

The Coalition for Responsible Community Development is a collective of over 40 community/resident associations, non-profits, and community leaders from across the City of Toronto

**To:**

Councillor Alejandra Bravo  
Councillor Shelley Carroll  
Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee



**From:**

Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)  
Residents, Neighbourhood Associations, Community Organizations, and Civic Partners

**Date:** April 8th, 2026

**Re: Investing in Communities as a Fiscally Responsible Strategy for a Stronger Toronto**

Dear Councillors,

We, the undersigned, are writing to call on Toronto City Council to scale up funding for community led planning through Social & Community Development Plans across all 158 neighbourhoods.

We appreciate the City's leadership in supporting communities to have a meaningful role in guiding development in their neighbourhoods. This approach directly advances the City's priorities of improving social well being and economic development. Based on the model's demonstrated success, we are seeking Council's leadership to:

- **Continue**
  - Advancing Social & Community Development Plans as place-based mechanisms to address displacement and barriers to economic opportunity and community well being.
- **In the 2026 Fiscal Year**
  - Increase funding for the Social Development Division to support a minimum of six neighbourhoods to develop and/or implement a Social / Community Development Plan. This includes Regent Park, Moss Park, Little Jamaica, Don Valley Village, Lawrence Heights and Alexandra Park.
  - Establish a Community Advisory Table to guide the equitable scale up of funding for Social & Community Development Plans across the city of Toronto.
- **By 2030**
  - Establish a permanent increase in the City Budget for the implementation of Social & Community Development Plans - targeting all 158 neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto. Neighbourhood allocation based on need, with high needs neighbourhoods receiving \$500,000/year.

## Why This Matters

Toronto is at a critical moment. Across our city, communities are facing intensifying pressures:

- Applications for personal use eviction are up 77% in Toronto, forcing many tenants to re-enter the housing market under difficult circumstances ([Social Planning Toronto - Poverty by the Numbers](#))
- Toronto households continues to report higher rates of low income than provincial and national averages. ([City of Toronto Inclusive Economic Development Framework - Staff report](#))
- Food bank usage has increased by 340% since 2019, with nearly 1 in 4 households being food insecure. ([Daily Bread - 2025 Who's Hungry?](#))
- Strained community safety systems and inequitable outcomes.

These trends reflect not only social inequities, but also barriers to full participation in Toronto's economy. Addressing them requires coordinated, place-based strategies that connect residents to economic opportunities.

The City has seen success.

Community-led, place-based approaches - such as the **Regent Park Social Development Plan** - have demonstrated measurable outcomes:

- Improved community safety.
- Increased youth engagement and employment pathways.
- Stronger collaboration between residents, agencies, and City divisions.
- More coordinated and effective use of public resources.
- Stronger commitments and follow through to protect and provide rent geared to income housing.

These results are not accidental. They are the outcome of **intentional, sustained investment in community leadership and local solutions.**

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## A Responsible Approach to City-Building

Investing in Social & Community Development Plans is not only the right thing to do - it is the **fiscally responsible choice**. Prevention-focused, community-led strategies:

- Reduce long-term costs across policing, healthcare, and emergency services
- Improve outcomes for residents
- Strengthen neighbourhood stability and economic resilience
- Ensure public investments are targeted, coordinated, and responsive to community priorities and strengths.
- Increase participation in the local economy by connecting residents to employment, training, and entrepreneurship opportunities

These plans leverage public investment by aligning City resources with community knowledge, local institutions, and private sector partners to generate stronger economic and social returns. This reduces overall costs to the City while strengthening neighbourhood-level economic ecosystems, including small businesses, community organizations, and local workforce pipelines.

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## **The Current Gap**

Despite their proven impact, Social & Community Development Plans **do not currently receive dedicated sustainable funding**.

This creates:

- Uneven access to community supports across neighbourhoods
- Missed opportunities to prevent crises and reduce long-term costs
- Increased pressure on already overburdened systems

Toronto cannot afford to continue underinvesting in prevention while managing the escalating costs of crisis response.

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## **A Vision for Toronto**

We believe in a Toronto where:

- Every neighbourhood has the resources to plan and shape its future
- Community safety is built through opportunity, not only enforcement
- Youth have pathways to meaningful employment and leadership
- Families and seniors are supported to live with dignity and stability
- Public investments reflect the City's commitment to equity and inclusion
- Local economies are inclusive

This is not an abstract vision, it is achievable, and it is already happening in communities where Social & Community Development Plans are resourced and supported.

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## **Conclusion**

Toronto's long-term resilience depends on the choices we make today.

Scaling investment in Social & Community Development Plans advances the City's existing priorities for inclusive economic growth, equity, and community wellbeing. It provides a practical, evidence-based model to align economic development with neighbourhood-level needs, while ensuring that the benefits of growth are more equitably shared.

**Toronto cannot afford to continue underinvesting in evidence-based models. Continued underinvestment will only cost the taxpayer more as crises arise.**

## **Signatories**

- Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)
- Regent Park Neighbourhood Association (RPNA)
- Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations (FoSTRA)
- Eglinton Allen Community Association
- Community in Public
- Build a Better Fairview
- Leslieville Residents Association
- Social Economy Through Social Inclusion
- Joe Mihevc
- Victor Willis
  - Lead The Toronto (Mental Health & Addictions) Supportive Housing Network
  - <https://tosupportivehousing.ca>
- Liam Vu
- Nisa Foundation
- Walied Khogali Ali, Co-Chair, Regent Park Social Development Plan
- Amina Yassin-Omar
- Brie Berry Crossfield, Empowered Tenants Project
- Blair Scorgie, Scorgie Planning
- Alexandra Piatkowski, Piat Public Health
- Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization
- Nathi Zamisa, Co-Executive Director | HOUSE Canada
- Faith Greaves, Mozia Women's Network Society
- Abigail Moriah
- Black Planning Project
- Helen Vassilakos - Chair, Junction Residents Association
- Michael Reyes - Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference
- Mohammed Salah
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## **Contact**

Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)

Campaign Site:

[https://www.regentparkna.ca/coalition\\_for\\_responsible\\_community\\_development](https://www.regentparkna.ca/coalition_for_responsible_community_development)

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Community in Public (formerly CP Planning)

Co-lead

Eglinton Allen Community Association

Community in Public

<https://communityinpublic.ca/>

Eglinton Allen Community Association

<https://sites.google.com/view/eglintonallenca/>

