A RECOMMENDATION FOR INTEGRATIVE PUBLIC SPACE
IN LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Cities are never static; they are ever-evolving organisms requiring constant adaptation in an effort to function for the changing and increasingly diverse populations. One of the main issues with past planning practices in the development of social housing in Ontario is the lack of integrative strategies used to build neighbourhoods. Defining what successful integration entails is an important aspect of the creation of successful communities. The purpose of this study is to understand the elements necessary for creating integrative public space for Lawrence Heights; a community located in Toronto that will undergo an extensive revitalization process over the next twenty years. To determine the results, personal observations of the neighbourhood were conducted in a few ways: by taking photographs and notes of activities being enjoyed in the area, by attending a public meeting to comprehend the proposed plan for the redevelopment, and by participating in a workshop to understand the opinions of residents who will be affected by change in the neighbourhood. Integrative public space should include programs, facilities and multi-use, flexible aspects that cater to a variety of people, and can be easily accessed by users. Public space is only one component of integration, but is a very important one to comprehend in the practice of planning.

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INTRODUCTION

The diversity and complexity of cities contribute to the many challenges that arise in the field of urban planning. The topic of housing is a complex and interesting one; social housing in particular requires attention. Many theoretical movements have driven the planning and building of social housing throughout Canada; Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier all influenced the design of cities in the twentieth century (Fishman, 1982). The late 1940s brought about post-war urban renewal in the city, which included the building of many social housing projects that still exist today. Because most of the social housing that is found in Canada was built prior to the mid 1970s and the construction of new public housing had completely ceased by 1984 (Sewell, 1994), the design of many of these communities reflects the influence of these dominant theories. In particular, the early application of these design principles produced segregated housing developments, which when used to house groups of low-income residents produced results that have been heavily criticized. For example, the introduction to the Community Engagement document for the revitalization of Regent Park in Toronto describes the process and outcome in these terms:

The housing was built in the 1950s as a social experiment. The community was entirely composed of subsidized housing. The buildings looked inward, separating Regent Park from neighbouring communities. The isolation and a physical design filled with hidden corners and narrow, sheltered walkways made Regent Park a prime location for criminal activity. Dealers from across Toronto made use of the convenient terrain of Regent Park, and brought with them the violence that accompanies competition for turf. The impact of these circumstances on the community has been unrelentingly negative.

(Meagher & Boston, 2003, p7)

The most obvious issue in many social housing neighbourhoods is that they lack social and spatial integration with their surrounding areas; successful integration goes beyond the social mixing of residents in a neighbourhood. Integration is a complex term comprising many aspects. According to the United Nations (1994), "Enhancing social integration can be understood as promoting harmonious interaction and solidarity at all levels of society. When this dimension of the concept is given priority, it becomes the opposite of a process of disintegration" (p6). Providing appropriate public space as an area of interaction in a neighbourhood is a fundamental aspect of integration. Tied to the increase in the significance of public space is a desire to include and involve 'the community' (McInroy, 2000). The integration of public space is important to the process of involving local people and communities as it can serve as a useful local everyday resource (Worpole, 1997). It is also a visible and functioning focus for community involvement in revitalization, and can assist in the processes involved in generating a communal sense of inclusion (Altman & Low, 1992).

Research Intent

The intent of this study is to begin to disentangle the complicated issue of integration, in an effort to recommend integrative public space in Lawrence Heights – a Toronto neighbourhood containing social housing. The goal is to portray the issues that have led to the creation of segregated social housing projects, as well as highlight the importance of integration as a new way of planning successful communities. This study proposes to answer the following main questions:

What does successful integration of public space entail?
How can this be applied to an area of Lawrence Heights?

Value of Research

To begin, outlining the history of theoretical processes that have led to some of the most criticized social housing projects currently existing in Toronto is necessary. This will allow for the understanding of oversights that have occurred in the past with respect to the planning and construction of social housing, as well as offer guidance on how to assess such oversights, in order to move forward in remediating them. A review of what integration entails is also crucial because integrative strategies need further comprehension in order to be applied to neighbourhoods. Narrowing in on the aspect of public space is interesting because public spaces can provide areas of interaction in neighbourhoods. Even if this one component of integration is better comprehended and considered in the context of creating healthier neighbourhoods, then an important piece in understanding the complexities of redeveloping housing in the city will have been introduced.

Organizational Structure

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first, entitled "Methodological Approach" describes the methods taken to inform the results of this study, the rationale for their selection, and the associated limitations. Chapter two is "A Literature Review", in which various topics, such as *Modernism*, *Canada's Social Housing Policy*, and *Integration*, are referenced. The third chapter is called "Lawrence Heights: A Case Study", where the history of the neighbourhood and its associated issues are communicated. Chapter four, the "Primary Data Results", breaks down and discusses the primary research. The final chapter, "Recommendations for Integrative Public Space" encompasses a summary of suggestions for a planned public space in

Lawrence Heights, as a result of the research that was conducted to complete this study.

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The primary research methods that were employed in this study include personal observations of Lawrence Heights in three forms: the first was taking photographs of the area, as well as taking notes of the activities being performed in the space; the second was gathering information provided by public meetings regarding the revitalization of the neighbourhood; and the third was a summary of the results from participating in a workshop facilitated by the City of Toronto. These methods will be further explained, given that they played a significant role in informing the results of this study. Secondary methods include sorting through scholarly books and articles to compile a comprehensive literature review.

Justification for Method Selection

The purpose of completing this myriad of tasks was twofold: to get a sense of what the various components that encompass the topic of integration are and discover why segregation occurred in past social housing projects that exist today, as well as to analyze and discuss the findings in a planning context to provide thoughtful insight, which supplements the existing literature surrounding this topic. Primary observations of the neighbourhood helped in gaining a sense of the spatial issues associated with the design and layout of the structures and of the landscape. The observations also assisted in understanding the activities that are enjoyed by individuals using the space, so that recommendations for public space can be made. Attending the public meeting allowed for further comprehension of the issues in the neighbourhood, as well as provided an opportunity to get insights on what the proposed revitalization plan for the area consists of. Finally, the involvement in a workshop allowed for direct participation

in the process, as well as to witness an array of viewpoints being aired by people who want specific issues addressed throughout the revitalization process of Lawrence Heights, especially with regard to park space. These methods, taken together, were very successful in devising an extensive and comprehensive review of the topic of integrative public space in Lawrence Heights. However, they offer a sense of some limitations that could have affected the outcome of the study.

Limitations

There are a few limitations associated with the research aspect of this study that should be noted. The first is the issue of time constraints: had there been more time to complete this research, additional primary methods could have been explored to further substantiate the results. For example, since the results consist of a recommendation for integrative public space in Lawrence Heights, facilitating a focus group to involve the youth living in the area that may like to see public space take a certain form would have been useful in getting feedback and ideas. Although methods of interviewing are not necessarily the most successful route in obtaining primary information, it might have been beneficial to have that option also available. The second limitation that the results faced is the winter season during which the majority of the personal observations were completed. Due to the nature of the observations, which included the monitoring of activities being done in outdoor space, it would have been useful to get a sense of what people tended to do all year round, especially in warmer seasonal months. For instance, perhaps some people in the area enjoy soccer rather than hockey, and would prefer to see a soccer field included in a park. Although this may be true, it can also be noted that neighbourhood demographics are not static, especially in an area undergoing

revitalization. Therefore, perhaps planning a multi-purpose and flexible park design will be a more valid consideration, which can compensate for the lack of direct observations being monitored throughout the different seasons.

As mentioned, secondary research methods have resulted in a review of the topics surrounding the development of social housing in the city, the notion of integration and the focus on public space. The following chapter is an extensive review of the literature that encompasses these topics.

CHAPTER TWO

A LITERATURE REVIEW

Several theorists and social movements have shaped the planning and development of social housing since the twentieth century. Canadian policies surrounding social housing are complicated and controversial, therefore, requiring some attention. Integration is a major aspect that was disregarded throughout history and is necessary in current planning systems. The incorporation of successful, meaningful public spaces within communities is particularly vital in promoting healthy integration.

Modernism and Postmodernism

Social movements and theoretical applications have influenced the way cities have been shaped, and how they continue to develop. Looking at past planning theories and principles is pertinent to comprehending the history of social housing, since many communities have been constructed through time reflecting various design ideals from an array of theorists and social movements. Modernism¹ and postmodernism² occurred in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and influenced the creation of social housing in cities. Modernist planning focused on “large-scale, metropolitan-wide technologically rational and efficient urban plans, backed by absolutely no-frills architecture” (Harvey, 1990, p66). Generally speaking, when thinking about social housing structures in this context, it is evident that their aesthetic appeal may not have been regarded during their construction. As noted by Harvey (1990), “Postmodernism cultivates, instead, a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a ‘palimpsest’ of past forms

¹ Modernism is described as “an approach to city-building rooted in perception of the historical urban landscape, as a problem to be solved by cataclysmic refashioning [which occurred] in the wake of the explosive growth of industrial cities” (Caulfield, 1994, p52). Giedion argues that ‘universal architecture’ dedicated to order was needed for the functional efficiency of cities (Giedion, 1967).

² Postmodernism “entailed a shift away from the ideas of modernist city-building” and celebrated “traditional urban form and social and cultural heterogeneity” (Caulfield, 1994, p97).

superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which are ephemeral" (p66). These depictions of postmodernist planning, when applied to social housing areas, may have actually led to the formation of segregated communities. For example, Hulchanski (1990), states that: "Throughout the twentieth century planners [had] been trying to move developers of subdivisions away from the grid -- the cheapest, quickest, most efficient way of dividing up land for development purposes. Planning regulations for post-war suburbs, as a result, generally require[d] curved road systems" (p7). Access to the city is a vital piece of spatial integration and is accomplished through road connectivity. However, social aspects of integration were disregarded in the past as well, suggested by the fact that "By 1970, after two decades of urban renewal, public housing projects in most large cities had become black reservations, highly segregated from the rest of society and characterized by extreme social isolation" (Massey & Denton, 1993, p57). Ultimately, when these planning principles emerged, they should not have been applied to a group of exclusively low-income residents.

The Concepts of 'Garden Cities' and 'Towers in the Park'

Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' concept was a utopian plan for a self-contained community which involved a specific number of residents, and was surrounded by a greenbelt (Howard, 1902). His idea of providing an open layout model influenced the developments built during the modern planning era. Today, many social housing areas in the city lack connectivity to surrounding areas and offer evidence that Howard's earlier ideas might have influenced this. In contrast, Le Corbusier focused on the aspect of structures in a neighbourhood and thought that buildings should function as machines

for living in, akin to cars, which he saw as machines for traveling in (Weber, 2008). His plan for creating 'Towers in the Park' meant the implementation of superblock style buildings in areas surrounded by an abundance of green space (Le Corbusier, 1986), therefore promoting the notion of seclusion. This theory by Le Corbusier was applied to South Regent Park in Toronto, for example, and is no longer supported or welcomed in current planning theory.

Many of the social housing buildings standing today that were built during the twentieth century lack cultural meaning and diversity, and instead appear as bland, square objects for the sole purpose of sustaining a function. Almost all social housing projects of the 1950s and 1960s used the superblock design concept, essentially obliterating existing street patterns and buildings in favour of a strict separation of vehicles and pedestrians, imposing a new non-grid layout for traffic, pedestrians and buildings (Hulchanski, 1990). Various Toronto neighbourhoods in which these planning theories were implemented are now considered unsuccessful and in need of revitalization. Old Regent Park, Alexandra Park and Lawrence Heights are only three examples of social housing complexes that will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Canadian Social Housing Policy

The policies surrounding social housing in Canada have aptly been described as controversial. While all three levels of government are involved in the housing sector, there is not a single comprehensive strategy to deal with the issue of social housing. Over the past hundred years housing policy has been hindered by jurisdictional squabbles as a result of policy decisions made by the government of the day leading to

the ultimate demise of adequate provision of affordable housing in Canada (Pierre, 2007).

From the mid 1930s until the late 1940s, the federal government was formally involved in housing through the *National Housing Act* (NHA) in 1934 and the *Dominion Housing Act* in 1935 (Pierre, 2007). These Canadian public housing policies “emerged as a consequence of the depressed economic activity of the late 1930s and the onset of the Second World War” (Rose, 1980, p27). The year 1938 marked the commencement of the War, which cut off all opportunities for homebuilding in Canada (Rose, 1980). In 1941, the prices of all goods and services, including housing accommodation rentals, had reached a point where government intervention was needed to control war-time emergency, which meant the control over prices, wages, rents and the allocation of materials (Rose, 1980). During this time, grants were made available to provinces and cities by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC), for acquiring and clearing blighted areas of low to moderate housing construction (Pierre, 2007). Carter (1989), provides a comprehensive review of the evolution of policies and programs, which essentially affected the housing market in the country. In some cities, “slum areas were perceived to be the source and distribution of great social ills” (Carter, 1989, p15). Regent Park and Lawrence Heights are some of the early examples of social housing in Toronto that were the result of these policies that drove the construction of housing during that time.

The year 1964 marked a turning point in Canadian housing policy. Significant changes were made to the NHA, framing the question of whether blighted areas were to be cleared, whether the process of re-housing and relocation needed attention, and

whether low-income families were to be offered affordable and adequate housing (Rose, 1980). Canadian social housing policy became admired in the 1970s; in fact, other countries looked to Canada as an exemplary model for government intervention in housing (Rose, 1980). The most significant period of construction of subsidized housing that was federally owned and managed for the explicit purpose of housing the very poor was between 1970 and 1974 (Pierre, 2007). This was also the time when the St. Lawrence neighbourhood in downtown Toronto was inaugurated and seen as a shining example of a socially diverse community by both national and international housing policy analysts (Gordon, 2001). The principal feature of St. Lawrence which distinguished it from past social housing developments was its collaborative planning process. Using input from various stakeholders, the community was designed to allow for a mix of incomes, social class, age and household size (Gordon, 2001). It consists of a mix of tenure type: 39% of the total units are condominium apartments, 30% are non-profit co-ops and private non-profit rentals, 27% are municipal non-profit rentals and 4% are ownership townhouses (Gordon, 2001). As well, St. Lawrence was designed to foster social integration using traditional site planning applications where streets were related to grade in order to encourage human activity (Gordon, 2001).

In the mid 1980s, neoconservative fiscal approaches placed greater emphasis on the private market to supply public goods and services, and social housing lost its place on the policy agenda (Pierre, 2007). By the time the Liberals came to power in the mid 1990s, all federal support to housing had been removed (Pierre, 2007). Presently, the federal government is not providing funding for any new housing stock and the provinces are responsible for all new social housing initiatives (Pierre, 2007). Provincial

and municipal responses to the federal transfer of housing programs and initiatives have been mixed and vary between provinces and municipalities. This downloading of fiscal and managerial responsibilities has resulted in the rise of private non-profit and cooperative groups as a crucial category of affordable housing providers across the nation (Pierre, 2007). The array of housing policies continue to the present day, and very little has actually changed since the NHA was written (Pierre, 2007).

It is apparent that many of the past design theories and strategies that were applied to social housing complexes are not functional. The results of these are existing neighbourhoods that are considered unsuccessful, which will be further discussed in the subsequent section. The consideration of integrative concepts that could potentially work out planning issues of the past is fundamental to this study.

Unsuccessful Neighbourhoods in Toronto

The results of past planning theories and practices have been neighbourhoods in the city that are considered unsuccessful and detached from their surrounding environment. Old Regent Park, Alexandra Park and Lawrence Heights are three social housing communities in Toronto requiring attention, which will be useful to study before expanding on the topic of integration. They can be considered examples of the results that should no longer occur today during the planning and revitalization of neighbourhoods.

Regent Park

After years of being scrutinized for its poorly planned streets, built form and public space, Regent Park is finally undergoing intense redevelopment. The neighbourhood was built over fifty years ago and is known as Canada's oldest and

largest social housing development, where more than two-thirds of the residents receive some form of public assistance (Regent Park Report, 1985). Located from Shuter Street to Gerrard Street East, between Parliament Street and River Street (Google Maps, 2010), this neighbourhood was not accidentally conceived; rather it was planned, developed, constructed and maintained through a specific design (Sahak, 2008).

Figure 1 depicts a view of Regent Park in the periphery of downtown Toronto.

Figure 1. Regent Park in the periphery of downtown Toronto
Source: Author unavailable (2009). Retrieved from http://www.rapidict.org/Regent_Park

The main issue that exists in the design of many social housing projects of the past is that they are isolated from surrounding communities. This is evident in Regent Park as shown in the picture, where the buildings are densely concentrated and secluded into a

segment of the city. Regent Park lacks street connectivity, open public spaces, and easy access to surrounding amenities, which are three important aspects of successful integration. Rosa (2006) argues that the planning and construction of the area essentially marginalized the people who moved there and “subjects come to know themselves as racially superior/inferior in and through representations of space” (p44). Rosa’s research places a greater emphasis on the racial segregation that the planning of spaces can create. She believes this was intentionally done in Regent Park, so as to house a large number of lower income residents in an area of the city. As noted by Caulfield (1994), Regent Park represents a type of suburbanization of the city, where

the land use is rigidly segregated. The streets that crisscrossed the old districts were eliminated during its development, and the area has an insular character, cut off from the city around it (Caulfield, 1994). These design elements, reflective of a 'Garden City' approach, and initially intended to support and strengthen the community, are considered a major contributor to segregation, and are no longer among design approaches used. Veronis (1999) concludes that by the 1970s, thirty years after the original tenants had moved in, Regent Park was not considered a model of how social housing should be done. When the redevelopment process was undertaken, the minimal inclusion of residents' input of how the neighbourhood should take shape was also a highly criticized aspect

Arnstein (1969) developed a "ladder of participation" describing three levels of community participation that exist within the planning process; they are nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power. Tokenism is described as including actions such as informing and consulting, and is distinguished from citizen power, which involves partnership, delegated power and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969). In the case of Regent Park, it can be argued that residents were not part of the most collaborative level because the decisions about what would exist as part of the redevelopment were determined prior to their reveal to the public. The residents were involved in some facets of the project, from process design to materials development, although they were not involved in the final decision-making processes around the implementation of the redevelopment and revitalization (Meagher & Boston, 2003). Residents' opinions are not nearly considered as much as they should be throughout the process of revitalization projects. Although they are the major stakeholders in the process, their

voices are often the weakest, or not heard at all. They risk being displaced if the redevelopment is not conducive to their needs, or if they can no longer afford to live where they once did. This concept may be more idealistic than practical, but every attempt should be made to ensure that everyone who is going to be affected by a redevelopment project has a voice in the process

Alexandra Park

Alexandra Park is another area of Toronto with similar issues to those of Regent Park, although it has not been written about as extensively. It is also located downtown, bounded by Queen Street on the south, Bathurst Street on the west, Dundas Street on the north and Spadina Avenue on the east (Google Maps, 2010). In the 1950s, Alexandra Park consisted of low density, two-storey frame housing, bordered by a mix of commercial and industrial land uses (City of Toronto Development Department, 1971). It was expropriated and demolished by city hall in the mid-1960s since it had been labeled an area in need of clearance and renewal (Caulfield, 1994). It was re-built

Figure 2. Alexandra Park, Toronto

Source: Author unavailable. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.skyscrapercity.com>

so that the uses of pedestrian life and housing form were separated from contact with cars (Relph, 1987). Figure 2 is an image of Alexandra Park. Seeing the neighbourhood within the downtown context is interesting in that the

buildings turn inward, and there is no connectivity to the street life (Caulfield, 1994).

Similar to Regent Park and Lawrence Heights, land uses are rigorously separated and

amenities are not conveniently located within the neighbourhood complexes, making it difficult for residents to access basic services (Caulfield, 1994).

Lawrence Heights

It is apparent that in both social and spatial terms, Regent Park and Alexandra Park have been deemed as unsuccessful neighbourhoods for some time. Lawrence Heights is a neighbourhood which has some characteristics similar to the two neighbourhoods that were just described. It will be used as a case study to fulfill the purpose of this research and will be further discussed in chapter three.

How can we overcome past planning issues in the development of segregated housing complexes? The answer to this is not simple, but the solution involves further comprehension of the notion of integration. Jane Jacobs (1969) was known as an opinionated planning guru, and stated: “conventional planning approaches to slums and slum dwellers are thoroughly paternalistic...to overcome slums, we must regard slum dwellers as people capable of understanding and acting upon their own self-interests, which they most certainly are” (p171).

Integration

The concept of integration is complex and there is no single definition that encompasses all that it entails. Integration can be viewed through both a social and a spatial lens within the context of housing. The focus of this study is heavily based on spatial integration, however, comprehension of the term's other component is equally important. The general meaning of social integration, also referred to as mixed-income, is that residents of different socio-economic classes co-exist in a housing complex.

Social Integration or Mixed-Income

There is an underlying belief that socially integrated neighbourhoods are desirable, but little empirical evidence proves this. The movement toward mixed-income housing is based on the widely held assumption that mixed-income, multifamily housing is preferable to housing in which large numbers of low-income residents are clustered together (Brophy & Smith, 1997). There are two rationales behind this thinking: first, there is hope that it will aid poverty through the deconcentration of the poor, and second, that it is “a general strategy for urban redevelopment” that is “economically lucrative” and “politically viable” (Joseph, Chaskin & Webber, 2007, p370). Social integration can be further described as using four common theoretical propositions such as the potential for increased social interaction, the increase of social control and accountability amongst residents, the benefit of better behaviour amongst residents, and the improvement of the political economy (Joseph et al., 2007, p370). If these four combined elements actually were to be attained in socially integrated communities, they would undoubtedly be more successful. Schwartz and Tajbakhsh (1997) categorize mixed-income housing based on whether it is mixed at the project level or the neighborhood level, and whether the sponsors/owners are public, private, or a combination of the two.

St. Lawrence is considered a model neighbourhood that exemplifies a healthy level of social interaction. It is believed that it is an open neighbourhood accessible to all groups and not exclusive in a particular domain of socio-economic status, unlike most public and private sector housing projects (Hulchanski, 1990). Due to the fact that St. Lawrence is not a socially homogeneous residential development, it “demonstrates that

public planning of large development projects in an open democratic fashion can be successful and that desirable high density socially mixed neighbourhoods can be developed by a municipality” (Hulchanski, 1990, p17).

Limitations of Mixed-income

The United Nations states that some issues of social integration include the relation between globalization, economic insecurity and declining social welfare, the dynamics of ethnic and religious conflict, and the reasons for the expansion of illicit and illegal activities, and the increase of violence (UNRISD, 1994). Popkin, Cunningham and Burt (2005) note other limitations such as the assumption that mixing incomes will reduce, or even eliminate a culture of poverty among residents, which therefore puts unrealistic expectations on the assets of the more affluent residents. Additionally, being in close proximity to higher-income groups can actually have negative social effects, including stigma, relative deprivation, and loss of local influence (Popkin et al., 2005). Finally, the concept of mixed-income excludes attention to the broader underlying causes of poverty; therefore, its ability to impact social mobility is limited (Popkin et al., 2005). Evidently, there are several perspectives on the social aspect of integration, and a simple consensus has not been achieved regarding its clear benefits in neighbourhoods. However, what is clear is that socially segregated communities are absolutely unacceptable because they have simply not worked in the past, evident in the fact that that many of them in Toronto are on the agenda for revitalization. Thus, providing mixed-income communities is a newer way of developing alternatives for successful neighbourhood planning.

Spatial or Physical Integration

It is necessary to think further than just mixing individuals of different social incomes in an area. Spatial integration involves a variety of planning and building strategies. When these are combined, they can create an inclusive area. Aspects such as street connectivity and access to good public space are vital in encompassing well-rounded integrative neighbourhoods. These attributes should especially be considered in the planning and development of communities which include social housing.

Street Connectivity

Traditional ways of building past social housing developments meant the inclusion of dense housing structures that were placed within a complex and segregated from surrounding streets. According to Hulchanski, "As more redevelopment of existing urban areas began to occur, planners and architects usually succeeded in having the existing streets eliminated and replaced with "superblocks" -- buildings surrounded with open space and no longer street-related" (Hulchanski, 1990, p7). This is apparent in many housing projects that still exist today and proves to be an unsuccessful characteristic promoting segregation. The layout of streets and public spaces within the context of a neighbourhood can play a major role in facilitating accessibility and integration.

Figures 3 and 4 depict the street layout of two social housing complexes in Toronto. The image on the left is the western segment of Lawrence Heights, located just

Figure 3. Street layout of Lawrence Heights
Source: Google Maps. (2010) Retrieved from <http://maps.google.com>

Figure 4. Street layout of Regent Park
Source: Google Maps. (2010). Retrieved from <http://maps.google.com>

south of where Lawrence Avenue West and the Allen Expressway intersect. The image on the right is a block within Regent Park, located near Dundas Street East and Parliament Street in the downtown core. As shown, both communities lack connectivity to their surrounding environment, as there are no main roads running through either housing development. In the case of Lawrence Heights, the construction of the Allen Expressway occurred after the establishment of the neighbourhood and essentially succeeded in dividing the community in half. In both cases, the roads that do exist within the neighbourhoods are laid out in such a way that they physically segregate the complexes from surrounding areas. A revitalization plan has already been implemented in Regent Park, and one is being considered for Lawrence Heights (TCHC, 2009). Evidently, successful spatial integration includes street connectivity, which needs remediation in both these communities. CMHC completed a study, which suggested

that the combination of continuous and discontinuous grid patterns of streets (rather than traditional layouts like the ones shown in the previous images) within neighbourhoods have positive outcomes. It optimizes the use of land for streets while securing tranquil and safe neighbourhoods, it increases the potential for social interaction and optimized infrastructure, and it assists traffic flows while encouraging walking (CMHC, 2008). It is clear that integrative street planning in communities is necessary in the creation of a well-rounded neighbourhood, particularly one that includes social housing

Public Space

An integral part of this study includes the aspect of successful public space and why it is so important for interaction and integration to occur within neighbourhoods. It is often assumed that parks and public spaces are the same in meaning; however, these terms should not necessarily be used synonymously. Parks have traditionally been known as open, green spaces in an area, which often do not have a function other than to provide aesthetics. Well planned public spaces – ones that are programmed, usable, and flexible – offer a role in a neighbourhood, which may increase the sense of place that people feel when using them. Hood Jr. (2003) and Dwyer (1994) suggest that park planning and designs should be reflective of, and respond to, the cultural milieu that both use and reside within close proximity of the space. Hood Jr. stresses that park designs are often driven by a park nomenclature, which fails to reflect any significance or representation of the current community's needs (Hood Jr., 2003). Providing significant park space in a community is a vital aspect supporting spatial integration.

Public spaces, when well planned, provide playfields, playgrounds, and open areas offering definable landscapes and programs. In a similar vein, Floyd (1998) claims that regardless of dimensions, parks are considered suitable places to provide recreational infrastructure, solve social and cultural conflicts, and support environmental equity. It is both environmentally integrative and socially inclusive to provide community park spaces that facilitate residents' preferences, identities, and favoured activities (Floyd, 1998). However, many existing parks fail to deliver inclusive and multifunctional spaces that support the wants and needs of residents in some of today's communities (Hood Jr., 2003), and these should be especially considered within the context of social housing neighbourhoods, in an effort for residents to feel a greater sense of community. Public spaces should represent nodal points of intra- and inter-cultural group solidarity, whereby the effective bonding of people and place can enrich social and inter-cultural communication (Goodall, Wearing, Byrne, & Kijas, 2007).

Conversely, Gobster (2002) states that parks can also signify places where certain individuals are made to feel intimidated, scrutinized and excluded, as opposed to being welcomed into a wider society. Reviewing the myriad of perspectives around integrative public spaces is significant in understanding how they can be applied to neighbourhoods. Planners must break through the standard nomenclature surrounding the issue of parks, to plan more responsive and representative spaces that are specific to the neighbouring urban cultural context (Floyd, 1998). According to Hood Jr., public spaces of the future are "hybrid landscapes", a collage of diverse cultural landscapes connecting the natural, social, and cultural ecologies of the modern metropolis (Hood Jr., 2003).

Since St. Lawrence is generally considered Toronto's successfully integrative neighbourhood, it is fitting to allude to it as an example once again. In the context of

Figure 5. Programmed public space in St. Lawrence
Source: Author unavailable. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.torontoioacongress.org>

Figure 6. Pleasant seating area in St. Lawrence
Source: Hulchanski. (1990). *Planning New Urban Neighbourhoods: Lessons from Toronto's St. Lawrence Neighbourhood*, p3.

public space, the neighbourhood's plan resulted in a pattern based on the city's original streets, with a major focus on a central linear park with adjacent playgrounds, which comprise 18% of the neighbourhood (Hulchanski, 1990). Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the public space in St. Lawrence. The area does appear to be physically appealing and well integrated into the surrounding environment. Rather than just solely offering green space, there are some aspects providing the opportunity for leisure activities and enjoyment, including a basketball court, a playground and benches. The consideration of a park's aesthetic composition and functionality are essential in the comprehension of spatial integration.

Successful integration entails an extensive array of components, which can be viewed in both social and spatial terms. The belief that social-mix is a desirable aspect of integration continues to be pondered. Several physical planning strategies that were applied to social housing complexes are now being reconsidered. What is apparent today is that spatial integration should include a combination of many elements, some of

which incorporate connectivity to surrounding areas with sufficient streets and meaningful public space which provides functionality. It is interesting to think about how public spaces can function within different contexts of the city. Lawrence Heights is a neighbourhood that will undergo a massive revitalization plan over the next two decades. The consideration for integrative public space within this community is crucial in planning for a more successful, well-rounded and desirable place to live.

CHAPTER THREE

LAWRENCE HEIGHTS: A CASE STUDY

Lawrence Heights was the first social housing complex to be built within the Township of North York (Rose, 1972). By 1955, the potentialities of a housing development on a site of approximately 100 acres was new, and considered a threat to many (Rose, 1972). It was opposed by many of the long-term residents and local politicians, since it would include several hundred low-income families as occupants of the Lawrence Heights housing project (Rose, 1972). It was presumed that middle income families would desire to live in the area because the homes would be built in an aesthetically pleasing manner, therefore, the “blending of inexpensive and subsidized housing would provide a form of social integration instead of producing a monolithic collection of very poor families bringing multiple problems with them” (Rose, 1972, p72). It is evident that the concept of integration is not a new one, and was in fact an issue at the time when neighbourhoods, such as Lawrence Heights, were being planned and developed. Despite its consideration, segregated communities are still the result of past attempts to build communities.

The Beginnings of Lawrence Heights

The construction of Lawrence Heights was completed between 1959 and 1962, and consists for the most part of row houses and maisonnettes, with a number of small apartment dwellings of about 30 units each (Rose, 1972). Social tension between residents of Lawrence Heights and the surrounding areas have been apparent ever since it was constructed: “it can be argued that 6,000 residents of Lawrence Heights were for some years rejected by the larger community of North York” (Rose, 1972, p72). By the mid-1960s, it became apparent that the neighbourhood was in need of programs,

services and facilities (Rose, 1972). CMHC had refused to provide funding or capital investments, “and the province had followed suit” (Rose, 1972, p72). The lack of financial resources to fund the building of Lawrence Heights led to the inability to produce adequate housing, as well as adequate programs and services in the area (Rose, 1972).

Lawrence Heights at the Present Time

Today, a plan for revitalizing the Lawrence Heights community is being implemented by the City of Toronto, in conjunction with Rio Can Real Estate Investment Trust and the Toronto District School Board (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). The formed partnerships should assist in addressing the issues of the lack of funding from the provincial government, which continues to be a problem today (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). Public-private partnerships, often referred to as P3, are being introduced in revitalization projects, as in Lawrence Heights, since they involve the “participation by the private sector in the delivery of public infrastructure” (P3 Primer, 2010). The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships describes P3 as the following:

“Public-private partnerships bring together the strengths of both the public and private sectors. They are innovative tools of public policy. In addition to maximizing efficiencies and innovations of private enterprise, public-private partnerships can provide much needed capital to finance government programs and projects of a commercial nature, thereby freeing public funds for core economic and social programs.”

(Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships, 2010)

Evidently, the implementation of P3 in the rebuilding Lawrence Heights may provide an avenue for the allocation of resources, which would essentially benefit residents. The following sections will provide further background information regarding the plan for redevelopment, as well as depict what the area looks like and how it functions for its residents. The compiled information will then inform the results of the study so that a recommendation for integrative public space in Lawrence Heights can be described.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIMARY DATA RESULTS

The methodological approach taken for the purpose of this study proved to be insightful and will be expanded and analyzed. Three types of primary research methods that were used will be discussed. They include personal observations in the form of taking photographs and notes of the area, attending a public meeting regarding the revitalization plan for the neighbourhood, and participating in a workshop where one of the discussion topics revolved around potential public space in the area.

Personal Observations

The following section will describe the observational study of Lawrence Heights, which includes pictures that were taken of the area, as well as what activities were noted there over the course of two months. The photographs serve the purpose of depicting the built form of the area, the surrounding neighbourhoods, and the public space that currently serves the community. Getting a sense of the physical form of the area is a beneficial component of this study.

Figures 7 through 9 convey the typical built form of the housing located in

Figure 7. Three-storey apartment complex in Lawrence Heights

Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 8. Single detached unit in Lawrence Heights

Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 9. Semi-detached units (also called maisonnettes) in Lawrence Heights

Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Lawrence Heights. Three main forms of housing can be seen in the neighbourhood: three-storey apartment complexes, single detached units, and semi-detached units. The

units are fairly run down, which can be attributed to the fact that they were built in the 1950s. The housing is clustered onto the residential roads that curve within the neighbourhood, and other than the Allen Expressway, which essentially segregates the community, there are no major roads located within the neighbourhood to connect the residents and their homes to surrounding areas (Personal Observations, 2010). Figure 10 is a view of the area depicting the street layout and the location of the homes

Figure 10. Street and housing layout in Lawrence Heights
Source: Google Maps. (2010). Retrieved from <http://maps.google.com>

throughout a section of the community. Lawrence Heights is enclosed by Varna Drive (see Appendix A for a more detailed map of the area), which is the street located on the eastern edge of the community and travels around the neighbourhood, causing the physical segregation from surrounding

neighbourhoods. Varna Drive acts as the dividing road in the area, whereby the residents living within its circumference do not associate with the people residing outside of it. There is no appealing place for interaction among the different residents, and one would not likely walk through Lawrence Heights unless they had a purpose to do so (Personal Observations, 2010). A different sense of community is felt while walking through both areas. The residents of Lawrence Heights are not only secluded from outside residents, but are secluded even from each other (Personal Observations, 2010). The winding roads within the neighbourhood play a role in the segregation that occurs, and since there are very limited amenities in the area that are not at all within a

walkable scale, a sense of isolation is felt (Personal Observations, 2010). A social distinction can be noticed just by the stark differences that exist in the forms and styles of the houses located on the other side of the dividing road. Figure 11 depicts the area inside Varna Drive, and Figures 12 and 13 show examples of homes that are typically

Figure 11. Typical houses within the Varna Drive boundary
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

found directly outside of Varna Drive. It is evident that Lawrence Heights is a highly segregated neighbourhood. The residents living inside the enclosed area most likely have a different sense of place than the

Figure 12. Typical house outside the Varna Drive boundary
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 13. Typical houses outside the Varna Drive boundary
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

residents living outside of it. Isolated communities consisting of low-income residents are the result of many developments that were built in the past, and are no longer considered desirable or acceptable places to live. The situation of the houses within the area, the layout of the streets, and the concentration of social housing in an area surrounded by a vastly different housing form in close proximity are three observations that do not support the notion of integration.

Since the topic of integrative public space is the main focus of this study, this was also examined during the observational visits to the area. It is evident while walking through the community that there is a lack of functional public space available for residents to enjoy. Although there are several green spaces located throughout the neighbourhood, there aren't any communal areas where people could enjoy activities. Figures 14 and 15 are examples what the majority of typical public space looks like in Lawrence Heights. The image on the left is a large field located on the outskirts of the community near Varna Drive. It is not easily accessible by everyone living in the neighbourhood, and other than the football posts and track located on the grass, there are no other functions of the park that can serve individuals with diverse interests. The

Figure 14. Open field in Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 15. Seating area in Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

image on the right shows an area within a park that provides seating, but very little else to do in the space. Throughout the neighbourhood, there are limited amounts of public spaces that offer variety of programmed uses. However, three small parks, illustrated in Figures 16 through 18 offer a splash pad that can be used in warmer weather, a community garden, and a play area set up with slides and swings for children to enjoy. These parks are centrally located within the neighbourhood, and are accessible to a larger portion of the population. It is useful to get a sense of what exists in the area for a

number of reasons: to determine how public space is currently serving the residents, to examine what activities may be enjoyed or what facilities may be used, and to evaluate whether the public spaces are well integrated within the community.

Figure 16. Splash pad in Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 17. Community Garden in Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

Figure 18. Children's play area in Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

The photographs taken during the observational sessions of the neighbourhood are useful in understanding the current physical composition of Lawrence Heights, and specifically of the public space that is offered in the area. To supplement the

pictures that were taken in the area, the activities being enjoyed were also noted over the course of two months. The observations were completed on different selected days throughout February and March (a table in Appendix B organizes the data collected into headings of the date and time of day the activity was noticed, and the outdoor temperature at the time of the observation). Due to the time of year that these observations were completed, they may not be accurate representations of the activities that people using the space most often enjoy. However, it is interesting to note the

actions taking place in the neighbourhood. Walking around, walking with pets, running and cycling are common pass-times that occurred during the observational period. The most frequently played sports were basketball and soccer. These results were very useful, and will be further analyzed later on in chapter five when recommendations for park space in Lawrence Heights will be discussed.

Public Meeting Review

On Thursday, February 25th, 2010, there was a public meeting held by the City of Toronto in the Lawrence Heights community centre. The meeting was to inform people of the revitalization plan, and where it currently stands in terms of its implementation. The strategy for the redevelopment project is referred to as the Emerging Preferred Plan, and was explained by the Project Coordinator Ann-Marie Nasr (see Appendix C for a depiction of the projected built form). This project is a very large scale one, as it involves 110 acres of land to be reconstructed (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). The reason for the revitalization of the area is to correct the “planning mistakes of the past”, one of which included the construction of the Allen Expressway that segregated the community (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). The plan has been created over the last two years, with the encouragement of public participation, and will roll out over the next two decades (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). It includes the rebuilding of 1,208 units to replace the exact amount of current social housing in the neighbourhood, and the addition of about 4,800 new units, in a combination of town homes and mid- to high-rise condominiums (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). The city is offering an incentive of a one-year transit pass to anyone who buys a new condo in the area (Personal Observations,

Public Meeting, 2010), which highly promotes the use of public transportation. The purpose of the plan is to create a desirable, mixed-use community that more efficiently serves its residents and surrounding population (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010).

The priority topics that were presented during the meeting were parks, streets, connections (which refer to pedestrian and cycling lanes), and built form, as components that require major remediation in the area (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). These also happen to be aspects that support the notion of integration, and are all crucial characteristics of well-planned neighbourhoods. Three types of parks are being proposed for the area: a district park, a community park, and local parks (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). A district park, which is meant to attract people from beyond the local area, currently exists in the neighbourhood and will be improved (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). A community park, which is typically larger in size (can be up to 10 acres), is being proposed for the centre of Lawrence Heights (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). Community parks usually come with programming or recreational facilities, and in the case of Lawrence Heights, although it has not been finalized, a soccer field and tennis courts are being proposed for this park (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). The third form of public space is a local park, which is usually around 1.5 acres in size, and serves primarily the people living within close proximity (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010). There will be several of these scattered around the community where appropriate, and they will function as focal points for residents who are close by (Personal Observations, Public Meeting, 2010).

Workshop Participation

On March 8th, 2010, a two hour-long workshop took place in the Lawrence Heights community centre, and was facilitated by the staff of the City of Toronto. The Emerging Preferred Plan was recapped for anyone who had not previously attended the public meetings. The topic of public space and the parks that are being recommended for the area were also explained in great detail again. The Project Manager for the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) is Heather Grey-Wolf, and she described some of the implications that the new plan may have for current residents in the area. As a requirement from the developers and builders, 10% of newly generated employment opportunities would be geared towards the tenants (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010). The residents of Lawrence Heights can stay in the community throughout the construction, but if they prefer to move out, they will be given several months notice to do so (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010). Anyone who chooses the option to move out during construction will be given the right to move back into a new unit upon completion (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010). The main goal is to create a mixed-income community, which provides a combination of subsidized and market rate units, while not displacing anyone throughout the redevelopment process (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010).

This was the first of six workshops to be facilitated by the City of Toronto over the course of February and March of 2010. The workshop was executed in the form of small focus groups. A total of nine tables were set up, each having around eight participants per table (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010). A facilitator and a

note taker were present at each table, and interpreters were available for individuals who spoke the following languages: Russian, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Oromo, Korean, Italian, Mandarin and Amharic (Personal Observations, Workshop Participation, 2010). The provision of these translations made the process a much more inclusive one catering to the residents in the area, while supporting the notion of public consultation and transparency throughout the revitalization process. The discussion at each table revolved around the following questions: what do you like about the parks, and what do you dislike about the parks, in the Emerging Preferred Plan? The note taker at each table wrote down the opinions and responses that people expressed, and at the end of the focus group, each table presented their results. The following are the themes that emerged from the conversations about the proposed parks in the area:

- The planning of parks should cater to seniors; parks should be an incentive for seniors to want to leave their home and enjoy the outdoors
- Individuals with disabilities should be considered within park designs; ramps should be placed throughout parks so that parents don't have to worry about not being able to properly watch their children
- Parks should be easily accessible by foot around the community
- Community gardens should be available in the public spaces; they should be large and centrally located throughout the neighbourhood
- The programming of space is very important to many people; there is a need for sports facilities to be provided within parks and public spaces
- People would like to see multi-purpose uses within the parks to promote a sense of community and togetherness in the area
- Aesthetically pleasing green spaces are lacking right now and these should be incorporated within the park plans
- The idea of a large central park is well liked by everyone

- Parks need to be safe and well-lit areas; this is not currently apparent in the neighbourhood
- There should be a mix of uses for both children and teenagers to enjoy the public spaces
- Noise and pollution control within parks are important issues that people would like to see managed

Participating in the workshop as part of this primary research proved to be insightful, as many opinions were shared regarding an important topic of integration, with a focus on public space. It will now be useful to integrate the opinions from the workshop, the information provided at the public meeting, and the aspects noted from observing the area, to compile recommendations for public space that can be well incorporated into Lawrence Heights.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATIVE PUBLIC SPACE

As cities evolve and diversify, there is an emerging need to reconsider parks and their role as public spaces. Unlike traditional parks, which are thought of as open, green spaces that mainly feature natural aspects, today's contemporary parks and public spaces require a deeper meaning embedded in their form and function, as well as a connection to the social, natural and cultural ecologies within cities. Since cities are ever evolving, much of which can be attributed to the diversity of their populations, it is vital that they be shaped to suit the desires of the citizens residing in them. This is a challenging aspect in the urban planning profession; deciding what gets built for the 'majority' to enjoy is a difficult task, which involves many complicated processes along the way. However, the inclusion of parks within cities is vital, as they can act as neutral public spaces for everyone to enjoy. Tate (2004) believes that: "Urban parks are one of the principal products of the design discipline known as landscape architecture" (p1).

Sustainable Parks

Parks play an important role in the context of cities, as well as in how notions of integrative public space can be represented in built form. Different strategies must be used in efforts to achieve the goals of inclusive park space. Waltner-Toews, Kay and Lister (2008) agree that taking an ecosystem approach to planning, where nature and the environment are prioritized rather than managed, is a beneficial one. In order for all facets of sustainable development to be achieved through planning new spaces for park use, large parks must be designed to allow both ecological and programmatic complexity, biological and social diversity to exist (Lister, 2007). Poole (2004) explores "how we might reinvigorate civic expression – and more importantly, civic life – through

another of landscape infrastructure's inherent characteristics; the enlisting of the landscape's ecological processes and systems" (p182). When planning parks as public spaces for people to enjoy within cities, the notion of ecological adaptive design is a vital consideration within sustainable park space.

Cultural Park Planning

Another notion embedded in integrative public space is the need to plan cultural landscapes. No longer can landscapes be considered real or successful if they are strictly ordinary. Corner (2007) believes that we must shift to thinking of landscapes as mediums rather than as composites. This would allow for more engagement and interaction within our surrounding environment. It would generate new observations of how landscapes are conceived, as well as allow people to have insight when perceiving movement, form and memory found in landscapes (Birksted, 2000). Hume (2009) stresses that "Cultural planning is about place and placemaking. It is about identifying and harnessing all of the cultural assets in [a] community" (p1). Creative cities are emerging as desirable places to live, and planning cultural landscapes is a means to achieving this goal. An example of accomplishing landscapes that embed meaning and culture is the incorporation of public art. At its grandest, public art certainly has the "potential to enliven, enhance and enchant" (Hume, 2009, p75). It is evident that there is a need to incorporate cultural landscapes into cities, and attaining these through the planning of parks would be beneficial. The rapid evolvement of modern cities has caused a re-thinking to the way land is best utilized.

Integrative Public Space

Waldheim (2006) argues: “Across the range of disciplines, landscape has become a lens through which the contemporary city is represented and a medium through which it is constructed” (p15). Integrative public space entails many complex notions, one being the activation of effective public space in a neighbourhood. Several authors have written about and critiqued the issues with postmodern planning in cities; Jacobs (1961) and Lynch (1981) agree that modernist planning failed to produce meaningful spaces in the public realm. Spaces tended to exude superficiality rather than significance and symbolism, and these latter concepts are promoted in the notion of integrative public space. The planning and design of new potential spaces are crucial processes in achieving areas that feature components embedded in integration. Francis (2003) believes that: “Recently, it has become more commonly understood that successful parks and open spaces, such as plazas, streets and public gardens are ones that are lively and well-used by people” (p1). The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) suggests that four main components are required to make great public open spaces: accessibility, activities, comfort and sociability (PPS, 2000). PPS also offers suggestions as to why public spaces fail, which include the lack of good places to sit, the lack of gathering points, poor entrances and visually inaccessible spaces, dysfunctional features, paths that do not lead to anywhere in which people wish to go, inconveniently located transit stops, and simply that nothing is going on (PPS, 2000).

User Needs

User needs are another important aspect of park planning, and “are defined as those amenities and experiences that people seek in enjoying public open spaces.

Needs provide the basic level of support and function in open space; they are the prerequisite for having an enjoyable landscape experience, and provide the basis for much design criteria" (Francis, 2003, p4). Francis argues that: "Successful public spaces are ones that are responsive to the needs of their users; are democratic in their accessibility; and are meaningful for the larger community and society" (Francis, 2003, p1). They can be successfully provided in many forms, such as in urban parks, plazas, streets and gardens (Francis, 2003, p1). These suggestions all support the themes that are inclusive of the definition of integration. The combination of these literature research components, along with the primary research results, will be considered in the final section of the paper, which will suggest integrative public space for Lawrence Heights.

Atterbury (2009) believes that healthy communities involve the integration of movement, open spaces, physical structures, social aspects and sustainable systems. He proposed a design alternative for integrative open space in Alexandra Park, and believes it is important to create a central activity core in an area that supports various uses to establish a link between neighbouring communities (Atterbury, 2009). Figure 19 is his rendition of what open space in Alexandra Park could potentially look like. The

Figure 19. Proposed condition for Alexandra Park
Source: Atterbury. (2009). *Past-Present-Future: The Revitalization of Social Housing in Canada*, p64.

space is programmed with the addition of a trail that can be used for walking, running and cycling, as well as a children's play area. It also provides flexibility with the open field that can be

used to play sports and for other leisure activities. It is in proximity to a residential area of the neighbourhood, making it accessible to users. A similar concept can be used in the recommendation for public space that can be applied to the Lawrence Heights community.

A Recommendation for Lawrence Heights: The Plan

It is apparent that integrative parks are important and desirable components for the creation of successful neighbourhoods. Lawrence Heights has an interesting history, and due to the mistakes that were made during past planning developments, it is not a desirable place to live. Integration is a vital component in the consideration of designing places for people to live. Evidently, this was disregarded in Lawrence Heights, and the area is physically and socially isolated from surrounding communities. A revitalization plan is on the planning agenda for this area and will be implemented over the next twenty years. An array of results has come out of this research process, and will be useful in the consideration for potential public space in Lawrence Heights.

The recommendations for park space in the proposed plan for Lawrence Heights should consist of a large park in the centre of the neighbourhood that is easily accessible by walking and by public transit. It should contain ramps that cater to aging populations as well as to individuals with disabilities. Programmed space is a well-like idea in this neighbourhood, and since soccer and basketball were the two most noticed sports being enjoyed, an appropriate field and court should be located somewhere in the space. Ample seating should be offered for individuals who simply enjoy relaxing outdoors. It was observed that individuals using the space enjoy running and walking their pets, therefore, these activities should be supported in the park space. A track or a

trail that is wide enough for people to run or walk on is something that can easily be incorporated into a space, and can enhance an area by adding a function. The inclusion of an outdoor community garden is a vital component desired by the residents in this neighbourhood. This currently exists in a small park in Lawrence Heights, and should be present in a large, central park as well. Figure 20 depicts a potential plan for integrative

Figure 20. Proposed integrative public space for Lawrence Heights
Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

public space in Lawrence Heights. The variety of these components not only support the notion of integrative public space, but also support well-rounded, good planning practices, which promote a healthy neighbourhood for everyone.

Recommendations for the Planning Process

Recommendations can also be offered to the process of planning in an effort to make it a more effective and inclusive one. A vital aspect of this is the promotion of public participation within neighbourhood meetings. In the case of Lawrence Heights, these have been held throughout the past two years in order to hear the opinions of the residents who will be affected by changes that are being proposed for the community. The facilitation of workshops and focus groups provided by the planning department also support the notion of transparency throughout the planning process, which is a much more fair and inclusive way to plan. A way to spur the conversations among groups and promote meetings in an area is for the regular distribution of informative flyers and maps to explain future plans and processes in a neighbourhood. Individuals who are informed about, and have a visual sense of, what may occur within their surroundings may be more willing to be inclusive of the planning process. A transparent, collaborative decision-making process also supports the notion of integration.

CONCLUSION

There is no simple answer to the question: what is a successful neighbourhood? What can certainly be concluded is that segregated communities do not work; the isolation of residents is not a good planning method and should no longer be practiced. Integration is a complex process and it entails several important components that need further study and consideration. Lawrence Heights is a neighbourhood that will undergo a revitalization process in an effort to remediate past planning mistakes that were driven by many theoretical notions which are no longer supported. This neighbourhood is located in proximity to main arteries of the city, has access to public transit, and is near an array of services and amenities. It is for these reasons, in addition to its size of over 100 acres, that it has the potential to become a model development promoting integration. The aspect of public spaces in neighbourhoods is vital; these spaces are considered focal points and areas of interaction, promoting togetherness and a sense of community. In addition, they provide places of leisure that can enhance health and well-being, and they can simply be enjoyed. Presently, the parks and public spaces in Lawrence Heights are small, underutilized, and lack programming and clearly defined activity areas.

Contemporary park and public space planning should include multi-functional uses, sustainable features and easy accessibility for all users. These aspects are crucial in the consideration of integrative public space. It is not only interesting, but critical to consider the integrative practices that can be applied to Lawrence Heights, as part of an effort to plan it more successfully and make it a well-rounded and desirable place to live.

APPENDIX A MAP OF LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

Lawrence Heights is located south of where Highway 401 and the Allen Expressway intersect, and Varna Drive is the street boundary encompassing the neighbourhood. The top image shows the greater context of the surrounding area, and the bottom image is a closer view of the Lawrence Heights community.

Source: Google Maps. (2010). Retrieved from <http://maps.google.com>

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF PRIMARY OBSERVATIONS: ACTIVITIES IN LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

Month	Time of day	Time spent Observing	Temp.	Activities Observed
February	9:30 a.m.	¾ hour	-3 °C	Walking, walking dog
February	1:00 p.m.	1 hour	2 °C	Walking, cycling
February	5:00 p.m.	1 ½ hours	0 °C	Walking, sitting
February	10:00 a.m.	½ hour	2 °C	Running, walking
February	2:30 p.m.	½ hour	1 °C	Running, Playing basketball
February	7:30 p.m.	1 ½ hours	-1 °C	Walking
March	11 a.m.	½ hour	11 °C	Running, cycling, reading
March	4:00 p.m.	2 hours	16 °C	Playing Basketball, playing soccer, walking, reading
March	8 p.m.	1 ½ hours	8 °C	Walking, cycling, playing basketball, playing soccer

Source: Personal Observations. (2010).

APPENDIX C

DEPICTION OF PROJECTED BUILT FORM IN LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

The following map was provided at the Workshop facilitated by the City of Toronto. It is the emerging proposed plan depicting built form in Lawrence Heights.

Source: Personal Observations, Workshop Participation. (2010).

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