

Regent Park Neighbourhood Association



CR9.3 Advancing Community Development through Evidence-Based Planning

Regent Park Neighbourhood Association Inc.

585 Dundas Street East, Toronto, Ontario

M5A 2B7 – 3rd Floor

rpna.info@gmail.com | (647) 294-4105

March 23, 2026

Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of City Council

Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: CR9.3 - Advancing Community Development through Evidence-Based Planning

Reference: [CR8.5](#) – 2026 Budget Allocation for Social Development Plan Implementation

Submission to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (CABRAC)

Dear Chair and Members of CABRAC,

On behalf of the Regent Park Neighbourhood Association (RPNA), we are pleased to provide this submission in response to **Item 2026.CR9.3 – Advancing Community Development through Evidence-Based Planning**.

We commend City staff for advancing a presentation that highlights the importance of **data-driven, place-based, and community-informed approaches** to improving outcomes across Toronto's neighbourhoods.

At the same time, we emphasize that **evidence-based planning must be explicitly grounded in equity, accountability, and sustained investment**, particularly in communities most impacted by systemic anti-Black racism.

1. From Evidence to Action: The Need for Equity-Centred Implementation

The City of Toronto has developed strong analytical frameworks and datasets over the past two decades. However, the gap between **evidence and implementation** remains a critical challenge.

For communities such as Regent Park and other Neighbourhood Improvement Areas:

- Data has consistently identified disparities in housing, employment, safety, and health
- Community priorities have been clearly articulated through consultations and planning processes
- Yet, funding and implementation have often been **fragmented, time-limited, or inconsistent**

Evidence alone does not drive change, **resourced, community-led implementation does.**

2. Social Development Plans (SDPs) as a Proven Model

The **Regent Park Social Development Plan (SDP)** stands as a leading example of how evidence-based planning can translate into measurable, community-level outcomes.

Key impacts include:

- Strengthened community safety and cohesion
- Increased youth engagement and employment pathways
- Improved coordination between residents, service providers, and institutions
- A demonstrated reduction in violence, including **zero gun-related deaths in 2023**

What distinguishes the SDP model is that it is:

- **Resident-led**
- **Place-based**
- **Data-informed**
- **Sustained through multi-sector collaboration**

This model directly aligns with the City's stated goals in advancing **transformational, neighbourhood-level change.**

3. Addressing Anti-Black Racism Through Community Development

CABRAC's mandate—aligned with the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent—calls for advancing:

- **Recognition**
- **Justice**
- **Development**

Evidence-based community planning must therefore:

- Include **race-disaggregated data** to identify inequities
- Prioritize investments in communities disproportionately impacted by systemic barriers
- Ensure that Black-led and Black-serving organizations are resourced and empowered
- Embed accountability mechanisms to measure progress on anti-Black racism

Without this lens, evidence-based planning risks reinforcing existing inequities rather than dismantling them.

4. The Case for Citywide Scaling of SDPs by 2027

Building on the success of Regent Park, RPNA strongly supports a **citywide expansion of Social Development Plans (SDPs) / Community Development Plans (CDPs)**.

We recommend:

- Implementing SDPs across all priority neighbourhoods by **2027**
- Allocating **stable, multi-year funding of \$250,000–\$500,000 per neighbourhood annually**
- Embedding SDPs within City planning, budgeting, and interdivisional coordination frameworks
- Ensuring governance structures include **resident leadership and accountability mechanisms**

This approach transforms evidence into action by creating **local infrastructure for prevention, coordination, and long-term impact**.

5. Strengthening Accountability and Coordination

To fully realize the potential of evidence-based planning, the City must:

- Improve **interdivisional coordination** (housing, safety, employment, health, and social services)
- Establish **clear outcome metrics tied to equity and anti-racism goals**
- Regularly report on progress to Council and the public
- Support **community governance tables** to ensure transparency and responsiveness

Community development is most effective when it is **co-governed with residents**, not simply delivered to them.

6. Recommendations to CABRAC

The Regent Park Neighbourhood Association respectfully recommends that CABRAC:

1. **Endorse the citywide expansion of Social Development Plans (SDPs)** as a core strategy for advancing equitable, evidence-based community development
2. **Advocate for sustained, multi-year funding** to support implementation in priority neighbourhoods
3. **Call for the integration of race-disaggregated data and anti-Black racism metrics** into all community development planning and reporting frameworks
4. **Support resident-led governance models** to ensure accountability, transparency, and community ownership
5. **Recommend alignment with the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism** and relevant Ontario Human Rights Commission guidance

7. Conclusion

Toronto has built a strong foundation in evidence-based planning.

The next step is clear:

To move from **analysis to action**, from **pilot projects to sustained systems**, and from **consultation to community-led implementation**.

The Social Development Plan model provides a roadmap for achieving this.

We urge CABRAC to take leadership in advancing this approach and ensuring that evidence-based planning delivers **equitable, measurable, and lasting outcomes** for all communities.

Appendix (Optional)

- Regent Park Social Development Plan Website - www.rpsdpnetwork.ca
- FoSTRA White Paper: SDP Expansion

Sincerely,

Walied Khogali Ali
Co-Chair, Board of Directors
Regent Park Neighbourhood Association
(416-625-7712)

Tamanna Yeasmin
Co-Chair, Board of Directors
Regent Park Neighbourhood Association

regentparkna.ca

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.

