

REGENT PARK READIES FOR PHASE 3

'Astounding accomplishment'

Massive recreation area, plus revamped rink, focus of next stage

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The excited voices of kids playing filled an outdoor hockey rink in Regent Park Wednesday — the noise an indication of what's to come.

Students from nearby Nelson Mandela school were at Toronto Community Housing's announcement that a third phase of Regent Park will include a huge new recreation area and a refurbished rink near Shuter and River Sts.

Funding for the multi-purpose sports facility, which will include a soccer pitch, basketball court, playground and community gardens, will come through fundraising by the charitable arm of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment. The Hockey Canada Foundation will pay to refurbish the rink.

The facility is what has been missing in the "world-leading revitalization" of Regent Park, said Martin Blake, vice president of Daniels Corporation, the private development company partnering with the city to build the first two phases.

The proposed third phase, the 6-hectare area between Sackville and River Sts. to the east and west, and Oak St. south to Shuter St., will include another 2,000 market condos and 550 rental housing units.

"Sixty-five per cent of Regent Park is under development, constructed or already complete," said Blake. "That is an astounding accomplishment in such a short period of time."

But the plan for the third phase is in its early stages and has yet to be approved by council.

"We're still working out the details



ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORONTO STAR

Regent Park youth were on hand Wednesday for the unveiling of the next phase of the area's revitalization.



TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING

The proposed multi-purpose sports facility includes a soccer pitch, basketball court, playground and community gardens.

of the budget, which will be going forward to my board of directors for approval in the next six months," said Tom Burr, head of TCH's Regent Park revitalization division.

Rezoning applications to reconfigure streets and parkland could be approved early next year.

If that's successful, more than 536 households will be displaced for

two to four years as existing social housing is demolished, beginning in 2014, and rebuilt.

The plan includes tearing down two existing rental towers on Blevins Place as well as another on Whiteside Place. Townhomes and midrise buildings in the area bounded by Dundas north to Oak, and Shuter east to Sackville, will

also be demolished. Burr notes that tenants will be notified a year in advance of demolition and five months before they have to move.

TCH's new president and CEO, Gene Jones, who has worked in Detroit, New Orleans and Indianapolis, says Regent Park's redevelopment is unparalleled.

"The Regent Park revitalization is unlike anything I have seen in my 30 years of working in social housing in North America," said Jones. "There is not a development in the U.S. that would compare."

Hockey greats Paul Coffey and Wendel Clark, who is on the board of the MLSE Team UP Foundation, were also on hand.

"Sports is huge," said Clark, referring to the importance of new playing fields. "You want to raise as many athletes as possible, but it's also that you're raising the community and the social interaction of kids in a very productive way."