space includes parks, sidewalks, landscaping and green roofs. Many green spaces and good physical infrastructure are vital elements for a healthy community. We therefore need to plan to maximize the positive physical and environmental impact from revitalization in Lawrence Heights.



Maximizing Opportunities for Success – Our Employment Needs

Employment is a key aspect of this Social Development Plan. Some of our residents find it difficult to prepare for and access job opportunities. Combined with our Employment Strategy, the Toronto Employment and Social Services' "An Employment Service Plan for the Revitalization of Lawrence-Allen" will provide our residents with services and support to better prepare them for job opportunities.





Introduction

Welcome to **Shaping Our Community Together: Our Social Development & Action Plan for Lawrence Heights**. The Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood is currently in a state of transition. In 2011, the Lawrence - Allen Revitalization Plan was completed by the City of Toronto (which includes Lawrence Heights).



This plan supports the shift from a pure social housing neighbourhood to a mixed-income community.

In July 2010 Toronto City Council endorsed the Lawrence Allen Revitalization Plan, which included a social Development Plan to be created with the Lawrence Heights residents and community members, partnering with Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance and Administration division.

The Community Steering Committee understands that in the creation of this Social Development Plan, as the physical environment changes in

Lawrence Heights, our social connections will also change.

As an important part of the revitalization process, this plan confirms that the social and economic improvements within our neighbourhood are as important as the physical redevelopments that have been planned for the area.

These revitalization efforts will bring many changes to our community. The Toronto Community Housing (TCH) buildings will be experiencing the most significant changes – transforming from a 100% social housing neighbourhood to a mixed-income, mixed-use community.



What is a Social Development Plan?

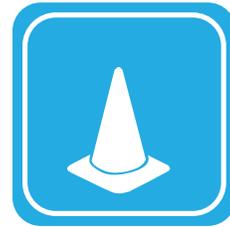
A Social Development Plan captures shared visions and strategies as a way to “Plan with the People.” By working with the community this plan aims to:

- Maximize social and economic opportunities throughout the revitalization to improve the quality of life and well-being of all residents, both existing and new;
- Improve access to services, build local capacity and give a voice to our residents; and
- Build a socially inclusive community that supports connections among all of our residents.

A socially inclusive community:

- Brings together all community members regardless of income, ethnicity, gender, faith, race, origin, immigration status, ability, sexual orientation, age or marital status; and
- Balances the needs of all our community members and eliminates barriers in order to help everyone feel connected to and involved with their local community.



**Our Connections****Our Services****Our Safety****Our Housing****Our Green Space****Our Employment**

Together, we have spent more than three years making a new vision for our community through the creation of this Social Development Plan. In doing so, we have strengthened our relationships to one another and have fostered a stronger, more empowered resident voice.

This document has been built through open dialogue among our residents and community stakeholders resulting in many strong and meaningful recommendations. These ideas can be divided into Six Key Priority Areas: Our Connections, Our Services, Our Safety, Our Housing, Our Green Space, and Our Employment.

The Social Development Plan lays the foundation for our new collaborative, cooperative and inclusive community. We hope that the connections – to our community, to each other and to the surrounding neighbourhoods – will continue to develop and grow as we move forward with the revitalization process for Lawrence Heights.



Our Residents, Our Community

Lawrence Heights was always intended to be a complete neighbourhood. Planned during the 1950's, it is the site of the first large scale social housing project located outside of the former City of Toronto boundaries.



Instead of becoming a complete and connected neighbourhood, Lawrence Heights was divided upon construction of the Allen Expressway in 1964. The expressway now runs through the centre of the segregated community, isolating it from the rest of the city.

From the very beginning, our residents have overcome many hurdles yet we have continued to maintain a strong sense of community.

Today, Lawrence Heights is home to generations of newcomers and working people from across the country and around the world. We share the common goal of raising our families in a safe and supportive community. We have a history of advocating for services that are accessible and serve our needs and will continue to advocate on behalf of our community, as the revitalization plans proceed over the next 20 years and beyond.

With the support of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organization Network (LHION) we have strived to build community involvement. During the revitalization process we will have meaningful participation in creating our Social Development Plan and Toronto Employment and Social Services' *"Developing Opportunities: An Employment Service Plan for the Revitalization of Lawrence-Allen,"* to address our Priority Neighbourhood Status.

Our residents are the strength behind our neighbourhood; we are its history, and here we have raised families and invested greatly in our neighbourhood.

We are a resilient community, connected by our family ties, our friendships, and the places we work and play. We are dedicated to building a better life for everyone.

Lawrence Heights: Map of Existing Community Services



Figure B

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| A Yorkdale Arts Centre | F Barbara Frum Library, Community Centre | K Flemington E.S., Child Care |
| B Lawrence Heights M.S. | G Oxford Learning Centre - Child Care | L Unison Health and Community Services |
| C Lawrence Square Mall (Human Service Agencies) | H Baycrest Arena | M Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre |
| D Baycrest Centre, Esther Exton Child Care | I Sir Sandford Fleming Academy | N John Polanyi Collegiate Institute, North York Harvest Food Bank |
| E Arpi Nursery - Child Care | J Baycrest E.S., Child Care | |



Our Strengths

We are a strong and united neighbourhood: with this foundation, we will continue to build our revitalized community. For more than three years our residents, community leaders and agency champions have taken charge in advocating for positive change in our neighbourhood.

Some of our community's strongest assets include:



Strong Sense of Community

We have a very strong and close-knit community: we are used to seeing familiar faces every day! Many residents support each other through social networks, volunteering or by just being good neighbours.

In our neighbourhood, we hold regular forums that bring different community members and resident groups together to build mutual connections and understanding.



Education and Skills

Many of our residents are well-educated, with college and university degrees, and are trained professionals with a variety of skills and experiences to offer employers.

At the same time, Lawrence Heights has a large population of youth who are under 18 years old. Many of our youth are actively involved in speaking out for the wants and needs of our community. They are also eager to take advantage of the employment and training opportunities that the revitalization will bring to our neighbourhood.





Strong Grassroots Leadership:

The grassroots community groups in Lawrence Heights reflect the diversity of our neighbourhood and supports resident leadership. They are:

- Lawrence Heights Inter-Organization Network (LHION) and its workgroups;
- Building Equitable Participation (BePart);
- Community Action Team (CAT);
- Lawrence Heights Family Support Group;
- Conflict Mediation Project;
- Youth Led Art and Safety Conferences;
- Neptune Renewal Group (NRG); and
- several others.

Local Services

We pride ourselves on the on-going work between the agencies and residents in Lawrence Heights, building high levels of trust and community awareness. As such, there are many agencies and activities close to our homes in and around the community, including:

- Barbara Frum Library;
- North York Harvest Food Bank;
- Artstarts;
- Toronto Employment & Social Services
Lawrence Square Employment Centre;
- Community Centre;
- Unison;
- Our schools; and
- many others.



Green Space

Our green spaces are highly valued in Lawrence Heights. The trees, community gardens, and parks support and cultivate an active lifestyle and provide the opportunity for community interaction.

Enjoying our public spaces allows for many cultural activities, family events, music, eating, dancing, gardening, and just having fun.

Housing

Toronto Community Housing supports low income housing options for large and small families, as well as seniors. The current Toronto Community Housing options have ground floor access and private outdoor spaces. The courts in Lawrence Heights create mini-neighbourhoods and places for social gatherings. Toronto Community Housing (TCH) has been a community partner with the residents of Lawrence Heights since 2002 and has fostered community connections and inclusiveness.





Our Challenges

Our community faces many challenges and long standing barriers. With the help of the community, this plan strives to break the perceived and actual cycles of isolation, poverty, and stigmatization within Lawrence Heights.

**Social Exclusion/Isolation:**

Our community experiences negative stereotypes, tensions with police and authorities, racism, discrimination (social and economical), and isolation. We recognize that these fears, either perceived or real, segregate our community from the rest of the City.

Lawrence Heights is home to many new residents from diverse cultural backgrounds who often have trouble accessing the services they need. These services can include community programs, language training, employment opportunities, child care services, and transportation options.

There are currently not enough programs to support the needs of our youth and seniors, while the programs and services that do exist have gaps. The community would benefit greatly from education/school programs and initiatives, community supports and services for newcomers, health care programs, food security initiatives, accessible legal support, and services that are youth, senior, and gender oriented.

The perceived and physical isolation we experience has brought us closer together as a community. Our bonds and commitment to one another are very strong. Yet, many residents are anxious about the unknown future surrounding the revitalization and the potential loss of our community's identity.



Toronto Community Housing

Today, rent-geared-to-income housing (RGI) is the only type of housing that exists in Lawrence Heights. In other City of Toronto neighbourhoods there are many housing types at a variety of affordability levels – contributing to the increasingly inclusive and vibrant communities across the city.

Lawrence Heights is home to many large families who are not always accommodated by the available housing options. The existing Toronto Community Housing buildings also lack spaces for community members to connect – an issue that especially affects the seniors in our neighbourhood. The new housing types will reflect our desire to have spaces that will better meet all of our families' many needs.

In the meantime, ongoing stereotypes about our neighbourhood are fed by the current condition of the existing housing. Being isolated from the city, victimized, and stigmatized has created psychological barriers between the Toronto Community Housing buildings and the surrounding neighbourhoods. New housing types will help us get rid of these misconceptions and bring us together as a mixed community.



Urban Design and Landscapes

The current design of Lawrence Heights creates areas that are hidden from public view. This makes parts of our neighbourhood feel unsafe, and allows for unwanted activities, such as crime, to go undetected.

The existing TCH lands are surrounded by fences, walls, and other physical barriers which isolate and segregate us from neighbouring communities and the rest of the city.

The design of the neighbourhood also fails to support a pedestrian friendly community and neglects the urban design principles of a safe community. Renewed urban design will help us to rediscover and enjoy our beautiful and vibrant spaces.

Coupled with the lack of connections to transit from our neighbourhood, the walkways and entrances to the TTC Subways are unsafe and unwelcoming. At the same time, one of the most isolating aspects of the neighbourhood is Allen Road, which cuts Lawrence Heights down the middle and creates two unconnected pieces with unequal access to services and facilities.



Employment

Some Lawrence Heights residents are faced with the stresses of chronic unemployment and underemployment; they simply cannot establish adequate income or maintain employment.

Together we have recognized the following challenges to Employment and Training in Lawrence Heights:

- Difficulties getting support for life skills, literacy, language skills, high school education, job skills and/or work experience;
- A scarcity of supports such as information resources, child care or transportation that would help support residents find work and move beyond their current cycles of poverty;
- An absence of local employment and training opportunities;
- Challenges with a large youth population that needs help with work and life skills; and
- Difficulties accessing information on the employment and training opportunities programs that are offered.

Communication and Information

Agency services are disjointed amidst concerns about specific programs reaching everyone in our community, as some services are only located in certain areas of Lawrence Heights. This means that there is a sense of "information isolation," making it difficult for our residents to get the information they need about community events, engagement, and services. Access to the internet is also a challenge for our residents, who could find online information on employment and other opportunities highly beneficial.



Our Vision

This is our vision of the future we see for our Lawrence Heights community:

Having a proud Lawrence Heights community that is built for the betterment of our environment and our residents, both now and in the future.



Creating an accessible community that is physically and socially connected, that values diversity, and supports strong and healthy relationships with our neighbours, our surrounding communities, and the rest of the city.

Enhancing indoor and outdoor community facilities and spaces throughout Lawrence Heights so that they are accessible to people of all physical abilities. This includes street furniture, park benches, play structures, shelters, and other amenities that encourage positive social interaction, activities and community bonding for all.



Starting new community programs and creating healthy environments and friendly spaces, by removing the barriers, both physical and social, that stand between our community and residents.

Having a safe, responsible, non-violent, and vibrant community that meets the needs of our residents and is accepting of people no matter their abilities, ethnicity, age, or any other prejudice.



Having a community where everyone has access to and can transition between a variety of housing options within Lawrence Heights throughout all stages of their life (youth, singles, young families, and seniors). Housing types could include:

- Rent-geared-to-income;
- Affordable rental;
- Ownership; and
- Affordable home ownership.

Having community services that are evenly distributed throughout Lawrence Heights and are easily accessed by people of all income levels and ages, such as programs for youths, newcomers, seniors, and those with other unique needs. We see this as a way to reduce social barriers and promote social inclusion.



Boosting local business and community economic development will support networks in Lawrence Heights. It is a way to help maximize the benefits of revitalization in our community.

Building our community from our strengths, skills and experiences, gained through employment and training services accessible to qualified local candidates that address our needs. This will prepare our residents for new employment opportunities arising from the revitalization and connect our residents to employment opportunities both in the neighbourhood and throughout the city.



Having higher levels of community services and strong community agencies to help our families now, during, and after the Lawrence Heights revitalization. This includes expanded initiatives, community services, and facilities that link local agencies, schools, the City, TCH, and other institutions, such as:

- Libraries;
- Child care;
- Health centre;
- Recreation;
- Employment; and
- Education and training.



Escalating the levels of collaboration in our community through resident and agency initiatives, such as:

- Be-Part;
- Lawrence Heights Inter-organization Network (LHION) and their workgroups;
- Local Immigration Partnership (LIP); and
- Grassroots and resident-led initiatives.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small green plant with yellow flowers. The person is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt. The background is a brick wall. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Build a **Healthy** community that offers all residents **Equal** opportunity, **Respect**, and **Empowerment**.

| Our Principles

Four principles have been created by the Social Development Plan Community Steering Committee to frame our Social Development Plan. These have been developed to help everyone involved in its creation to stay focussed on the goals of creating a collaborative and socially inclusive community within Lawrence Heights.

Our Principles can be summed up in one sentence:

“Build a Healthy community that offers all residents Equal opportunity, Respect, and Empowerment.”

- H** A **HEALTHY** and welcoming community that is supportive of all residents, with a sustainable environment, and a thriving economy;
- E** **EQUAL** opportunities to benefit from community assets and services, free from discrimination and oppression;
- R** **RESPECT** for all community members by community members; and
- E** **EMPOWERMENT**, so that all members are able to participate in our community's decision making.

HERE is where
we live, work,
play, and
connect to
each other.





Our Actions

Our Actions are the steps that we will take to continue to build and develop a strong community, both during the revitalization period and beyond. These actions come directly from the members of our community and reflect our strengths and vision for the future.

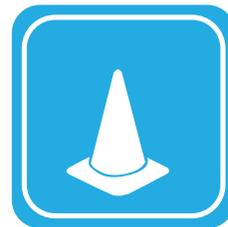
These actions can be categorized by **Our Six Key Priorities**, which will determine our collective actions:



Our Connections



Our Services



Our Safety



Our Housing



Our Green Space



Our Employment



Building a Village within our City – Our Community's Connections

Our Community's Connections are the ideas, activities, and practices that bring community members together. These connections form the bonds that strengthen our community and keep us resilient against the many challenges that we face.



A | Document the history of the community and its transformation



1. Develop a Heritage Plan that identifies the key cultural and historic references from the Lawrence Heights and Neptune neighbourhoods, keeping the memories and vitality of our communities alive. A Heritage Plan can include:
 - A Community Mobile Museum Project to document the vast history of Lawrence Heights and Neptune (a neighbouring community) over time;
 - Public Art projects that reflect and document community history;
 - Storytelling and Community Mapping opportunities prior to demolition;
 - Community walks and tours that document and highlight the physical history and changes to Lawrence Heights; and
 - Time Capsules to capture and preserve community history.
2. Develop events and initiatives that are inclusive, highlight the history of our various neighbourhoods and welcome new residents to our community.
3. Support ways to have our residents included in the naming processes for new streets, buildings, and public spaces by involving us in the planning, design, and governance of these new community spaces.
4. Identify key landmarks and community icons that our residents remember and honour; create a way to capture and integrate these memories into the new neighbourhoods (for example: facility design that reflect the history of Lawrence Heights).
5. Preserve and celebrate the identity and history of the original community; this can be achieved through oral and visual displays or at community events/gatherings.

**B****Increasing our community's connections through stronger communication.**

1. Support current and future community services including libraries, child care centres, adult education centres, community, and health centres by ensuring that these community facilities are designed to accommodate a diversity of community needs and services.
2. Evaluate other agencies working with us as to how they serve our community as it changes through revitalization. Leverage any opportunities that may become available to support and benefit our residents.
3. Have more children and youth oriented programs that are academically focused: this includes tutoring and mentoring, such as the current 'Pathways to Education' program.
4. Continue to provide a wide range of adult education programs, including Adult English as a Second Language, Adult Literacy and Basic Skills, and Adult (High School) Credit programs.





C | Support resident to resident engagement

1. Support the formation of a resident-to-resident body that brings people together from diverse groups and across neighbourhood boundaries regularly to share, discuss, resolve, and celebrate.
2. Ensure that the resident voices and principles in this Social Development Plan are present at all key decision-making tables and that new community initiatives, projects, and programs are developed and designed with the involvement of our residents.
3. Create a resident-managed community hub and identify key locations for social connection activities that are financed, organized, and operated by our community.



Building a Strong & Healthy Community – **Our Community's Services**

Our Community's Services support our quality of life. They are offered by agencies, publicly funded schools, child care centres, community health centres, libraries, community recreation centres, and employment and human services.

A range of programs are delivered through partnerships with agencies in Lawrence Heights. They include language training, education, arts, music, culture and other services such as food security, employment, child care supports, parent resource programs, baby-sitting programs, and child-minding.



A | Encourage and support programs that meet the needs of local residents.

1. Create programs and services that take into consideration our community's cultural diversity, abilities, gender, ages, needs, and concerns.
2. Work in partnership with youth groups and youth service workers to develop safe spaces for their engagement in the community.
3. Develop, encourage and support programs and services that focus on and meet the needs of our most isolated and vulnerable residents.



B | Ensure that as the community grows through revitalization, there is a commitment to maintain, invest, and increase community services within our community.

1. Support current and future community services including libraries and child care, community, and health centres. Ensure that these community facilities are designed to accommodate a diversity of community needs.
2. Evaluate our other agencies as to how they will serve our community as it changes during the revitalization and leverage any opportunities that may become available to support and benefit residents.
3. Have more academic focussed programs that include tutoring and mentoring, such as the 'Pathways to Education' program.



C | Encourage community organizations and providers to help focus the community service needs of our residents as the community transitions through the revitalization of Lawrence Heights.

1. Coordinate seamless service provision, such as the sharing of space, and maximizing resources in a 'one-stop/ hub' model of services.
2. Offer programs and services that can serve whole families at the same time and in the same place.
3. Understand and provide support between parents and their children, with a focus on newcomer residents.
4. Develop broad and effective communication about community programs and services. This may include a neighbourhood office, bulletin boards, guidelines for using resident networks, newsletters, social media, and other forms of communication.





Step up! We're all part of the solution – [Our Community's Safety](#)

Our Community's Safety is about the comfort, security and confidence for our residents. We are motivated to create programs, events, and activities that improve our community safety together - with the goal of increasing community well being, access, and involvement.

**A**

Enhance the communication between all stakeholders involved in building a safe community.

1. Expand our residents' participation in the LHION Safety Committee through outreach to the community and the use of the Crisis Response Protocol and Safety Bulletins. These are meant to address safety challenges in one coordinated approach for all of our residents and stakeholders.
2. Increase communications and outreach to our residents. Support the creation of a phone tree to spread information, with a focus on informing and connecting seniors to safety information networks.
3. Support the development of community resource spaces and information hubs within Lawrence Heights, to provide notice of regular community meetings and other events.
4. Provide opportunities for our residents to tell "good news" stories about people who live in the community and contribute to its safety and success.
5. Encourage more partnerships with agencies, government, and local businesses that support and fund ongoing safety initiatives.





B | Support community - wide strategies to combat violence and crime.

1. Develop and increase the levels of intergenerational programs and spaces that promote family unity, such as mediation programs and initiatives among resident groups, families and youth through an expanded safety network.
2. Increase the outreach and support of seniors, parent and youth specific education opportunities for community members that are facing challenges with the law.
3. Identify, support and provide coordinated long-term follow-up to families who are directly affected by violence.
4. Create employment and volunteer opportunities for our resident groups and community leaders who work to prevent violence and crime and promote community safety.
5. Support the continued recognition, evaluation, and accountability of resident led initiatives, safety audits, action plans, training, and safety programs.





C | Develop ways to build a trusting relationship between our residents and the police.

1. Communicate and support the creation of places to meet with our residents and the police to share experiences; build partnerships by establishing a Satellite Police Station.
2. Support and encourage improved police/community relationships with the goal to end racial profiling. We will do this by increasing dialogue and training between the Police, frontline community workers and residents, by partnering with the local Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC).
3. Increase the number of places where our residents can gather visibly at all times of the day.



D | Improve the urban design of our neighbourhood with revitalization, to support a safe environment and ensure the regular maintenance of our public spaces.

1. Design our neighbourhood to reduce crime and to enhance our community spaces, trees, streets, walkways, and buildings making sure they are safe for everyone.
2. Install better lighting and signage in our community, as well as lit walkways and safe physical connections that minimize the use of dividing walls and fences.
3. Work with the local community, the City, and agencies when designing places and spaces to ensure all community safety needs are considered.



Beyond Bricks and Mortar – Building Bridges and Making Connections – Our Housing

We will continue to develop a feeling of belonging within Lawrence Heights. Revitalization is an opportunity to improve the Toronto Community Housing's rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. It is also a chance to create a healthy and vibrant mixed-use and mixed-income community, where everyone has access to various housing choices.



A | Support and encourage a strong resident voice and continuous resident engagement.

1. Make sure that our residents continue to be engaged, have a voice and help in the decision making of the design of the new housing. This will be done through the creation of resident-led discussion forums, associations, and social events specifically tailored to assist in conflicts arising from new housing.
2. Maintain the Community Animator Program and include the participation of our new and current residents in the program.
3. Support residents working with TCH, the City, and each other to advocate for funding and opportunities for home ownership, affordable and supportive housing, seniors facilities, and other types of housing options.
4. Create formal and informal resident and community structures that are focussed on building a sense of belonging to the community, regardless of whether our residents live in rent-geared-to-income, ownership, or other forms of housing found in the new community.
5. Connect with other communities through shared facilities, buildings, and pathways that can be accessed by members of all communities, resident associations, and community agencies in the area.
6. Ensure that building designs will create a barrier-free community for all stages of life that seamlessly integrates RGI and market housing.
7. Formalize Toronto Community Housing's commitments in a Lawrence Heights Housing Agreement in order to minimize the impact of housing construction on our current and future residents.





Our Green Space & Physical Infrastructure

Green Space includes parks, boulevards, sidewalk right of ways, landscaping, and green roofs.

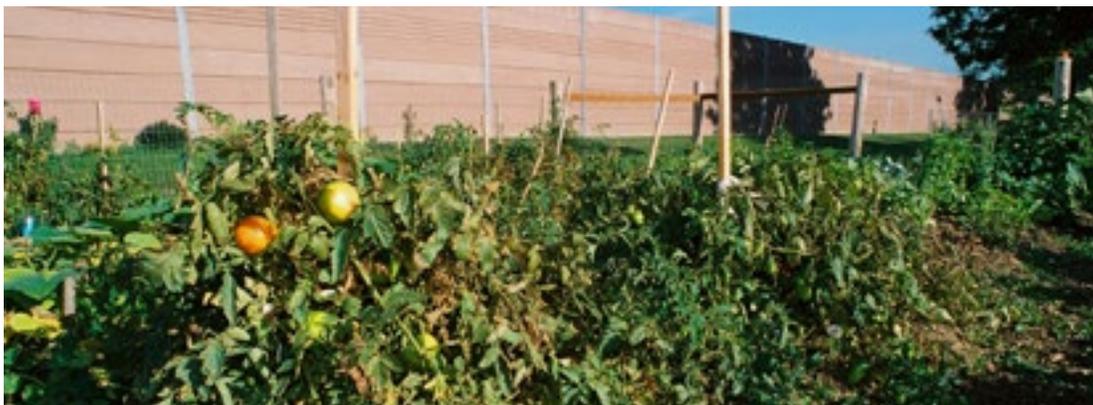
The space we live in affects us. It includes connections such as roads, bike and walking paths; street furniture such as bulletin boards, transit shelters, benches lights, and garage/recycling receptacles; and park amenities that include play structures, picnic tables, and shelters.

Green space is vital to a healthy community and as our city grows, it is becoming scarce – therefore, we need to plan how to maximize the positive social and environmental outcomes from revitalization.



A | Ensure that our green space is accessible and well maintained.

1. Design and operate parks efficiently while providing accessible green space for everyone. Parks should have options for a variety of activities designed for people of all age groups and physical abilities.
2. Develop the sense that our parks belong to everyone in the community. Parks are a place where our community will grow together.
3. Ensure that permits for park activities for community groups and sport clubs are accessible, fairly distributed, and support community-wide events.



B | Encourage gardening and food-related activities to support healthy lives and community building.

1. Encourage new food related activities and ensure that current activities (bake ovens, North York Harvest Food Bank, community gardens) are supported and enhanced through partnerships.
2. Plant community gardens in public spaces, such as landscaped areas near public facilities, herb hedges, and rooftops. Also, encourage housing designs that consider these opportunities.
3. Promote gardening activities both in private space and homes, such as on balconies and in yards.
4. Discuss and act on broader food issues, specifically poverty and other socio-economic factors.



C | Use new physical infrastructure to build an accessible and connected community that supports healthy and active lifestyles.

1. Support and advocate for the creation of bicycle paths and separated bike lanes on our roads.
2. Promote and support the TTC by designing welcoming and safe walkways and pedestrian access in our community.

D | Ensure there is adequate street furniture to meet the needs of our community.

1. Support the provision of benches for people to meet, relax, and enjoy their surroundings.
2. Have picnic tables, shelters, and other amenities that support places to gather and ensure those spaces are well monitored by our community.
3. Create places where community news and information can be posted.
4. Place garbage, recycling, and composting bins in places that encourage everyone to keep our community clean and beautiful.



E | Develop accessible and safe transit links.

1. Encourage and support improving the Raneer Avenue and Lawrence West TTC Subway Station entrances to include community information posts, elevators, safe and welcoming entrances, access tunnels, and community art.
2. Support the City and TTC in providing bus shelters that protect us from the elements and will create safe and welcoming waiting spaces.

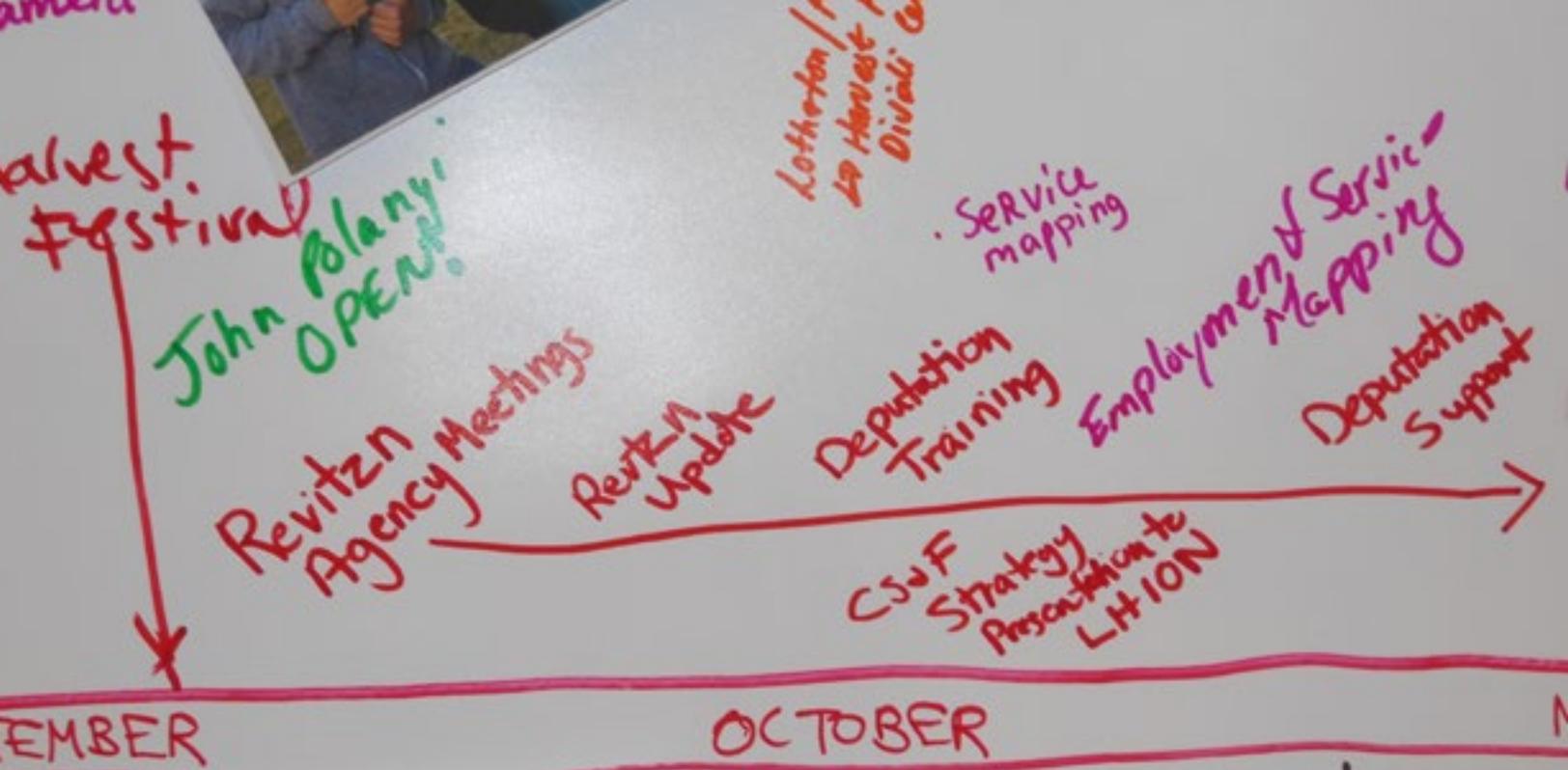


F | Ensure there are adequate park amenities to meet the needs of our community.

1. Enhance our ability to use parks for multiple activities such as, barbecues, picnics, and other social gatherings.
2. Encourage the use of plants and other vegetation that require low maintenance in the design of open spaces.
3. Support our community voice in the parks design and planning process and ensure that children's playgrounds are accessible and designed for children of all ages.

G | Support environmental learning, community ownership, and pride in public spaces.

1. Encourage environmental learning opportunities in schools, homes, local agencies, and in the broader community surrounding Lawrence Heights.
2. Help our community to take ownership and be active stakeholders in achieving common goals, such as keeping front yards, gardens, and common spaces clean and safe.
3. Expand the recycling and green bin programs, while providing on-going education for our homes, businesses and community facilities including outdoor spaces.
4. Support and encourage policies and recommendations from our community that respect the sustainability of our environment.



Maximizing Opportunities for Success – Our Employment Needs

One of the key aspects of the Social Development Plan is employment. From our perspective as residents, meaningful employment can significantly improve our economic and social well-being. Many of us experience difficulty preparing for and accessing employment. We require better services and supports to prepare for local, city-wide and regional employment opportunities.



Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) has created an Employment Service Plan for Lawrence Heights residents, called “Developing Opportunities: An Employment Service Plan for the Revitalization of Lawrence-Allen.” The Employment Service Plan complements the Social Development Plan, and is dual client focused; targeting the workforce needs of employers while also addressing the employment needs of under and unemployed Lawrence Heights residents.

This will prepare our residents for employment and training needs across Toronto.

A | Jobs – Our residents want access to jobs.

1. Capitalize on the revitalization by working with developers and sub-contractors to identify jobs, and then connect qualified residents to those opportunities.
2. Better access to employment opportunities, and ensuring that a full range of employment services are available and are made for our resident's needs and circumstances.
3. Promote local hiring by identifying economic opportunities and jobs for local residents and youth to help in the revitalization process.
4. Engage employers through job and recruitment fairs from different industries, coordinated with our local agencies, schools, and other stakeholders.
5. Support recruitment of local youth by creating partnerships with high schools, colleges and universities, and also helping businesses recruit our high school, college and university graduates.

**B**

Preparing for Work - Particular programs, services, and supports are needed to prepare us for employment.

1. Connect residents to available jobs and employment services through various forms of communication, including the internet, TESS offices, and local agencies.
2. Offer specific training and education in areas that have consistent job opportunities (for example: customer service, carpentry, electrical).
3. Ensure literacy, language (ESL), basic education, life skills training, and work experience programs are available to whoever needs them.
4. Provide personal and focused services for our youth, seniors, international professionals, and single parents.
5. Provide job preparation and career management supports (for example: resume writing, interviewing skills, and financial planning workshops).
6. Support volunteer and training opportunities to enhance, share, and/or resume their job experiences.
7. Offer entrepreneurship programs and business training and identify small business opportunities that may come from revitalization (for example: connecting residents to business training, micro loans, social enterprise development and business incubation services).
8. Connect our residents to sources of financial assistance for costs related to gaining work, such as child care, transportation, licensing, and accreditation.
9. Connect our residents to financial aid for those pursuing skills training and certification.





Opened a new TESS Employment Centre in Lawrence Square Mall

Establishing a new TESS Employment Centre in Lawrence Square Mall

A dedicated Community Team of TESS employees working in the Lawrence Square Employment Centre serves over 900 families in the Lawrence Heights and Lotherton Pathway neighbourhoods. They work with our individual clients to develop one-on-one service plans. Each of these plans is specific to that person's needs, skills and experiences; their primary goal is to prepare them to enter the job market. Residents are connected to job opportunities city-wide.

Services offered at the Employment Centre include:

- career planning
- resume and cover letter writing
- interview skills
- networking techniques
- researching jobs
- program referrals
- education & training options
- financial literacy
- job retention supports
- labour market information
- community resources
- job search coaching
- computers with internet access
- laser printers, scanners, photocopiers, and telephones
- workshops and community agency presentations
- job fair and event information

Career and Employment Information Specialist (CEIS) at the Lawrence Square Community Centre.

Every Tuesday and Thursday from 12 to 3 p.m. a CEIS is on-site at the Lawrence Heights Community Centre, 5 Replin Road. This individual helps our residents develop their employment pathways, providing resume support, coaching, job search, and referrals. They are a key resource, providing up-to-date information on employment events and services.

The CEIS is also developing a sector-based employment resource pool in order to better screen and match our residents to employment opportunities resulting from the revitalization.



Examples of Initiatives that Provide Residents with Access to Jobs

Pathways to Employability Program

Persons in the Pathways to Employability Program get training in food handling certification, smart serve, first aid, customer service/cashier training, and employment supports.

Investing in Neighbourhoods

Investing in Neighbourhoods (IIN) provides job opportunities for our residents by funding non-profit organizations to create positions for those that are receiving social assistance. Residents develop contacts with employers and gain new employment skills, as well as references, leading to sustainable job opportunities. Non-profit organizations also heighten their ability to deliver services to our residents. The Lawrence Square Employment Centre is working with community agencies to address their staffing needs through this initiative. It has hosted a series of sector-based workshops to prepare residents for and connect them to a number of community agency positions.

Employment Opportunities System (EOS)

EOS is a user-driven, web-based system that matches people to job opportunities. Designated City staff are responsible for posting positions, matching candidates, and updating information. The system allows people to post resumes, search jobs, and apply for them. City staff can also post positions and match candidates with suitable opportunities.

C | Community Engagement and Planning – We want local employment planning between employers and our community partners.

1. Build relationships with employers in our neighbourhood to explore potential opportunities for local residents (for example: jobs, training, and mentorship).
2. Identify specific types of job opportunities and create training and employment programs to meet employer needs (for example: in the small business, retail, food, or 'green'/sustainability sectors).
3. Develop local partnerships with colleges and universities when developing training programs.



Examples of Collaborative Employer and Community Partner Planning Initiatives in Our community

LHION Employment & Training Workgroup

Made up of various City divisions and community agencies, the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organization Network (LHION) was established to enhance and increase local employment planning, service coordination, provision, and access to local services. It strengthens the partnerships in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood among our service providers. The workgroup has sponsored various events, such as the Youth Opportunity Fairs, Youth In Policing Initiatives, Community Awareness Fair, and more.

Lawrence Allen Labour Market Planning & Coordination Group

The Lawrence Allen Labour Market Planning & Coordination Group is a joint planning initiative with MTCU, several City Divisions and local employment service providers. This group is planning, organizing, and coordinating the development of a local labour market plan for implementation in the Lawrence- Allen area. It is aimed at understanding, identifying, and linking the employment needs of job seekers to the needs of the existing and future employers in our community.



| Our Evolving Community

Progress is continuing to be made in Lawrence Heights. Together, we are engaged in a number of programs and plans, including our Social Development Plan.

All of our community initiatives are important, linking to our six key actions and to our goals, visions, and desires for our future in Lawrence Heights. Some of these plans include:

1. Public Realm Master Plan

The Public Realm Master Plan for Lawrence Heights goes into detail about the City policies related to our streets, pedestrian connections, bicycle routes, parks, open spaces, public art, and public buildings. These are the network of public places that make up our community.

We are engaged and will contribute our thoughts and ideas on the way that the public realm in and around Lawrence Heights is arranged and designed, so that we can create a picture of our community's character and hopes. This plan should also help promote our community's pride and sense of place.

2. Police Plan

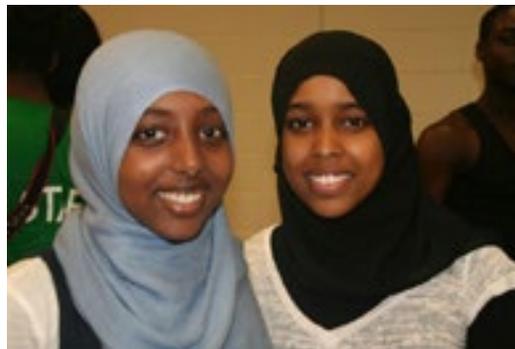
Soon there will be more people living and working in Lawrence Heights and with this, Toronto Police is engaged with our community in creating a Police Plan. This plan is focused on dialogue, cooperation, and creating partnerships and an understanding between our residents and the Toronto Police.

Together with the key actions in "Our Community's Safety," Toronto Police will continue working with Toronto Community Housing, Lawrence Heights Inter-Organization Network, Toronto Transit Commission, Yorkdale Shopping Centre, and the current and future residents and neighbours of our community in developing the Police Plan.

3. Heritage Interpretation Plan

Interpreting and celebrating the history of Lawrence Heights is an important part of the revitalization process for our community. We will be engaged in a Heritage Interpretation Plan for Lawrence Heights.

This Interpretation Plan will be put together by the current and future residents, engaging and empowering them to construct and understand the history of our neighbourhood. We will do this by giving our insights, ideas, and new ways of looking at our places. It will also help everyone involved in the redevelopment appreciate, teach, maintain, and link our community's future to its past.



4. Green Spaces

Green Spaces in Lawrence Heights are important to our community, and together with the key actions in “Our Green Spaces” we see our neighbourhood having more parkland and green spaces. The Lawrence Allen Revitalization Plan will double the amount of parkland in Lawrence Heights, and includes a full range of park types including a community commons anchored by a large community park.

Through out this process we will have ongoing community engagement regarding our desires for green spaces. We continue to work with the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing, and other agencies in developing a set of guiding principles and desires for park elements. This will inform the Final Park Concept Plan for Lawrence Heights.

5. Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

The revitalization will bring more housing and more people to our community. About 80% of the proposed units will be within 500 metres of a subway station. In order to have an integrated transit system, improvements are needed to the TTC stations that serve our neighbourhood.

We are engaged with the Toronto Transit Commission in their Lawrence West and Yorkdale Station Improvement Study. This will inform the TTC of our desired subway station improvements such as where and how we would like to see improved accessibility, convenience, service, safety, and enhanced station designs.



Our Next Steps: Moving Forward

This document is the culmination of three years of consultations and engagement with the residents of the Lawrence Heights community, working collaboratively to identify the characteristics that make our community unique. Through these discussions we have created our Social Development Plan, which will help guide us through all of the phases of the revitalization happening in Lawrence Heights.

This is very much a living document for our community. Taking into account the reality that our community will evolve, both physically and socially, our Social Development Plan is designed to meet the changing needs of Lawrence Heights and our current and future residents. The goals and visions for our plan were created directly by current residents of Lawrence-Heights who want the best for our community. This has been an open and transparent process from start to finish and should continue this way during the revitalization process in order for us to create, develop, and realize our dreams and desires for our current and future Lawrence Heights.

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Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre

Appendix A

Community Services Contact list

Lawrence Heights Inter-Organization Network (LHION) Partners

Organization	Address	Contact Name	Telephone Number
LHION Coordinator	10 Old Meadow Lane, Toronto, ON M6A 2N2	Yvette Bailey	647.261.4039
Action for Neighbourhood Change, Lotherton Caledonia	109 Lotherton Pathway, Toronto, ON M6B 2G7	Tara Bootan	416.783.5300
African Food Basket	59 Heathrow Dr., Toronto, ON, M3N 1X1	Anan Lololi	416.248.5639
Arts Starts	Yorkdale Shopping Centre, 3401 Dufferin St., Lower Level, Toronto, ON M6A 2T9	Liz Forsberg	416.656.9994
Adult Ed. Campaign Coordinator CUPE 4400	1482 Bathurst St. Toronto, ON M6C 1A1	Graham Hollings	416.994.9447
Breaking The Cycle	50 Euston Ave. Toronto, ON M4J 3N3	Gary Neuman	416.920.3515
Career Foundation	Lawrence Square Mall, 700 Lawrence Ave. West, Ste 440, Toronto, ON M6A 3B4		416.789.4862
COSTI	1710 Dufferin St., Toronto, ON M6E 3N9	Isaac Fonseca	647.827.1427

Organization	Address	Contact Name	Telephone Number
Dowdview Legal Services	893 Sheppard Ave. West, Toronto, ON M3H 2T4	Grace Pluchino	416.635.8388
Ecu Homes	149 Jameson Street, Toronto, ON M6K 2Y3	Abdirizak Mohamed	416.537.1334
Family Service Toronto	Lawrence Square Mall, 700 Lawrence Ave. West, Suite 402, Toronto, ON M6A 3B4	Kim Hinton	416.586.9777 ext. 425
Humber College Community Employment Services	1700 Wilson Ave., Toronto, ON, M3L 1B2	Gordana Kokorovic	416.631.7600
Labour Community Services	15 Gervais Dr., Ste. 603, Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8	Sharon Simpson	416.445.5819 ext. 23
Leave Out Violence	3130 Bathurst St. #212, Toronto, ON, M6A 2A1	Sree Nallamothu	416.785.8411 ext. 23
Local Immigration Partnership, JVS	2700 Dufferin St, Unit 90 A, Toronto, ON, M6B 4J3	Petra Kukacka	416.787.1151 ext. 265
Frontier College	10 Old Meadow Lane, Toronto, ON, M6A 2VA	Awale Jama	416.821.3120
North York Community House	109 Lotherton Pathway, Toronto, ON M6B 2G6	David Cross	416.783.5300
North York Harvest Food Bank	640 Lawrence Ave. West, Toronto, ON M6A 1B1	Daniel Liadsky	416.635.7771 ext. 32
Pathways to Education, Unison Health and Community Services	Lawrence Square Mall, 700 Lawrence Ave. West, Ste 326, Toronto, ON M6A 3B4	Owen Hinds	416.787.1676 ext. 306
Ready Program Coordinator, Pathways	Lawrence Square Mall, 700 Lawrence Ave. West, Ste 326, Toronto, ON M6A 3B4	Jabulah Murray	416.787.6800
St. Stephen's Employment and Training	1415 Bathurst St., 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5R 23H	Randy	416.964.8747
Unison Health and Community Services	12 Flemington Rd., Toronto, ON M6A 2N4	Jen Quinlan	416.787.1676 ext. 252
VPI	56 Aberfoyle Crescent Suite 600, Toronto, ON M8X 2W4	Frank Kelly	416.784.9544

City of Toronto and Partners

Organization	Address	Contact Name	Telephone Number
Barbara Frum Library	20 Covington Rd., Toronto, ON M6A 3C1	Elizabeth Malak	416.395.5444
Community Crisis Response	Toronto City Hall 100 Queen St. W. 15th Floor East Tower, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2	Scott McKean	416.526.0588
Investing In Families, Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation	5 Replin Rd., Toronto, ON M6A 2M8	Shanaz Khan	416.395.6121
John Polanyi Collegiate Institute	50 Ameer Ave., Toronto, ON M6A 2L3	Aiman Flahat	416.395.3300 ext. 20010
Lawrence Heights Community Centre, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation	5 Replin Rd., Toronto, ON M6A 2M8	Helen Kennedy	416.395.6120
Member of Council, Ward 15, Eglinton-Lawrence	Toronto City Hall 100 Queen St. West, Suite B30, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2	Josh Colle	416.392.4027
Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Employment and Training Consultant	150 Bridgeland Ave., 1st Floor, Toronto, ON M6A 1Z5	Wanda Topolski	416.256.4748
Social Development, Finance & Administration, City of Toronto	Toronto City Hall 100 Queen Street West 15th Floor East Tower M5H 2N2	John Smith	416.397.4495
Toronto Catholic District School Board, Superintendent of Education,	800 Shepherd Ave. East, Toronto, ON M2N 6E8	Douglas Yack	416.222.8282
Toronto Community Housing Corporation	931 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2	Carmen Smith	416.981.4099
Toronto District School Board, Superintendant of Education, NW3 Family of Schools, TDSB	1 Civic Centre Court, 2nd floor, Toronto, ON M9C 2B3	Jeff Hainbuch	416.394.2032
Toronto Employment and Social Service, Lawrence Square Employment and Social Services	700 Lawrence Ave. West, Ste 330 East Tower, Toronto, ON M6A 3B4	Barbara Taylor	416.397.1609
Toronto Public Health	339 The West Mall, Toronto, ON M9C 2Y2	Julia Barnett	416.338.1506
Youth Outreach Worker, Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation	5 Replin Rd., Toronto, ON M6A 2M8	Wilton Hall	416.395.6121
32 Division, Community Response Unit, Toronto Police Service	Toronto Police Service 30 Ellerslie Ave., Toronto, ON M2N 1X8	Sharon Davis	416.808.3232