

Regent Park Neighbourhood Association



Regent Park Neighbourhood Association Inc.

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December 9th 2025

Mayor Olivia Chow

Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Members of the Executive Committee and City Council

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100 Queen Street West
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Written Submission & Deputation to Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of the Executive Committee - EX28.19 - 2026 Budget Allocation for Social Development Plan Implementation

Date: December 9, 2025

Submitted by: Walied Khogali Ali

Co-Chair, Regent Park Neighbourhood Association (RPNA) – <http://www.regentparkna.ca>

Subject: Letter Regarding Item 2025.EX28.19 – 2026 Budget Allocation for Social Development Plan Implementation

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of the Executive Committee,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of the **Regent Park Neighbourhood Association (RPNA)** regarding **Item 2025.EX28.19 – 2026 Budget Allocation for Social Development Plan Implementation**. This item represents a pivotal opportunity for Toronto to advance community safety, equity, and neighbourhood resilience through sustainable, resident-led planning.

1. A Citywide Call for Social Development Plans

Several organizations and resident networks have submitted letters in support of expanding Social Development Plans (SDPs), most prominently the Federation of South Toronto Residents Associations (FoSTRA), led by Chair Rick Green:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/ex/comm/communicationfile-199620.pdf>

These submissions reflect widespread recognition that SDPs are now essential social infrastructure — not optional programs — for addressing the social conditions that shape safety, belonging, and well-being.

2. CABRAC's Leadership – November 25, 2025

At its meeting on **November 25, 2025**, the **Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (CABRAC)** reaffirmed the urgency of investing in SDPs and unanimously recommended that City Council dedicate **\$250,000–\$500,000 annually per neighbourhood** to develop and implement SDPs across Toronto.

CABRAC identified SDPs as evidence-based tools that address root causes of inequity affecting Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities, and emphasized their alignment with Toronto's equity commitments, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the International Decade for People of African Descent.

3. Regent Park: Toronto's First Social Development Plan

Regent Park holds a unique place in Toronto's history as the **first neighbourhood to adopt a Social Development Plan**, approved by City Council in **September 2007**. The original SDP included **75 recommendations** designed to guide Regent Park's transition from a mono-tenure social housing community into a mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhood while ensuring social cohesion and inclusion.

2019 Refreshed Social Development Plan – Built on Resident Expertise

In 2019, after a decade of redevelopment, Toronto Community Housing and the City partnered to refresh the SDP based on deep resident engagement. The refreshed plan is structured around four priority areas:

- **Community Safety**
- **Employment & Economic Development**
- **Community Building**
- **Communication**

It remains a *living document*, continually adapted to the evolving needs of Regent Park's diverse and growing population.

4. Demonstrated Impact: Regent Park SDP (2019–2024)

The Regent Park SDP has generated some of the most significant neighbourhood-level outcomes in the city. According to the **RPNA Impact Summary (2019–2024)**:

Community Safety

- Regent Park experienced **zero gun-related homicides in 2023**, a powerful testament to sustained, coordinated community-based safety work.

Economic Inclusion & Employment

- More than **1,000 residents** accessed employment, training, or entrepreneurial opportunities connected to SDP partners.
- Youth employment programs saw dramatic growth, increasing access to leadership pathways and economic mobility.

Community Leadership & Governance

- Over **300 residents** have participated in SDP working groups, leadership roles, and consultations — embedding resident voice in decision-making.

Service Coordination & Program Delivery

- The SDP framework has strengthened collaboration across City divisions, service providers, and grassroots groups, resulting in more effective and efficient delivery of housing stability programs, food security initiatives, arts and recreation programming, and newcomer supports.

Building Social Cohesion

- More than **10,000 residents** participated in community festivals, consultations, arts activations, and social cohesion-building initiatives supported through the SDP.

These outcomes demonstrate that when SDPs are **properly funded and supported**, they transform neighbourhoods, improve safety, and dramatically expand access to opportunity.

[Full Impact Summary:](#)

5. Alignment with Toronto's Budget Priorities

Toronto is at an inflection point. With the **2026 municipal election approaching**, this budget cycle will shape how neighbourhoods experience safety, equity, and belonging for years to come.

At the same time, the Toronto Police Service has requested a **\$93.8 million increase** — equivalent to roughly **\$600,000 per neighbourhood** across all 158 neighbourhoods.

If such increases in enforcement spending are being contemplated, comparable investments in **prevention, equity, and community capacity** must be prioritized. SDPs complement policing by:

- Strengthening neighbourhood resilience
- Reducing preventable crises
- Improving safety outcomes
- Addressing root causes of violence and instability

SDPs are the *only* model in Toronto with a 15-year track record demonstrating measurable safety and cohesion outcomes through resident-driven planning.

6. Recommendation

Given the overwhelming evidence, citywide support, and clear equity mandate, I respectfully urge the Executive Committee to:

Adopt CABRAC's recommendation and ensure that the 2026 City Budget includes:

1. **\$250,000–\$500,000 in annual ongoing funding per neighbourhood** for SDPs
2. **Resources for neighbourhood associations and resident-led coalitions** to coordinate SDP work
3. A **citywide rollout of SDPs**, starting with equity-deserving and high-priority neighbourhoods
4. **Clear accountability and reporting mechanisms** aligned with the Toronto Housing Charter, equity frameworks, and race-based data

This is a critical opportunity to invest in what works.

7. Closing

The Regent Park Social Development Plan has shown — unequivocally — that when the City invests in residents, the outcomes benefit the entire neighbourhood and the entire city.

SDPs are Toronto's most effective tool for advancing community safety, racial equity, economic opportunity, and social cohesion.

We urge you to seize this moment and commit to stable, long-term funding for SDPs in the 2026 Budget.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the importance of SDPs further and support community engagement as this item advances

Sincerely,

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cc: Members of the Executive Committee

About the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association

The RPNA seeks to foster an inclusive, diverse and healthy neighbourhood in which all residents feel at home. The RPNA also recognizes that Toronto Community Housing (TCH) residents had a vibrant community in Regent Park prior to the redevelopment and seeks to build on that history of grassroots initiatives, resident led ventures, and strong networks. To ensure that this heritage is not lost, TCH residents serve in half of the RPNA Leadership Team positions. The RPNA's advocacy was central in negotiating and winning a commitment from TCHC to include a \$26.8M Community Benefits Agreement as part of Phase 4 and 5 of revitalization in Regent Park.

The RPNA seeks to foster an inclusive, diverse and healthy community through...

1. **ADVOCACY** - to provide a strong voice for residents on issues that will benefit our entire community.
2. **COMMUNITY BUILDING** - to bring our culturally diverse and mixed-income community together.
3. **COMMUNICATION** - So much is happening in Regent Park! It's important to keep residents informed.