

## Regent Park Social Development Plan

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### Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of Council

Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

### Re: *Item MPB38.1 – 2026 Operating and Capital Budget (City-wide)*

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of City Council,

We are writing on behalf of the **Planning Committee of the Regent Park Social Development Plan (RPSPD)** to advocate for the **restoration and stabilization of dedicated project and programming funding** for the Regent Park Social Development Plan in the City of Toronto's 2026 Capital and Operating Budgets.

The Regent Park Social Development Plan is a **community-led, City-supported framework** established to ensure that physical revitalization in Regent Park is matched by sustained investments in community safety, social cohesion, resident leadership, and equitable access to opportunity. From its inception, the SDP was designed to align City divisions, service providers, and residents around shared priorities, accountability, and measurable outcomes—recognizing that redevelopment without social infrastructure deepens inequities rather than resolves them.

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### A Brief History and Council Leadership

The Regent Park Social Development Plan emerged from years of community advocacy and collaboration with the City of Toronto. It was advanced with the strong support of former Councillor **Pam McConnell**, whose leadership recognized that physical redevelopment without parallel social investment would undermine long-term community well-being.

That commitment was later reaffirmed through Council action led by former Councillor **Kristyn Wong-Tam**, who moved the motion to resource the Regent Park Social Development Plan and

embed it as a cornerstone of community safety and well-being. This Council-backed investment reflected a shared understanding: **prevention, social infrastructure, and resident leadership are essential to building safe and resilient neighbourhoods.**

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## Demonstrated Progress and Outcomes

Between 2019 and 2025, City investment in the Regent Park Social Development Plan supported tangible progress, including:

- Contributing to sustained community safety and violence-prevention efforts, including a year in which Regent Park experienced **zero gun-related homicides**, alongside strengthened youth engagement and prevention-focused strategies;
- Strengthening coordination among residents, City divisions, and community agencies through a shared governance and accountability framework;
- Expanding youth leadership development, employment pathways, and culturally responsive programming;
- Improving coordination of supports related to housing navigation, wellbeing, and community stability; and
- Increasing trust, participation, and social cohesion in a neighbourhood undergoing significant redevelopment and demographic change.

These outcomes were **not incidental**. They were enabled by predictable funding, long-term planning, and resident-driven implementation through the SDP's coordinated framework.

For Council's reference, additional background on SDP outcomes and impacts is available through:

- **Regent Park SDP Resource Page:** <https://www.downtowneastvotes.ca/sdp/index.html>
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## Clarifying the Current Funding Context:

We acknowledge recent correspondence from City staff noting that, while no new SDP investments are proposed in the 2026 Budget, Social Development continues to support this work through:

- **A \$50,000 annual operating allocation**, and
- **One full-time Community Development Worker**, approved by Council.

We appreciate these commitments. However, as discussed and affirmed at recent SDP Planning Committee meetings, the core issue before Council is **not merely the existence of these allocations**, but the SDP Network's **limited and inconsistent access to them in practice**.

Without clear, functional access to operational resources and staffing support, the SDP's ability to coordinate working groups, steward governance, and translate planning into on-the-ground outcomes is significantly constrained. **This distinction between allocated resources and implementation capacity is critical.**

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## **Programming and Project Investments Required to Implement the SDP**

To effectively implement Council-endorsed priorities through the Regent Park Social Development Plan, the Planning Committee is requesting **stable project and programming investments** in the following areas:

### **SDP Coordination and Backbone Capacity**

Dedicated funding to support central coordination of the SDP network, including convening working groups, aligning City divisions and partners, stewarding implementation, and supporting reporting and accountability.

### **Resident Leadership, Governance, and Participation**

Resources to ensure meaningful resident participation through honoraria and accessibility supports, leadership and facilitation training, and full implementation of the *Shaping SDP Culture* framework, including conflict resolution and mediation processes.

### **Community Safety and Prevention Coordination**

Support for community-led prevention infrastructure, youth engagement linked to safety outcomes, and coordinated strategies that reduce reliance on enforcement and emergency responses.

### **Economic Stability and Workforce Integration**

Coordination support linking social development priorities with workforce pathways, skills development, and employment-focused initiatives that strengthen household and community stability.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Mobilization**

Modest resources to track outcomes, support evidence-based decision-making, and share lessons learned to inform the potential scaling of Social Development Plans city-wide.

These investments are **not program-by-program grants**, but essential social infrastructure required to translate Council priorities into measurable and sustainable community outcomes.

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### **Alignment with FoSTRA and CABRAC (Executive Committee Item 2025.EX28.19)**

These requests align with broader City-endorsed directions on equity, prevention, and community safety.

The **Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations (FoSTRA)** has formally endorsed sustained support for Social Development Plans as a resident-driven, prevention-focused approach to neighbourhood well-being.

In addition, the **Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (CABRAC)** advanced motions emphasizing the need for structural, preventative investments to address systemic inequities and community safety. These motions were referred by the Executive Committee on December 9, 2025, under **Item 2025.EX28.19**, affirming Council's recognition that upstream social development investments reduce harm and inequity.

The Regent Park Social Development Plan directly operationalizes these Council-endorsed directions at the neighbourhood level through resident leadership, prevention-focused strategies, and accountable governance.

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### **The Risks of Disinvestment**

The absence of stable project and programming funding for the Regent Park Social Development Plan in the proposed 2026 Budget places these gains at risk, at a time when pressures on communities across Toronto are intensifying.

Disinvesting from the SDP weakens a proven prevention framework and shifts costs toward far more expensive emergency, enforcement, and crisis-based responses.

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### **A Prudent and Forward-Looking Investment**

As the City manages rising expenditures and fiscal pressures, it is essential that limited resources be directed toward **evidence-based approaches that prevent harm and reduce long-term liabilities**.

The Regent Park Social Development Plan has consistently demonstrated that **modest, sustained investments** deliver strong returns in safety, stability, social cohesion, and fiscal responsibility. This model has informed broader discussions about scaling Social Development Plans across Toronto and aligns with national and global frameworks for inclusive and resilient cities.

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## **Our Request to City Council**

On behalf of the Planning Committee of the Regent Park Social Development Plan, we respectfully request that City Council:

1. **Restore and stabilize dedicated project and programming funding** for the Regent Park Social Development Plan in the 2026 Budget;
2. **Ensure meaningful access to approved operational resources and staffing**, so the SDP Network can effectively implement Council-endorsed priorities; and
3. **Affirm the Regent Park SDP as a core implementation vehicle** for Council directions advanced through FoSTRA advocacy and CABRAC-endorsed motions, including those referred under Item [2025.EX28.19](#).

Restoring funding to the Regent Park Social Development Plan honours the legacy of Council leadership that made this work possible and ensures that Regent Park residents are not left behind at a moment of growing instability across the city.

Thank you for your consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information or meet to discuss the continued importance of the Regent Park Social Development Plan.

Sincerely,

Walied Khogali Ali

On behalf of the Planning Committee  
Regent Park Social Development Plan

*cc: Members of Toronto City Council; Budget Committee; City Manager; Social Development, Finance & Administration Division*