

Defining and Exploring Public Space: Young People's Perspectives from Regent Park, Toronto

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Planning

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2008

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Young people have not traditionally had a voice in urban planning. More often than not, they are incorporated into planning by either considering them as an implicit population or as part and parcel of planning for families (Knowles-Yanez, 2002; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005; Frank, 2006). This is now recognized as one of the shortcomings of urban planning. This study seeks to address this gap within a specific context of urban revitalization and public space within a public housing development.

This study explored how young people between the ages of 10 and 16 living in Regent Park, Toronto define and value local public spaces. Their perspectives are particularly relevant at this time as their neighbourhood is in the process of a 15-year, multi-million dollar revitalization plan. This plan will bring about extensive physical and social changes to the neighbourhood. The key objectives of this study were to understand the perspectives of young people about their neighbourhood public space, to determine how young people's perspectives match with revitalization plans and to adapt participatory research methods appropriate for young people. By using a participatory, multi-method approach, I set out to determine how young people understand public space and the extent to which this is incorporated into public housing revitalization.

The study findings show that the contemporary principles guiding public housing revitalization do not match how young people define and value public space. Findings reveal that young people have a broad definition of public space which encompasses public, quasi-public and private spaces. They also demonstrate that understanding public space involves both physical and social elements. This is incorporated into their ideas regarding revitalization. Young people placed more of an emphasis on social than physical solutions. Key to the findings are young people's preferences for a neighbourhood network of walkways over through streets, maintaining community insularity, local landmarks and culture and their fears over losing these due to change brought about by new residents. Many public space elements were regarded as simultaneously positive and negative. They regard the revitalization process of their neighbourhood public spaces with mixed emotions, including trepidation, scepticism and hope. In this way, study findings add to the existing

literature on young people and urban planning. Young people have a distinctive way of experiencing the urban environment and when asked in an appropriate manner, will share revealing insights that would not necessarily have been thought of by adults (Hart, 1997).

The study recommendations build upon the existing literature on the participation of young people in urban planning. This study shows that there is a need for planners to work alongside local community agencies and organizations already involved with young people. There is also a need to reconsider how planners address the issues of equity and public engagement. Young people do not have a political voice. For this reason, it is important for planners to consider the principles of equity and advocacy in a manner that embraces strategies for planning with multiple publics. Planners need to be educated and made aware of the different methods to appropriately engage young people. This includes adapting participatory techniques, determining agents of community access and self-reflexivity.

Acknowledgements

A number of people and organizations helped make this study possible. I am very appreciative of the young people who took the time to participate in this study and shared their viewpoints and experiences with me. Without the ongoing interest and assistance of Regent Park community organizations and youth workers made this study would not have been possible. For reasons of confidentiality and in order to protect the identities of the young participants, I will not provide names. But know that I will always remember and be grateful for this support.

I would also like to thank my advisor, Laura Johnson, who encouraged me to undertake my research in Regent Park in the first place and for the countless hours of discussion around this topic.

My committee, Rob Feick, Steffanie Scott and Mark Seasons, gave valuable contributions to the development of this research. Thank you so much for your time, insights and support.

I am grateful for the beneficial suggestions made by my external examiner, Richard Milgrom.

I extend a very warm thank you to Michael Leahy for assisting me with GPS data, creating maps, and technical questions in general.

Financial support for the refreshments and cameras and photograph developing came from Primeland Properties and The Learning Institute.

There are those who deserve a very special thank you. Their personal support helped me get through this process. I am very grateful to:

- My aunt and uncle, Rose and Gary O'Connor, who gave me unfaltering support, rides to the bus station, good food and a comfortable space to work;
- Emily Boylan for always being on my side and countless discussions over a glass of wine;
- Heidi Hoernig for the insights, encouragement and suggestions and the "T'es capable" just when I needed it;
- Michael Leahy and Allyson Hoffman and Emily and Shawn Boylan for the many nights I spent on their couch/pull-out bed;
- My parents, Annette Vandendriessche and Michael Leahy, my brother Michael, my grandma, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends who always act as my own personal cheering section;
- My husband, John, for always helping me put things into perspective and is always there for the good and the bad days, regardless of the time zone.

To my dear, kind, patient John

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research focus.....	1
1.2.1 Research questions	2
1.2.2 Research objectives	2
1.3 Young people and planning for public space	2
1.4 The benefits of young people's involvement in the planning process.....	6
1.5 Young people, public space and Regent Park	10
1.6 Thesis outline	12
Chapter 2 Regent Park Context	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.1.1 "Raze the hovels"	13
2.1.2 'A housing oasis'	17
2.2 Contemporary Regent Park: 1960s to present	19
2.2.1 Regent Park's challenges: design, poverty and ownership.....	21
2.2.2 The residents of Regent Park.....	24
2.2.3 Challenges and opportunities for young people	25
2.3 Revitalizing Regent Park.....	25
2.4 Key features of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan	26
2.5 The community engagement process	27
2.6 Conclusion.....	28
Chapter 3 Literature Review	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Revitalization: process and product.....	30
3.3 Public housing	32

3.4 Public housing within the context of urban revitalization	34
3.4.1 Beyond the federal bulldozer	36
3.4.2 A new iteration of environmental determinism?.....	42
3.4.3 Young people and public housing revitalization.....	44
3.5 Public space: concepts of space, place and public	47
3.6 What it means to think about space	47
3.6.1 Space through Euclidean, relationist and social process lenses	48
3.7 The connections between space and place	51
3.8 Relationships shaping public space.....	53
3.9 Determining the place of young people: ‘angels’ or ‘devils’	56
3.10 The place of young people in revitalized public space	61
3.11 Engaging young people in the urban planning process.....	62
3.11.1 The benefits of incorporating young people into the planning process	65
3.11.2 Parallels in planning thought.....	72
3.12 Intersections between the existing literature and this study.....	76
3.12.1 Youth engagement	76
3.12.2 Public space	79
3.12.3 The connections to public housing revitalization.....	80
3.12.4 Planning implications.....	81
3.13 Conclusion	81
Chapter 4 Methods	82
4.1 Introduction.....	82
4.2 Research Design.....	82
4.3 Research stages	83
4.4 Stage 1: Community contact.....	85
4.4.1 Preliminary meetings with adults.....	85
4.4.2 Consultations with young people: working their ideas into the research design	87
4.5 Stage 2: Key informant interviews.....	88
4.5.1 The importance of relationships with youth workers.....	90
4.6 Stage 3: Activity sessions with young people.....	92
4.6.1 Pilot sessions	95
4.6.2 Recruitment of participants: community rather than the classroom	95

4.6.3 Locating and reminding participants	97
4.6.4 First activity session	97
4.6.5 Second activity session.....	99
4.6.6 Stage 4: Follow-up discussion groups	100
4.7 Observations of young people’s behaviours and actions.....	101
4.8 Building relationships with young participants	102
4.9 Ethics, confidentiality and anonymity	106
4.10 Research validity, reliability and transferability.....	107
4.11 Data analysis and management	109
4.12 Reflections and limitations	110
4.13 Conclusion.....	112
Chapter 5 Findings.....	113
5.1 Introduction	113
5.2 What is public space?	113
5.2.1 Public realm.....	114
5.2.2 Quasi-public spaces.....	115
5.2.3 Private spaces	115
5.3 Walking tours: the intersection of social and physical public space elements	116
5.3.1 Where to go and what to see: maps of walking tour routes.....	117
5.3.2 Summary of walking tour experiences and observations	122
5.4 Dimensions of public space in Regent Park	123
5.4.1 Physical elements of public space	123
5.4.2 Social elements of public space.....	144
5.5 Would findings be different with more boys?	155
5.6 Conclusion.....	156
Chapter 6 Discussion.....	157
6.1 Introduction	157
6.2 Young people, public space and public housing revitalization	157
6.3 Working with a broad definition of public space	160
6.4 Young people’s attitudes towards physical and social elements of public space and the Regent Park Revitalization Plan	163
6.5 Staying off the grid.....	164

6.5.1 Walkways.....	165
6.5.2 Connections to public spaces in the surrounding neighbourhoods	167
6.6 The physical environment.....	170
6.6.1 Housing.....	170
6.6.2 Murals, graffiti and gardens	171
6.6.3 Garbage and lack of neighbourhood maintenance	172
6.7 Attitudes towards neighbourhood change.....	174
6.7.1 Family and friends	174
6.7.2 Friendships and relocation	175
6.7.3 Neighbourhood culture	176
6.7.4 Programmed recreation and leisure spaces	177
6.8 The different positions of adults in public space: ‘creepies’ and ‘crazies’ versus the ‘richy rich’	179
6.9 Discrepancies in narratives	181
6.10 Conclusion	182
Chapter 7 Conclusion: Reflections and Recommendations	184
7.1 Introduction.....	184
7.2 Reflections	184
7.2.1 Photography and activity sessions	185
7.2.2 Access to young people: recruiting through youth groups rather than schools.....	186
7.2.3 Involving girls in research and planning initiatives	188
7.3 Working towards the incorporation of young people’s perceptions of public space into urban planning: study recommendations	191
7.3.1 Establish a community network.....	193
7.3.2 Involve young people from the outset.....	193
7.3.3 Expand communication with other departments and agencies	195
7.3.4 Revisit planning’s communicative and equity roles	196
7.3.5 Rethink engagement methods	197
7.3.6 Agents of community access.....	201
7.4 Conclusion	201
Appendix A Collages.....	203
Bibliography.....	217

List of Figures

Figure 2-1: Aerial of Regent Park	16
Figure 2-2: Schematic of the future layout of Regent Park	27
Figure 3-1: Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation	67
Figure 5-1: Public space as places we can go: incorporating private, public and quasi public spaces	114
Figure 5-2: First walking tour route	118
Figure 5-3: Second walking tour route	119
Figure 5-4: Third walking tour route	120
Figure 5-5: Fourth walking tour route	122
Figure 5-6: Streets and walkways.....	125
Figure 5-7: Segments of collages showing the Boardwalk.	127
Figure 5-8: Gates blocking walkways.....	128
Figure 5-9: Community garden.....	129
Figure 5-10: Photographs of schools incorporated into collages.....	130
Figure 5-11: Examples of murals	132
Figure 5-12: Segments of collages devoted to graffiti	134
Figure 5-13: Examples of stores in collages.....	134
Figure 5-14: A useless basketball standard	137
Figure 5-15: Examples of playgrounds	138
Figure 5-16: Regent Park Community Centre	138
Figure 5-17: Negative images of housing.....	140
Figure 5-18: Segments of collages about ideas for better housing.....	141
Figure 5-19: Segments of collages to show buildings as home	142
Figure 5-20: Garbage reflected in the collages.....	143
Figure 5-21: Examples of segments of collages dedicated to friends.....	145
Figure 5-22: Representation of community culture.....	146
Figure 5-23: 'I don't think it's a gang'	147
Figure 5-24: Segments of collages incorporating the police	149
Figure 5-25: Capturing violence.....	150

List of Tables

Table 4-1: Research stages.....	84
Table 4-2: Summary of key informant interviews	89
Table 4-3: Sources and numbers of participants	95
Table 4-4: Participants by age and sex.....	107
Table 4-5: Methods and data by research questions and objectives	108

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Young people have not traditionally had a voice in urban planning. They are not typically part of the planning process or fully considered as potential users of urban spaces (Freeman, Henderson, and Kettle, 1999; Matthews, Limb, and Taylor, 1999; Knowles-Yanez, 2002; Malone, 2002; Frank, 2006). More often than not, young people are incorporated into planning by either considering them as an implicit population or as part and parcel of planning for families (Knowles-Yanez, 2002; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005; Frank, 2006). This gap is now recognized as one of the shortcomings of urban planning, and young people have become a focus of research in recent years (Frank, 2006). This particular study seeks to address the gap in the literature about young people and urban planning within a specific context of urban revitalization and public space within a public housing development in Toronto, Canada. By using a participatory, multi-method approach, I set out to determine how young people understand public space and the extent to which this is incorporated into public housing revitalization.

1.2 Research focus

My goal with this study was to use youth-friendly methods and to emphasize young people's perspectives in a field that is typically dominated by adult views. This research draws from three areas: the participation of young people in urban planning, the construction of public space, and urban revitalization. The research questions take three approaches, first, the empirical documentation of how a sample of young people define and perceive their neighbourhood public spaces, second, how their definitions and perceptions translate into the world of planning practice, and third, the potential for urban planning to apply these findings.

1.2.1 Research questions

This study is framed around four research questions. These are:

- 1) How do young people in Regent Park (between the ages of 10 and 16) define public space?
- 2) How do young people perceive and value public spaces?
 - a. What are considered positive elements?
 - b. What are considered negative elements?
- 3) Are these definitions and perceptions considered in urban revitalization plans?
- 4) How can these perceptions be integrated into planned neighbourhood revitalization?

1.2.2 Research objectives

This thesis has the following objectives:

- 1) To understand the perspectives of young people in their neighbourhood public space.
- 2) To determine how young people's perspectives match with revitalization plans.
- 3) To adapt participatory research methods appropriate for young people.

1.3 Young people and planning for public space

Defining young people is a challenge (Hart, 1992; Aitken, 2001). One of the difficulties comes from the variety of ways childhood, adolescence and adulthood are defined and constructed. From some perspectives, a young person is simply on the way to becoming an adult, or is the opposite of an adult (Aitken, 2001). This places emphasis on physical and cognitive development (Valentine, Skelton and Chambers, 1998). This approach does not allow for the roles of context and the state. At one level, culture and time dictate definitions (Sibley, 1995a; Valentine, 1996a) meaning that the responsibilities and societal expectations of young people can vary. As a result, young people cannot be defined into a homogeneous, monolithic group (Greig and Taylor, 1999; Aitken, 2001). At

another level, policy dictates definitions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years. In common usage, a child is considered a pre-pubescent person, and an adolescent (or youth, or teenager) a person between the ages of 13 and 18 years (Hart, 1992; Aitken, 2001; France, 2004). Hart (1992) prefers the term 'young person', rather than 'child' or 'youth' or 'teenager', because it encompasses both age groups without making definitions that may be artificial and not apply in all contexts. My population of interest in Regent Park encompassed those conventionally considered children and teenagers. For this reason, I make use of the term 'young people' throughout my thesis for the reasons offered by Hart (1992).

Urban planners do not typically have a good understanding of how young people fit into the planning process or how they perceive public spaces (Simpson, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Knowles-Yanez, 2002; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005; Frank, 2006). There are examples of initiatives that do incorporate the views of young people, such as the location of skate parks (Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Nolan, 2003); however, meaningful participation by young people is not common. Freeman and Aitken-Rose (2005) show how planning departments in New Zealand have difficulty conceptualising how young people fit into land-use plans. Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1999) illustrate how government departments in the UK that address youth issues do not always appropriately incorporate young people's views. Community groups, not planning departments and organizations, continue to represent primary points of interaction and planning with young people (Cosco and Moore, 2002; O'Donoghue, Kirschner and McLaughlin 2002; Youth IMPACT, 2002).

The lack of interaction of professional planners with young people has in some ways caused the city to be conceived by planners as a 'child-free zone' (Borden, Rendell and Thomas, 1998). Although planners do give consideration to the needs of young people regarding the provision of facilities, issues around safety, and the location of developments with potentially negative impacts,

the unique perspectives of young people are generally ignored in formal planning circles (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). As a result, the implications for young people in the planning of public spaces typically are addressed accidentally or indirectly.

Public spaces are often considered the 'spaces in between' (Atkinson, 2003) and most typically viewed as the streets, alleyways, sidewalks, parks and open spaces that make up the public realm (Carr et al., 1992; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). Public space is often defined by what is private and quasi-private (Smith, 1996; Blomley, 2004). In this sense, private property rights have an important role in defining public space in terms of access and use. Public spaces play important roles for young people. They provide the forum for personal growth and development as young people navigate and develop their understandings of social and physical boundaries (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Bauder, 2001; Malone, 2002). The new 21st Century urban renewal schemes have led to new debate and conceptions of public space and a growing privatisation thereof. At the centre of this are questions about what are considered desirable forms and functions of public space. A principal component of the emerging discussions on revitalized public space is the place of those members of society that are on the social, economic, and political fringes. Young people represent one of these groups and this makes it important to investigate their perceptions of public space.

Public space has always been marked by the implicit and explicit rules that are imposed on acceptable users and uses (Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Malone, 2002). These rules reflect dominant social values (Lefebvre, 1991; Iveson, 2000; Massey, 2005) and are typically based on adult views and norms (Iveson, 1998; Massey, 1998; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). Young people are key users of neighbourhood public spaces, but they are not typically part of the planning for the renewal that affects these spaces (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). In fact, young people, particularly low-income youth, face noted challenges in making use of urban public spaces (Coley, Kuo and Sullivan, 1997; Watt and Stenson,

1998). Challenges come in the form of targeted police operations, “move along” laws, where young people are the focus of actions to break up gathered groups, for example loitering laws, curfews and general adult disapproval of young people congregating together (Iveson, 2000; Collins and Kearns, 2001; Malone and Hasluck, 2002). They face stereotypes that associate youth and poverty with violence and crime (Breitbart, 1998; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). Legal and social restrictions on young people create a public realm which does not explicitly engage young people.

Urban revitalization has again become a key part of the urban agenda as cities now attempt to position themselves on the global stage (Teitz, 1989; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004). Inner city public space and the surrounding neighbourhoods are particular focuses of revitalization. Often, the process of urban renewal is couched within globalization and neoliberalism (Smith 1996, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Blomley, 2004; Hackworth and Moriah, 2006). The ideals of competition, individualism and market value are typical foundation values of these efforts. This has placed young people, who are tied by age and socio-economic status to their neighbourhood, in the midst of changes that are taking place as a result of pressures far beyond their local boundaries. Urban planning has direct impacts on the lives of young people who live within neighbourhoods targeted for urban renewal.

Planning at the neighbourhood level has significant implications for young people. The concept of a spatially defined neighbourhood is often used in studies that make connections between the life chances and quality of life of young people. Because of their youth, they are less mobile and thus are bound closely to their neighbourhood (Pile and Thrift, 1995; Curtis, Dooley and Phipps, 2004). This makes young people an important population to consider when assessing change that may result from revitalization plans. The local neighbourhood provides the forum for place-bound identity (Pile and Thrift, 1995; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Bauder, 2001; Massey, 2005) and contributes to the educational and employment outcomes of young people (Boyle and Lipman, 2002;

Galster, 2003) as well as to their physical health, and emotional well-being (Ellen and Turner, 1997; Curtis, Dooley and Phipps, 2004). In this age of increasing telecommunications, there is debate regarding the role of the neighbourhood now that networks are built and developed across time and cyberspace (Massey, 1998; 2005). However, many still believe that the neighbourhood and its local public spaces play a key role for young people (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Aitken, 2001; Malone, 2002), particularly those from poor families (Pile and Thrift, 1995; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Percy-Smith and Matthews, 2001; Curtis, Dooley and Phipps, 2004). Coley, Kuo and Sullivan (1997) find this to be particularly true for young people living in neighbourhoods of public housing. For these young people, neighbourhood public spaces are an extension of private space and they make much more use of public space than do their more affluent counterparts. The present study builds upon the findings related to the unique and knowledgeable perspectives of young people on their neighbourhood by seeking the perceptions of young people within the context of a public housing neighbourhood, Regent Park, Toronto, on the threshold of large-scale revitalization.

1.4 The benefits of young people's involvement in the planning process

Despite the absence of young people from most planning for neighbourhood public spaces, there are noted benefits from involving young people in the urban planning process. By incorporating the perspectives and knowledge of young people, planners can accomplish three things: introduce young people to the democratic decision-making process, support the building of young people's skills, and encourage balanced planning that is more holistic and therefore more successful. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by Canada (Covell and Howe, 2001), requires that young people be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Participation in the planning process is one logical place for this commitment to be fulfilled (Freeman and Riordan, 2002). Involvement in the planning process is beneficial to young participants. It fosters self-esteem and citizenship (Hart, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Chawla et al., 2006). Meaningful

participation of young people can also lead to the development of more enduring plans (Hart, 1997; Chawla et al., 2006; Frank, 2006). As adults, most of us have forgotten what it is like to be a child. This makes collaboration with young people essential in order to fully understand everyday neighbourhood activities (Hanne, 2002). Chawla et al. (2006) describe young people as a city's "keystone species" for determining the health and success of urban processes and spaces. Therefore, incorporating young people into planning needs to be a central part of the process rather than an afterthought (Hart, 1997; Chawla et al., 2006).

Past studies of young people in the urban environment have been undertaken by a variety of disciplines, most notably education, child development studies, sociology, urban studies, and geography. Hart's (1979) *Children's Experience of Place* provided an early understanding of how young people invest spaces with meaning and how they make use of these spaces. This foundation has led to investigations of how young people relate to and evaluate the natural and built environments (Moore, 1986; Matthews, 1992; Aitken and Wingate, 1993; Dodman, 2003; Tunstall, Tapstell and House, 2004). Two key findings have developed out of this research. First, young people value their surroundings differently than adults (Hart, 1979; Ward, 1990; Matthews, 1992; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Terrible, 2000; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003; Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004, Chawla et al., 2006). This makes their views and contribution to planning for the design and uses of the urban landscape unique. Second, young people are key users of urban public spaces and have deep knowledge of their local areas (Ward, 1990; Davis and Jones, 1996; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Percy-Smith and Matthews, 2001). Because of this, consultation and planning with young people can provide important viewpoints on urban plans.

There is particular interest in how disadvantaged young people interact with their environments. Breitbart (1995, 1998) and McIntyre (2000) both investigate how young people from

poor inner city American neighbourhoods value their neighbourhoods. The spatial geographies of young people have also received growing attention. These studies range from the geographies of homeless youth in Los Angeles (Ruddick, 2002) to the legal constraints that restrict their movement and access to urban space (Lucas, 1998; Collins and Kearns, 2001). There are also studies on how young people make use of and are treated in urban public spaces. Matthews, Limb and Taylor (2000) explore the role of the street as a fundamental public space of the neighbourhood in the UK. Lees (2003) identifies the challenges of young people in terms of use and access in a recently renewed downtown centre in the United States and Malone (2002) undertakes a similar investigation in Australia.

Studies from fields related to urban planning are useful; however, there is a need for planning-based research on how planners can incorporate the views of young people into revitalization plans. From a planning process perspective, Freeman and Aitken-Rose (2006) document the understandings that planners have of roles young people play in the formation and implementation of plans. Simpson (1997), Freeman, Henderson and Kettle (1999) and Frank (2006) outline the roles of young people and their valuable contributions to the planning process. The United Nations' *Growing Up in Cities Project* provides international case studies of how young people feel alienated from their neighbourhoods and communities and how they can be incorporated into local initiatives. However, there are opportunities to undertake planning studies that can have their findings applied to practice. This is particularly the case for the Canadian experience. The majority of studies are focused on the American, UK and developing world contexts. While these are useful for establishing themes and trends, there is room to explore how these apply to Canada. There is a need for Canadian examples in order to demonstrate the importance of planning with young people because few Canadian planners place an emphasis on young people (Bridgman, 2004a).

This study adds to the existing literature by presenting and analysing how young people within the context of urban public housing revitalization in Toronto, Ontario define and perceive neighbourhood public space. The case study, Regent Park, is in the midst of a \$1 billion, 12 year renewal plan, making the findings and recommendations applicable to future plans for the neighbourhood. The Regent Park Revitalization Plan has gained a great deal of media attention, making it a recognizable and current case study. The revitalization of Regent Park is a landmark planning project having already received awards, prizes and debate in pages of news media and professional planning publications. Regent Park is Canada's oldest and largest public housing development. It reflects the modernistic planning of the time. The result of slum clearance, it gave planners an opportunity to implement elements of Le Corbusier's vision of towers in the park and Howard's garden city concept. The end result was a public housing neighbourhood that removed through streets and imposed clear demarcation of where surrounding neighbourhoods end and Regent Park begins. Walkways and open space dominate the neighbourhood. The revitalization plan essentially reverses much of the physical design of the neighbourhood that was put into place when it was built over 50 years ago. The network of walkways and the 'island within the city' feeling will be replaced with a grid street pattern. A neighbourhood based on mixed use and mixed income housing will take the place of the almost exclusively residential, public housing development.

The findings of this study add to the current literature on how young people relate to the environment in that their perspectives were very unique and were not reflected in the formal plan (Hart, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). When compared to the literature and key informant interviews, the findings show significant differences in how young people define public space as well as their neighbourhood design preferences. For them, public space consists of spaces that are traditionally considered private and quasi-private. Walkways are given greater importance than streets. Themes that emerged from the findings include sense of

community, housing design, violence and fear, dislike of neighbourhood litter and vandalism, appreciation of neighbourhood art and history, and apprehension and scepticism regarding the Regent Park revitalization plan.

1.5 Young people, public space and Regent Park

This study was approached from a collaborative, participatory planning perspective. Part of participatory planning processes is to recognize diversity and to respect different forms of knowing and knowledge (Healey, 1997; Umemoto, 2001; Innes and Booher, 2004). This study made use of this perspective and respected the knowledge of young participants based on their current values and opinions rather than seeing it as limited by their lack of exposure to alternatives because of their age and the socio-economic circumstances shaping their life experiences. The participatory planning techniques employed with young people need to differ from those used with adults (Breitbart, 1995; Hart, 1997; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). Adult-oriented methods, such as meetings and round-table discussions are not only less likely to be successful with young people (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005), but also have the potential to inhibit or shape young people's contributions (Hart, 1992, 1997). Freeman, Henderson and Kettle (1999) call for activity, interaction, and a 'hands on' approach to the principles of participatory planning with young people. In order to gain access to young people's views and ideas about their local neighbourhoods and neighbourhood change, Breitbart (1995, p. 37) recommends "active neighbourhood exploration and a visual articulation of needs and desires." This study worked towards following these principles and recommendations by integrating small group work with photography, artwork and participant-led neighbourhood tours.

The Regent Park Revitalization Plan made use of an extensive community consultation. This process is presented by Meagher and Boston (2003) in *Community Engagement and the Regent Park Redevelopment*. When I reviewed this document, I noticed "...who speaks and who does not, who

attends meetings and who does not ...” (Forester, 1994: 154). The Regent Park community engagement process consulted young people as a subsection of the population. Those in elementary school were involved in classroom exercises. Those who attended Pathways for Education, a local tutoring and mentoring programme, could participate in focus group discussions. Classroom exercises were oriented towards awareness building. My early discussions with community key informants revealed that these focus groups were not received well by young participants because the discussion was strongly shaped by the facilitator and the outcomes were not clear. The goal of this research is not to place blame on those responsible for planning the redevelopment for not involving young people more, but rather to investigate what young people may have said if they had been asked, or if someone had listened.

My choice to specifically look at how young people view neighbourhood public spaces grew out of the Regent Park Revitalization Study and its proposal to change the street design and use of a park to anchor the neighbourhood. Planning for public space quickly becomes fraught with the question of ‘what is public space?’ (Harvey, 1973; Iveson, 1998; Atkinson, 2003). The spaces most commonly considered public include walkways, streets, playgrounds and parks that are usually open and accessible to the public (Carr et al., 1992). However, there is more to planning of public spaces than providing for the physical. There are many different publics. This results in competing views of the needs and functions of spaces (Zukin, 1995; Atkinson, 2003). Space should not be viewed as a container of actions, but produced by interactions, invested meanings and shaped and maintained by power (Lefebvre, 1991). Space is socially constructed (Harvey, 1973), and those with power and influence have the ability to impose a vision on space (Lefebvre, 1991; Zukin, 1995; Arthurson, 2001). Social groups with relatively less power, such as the elderly, the poor, women, ethnic and sexual minorities, and young people, typically lack access to decision-making power and have been excluded from the planning for urban public spaces (Malone, 2002). Because of the lack of

involvement of young people in planning and because young people do not have the power to define the dominant discourse on public space, for this study I purposely did not come up with my own working definition of public space. This was left to the young participants. My focus was on how young people in particular view public space – how they define it, what they consider to be positive and negative components, and how this compares with the revitalization plan.

1.6 Thesis outline

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. This Introduction chapter has presented an overview of why this thesis is important and how it fits within the larger planning field. Chapter 2 sets the context of the study by examining the history of Regent Park and the elements of the *Regent Park Revitalization Study*. Chapter 3 explores the literature related to the key themes associated with this study: research involving young people, public space, and urban revitalization. The research methods are presented in Chapter 4 which also discusses the rationale for and approach towards analysis. This was a qualitative study that made use of photography, art, and discussion. Chapter 5 presents the findings that were generated with the young participants, key informant interviews, and secondary sources. These are discussed in Chapter 6. My reflections and recommendations are presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2

Regent Park Context

2.1 Introduction

Regent Park is unique from a number of perspectives. It has the distinction of being Canada's first and largest public housing development. The planning perspective on Regent Park has shifted over the past 50 years, moving from lauding the successes of the neighbourhood in the 1950s and 1960s to condemning its failures from the 1970s through to the present day. In Regent Park's early years, planning had transformed the area "from slum to housing oasis" (Hilliard, 1955). Now the description of the neighbourhood takes a very different tone. The housing development is considered socially isolating, physically deteriorating with spaces that lend themselves to crime and vandalism (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002). It is also described as Canada's "most notoriously ill-planned community (Meagher and Boston, 2003: 5). The revitalization plan is an effort to address these past planning failures. This chapter provides background on how Regent Park came into being, its current state, and visions for the future.

2.1.1 "Raze the hovels"

Regent Park's 69 acre site on the eastern edge of Toronto's downtown was carved out of the neighbourhood known as Cabbagetown. Present-day Cabbagetown is noted for its Victorian façades and tree-lined streets, but it was long regarded as the city's largest working-class slum (Holdsworth, 1993). The families living in the Cabbagetown slum were considered dirty and prone to all sorts of social ills and deviance (Holdsworth, 1993; Purdy, 2005). The neighbourhood became the target of the post-World War II urban reform movement. It represented the two problems facing housing in Canada at the time: overcrowding and blight (Rose, 1958; City of Toronto, n.d.). The growth of the slum attracted the attention and concern of Lieutenant Governor Bruce in 1934 who called for the

evacuation of these 'hovels' and to 'raze them and bury the distressing memory of them'. Bruce's sentiment was consistent with the urban reform movement of the time, found across large American and European cities, which promoted top-down, interventionist slum clearance projects. From the perspective of these urban reformers, slums represented the convergence of the physical environment with social behaviour where the combination of social isolation and undesirable environment resulted in deviant behaviour (Purdy, 2004; 2005).

In 1934, a committee was formed under Lieutenant Governor Bruce to study Toronto's housing conditions. The scope of the report, which became known as the Bruce Report, was to address:

- 1) The quality of the accommodation in regard to:
 - a) construction;
 - b) sanitary facilities;
 - c) overcrowding;
 - d) existence of conditions generally detrimental to health.
- 2) Rents paid by tenants;
- 3) Environmental considerations.

According to Rose (1958), a prominent housing scholar, the terms of reference for the report were to make general recommendations for the steps needed to remedy any unfavourable conditions. As a result of the report, the Cabbagetown area was given first priority for redevelopment (Rose, 1958; City of Toronto, n.d.). The report advised wholesale slum clearance and building large-scale housing with modern amenities (Zapparoli, 1999). However, the recommendations were not acted upon immediately. The Depression and World War II resulted in the Bruce Report being shelved until 1946 (Zapparoli, 1999). Regent Park was built in two phases, referred to as Regent Park North and Regent Park South. The decision regarding the development of what is now Regent Park North was

dealt with on the 1947 municipal election ballot (Rose, 1958; City of Toronto, n.d.; Purdy, 2005). Nearly two-thirds of the electorate, defined at the time as rate payers only, responded yes (Rose, 1958; Purdy, 2005).

Regent Park followed in the same path of other public housing developments across North America and Europe (Sewell, 1994). The design marked a departure from the surrounding Victorian neighbourhoods. The inspiration for public housing of this era came from a fusion of Howard's garden city and Le Corbusier's Radiant City resulting in Towers in the Park (Venkatesh, 2000). The Garden City is often considered to be the model for Regent Park, however, this points to some confusion over what the Garden City concept truly represents. Howard's 1902 *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* had provided a foundation for a great deal of the design for Britain's new towns (Hardy, 2005). The garden city design was based on two parts. The first related to the physical organization where settlements were envisaged as self-standing neighbourhoods surrounded by a green belt and each development would be 'a city of gardens and a city within a garden' (Hardy, 2005). The second element of the design was based upon shared land ownership. Land would remain in trust for the garden city as a whole rather than selling land to developers (Hardy, 2005). Like Howard, Le Corbusier also placed emphasis on generous open spaces and the separation of uses. Le Corbusier stressed the need for openness and the strict isolation of lived spaces from vehicular traffic (Venkatesh, 2000). For Le Corbusier, open space was not just park space, but also the spaces between buildings to ensure that all buildings had access to recreational and health aspects of open space. The pedestrian nature of these developments meant that residents were free from worries of traffic dangers and nuisances. These designs reflect the broader views of this era. Environmental determinism, the belief that the physical built environment directly shapes the lives of its residents provided the foundation for Le Corbusier's visions.

Over time, Howard's ideal of the garden city took on a generic meaning that did not truly relate to his basic ideals. Many post-war developments that made use of liberal open space, trees and winding streets are often considered as influenced by the garden city movement, but in actuality have little to do with Howard's vision (Hardy, 2005; Grant, 2006). The concepts associated with Le Corbusier are now discredited as creating neighbourhoods of vast tracts of open space with unclear divisions between public and private space, leading to isolation, crime and vandalism (Sewell, 1994).

Figure 2-1: Aerial of Regent Park



Source: City of Toronto (1999)

Toronto's version of the Towers in the Park was built over two phases between 1948 and 1959. Regent Park North, bounded by Parliament, River, Gerrard and Dundas Streets, is made up of walk-up apartments and row houses and reflects the typical model of public housing of the era

(Milgrom, 1999). It was built by the City and managed by the Toronto Housing Authority. Regent Park South is much higher density and has 15-storey apartment buildings and 4-storey row houses. This part of the development, bounded by Parliament, Shuter, River, and Dundas Streets, was funded by a federal-provincial partnership. Designed by Peter Dickinson, Regent Park South won a Massey Medal for Architecture (Milgrom, 1999) and was declared "... a noteworthy advance in the standards of apartment-house planning, siting and aesthetic character" (Jackson, 1959: 63). The end result was a self-contained neighbourhood with no through traffic and a focus on open spaces (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002).

The first inhabitants of Regent Park were allocated a home based on financial and housing needs (Rose, 1958). The application list for accommodation in Regent Park North exceeded 5,000 families (Rose, 1958). The majority of the early residents were of English, Scottish and Irish descent who worked in local factories and businesses (Rose, 1958; Purdy, 2005). Initially, only two parent families were accommodated in Regent Park, single parent families and single people were not admitted (Zapparoli, 1999). By 1960, the population of Regent Park was approximately 10,000 people (Purdy, 2005).

2.1.2 'A housing oasis'

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) heralded the opening of Regent Park with its 1953 documentary film *Farewell to Oak Street*. The documentary portrays how urban reform rescued Cabbagetown residents from blight, poverty and its associated pathologies and the happy move-in day of the new residents (Purdy, 2005). Lorne Greene's narration summarizes the overall tone of the times:

"...down came the verminous walls, the unclean, the unhealthy buildings and down came the fire hazards, the juvenile delinquency, the drunkenness, the broken marriages and rose, something new, the nation's first public housing project."

Zapparoli (1999) describes these early years of Regent Park as its 'honeymoon period'. For a brief time, the newly built Regent Park was considered the panacea for its residents. *The Star Weekly*, a Toronto weekly magazine publication, proclaimed the area to be "a housing oasis" that "has sprung up in the heart of downtown Toronto where, eight years ago sprawled one of Canada's worst slums" and that the "results have exceeded their expectations" (Hilliard, 1955). Success was attributed to the clustering of the units and families close together rather than being spread throughout the city (City of Toronto, n.d.) and because it was a more heterogeneous cross-section, in age groups, family size, income, ethno cultural background and race than any of Toronto's suburban neighbourhoods (Haggart, 1958). Rose (1958) credits to the project's success a decline in juvenile delinquency, improved school attendance of Regent Park's school-age children, and improved overall health of residents. *Farewell to Oak Street* (1953) and Rose (1958) document families who are very happy to leave the squalor of Cabbagetown behind and are satisfied with their new and improved housing and neighbourhood.

Purdy, who writes about Regent Park from historical and socio-political perspectives, reads the interpretation of Regent Park's early success differently. Slum clearance was based predominately on the dominant white, middle-class values of post-war notions of family and community (Purdy, 2004; 2005). Other ways of living were considered deviant and in need of intervention. This discourse on slums and slum living revealed much more about dominant class values than it did about the actual conditions and day-to-day activities of those living in slum neighbourhoods (Ley, 2000). The social connections and community life that did exist in these neighbourhoods were not recognized or valued (Jacobs, 1961). Residents of the planned neighbourhood were considered to have been "economically, socially and morally transformed due to the new public housing environment" and therefore had been brought into line with more acceptable and decent ways of living (Purdy, 2005: 531).

However, the residents of the newly established Regent Park did not share this portrayal of their situation. Purdy (2005) challenges the notion that *Farewell to Oak Street* is truly a documentary. He considers it more a vehicle for urban renewal propaganda, as the families and their activities were staged and scripted for the film. His position is underlined by the actions taken by a Regent Park tenants' association upon the release of the film. The portrayal of Regent Park residents as former slum dwellers in need of reform prompted them to contact their Member of Parliament, Charles Henry. Although Henry brought their concerns to the House of Commons and requested that the film be withdrawn from circulation, *Farewell to Oak Street* became a widely available testament to the success of Regent Park.

In the midst of the heralding of the achievements of Regent Park, there were cautions about the high expectations. Rose gave one such warning (in Haggart, 1958):

“The public generally sets high expectations for the changes which they feel should result from the new physical and social environment of public housing. If people are unhappy, public housing should make them happy. If husbands and wives are in conflict or poorly adjusted emotionally, public housing should remove their basic conflicts ... If children or adults are in poor health, the conditions of public housing should cure them ... public housing should make them clean, well-dressed, and able to progress normally at school. This point of view is extreme and sets up the most unrealistic expectations for public housing developments; not all of these expectations can be achieved and none of them will be realized immediately.”

Rose's sentiment foreshadowed the change in public perception and the reality of living in Regent Park.

2.2 Contemporary Regent Park: 1960s to present

The modernist planning approach to public housing development began to draw criticisms in the 1960s. In many cases, public housing developments were viewed as worse than the slums they were supposed to replace and were identified as pockets of delinquency, vandalism and hopelessness

(Jacobs, 1961). Regent Park's honeymoon period with the media, academics, planners, and poverty was fairly short-lived. By the late 1960s, Regent Park was increasingly considered a slum, and in many ways similar to the Cabbagetown neighbourhood that had been demolished in order for it to be built (Purdy, 2005). Criticism came from many sides.

“Condemned as too large and badly designed by academics, as a haven for single mothers, welfare families and deviants by governments and media, a magnet for crime and drug problems by police and law and order advocates, and the site of potentially explosive ‘racial’ problems by many popular commentators, it had come full circle in the public mind from the ‘ordered community’ of the 1940s” (Purdy, 2005: 531).

By the early 1970s, public housing fell out of favour as a federal government strategy for housing or urban renewal (van Dyk, 1995; Harris, 1999). In 1968, the Paul Hellyer Report was issued by the task force established by Prime Minister Trudeau to investigate housing and urban development. It was very critical of public housing and labelled the developments as ghettos that acted as disincentives and led to lack of pride for their residents (Sewell, 1994).

The image of Regent Park as an island of concentrated poverty and crime has been sensationalised by the media and further exacerbated by the limited experience that the general public has with the neighbourhood (Purdy, 2005). Outsider views of public housing do not always capture the perceptions of its residents (Brown, Perkins and Brown, 2003). Community networks and friendships are also part of poor neighbourhoods - they are not just areas ridden with crime, violence, and drug-trafficking. This places residents at the intersection of conflicting outsider perceptions and their own local, lived realities (Reay and Lucy, 2000). Zapparoli (1999), a recognized photographer

and photojournalist who grew up in Regent Park, captures this disconnect in the introduction to his *Regent Park: The Public Experiment in Housing*:

“I grew up in a small town – small town inside a big city. A small town that is known as the housing project called Regent Park. What people who ride by on the streetcars or in the comfort of their own cars see is not what I experienced.”

His portrayal of Regent Park captures a neighbourhood that does not match with media reports and public perceptions. Zapparoli complements his own experiences growing up along with other oral histories and photographs to shed light on a neighbourhood, admittedly facing the challenges of poverty and run-down public housing, which has a strong and diverse community.

2.2.1 Regent Park's challenges: design, poverty and ownership

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), the agency responsible for providing and managing Toronto's public housing acknowledges through their website for Regent Park (www.regentparkplan.ca) that there is local community spirit. The Regent Park Collaborative Team (2002) echoes this sentiment. But this recognition is not shared by the general public (Purdy, 2005) and comes in the midst of much criticism. There are different perspectives on Regent Park's failures as a neighbourhood. Some blame the physical design. The lack of through streets is considered an isolating factor because it cuts the neighbourhood off from its surrounding areas and the rest of the city (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002). John Sewell, former mayor of Toronto and housing and planning activist, has specific ideas about the problems and potential solutions for Regent Park. In his opinion, the modernist design elements of the neighbourhood, such as lack of privately defined, 'defensible' space, the concept developed by Oscar Newman (1972), the large number of dwellings that share a single entrance and high rises in general have led to anti-social and deviant behaviour and are connected to lack of ownership and safety (Sewell, 1994). He elaborates on this in the NFB's 1994 documentary *Return to Regent Park*. He states that the planners are to blame for Regent Park

because they created a community where no one feels connected to anything. He believes that because “nobody knows who is in control of public space, it is usurped by drug dealers”. In his eyes, the only solution to modify behaviour is to modify the physical environment of the neighbourhood.

The concentration of low income households is presented as another problem (Zapparoli, 1999, Purdy, 2005). The purpose of public housing across North America has shifted over the decades (Vale, 2002). Regent Park also reflects this shift. The original working poor families that called public housing neighbourhoods home over time have been replaced by the targeted poor where only the poorest and most disadvantaged could access public housing (Vale, 2002). In recent years, the concentration of poverty is increasingly identified as a key factor impeding neighbourhood stability and success. In addition to usually living in sub-standard housing, residents of neighbourhoods with intense poverty are noted as facing obstacles for employment, stable family relationships (Wilson, 1993; Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2003) and physical and emotional well-being (Ellen and Turner, 1997). The resources from local public goods, such as schools, libraries and law enforcement, are not always of the same quality as in more affluent neighbourhoods (Oreopolous, 2002). From this perspective, poverty marks Regent Park as a neighbourhood apart both physically and socially.

However, it is not just the design and the income status of its residents that clearly demarcate Regent Park’s boundaries. The physical deterioration of the buildings and grounds marks it as different from its surrounding neighbourhoods. Sewell (1994) and Jacobs (1961) state that public housing developments do little to instil sense of pride and ownership in residents. It is the landlord who has ownership and responsibility for maintenance. In the case of Regent Park, the landlord has changed over time. This change in ownership itself is not an issue. What becomes problematic is when these changes were accompanied by increased distance through bureaucratization and inadequate funding. From 1949 to 1968, the Housing Authority of Toronto administered and

managed Regent Park (Purdy, 2004). In 1968, these responsibilities were transferred to the provincially run Ontario Housing Corporation (Zapparoli, 1999). Residents protested this change on the grounds that the management was ineffective, bureaucratic, and essentially like dealing with an absentee landlord (Zapparoli, 1999; Purdy, 2004). In the 1990s, the task of overseeing Regent Park was shifted again as the Ontario Housing Corporation created another layer of management in the form of housing authorities for certain municipalities. The responsibility for managing Regent Park became vested in the Metro Toronto Housing Association. These housing authorities carried virtually no authority (Zapparoli, 1999). All of the major decisions facing Regent Park, such as staffing issues, major repairs, setting rent, and security, needed approval of the provincially-based Ontario Housing Corporation (Zapparoli, 1999). In 2000, Ontario passed the Social Housing Reform Act. This Act codified the downloading of housing to the municipal level and created 47 local housing service agencies that were typically associated with a municipal government (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006). The rationale behind the downloading was “to improve local delivery, innovation, and forge a new relationship with the private market; in simple terms, to make housing providers behave more like businesses” (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006: 515).

The most recent step in the evolution of Regent Park’s management, and essentially its landlord, was the merging of the Metro Toronto Housing Corporation and the Toronto Housing Company to create the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) on January 1, 2002. This merger was part of amalgamation of local jurisdictions. This made TCHC the second largest housing provider in North America, second only to New York, and the largest in the province (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006). Hackworth and Moriah (2006) consider TCHC as quite unique from other housing service providers in the province because of its entrepreneurial activities. These include the selling of part of its portfolio to fund new developments, renting out space to commercial tenants, and transferring some of its properties to the private market (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006).

2.2.2 The residents of Regent Park

Just as the administrative and management responsibilities have changed over time, so has the profile of who lives in Regent Park. There are some challenges to exactly determine the population characteristics of Regent Park. Officially the home of approximately 7,500 people, the estimated current population is closer to 10,000 when the uncounted population, such as the homeless and undeclared family and guests, is taken into consideration (TCHC, 2007). Regent Park is made up of two census tracts with Regent Park North in one and Regent Park South in the other. These tracts stretch beyond the boundaries of Regent Park to include segments of the surrounding neighbourhoods. This affects the statistics, such as those related to income, age and language. The demographic information presented here draws on the data in the *Regent Park Social Development Plan* (2007) and the *Regent Park Community Services and Facilities Study* (2004).

Regent Park residents are no longer mainly Anglo-Irish two-parent families. It is now a multicultural neighbourhood where more than 70 languages are spoken and 63% speak a language other than English (TCHC, 2007). In recent decades, Regent Park has evolved into an immigrant reception area (TCHC, 2004). Immigrants make up 60% of Regent Park resident profile with one third having arrived in Canada in the last five years. The largest groups represented in the immigrant population are Bengali (15%), Tamil (10%), Vietnamese (10%) and Chinese (8%) (TCHC, 2007). The immigration points system places an emphasis on education and qualifications and likely has had an impact on the education profile of Regent Park. Of those 20 years and older, 25% have been to university and 17.8% have at least a Bachelor of Arts degree. Almost 50% have completed high school.

Poverty is a defining feature of Regent Park. Regent Park North is located in the lowest income census tract in Ontario. The average family income is \$20,645, more than 50% below the national average of \$50,091. The second lowest income census tract in Ontario is Regent Park South

where the average family income is \$26,912. This high level of poverty is also accompanied by a large proportion, 37.3%, of lone parent households mostly made up of single mothers, with the ratio of female-to-male single parent families being 9 to 1 (TCHC, 2007).

When Regent Park welcomed its first families, youthfulness of the population had come as a surprise. Of the 4,000 people that first resided in Regent Park South, 63% were children (City of Toronto, n.d.). Regent Park has maintained its youthful profile and is markedly different from the rest of the city. Residents 18 years old and under make up 37% of the population, which is significantly higher than the city average of 17.5% (TCHC, 2007). Nearly 57% of those living in Regent Park are aged 24 years and under (TCHC, 2007).

2.2.3 Challenges and opportunities for young people

The sheer numbers of young people make their challenges and opportunities within the neighbourhood important. Interviews with those that work within Regent Park reveal the main challenges for young people as safety, local environmental hazards, harassment and stigmatization, and growing up in a culture of immediacy. However, there are also a number of opportunities for young people living in Regent Park. *Regent Park Community Services and Facilities Study* (2004) and the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy identify Regent Park as a highly serviced area with a large network of strong community-based services and facilities.

2.3 Revitalizing Regent Park

Regent Park is about to undergo redevelopment once again, and again, changing the built environment is seen as a fundamental component in order to change local social dynamics. “Modifying the physical form to modify behaviour is the only solution” (Sewell in *Return to Regent Park*). However, the current revitalization plan is not the first attempt to initiate change in the neighbourhood. Between 1989 and 1995 the United Church explored a redevelopment plan for their

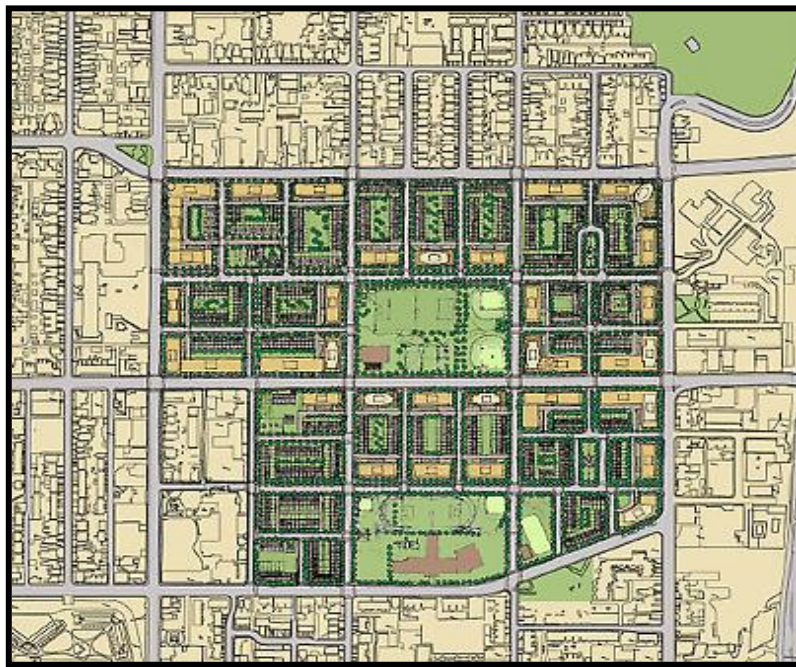
property, 40 Oak Street. This plan was based on a phased approach in order to avoid resident displacement and emphasised a grid street pattern, front doors, private open space and income mix (Milgrom, 2003). This initiative depended on provincial funding, and the government's cancelling of funding for public housing put an end to the project. In the late 1990s, another revitalization attempt emerged through the North Regent Park Working Committee. This plan focused on the northeast corner bounded by Gerrard, Oak, River and Sumach Streets and was advocated by a group of residents and other community activists and garnered attention in the media (Monsebraaten, 1997; Purdy, 2005). It called for a private developer to build 163 units that would be a mix of subsidized, market rent and private ownership on a street pattern similar to local urban neighbourhoods (Rider, 1997). Much of the value of this plan was based on making Regent Park 'normal'. Monsebraaten's (1997) *Toronto Star* article stated that area residents felt that children growing up in Regent Park should have their own backyards and live on regular city streets. In the same article, John Sewell expressed his feeling that those living in Regent Park should be able to take their garbage cans out to the curb on garbage day like everyone else. This plan to redevelop a small section of Regent Park progressed through the planning approvals process (Milgrom, 2003). Although it did not succeed due to financial constraints, it shares similarities with the Regent Park Revitalization Plan (TCHC, 2007).

2.4 Key features of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan

The Regent Park Revitalization Plan proposes a very different Regent Park from the one that exists now. According to the new plan, the streets and the types of residents will change. Regent Park will be placed back onto the urban grid street pattern by reintroducing through streets. Streets will replace the network of walkways and parking lots along Sumach, Oak, Sackville and St. David's Walk, with smaller local streets providing access to all new housing. Parks are a large part of the plan for public spaces. A large park in the centre of the development is to serve as an anchor. It will provide the primary public space. A series of smaller parkettes will serve as the public space for the immediately

surrounding housing. Social mix will also be introduced by having a combination of social housing, market rent and private ownership. This social mix is also accompanied by an increase in population density. The current number of 2,087 units is proposed to increase to 4,500, with the same number of social housing units being maintained on-site and in the nearby neighbourhoods (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002). The expectation is that this plan will transform Regent Park from an island of isolation and poverty into a mixed neighbourhood that will improve the lives and environment of its residents (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002).

Figure 2-2: Schematic of the future layout of Regent Park



Source: Regent Park Collaborative Team (2002)

2.5 The community engagement process

The initial Regent Park Revitalization Plan was formulated by experts from different fields, including urban design, urban planning, financial modeling and community development (Meagher and Boston, 2003). This provided the basis for an extensive consultation process. Consultation took place in 2001 with Regent Park residents, residents from surrounding communities, area-based community

agencies, financial experts, developers, architects and City of Toronto staff (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002; Meagher and Boston, 2003). The planning consulting firm responsible for the revitalization plan, GHK Consulting, contracted out the public participation process to Public Interest Strategy and Communications. For Regent Park residents, group meetings and one-on-one meetings took place in the autumn of 2001. Outreach involved addressing the nine groups representing the largest ethno-cultural groups. Residents were hired and trained as community animators to gain access to the broad spectrum of Regent Park voices as well as to ensure culturally appropriate dialogue. In September, general issues of street design, community services and housing were discussed. The details of these issues were discussed further in October in both community forums, small groups and with individuals. In November, the complete plan was considered. Those groups with special needs, such as the elderly and young people, had complementary consultations.

The engagement with children and youth took place in October through local elementary schools and Pathways for Education, a local tutoring and mentoring programme for Regent Park high school students (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002; Meagher and Boston, 2003). Curriculum units were developed by elementary school student teachers and librarians. Students created art work, filled out surveys and did an assignment that involved interviewing and speaking to their parents and other adults in their neighbourhood about the revitalization. At Pathways for Education, focus groups were held to discuss what services were needed in the new neighbourhood. These focus groups were not received well by participants. One of the participants in my project had taken part in the focus groups. He was not enthusiastic about what had happened. He said that they were told what they could talk about and he didn't think that what they had said had really mattered.

2.6 Conclusion

February 3, 2005, City of Toronto councillors voted 43 – 1 to go ahead with the 12 year plan to redevelop Regent Park (Gillespie, 2005). Over six phases, with the exception of one of the high rises

that will be renovated and restored as heritage preservation, the area will be razed and then rebuilt. Mayor David Miller has called the Regent Park revitalization a pilot project and was quoted in the *Toronto Star* as saying that “ it must be gotten right” because the future revitalization of other social housing projects depend on its success (Lu, 2005). February 15, 2006, the demolition of Regent Park began. Coyle’s (2006) article in the *Toronto Sun* describes the mixed emotions towards the event captures the complexity of the situation:

“It was easy to understand the cheers as the first bricks fell to the din-making demolition machinery at Regent Park this week and the city’s ambitious redevelopment of the infamous housing project began. What might have surprised outsiders, though, were the laments for the much-cursed, long-troubled place ... The idea of home holds a powerful place in the human psyche – sometimes the more powerful for the meanness of its construction, the sparseness of its furnishings, its hard-scrabble surrounds. Sometimes, roots grab most fiercely to the least hospitable ground.”

The neighbourhood context of Regent Park is one that has a multiple understandings and is layered with meanings. It is one of contradictions – violence versus sense of community; isolation versus sense of belonging. In many ways, it has come full circle.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The topic of young people's perceptions of public space in Regent Park is at the intersection of three areas of literature. This study focuses on how young people perceive their neighbourhood public spaces. Regent Park, the neighbourhood context for this study, is undergoing significant, planned revitalization. This makes the literature related to urban revitalization relevant for discussion. The first section presents literature that is relevant to understanding urban revitalization and public housing revitalization, including how young people fit into this process. The concepts associated with public space are the focus of the second section. The third section discusses how young people are widely perceived and how they are incorporated into the planning process. The final section of this chapter discusses how I make use of this literature for my own study and my own contributions to the literature.

3.2 Revitalization: process and product

Revitalization is just one of the terms used to describe the process and outcome of introducing improvements to a declining area of a city. Although Pomeroy (2006) distinguishes between the connotations of the different terms¹, 'renewal', 'regeneration' and 'revitalization' are often used interchangeably. Throughout this thesis I use the term revitalization because it is the language used by TCHC when describing its Regent Park efforts.

Definitions of urban revitalization consider both the process and the final outcomes. They also are geographically-bound, with a physically defined neighbourhood often providing the focus area, and include reference to economic and social investments. Kennedy and Leonard (2001),

¹ Pomeroy identifies the term 'renewal' with the negative connotations associated with the large scale slum clearance of the 1950s through to the early 1970s. 'Regeneration' is typically used in the British literature.

Larsen (2005), Spaans (2004), and Pomeroy (2006) incorporate these elements into their definitions of revitalization. Larsen's general description draws on Schubert (2001: 37) and defines revitalization as: "A process to influence and support individual and institutional choices within a regional context toward investment in a particular neighbourhood or neighbourhoods." Spaans (2004) describes revitalization as improvements to the existing spatial structure in order to realize the functional and economic opportunities and potentials of the city. Kennedy and Leonard (2001) give direct consideration to revitalization as a process of enhancing a neighbourhood's physical, commercial and social components and the future of its residents through public and private efforts. Improvements to the housing stock and services represent physical components, and social components include an increase in employment and reductions in crime. In his definition of revitalization, Pomeroy (2006) provides a list of the processes and outcomes. Like Kennedy and Leonard (2001), he considers both the physical and social. In his view, revitalization works towards significant socioeconomic change, ideally reducing poverty, welfare dependency and increasing employment, as well as replacing negative images and deteriorated and abandoned properties. Ultimately there should be a decrease in crime and insecurity, rising property values, growth in business investment, and increased opportunities for local residents (Pomeroy, 2006).

As a process, revitalization is shaped by regional and international socio-economic shifts. Inner city decline, suburbanization, structural changes in the economy and social trends all influence revitalization. The decline of central cities and their surrounding neighbourhoods has translated into lost population, jobs and services as institutions and employment has shifted to the suburbs (Keating, 1996; Ley, 2000). The people and neighbourhoods that are left behind can become socially and economically marginalized, and in the case of many large American cities, racially segregated, from the rest of the city (Holloway et al., 1998; Popkin et al. 2004). The focus of revitalization efforts has long been to stem neighbourhood decay (Cars, 1991; Keating and Smith, 1996). Cars (1991: 1)

identifies decay as “a housing problem, an employment problem, a social integration problem, an educational problem, and an architectural problem”. The goals of revitalization have attempted, through various means at different points in time, to address these problems.

The planning involved in revitalization also receives attention. Internationally, the city centre has received most of the attention from revitalization efforts (Cars, 1991; Keating, 1996; Pomeroy, 2006). Pomeroy (2006) explores how the American experience may have lessons for Canada. Blomley (2004) considers the implications of gentrification that often follow revitalization. These efforts have resulted from both institutionally organized projects as well as private interests (Keating, 1996; Smith, 1999; Smith, 2002). Large-scale projects, such as festival market-places, convention centres, sports arenas and waterfront related developments (Keating, 1996; Spaans, 2004), have taken place alongside the revitalization of central city residential neighbourhoods (Smith, 1996; 2002; Blomley, 2004). The distribution of wealth has a definite impact on where revitalization occurs. Areas viewed as in need of revitalization are synonymous with social and physical decline, and these are typically the neighbourhoods that are home to the poor and socially excluded (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004). What happens to these poor residents as a result of revitalization gives rise to a number of concerns, including their involvement, the imposition of outside values onto their neighbourhood, and displacement (Keith, 1995; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004; Phillips, 2004; Popkin et al., 2004). It is these concerns that cause Keith (1995) and Fainstein (2000) to criticize urban planning for attempting to take on a technocratic role in planning revitalization projects.

3.3 Public housing

There is sometimes confusion over what term is appropriate to use to define housing developments like Regent Park. In the media and academic literature alike there is frequent and interchangeable use of both social housing and public housing terms. Sewell (1994) states that ‘public housing’ is

housing owned by a government or government agency where rent is calculated according to household income. He further defines what public housing does not include. Even if it is owned by a government or government agency, the various kinds of non-profit housing arrangements, such as co-operative housing, do not meet the criteria for public housing.

Differentiation between 'public' and 'social' housing can cause confusion because government agencies that often own public housing also own non-profit and other housing that is publicly subsidized (Murdie, 1992; Sewell, 1994; Best, 1998; Chisholm, 2003). 'Social housing' is a term that envelopes all publicly subsidized accommodation, including public and not-for-profit (Best, 1998). Although social housing may be more affordable through rent-geared-to-income arrangements, usually to reduce rents to 25% - 30% of household income (Murdie, 1992; Chisholm, 2003), the application process and the management of the property is quite different from public housing (Sewell, 1994).

Keith (1995: 360) believes that the city landscape can be interpreted by institutional archaeology where "various initiatives, all the product of their own time, litter an area, all bearing testament to yesterday's vogue notions of inner city regeneration". Cultural values of the time and place are an important part of the rise and fall of planning initiatives (Jacobs and Manzi, 1998). Public housing is one of these 'vogue notions' of the past, and has re-emerged in the present. Much of the existing central city public housing in North America and Europe came about due to revitalization schemes (Schach, 1997; Hall and Rowlands, 2005). They are a result of the socioeconomic paradigm of the post-WW II period (Hall and Rowlands, 2005) that embraced modernistic planning and its beliefs in rationality, progress and technological change (Jacobs and Manzi, 1998). The values that spurred urban revitalization during this era were also reflected in the public housing movement (Purdy, 2005). Run-down parts of the city were viewed as "problem areas where both human life and public money are wasted, which cry out for replacement, but are left in

neglect” (Joint Advisory Committee, 1956: 2). Public housing solved both of these issues: the urban form and its residents could be shaped according to broader societal and political visions.

3.4 Public housing within the context of urban revitalization

Public housing is often part of the wider revitalization agenda (Purdy, 2005; Pomeroy, 2006).

Although each country may place its own particular stamp on urban housing revitalization, Carmon (1997; 1999) contends that the socioeconomic and political developments since World War II have created universal themes in public housing and revitalization in western countries. She identifies these themes in terms of three generations of policies, beginning with the early days of revitalization and public housing, followed by programmes to address existing housing, and ultimately, the present day business-like approach to revitalization.

Slum clearance is the defining feature of Carmon’s (1999) first generation of urban revitalization. Also known as the era of the “federal bulldozer”, large tracts of land were demolished in the central cities of the North America and Europe. This clearance made way for freeways, housing, recreation areas, and commercial developments (Schwartz, 1993; Carmon, 1999; Pomeroy, 2006). Although housing provision was part of slum clearance, wiping out slums was a much larger part of the agenda of urban revitalization advocates (Wallock, 1991). The grand scale, modern planning revitalization initiatives did not involve the residents of the neighbourhoods that were levelled to make way for the new and improved city. The physical deterioration and poverty were successfully exoticized and proved to gain public support for slum clearance as not only physical redevelopment, but social intervention (Purdy, 2005). When cast in such a light, and viewed from the perspective of modernistic planning, there was little need to engage residents or value their existing neighbourhood networks and community culture. Gans’ (1962) and Jacobs’ (1961) critiques of slum clearance centre on this point. The effects of urban revitalization from this era are described as “no rosy dream. It is a hair-raising long-drawn-out nightmare, disrupting home and community” (Barron

and Barron, 1965). Entire neighbourhoods were destroyed and in the American case, residents were often displaced and had to seek refuge elsewhere.

In reality, the exercises of slum clearance and the resulting public housing reveal more about the white, middle-class values of the time of what constituted a proper neighbourhood and appropriate living than it does about the physical and social environment of the poor (Gans, 1962; Purdy, 2005). There were great expectations for public housing that resulted from the wholesale slum clearance (von Hoffman, 1998). Public housing was to be a temporary stop on the way to home ownership for families that either needed a helping hand to establish themselves or were inadequately housed (Rose, 1958). Modification of the behaviours of the poor was also to be addressed through design (Franck, 1998; von Hoffman, 1998; Larsen, 2005).

Franck and Mostoller (1995) and Franck (1998) identify three general stages in public housing's history: 1) semi-enclosed courts and walk-up buildings in the 1930s and early 1940s; 2) open space between lines of row houses and walk-up buildings, or around widely spaced high-rise buildings starting in the 1940s and into the 1960s; and 3) private yards and semi-enclosed or fully enclosed courts for row houses and other low-rise buildings in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The proximity of the buildings to the street has also changed over time in public housing developments (Franck and Mostoller, 1995; Franck, 1998). The earliest public housing developments in the United States located buildings on streets, but the entrance was mostly from the interior of the site. The second stage is characterised by the closing of streets, which is contrasted to the third stage's reintroduction of streets and the fronting of buildings and their entranceways onto them.

Each of these stages reflects the values associated with its time period. The second stage marks the time period of Regent Park's construction and the high point of public housing construction due to urban revitalization via slum clearance. The design reflects the utopian images of the era, as well as principles of environmental determinism. Howard's traditional garden city was often merged

with Le Corbusier's functional design (Taylor, 1998a). Both of these designs worked well with slum clearance as they required reorganization of the densely built inner city neighbourhoods in order to create residential zones and open spaces. The removal of the streets from these created public housing neighbourhoods produced superblocks. The superblock system created safer places for children to play by removing sources of danger from traffic and pollution (Franck, 1998). Private and semi-private spaces did not figure prominently in these neighbourhoods. The emphasis was on vast amounts of open public space.

The stark contrast of revitalized sites with public housing with their surrounding neighbourhoods was also a means to differentiate the site with the slum it had replaced and any existing ones that may remain adjacent (Franck and Mostoller, 1995; Franck, 1998). According to Franck (1998), the differences in the style of buildings and their arrangement as well as the removal of streets were to serve two functions: a symbolic reminder and break for residents from their past lives and to separate and protect residents from their surroundings and discourage regression to slum life.

3.4.1 Beyond the federal bulldozer

The initial design strategy, in combination with the homogeneity of residents and housing appearance is no longer applied to public housing. By the 1970s, the reputation of urban revitalization "...was shabbier than downtown Toledo" (Teaford, 1996: 665). The demolition of Pruitt-Igoe, a public housing development in St. Louis, on July 15, 1972 is commonly held as the end of modernist planning approach towards slum clearance and public housing (Sewell, 1994). Slum clearance proved to be more complicated than merely updating the image and amenities for inner city neighbourhoods (Birch, 2001). The primary lesson taken away from the public housing developments built as a result of wholesale clearance was interpreted as what not to do (Pomeroy,

2006). The failure of this generation of revitalization and public housing is blamed on many things, including the changing role of public housing, poor management and design (Popkin et al., 2004).

The original purpose of public housing was to provide accommodation for working poor, two-parent families who temporarily lacked funds to afford the housing available in the private market (Murdie, 1992). This goal was met (Franck, 1998), but the low-income application criteria eventually changed the role of public housing and the resident profile (Franck, 1998; von Hoffman, 1998). As a result, public housing has shifted from provision of temporary accommodation to permanent housing for the dependent urban poor, such as the long-term unemployed, single parent families, and the mentally ill (Murdie, 1992; von Hoffman, 1998; Smith, 1999; Hall and Rowlands, 2005). Public housing developments like Regent Park, once hailed as the solution to slum living, are now labelled 'warehouses of the poor' (von Hoffman, 1998) and 'refuse space' (Gotham and Brumley, 2002) and blamed for their residents' socio-economic isolation (Sewell, 1994; Smith, 1999; Popkin et al., 2004; Hall and Rowlands, 2005). Rather than fulfilling the vision of urban revitalization, public housing is considered a key factor in inner city decline due to the extreme concentration of poverty and segregation (Popkin et al., 2004; Musterd and Andersson, 2006). Holloway et al., (1998) conducted research in Columbus, Ohio in order to determine if public housing was indeed a factor in poverty concentration and segregation. They found that for many households, public housing is housing of the last resort. Those who can afford to, choose to live elsewhere resulting in the poorest of the poor living in public housing. There is also a connection between race and poverty concentration. According to their research, public housing concentrates black poverty two times that of white poverty. This finding has been found to be true elsewhere and families on waiting lists will turn down a placement when offered especially degraded public housing (Popkin et al., 2004). The efforts to set minimum standards and to create a sense of universality are now

blamed for the stigmatization that many public housing developments created during the era of slum clearance (Franck, 1998; Taylor, 1998a; Smith, 1999).

The bureaucracy and management of public housing are also pointed to as a reason for failure. Regardless of jurisdiction, troubled public housing is often a by-product of troubled housing authorities (Popkin et al., 2004). The United States and Great Britain have centralized housing programmes, but Canada does not. The responsibility for management and maintenance has shifted over the decades, as was illustrated in the previous chapter with reference to Regent Park. The lack of consistent ownership by any level of government has translated into confusion over accountability and funding for maintenance (Popkin et al., 2004). The lack of interaction between areas of policy also created problems of degrading physical infrastructure, decaying buildings and lack of policing (Fallis, 1995). The years of wear and tear and poor construction does not combine well with poor maintenance and management (Popkin et al., 2004).

New approaches towards urban revitalization have surfaced in order to fix the problems created by past approaches (Keith, 1995). The backlash against slum clearance ushered in an era of housing rehabilitation that did not involve demolition and public welfare programmes to address social problems (Carmon, 1999). The majority of efforts focused on social programmes and not physical rehabilitation. Criticised as being too theoretical in approach and insufficiently resourced, this stage in public housing revitalization was soon eclipsed by new thoughts on design and how to best serve the needs of the city and the poor (Carmon, 1999).

The most recent efforts at revitalization involve a multi-faceted approach. Andersen (2002) documented the policies for tackling deprived public housing developments in Europe and found these to include changes to the physical and social environments. In addition to physical renovation of the buildings, there is also a change in the tenure of or disposal of housing, support for private service facilities, special efforts against crime, attempts to attract new private firms and workplaces to

the neighbourhood, and education, job training and other attempts to get employment for local residents. In terms of design, the most recent efforts at revitalization follow the design elements in Franck and Mostoller's (1995) and Franck's (1998) third stage of public housing development where streets are reintroduced and private and semi-private space are central to the plan. In many cases, this involves extensive changes as many large public housing developments did not incorporate these elements. The HOPE VI programme in the United States has raised the profile of this approach. The principles of new urbanism are an important part of the current revitalization efforts (Day, 2003; Talen, 2002; Popkin et al., 2004). New urbanists advocate plans that recall neighbourhood designs of the pre-1940s. This is reflected in the belief that "traditional neighbourhood patterns essential to restoring functional and sustainable communities. These patterns include housing facing the street with ... a mix of housing types, prices and sizes to attract a mix of people; shopping and parks accessible via footpaths and sidewalks; a grid of streets" (Newman, 1996 in Popkin et al., 2004: 16).

Grant (2007) critiques the basic principles of new urbanism. From her perspective, the drive to achieve "traditional" neighbourhoods reveals the shortcomings of this approach to urban planning. This echoes Katz's (1994) concerns. Katz refers to new urbanism as the "architecture of community" because the common and orderly layout of the buildings and the neighbourhood is supposed to convey that the residents share a common set of values. This assumed commonality is also accompanied by a redefinition of the common good where "the public interest is redefined in new urbanism as coterminous with a definition of the good community as a particular kind of place" (Grant, 2007: 11). For the new urbanist, a good community reflects the universal principles of beauty, order and coherence and space is a manipulable receptacle in order to achieve these (Grant, 2007). Although new urbanism has enjoyed popularity in new urban developments and as the inspiration for the HOPE IV projects, there have been cautions issued for planners. The value placed on aesthetics to create social harmony and common values ignores complex issues like

communication and power and silences conflicting and divergent views for the neighbourhood (Day, 2003; Grant, 2007).

Many of the current North American revitalization plans for public housing focus on changing the physical built environment and tenure. These plans address the concerns that public housing created between the 1940s and the 1970s lack anonymity, transitions and sufficiently defined uses of space (Franck, 1998). The very elements that were so prized earlier, the openness and departure from the surrounding neighbourhoods, are now defined as severe stumbling blocks (Franck, 1998; Taylor, 1998a). The introduction of a grid street pattern along with the application of Newman's (1972) concept of 'defensible space' -- fewer common areas and more private and semi-private spaces and housing with private entrances and private outdoor spaces clearly demarcated and separated from each other -- are to fix this problem (Franck, 1998; Popkin et al., 2004).

In many cases, public housing neighbourhoods will change socially as well as physically (Kennedy and Leonard, 2001; Hall and Rowlands, 2005). Again, public housing draws upon principles associated with new urbanism. New urbanism advocates the integration of affordable units within market rate housing (Grant, 2007). Social change is to come about through the revitalization of public housing by introducing social, or income, mix, also referred to as social balance. Social mix is to counteract the effects of poverty concentration that Wilson (1987) believed institutionalized poverty. This is thought to create positive change through different means. The promotion of social mix is based upon the premise that spatial proximity of the poor to wealthier neighbours will enhance their life opportunities (Sarkissian, 1976; Musterd and Andersson, 2006). There are arguments made for social mix on economic, social and moral grounds. Both the housing provider and residents are expected to benefit economically. Increased tenant revenues should lead to the potential for more public housing units and increased financial viability for public housing over the longer term (Copas and Copas, 2001). Social mix is also to give poor residents greater access to social networks and the

services and amenities that are to follow wealthier residents. The combination of these is believed to increase their chances of finding employment (van Beckhoven and van Kempen, 2003; Musterd and Andersson, 2006). Social mix is also presented as a solution to segregation as there will be more housing choices so households will not need to leave the neighbourhood when their choice level increases (Musterd and Andersson, 2005). This is not only supposed to help with poverty concentration, but also to reduce stigmatization of the neighbourhood and those who live there (Popkin et al., 2004; Musterd and Andersson, 2005; 2006). The professional, middle-class occupants are also to serve as an example for poor residents and to provide them with positive role models (Sarkissian, 1976; Purdy, 2005; Musterd and Andersson, 2006) -- a sort of 'uplift through osmosis' (Blomley, 2004). In many revitalization scenarios, social mix also entails new residents being property owners (Smith, 2002; Day, 2003; Purdy, 2005). This is based on particular neoliberal assumptions associated with property owners: that they take a keen interest in their neighbourhood and its safety, services and stability and that this will help improve and revitalize the area (Krumholz and Star, 1996; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004). For this reason, social mix is criticised as not being concerned with the welfare of the previous residents, but more so with how to make the neighbourhood more attractive to prospective buyers. This is especially the case when considering how new urbanism applies the concept of social mix. There is no established threshold for the percentage of affordable to market rate housing, but it is recommended that affordable housing represent a small percentage of the neighbourhood housing in order to protect property values and reinforce positive social behaviour (Grant, 2007). The translation of this approach has not always served poor families in keeping their home. HOPE IV is a prime example of this where more affordable housing units were destroyed than were created (Popkin et al., 2004).

3.4.2 A new iteration of environmental determinism?

Like with the slum clearance that made way for public housing developments, there are also criticisms of the newest form of urban revitalization. The current revitalization efforts are charged with making the same expectations of environmental determinism that were made by post-war planners and policy makers (Purdy, 2005). Epstein (1998) identifies one of planning's pitfalls as the implicit belief that the physical environment and social relationships can be resolved as long as the 'correct' actions are taken. Critics of the current public housing urban revitalization plans hold that planning is once more falling into this trap. These plans are based upon the belief 'that an ideal or improved residential environment will better the behaviour as well as the condition of its inhabitants' (von Hoffman, 1998).

Many researchers point out flaws in environmental determinism. Talen (2000) considers the assumption that design provides the foundation for community. Although "putting people closer together and getting them out on the streets and mingling ... seem intuitively obvious methods for gaining resident cohesion" (Talen, 2000: 173), she calls for planners to consider its limitations:

- The lack of evidences that physical design creates social networks;
- Research on environmental determinism has a focus on site design and does not truly encompass entire neighbourhoods;
- The multiple effects that cause people to identify with a neighbourhood, creating a level of complexity that may go beyond the realm of physical planning.

Schnee (1998) provides an evaluation of the Robert Pitts Plaza public housing revitalization in San Francisco. One of his conclusions is that physical design and aesthetics are not always related to perception. Despite making the housing look like the surrounding neighbourhood, the perceptions of residents did not change and they still felt that there was a stigma attached to the public housing. This perception of stigma may be related to Harvey's (1996) position that design alone cannot address

socio-economic conditions. Although it is acknowledged that design does play a factor in people's lives (Cooper Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986; Byers, 1998; Purdy, 2005), placing such weight on the physical environment downplays the systemic conditions that give rise to poverty, segregation and isolation (Cars, 1991; Harvey, 1996; Smith, 1999).

Social mix is not universally accepted as an effective strategy for urban revitalization. There are also those who question whether social mix will fulfill the expectations placed upon it by environmental determinism. On the surface, it is difficult to criticise. In the words of Neil Smith (2002: 445), “‘Social balance’ sounds like a good thing – who could be against social balance?” To its critics, the problems with social mix rest on the values that are behind the strategy, the potential for resident displacement through privatisation and gentrification, and the lack of evidence to support that it actually works. The assumption that social mix will lead to lower income households benefiting from exposure to those with more financial resources “is both patronizing and demeaning” (Copas and Copas, 2001). Furthermore, it implies equality where there is in fact a hierarchy (Blomley, 2004). Differences in ownership and wealth often translate into differences in power (Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004). The largest criticism for social mix is that there is little evidence to support its claims to improve the lives of low income residents. There is no guarantee that a mixing will lead to social contacts between income groups (van Beckhoven and van Kempen, 2003). Within HOPE VI developments, Popkin et al., (2004) have found that there is little interaction between residents from different income groups. Brophy and Smith (1997) and A. Smith (2002) document these interactions as only surface, or superficial. Furthermore, urban neighbourhoods are rarely heterogeneous (Keating and Smith; 1996; Marcuse, 1998; Talen, 2002). Despite this and the lack of substantial research of what kind of mix and distribution work well in a neighbourhood, social mix is being implemented as a solution for problem public housing (Marcuse, 1998). Revitalization plans

that rest on the principle of social mix also beg the question of why are concentrations of the rich not identified as ghettos and targeted for change (Blomley, 2004; Purdy, 2005).

The concerns of displacement due to the social mix component of public housing renewal follow the same lines of the displacement that can take place due to gentrification. Keating and Smith (1996) consider displacement from gentrification inevitable once there have been shifts in the income and lifestyle of a neighbourhood. It also creates a psychological displacement for original residents as their neighbourhood uses and activities are supplanted by newcomers (Blomley, 2004; Freeman, 2006). However, the introduction of social mix to public housing is part of planned revitalization on the part of governments, corporations or public-private partnerships rather than middle- and upper-middle class households acting as agents of spontaneous neighbourhood change (Smith, 1999). This raises speculation about the larger agenda for public housing revitalization, which Kipfer and Keil (2002) consider in the Toronto context. They believe that public housing is part of the urban revitalization efforts needed to improve their image in order to globally compete for and attract investment and talent. They believe that urban revitalization is taking place with little regard to the social costs to local residents. Smith (1996) also considers revitalization as part of the revanchist city, which exerts control over the urban landscape and the behaviour of its residents in order to ensure that the middle-classes will feel safe and comfortable. Both the competitive city and revanchist city constructs lead to questions of whether public housing revitalization through social mix is an effort to provide better housing for lower income households, or to displace the poor.

3.4.3 Young people and public housing revitalization

The importance of housing for young people translates into implications for public housing revitalization. Shillington (2002) identifies the symbolic, physical and socio-economic ways that the housing environment influences the lives of young people. Symbolically, the home and its surrounding neighbourhood effects how they participate in the wider community, and this depends a

large part on where they live. This includes the stigma or reputation attached to a neighbourhood. The physical condition of housing, and whether it is crowded, is connected to health factors. The kinds of services and supports available in the neighbourhood influence the opportunities and means for them to integrate with the larger community. Wider societal concerns about young people and their culture, such as gangs, drug and alcohol consumption, and particularly low-income youth (Breitbart, 1995; Lucas, 1998; Matthews, 2003), have generally placed young people living in public housing in two categories of 'at risk' and as a potential risk to others (Reay and Lucey, 2000). Revitalization in many ways is viewed as a means to address both categories of concern.

Much of the criticism of the current public housing revitalization practices is that in many cases there is not a high level of resident participation (Popkin et al., 2004). This has important implications on two levels. The perceptions of residents of public housing neighbourhoods are usually quite different from those who are from outside of the neighbourhood and those in planning and policy-making positions and others involved in revitalization (Arthurson, 2001; Brown, Perkins and Brown, 2003). The poor condition of the housing is often the defining feature for policy-makers and non-residents and they can overlook strong neighbourhood attachment and the positive features that residents identify (Brown, Perkins and Brown, 2003). Outsiders may find the area miserable and in need of complete overhaul, but residents may be proud of their neighbourhood and comfortable with their social and emotional ties within the community (Arthurson, 2001). Despite the claims that the neighbourhood level is playing an ever diminishing role in contemporary society (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; McNamee, 1998), it remains a significant aspect in the lives and cultures of young people (Watt and Stenson, 1998; Bauder, 2001). This is particularly the case for young people from lower income households like those living in public housing (Borden, Rendell and Thomas, 1998). Young people from lower income housing developments strongly identify with their surroundings and prefer to stay where they feel like they belong (Bauder, 2001). This strong

attachment to housing development is partly due to their age (Moore, 1986) and socio-economic status (Bauder, 2001; Brown, Perkins and Brown, 2003). Both of these factors serve to tie them to their specific geographic location and can act as isolating and segregating features. Changes in their environment would mean that they will need to change how they construct their places of belonging.

Chawla and Malone (2003), Morrow (2003) and Matthews (2001) find that young people in neighbourhoods that are targeted for urban revitalization have definite ideas about how to improve their surroundings. These include both social and physical elements, even in the case of Morrow's investigation which asked young people to focus exclusively on the built environment. Use of space, cleanliness, traffic and people, such as family, friends and neighbours are all topics of potential improvements. Their life experiences influence how they view public spaces such as parks and walkways (Chawla and Malone, 2003). These spaces become understood from their perspectives on safety and use, and this is often very different from how they are planned (Chawla and Malone, 2003). The various project sites in the *Growing Up In Cities Project* have revealed that young people do not measure their neighbourhoods and public space the same way that adults do. Open green space may be designed for playing ball and from an adult perspective, a positive step towards providing for young people, but in the eyes of young people, it is seen as a space of litter and drug and gang activity (Percy-Smith, 2002; Malone and Hasluck, 2002; Chawla and Malone, 2003). What differentiates young people from other demographics that do not perceive or use public spaces for their intended use are the issues of power and legitimacy. Young people do not have a political voice, often positioning them outside of the awareness of planning circles. There is also a strong social belief that there is a need for supervision of young people in public space, translating into planning for rather than planning with young people (Henderson, Freeman and Kettle, 1999) and enacting curfews and loitering laws to maintain adult hegemony over public space (Collins and Kearns, 2001). This leads to the difference in how young people interpret public space being an important avenue to

explore. However, young people are not always represented in the planning and final outcomes of revitalization. Schnee (1998) identified this as a significant drawback to public housing revitalization. His study of a public housing revitalization project in San Francisco is an example of how young people's uses of public space had not been considered in the revitalization process, thereby creating a neighbourhood that does not incorporate or reflect young people. Not considering young people's perspectives can lead to conflicts between new residents and young people over their use of space and their noise (Pader and Breitbart, 1993; Schnee, 1998).

3.5 Public space: concepts of space, place and public

Public space is a commonly used term in disciplines that primarily deal with space. In order to understand public space, it is necessary to take into account the other concepts that are tied to it. This section considers space and place as constructs as well as the differing meanings of public and the place of young people within the public space literature.

3.6 What it means to think about space

The question of 'what is space?' is multi-layered and can be answered from different perspectives. Soja (1980) feels that the difficulty with space as a term stems from its wide use and broad meanings. This is because questioning space is questioning one of the axes on which reality is traditionally defined (Shields, 1991). When planners conceptualize and theorize about space, they have often drawn from debates in other disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, geography, sociology, mathematics and physics (Madanipour, 1996). The perspectives that have come from these other areas of study cover a wide range, including "seeing space as a physical phenomenon, a condition of mind, or a product of social processes" (Madanipour, 1996: 332). The level of emphasis placed on social relationships and social meanings partly determines which perspective is used to approach

space as a concept and whether it is a mechanism of understanding how the urban environment is structured or how to go about structuring it.

3.6.1 Space through Euclidean, relationist and social process lenses

There are different ways to approach space. Some interpret space as a void needs to be limited or defined (Madanipour, 1996; Healey, 2004). From this perspective, the built environment is a central part of defining space. Tuan (1979) believes that the built environment clarifies social roles and relationships. This ties into the Euclidean notion of space. The traditional spatial tools of planners, such as master plans, development plans and comprehensive plans, are two-dimensional and aim at providing objective representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991; Graham and Healey, 1999). This approach to space makes use of Euclidean notions of space, where the city is understood as if it were a jigsaw – adjacent and joining land use pieces linked together by infrastructure, where the city is assumed to be the sum of the jigsaw (Graham and Healey, 1999). This interpretation of space has strong connections to physical and environmental determinism which is considered the key drawback to this approach to defining urban space and understanding how people use and relate to it (Friedmann, 1993; Madanipour, 1996; Graham and Healey, 1999; Healey, 2004). It is the implicit assumptions attributed to Euclidean space that are criticized. It supposes that physical proximity is central to social ordering and that the qualities of space exist and can be created objectively (Graham and Healey, 1999; Healey, 2004). It also does not consider alternative understandings or meanings people may associate with a particular space (Graham and Healey, 1999; Massey, 2005).

The critique of objective and linear construct of space has given rise to a different approach to defining and analyzing space. For many writers on space, relationships and the broader socio-political context that underpins social interactions act as forces that refine the physical setting (Arefi and Triantafillou, 2005). Rather than placing an emphasis on how space shapes activities, they consider space as a mentally constructed backdrop that is developed through power dynamics and

consumption. Space becomes “a complex web of ...domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation” (Massey, 1993:81). Space is still a physical location, a piece of real estate (Gottdeiner, 1985), but it is also simultaneously a mental expression, an object of consumption, and an arena for class struggle to exert power over the right to physically manifest the mental image of space (Gottdeiner, 1985; Harvey, 1973; Massey, 1993). From this perspective, space becomes fractured; it can mean many things at once to different individuals and groups (Gottdeiner, 1985; Shields, 1991; Massey, 1995; Reay and Lucey, 2000).

In the recent decades there have been many attempts to rationalize the social with the physical when conceptualizing space. Petersen (1985) views space as something more sensed than seen. Through experience, it is created as public artifact of histories and memories (Hayden, 1997). Gottdeiner (1985) defines space on two levels. It represents the location where events take place, or the container function, as well as the social permission to engage in these events, also labeled the social order function. Shields (1991) uses the term ‘social spatialization’ in order to recognize both the continuous social construction of space as well as the built environment, which he considers as interventions in the landscape.

One of the most influential framings of space as both social and physical was developed by Henri Lefebvre. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre sets out a three-fold perspective on space that incorporates physical, mental and social elements and considers how space is created, maintained and used. The components of Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial triad are:

1. Representations of space, or conceptual space. For Lefebvre this is the level where most planners and architects feel most comfortable as it is the space of drawings, images and plans of a city and their materialization on the urban landscape. This is also identified as the dominant space of any society.

2. Representational space, or lived space. This is the space associated with the symbolic values created by residents. It is the living space of the city where the physical becomes invested with meaning.
3. Spatial practice, or ways in which spaces are used. This is the space of patterns of everyday life and production and reproduction.

This approach to space “claims that everyone, regardless of circumstance, continuously produces space in socially and spatially interactive process” (Carp, 2003: 243) and that space is important because it is both a requirement for social action (social action must take place in space) and the end result of social action (space is a social product) (Milgrom, 2003). However, power over space is still part of Lefebvre’s construction. Lefebvre (1991) addresses this in his conceptualization of abstract space. This is the space of capitalism, where space is a social and political product that is bought and sold. It is described as positivist tool and relates to technology, applied sciences and knowledge bound to power and is the space of experts, like architects and planners. It is about the production of commodities, or ‘objects in space’, hence limiting the meanings associated with space to the monetary, or exchange, values. It does not consider the physical and social aspects of space and works towards producing homogeneity. But Lefebvre asserts that space that homogenizes has nothing homogeneous about it, it simply has homogeneity as its goal and orientation. Power and the power to consume lead to the ability of a person to shape their environment according to their beliefs and values. Being able to change the physical surroundings is the most significant indication of power, control and self-determination (Lefebvre, 1991; Carp, 2004). “Ideas, representations or values which do not succeed in making their mark on space, and thus generating (or producing) an appropriate morphology, will lose all pith and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions, or mutate into fantasies (Lefebvre, 1991: 416-17). But abstract space is only one part of Lefebvre’s vision of space. He also offers differential space as an alternative to strive for beyond

abstract space. Rather than emphasizing homogeneity, differential space is about recognizing difference. It works towards incorporating the meanings and functions of social practice. Rather than being founded on exchange value, differential space is based on primacy of use, or use value. Lefebvre believes that the contradiction between abstract and differential space follows other contradictions of our society like (economic) growth / (social) development, social / political, and power / knowledge.

According to Lefebvre, planners and other specialized technical specializations sometimes lose perspective on the spaces beyond representations of space and miss out on understanding everyday life. This issues a challenge to planners to stretch themselves and consider other levels of space outside of representations of space, and to give credence to the other possible and multiple understandings of lived and created space. This means moving beyond understanding space in terms of its monetary value, or exchange value, and also consider how people value it for its meanings and local practices, or use value.

3.7 The connections between space and place

Space and place are connected concepts and the terms are often used interchangeably. It is emphasis on social relations and the social construction and production of space that gives rise to the concept of place and place-making. Place is often seen as subjective and concerned with individuals' attachments and symbolism. Tuan (1979) defines place as security and space as freedom and that while we are attached to the one, we long for the other. Madanipour (1996) acknowledges this difference, but states that the meanings of the two concepts merge and each requires the other for their definition. "If space allows movement to occur, place provides a pause" (Madanipour, 1996: 348). This is demonstrated by the definitions of other researchers that work with the concepts of space and place. Massey's (1993) look at a power geometry of difference considers space as a wider

structure where place becomes a reflection of the more local pattern that represent 'articulated moments'. McDowell (1996) considers space to be made up of different levels of place, with each set of places carrying a variety of meanings for both individuals and groups.

Place is also associated with 'felt value' (Madanipour, 1996). It is where attachment and the social processes of inclusion and exclusion occur (McDowell, 1996; Reay and Lucey, 2000; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). In the words of Massey (2005: 5), "it is the sphere of everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographic source of meaning, vital to hold on to as 'the global' spins its ever more powerful and alienating webs. For others, a 'retreat to space' representing a protective pulling-up of drawbridges and a building of walls against the new innovations. Place, on this reading, is the locus of denial, of attempted withdrawal from invasion/difference." These social processes create place as a cultural object invested with powerful emotions (McDowell, 1996). Rose (1995), Watt and Stenson (1998) and Reay and Lucey (2000) believe that place is a central element of how we define ourselves and where we feel we belong in the world. As such, place is made up of the interconnections to surrounding areas and depends on other places to instill it with meaning (Shields, 1991; Massey, 1995; Reay and Lucey, 2000; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). This is a mechanism to provide spatial boundaries in order to determine who belongs and who does not and the justifications for what it means to be in the right place (Shields, 1991; Massey, 1995; Rose, 1995; Reay and Lucey, 2000) and the political and spatial consequences that this carries (Hayden, 1997).

Place and its spatial attributes can be quite localist for those living in low-income neighbourhoods and public housing (Jenkins, 1983; Callaghan, 1992; Watt and Stenson, 1998; Bauder, 2001). In a sense, spatial boundaries become moral boundaries (Sibley, 1995b). Within the UK, Jenkins (1983) and Callaghan (1992) both find that young people's social networks and their potential employment prospects are defined through place and sense of belonging. This results in a narrowly-defined spatial movements and view of the world. In the American context, Bauder's

(2001) findings are very similar and assert that place attachment and its associated culture provided a sense of security when young people stay within their own neighbourhood, but acted as a limiting factor once they left it. This somewhat confining and localist construction of space and place for young people is also connected to the dominant constructions of the poor and public housing developments. Young people are influenced by how their neighbourhood as a place is understood and portrayed in wider society. Reay and Lucey's (2000) study of young people in public housing neighbourhoods in London, England found that young people were caught up in different and sometimes conflicting understandings of poverty and public housing. They balanced the popular and media portrayals of their public housing estates with their attempts to carve out their own different and local ideals of place and belonging.

3.8 Relationships shaping public space

The concept of public is the third element of understanding what is meant by public space. Iveson (1998) outlines the interwoven complexities when attempting to answer 'what is public space?' The introduction of the notion of public involves ideas around ownership and people. Public space can refer to the distinction between privately-owned or state-owned property. It can also refer to those areas beyond the privacy of the home. Finally, people can represent and be collectively considered as 'the public' and therefore be considered as the general users of public space. What constitutes public is very different across societies, places and times (Smith and Low, 2006).

By contrasting what is public against what is privately owned is the most traditional way to define public space (Smith and Low, 2006; Miller, 2007). Using a public – private binary allows for differentiating public from private in terms of the rules of access, nature of control over the space, norms of individual and group behaviour and uses (Smith and Low, 2006). Private space is viewed as recognized and protected by the state regulations of private property (Blomley, 2004; Smith and Low,

2006) while public space is generally considered as open to the greater public (Carr et al., 1992; Iveson, 1998; Smith and Low, 2006). However, binaries often do not allow for the grey area that falls between the ends of the spectrum, and each concept relies on the other for its existence (Matthews, 2003). The private realm of the home is presented as controllable and personal in contrast to public space, which is seen as uncontrollable and uncertain (Sibley, 1995b). There is the perceived need for the controlled, private home in order to create safe and successful public spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Blomley, 2004). Jacobs' notion of 'eyes on the street' and Blomley's idea of 'un-real estate' – the ways people sometimes act as if they have ownership over public property - make the connection between private and public property. Private property owners act as surveillance for the public spaces for which they feel responsibility and accountability. From this perspective, if public space is to be considered to be open to the general public, its safety and general success is largely linked to privately owned space.

Public space is also defined by its physical form and features as well as the social processes that create and maintain it. Carr et al. (1992) places an emphasis on the built environment. From their perspective, public spaces are those open, accessible spaces where people can go. These spaces can take many forms, such as plazas, malls and playgrounds, and offer public amenities like walkways, benches, paving, lawn and water features. From a social process perspective, public space is defined through practices and means of "access and exclusion, law and custom, power and protest" (Mitchell, 2006: 144). Young (1990) asserts that public space is where urban diversity is most apparent. Public space is the space of representation and comes to be defined by the patterns of the people who use it (Lefebvre, 1991).

The question of who gets to make use of, or shape the uses and access to, public space is a central part of recent research that addresses public space. There is a tendency to romanticize both the function of and access to urban public space (Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Malone, 2002; Massey,

2005). Nostalgic views of public space portray it as the forum for free speech and equal and democratic access (Malone, 2002; Massey, 2005). However, at different points in time and place, various social groups such as the elderly, young people, women, the poor and members of sexual and ethnic minorities, have been excluded from public space and exposed to political and moral censure (Sibley, 1995a; Malone, 2002). Each of these groups has its own particular stories and set of experiences associated with planning and public space. In the 1970s, the assumed neutrality of planning practice started to be called into question (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1990). The issue of gender is often used as an example of how understandings and experiences of urban space are fractured. When examining the built environment from a gender perspective, it is necessary to challenge the idea that women experience the city in the same way as men (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1990; Greed, 1994; Hayden, 1997). The layout of public space takes on different dimensions in terms of safety, leisure and daily activities (Greed, 1994). The designs of suburbia and transportation systems are very different from a female perspective (Hayden, 1997) as well as the views on the layout and use of park spaces (Greed, 1994).

The objectives of the producers and managers of public space do not always consider the needs of all societal groups. The most frequently mentioned goals for public space include public welfare, visual enhancement and economic development (Carr et al., 1992). There is another key goal that is not always stated but very much part of the planning and provision of urban public space, and that is the enhancement of the corporate or municipal image (Carr et al., 1992; Smith, 1996; Lees, 2003; Blomley, 2004). The type of image that is produced and promoted for public space is a reflection of dominant societal values, creating a normative landscape that does not incorporate those considered to be fringe or unwelcome groups (Nolan, 2003; Blomley, 2004). This is done through both the regulation and physical design of public spaces which is strongly linked to who is considered the public and what is in their interest (Miller, 2007).

Dynamics of power are related by Lefebvre (1991) to modes of production and consumption in a capitalist society. Many build upon his notion of power and the ultimate expression of power is control over the form and functions of urban space. For Zukin (1995), the power in cities rests with those who have the authority to 'impose a vision on space'. This power over space is one of the obvious markers of influence and lays the foundation for defining public culture (Breitbart, 1998; Arthurson, 2001). Arthurson (2001) describes this process of imposing urban vision and culture on those who are less powerful as cultural hegemony. It is the dominant societal values that determine the social norms that govern behaviour and access in public space (Nolan, 2003). "Being welcome in the public sphere has particular expectations, and those who enter must be willing to conform (Malone, 2002: 162). Those who do not, or cannot, conform become both invisible and conspicuous at the same time (Sibley, 1995a). Their uses are not accepted and therefore not planned for or incorporated in public space. Young people represent one of the groups that are not typically represented in the values and functions of public space (Sibley, 1995b; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). This is a result of the traditional absence of young people from the urban planning agenda and their general societal position as future adults.

3.9 Determining the place of young people: 'angels' or 'devils'

Typically, young people either fall within the zones of spaces allocated to them by others, or informal and potentially 'subversive' spaces created or appropriated by young people for their use (Ward, 1990; Fog Olwig and Gullov, 2003). This is in large part due to the adult perceptions of young people regarding their place and role in wider society and this is in turn reflected in our cities. Views towards young people "tend to be vague and romantic" and actually tell more about the needs of society than what young people think themselves (Graue and Walsh, 1998: 37). What it means to be young is often connected to notions of innocence and the mind and personality as a blank slate. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's mid 18th Century work *Emile* provided the foundations for these ideas (Jenks,

1996; James, Jenks and Prout 1998; Aitken, 2001). *Emile* tells the story of a boy in his journey from infant to adult and how he navigates it with the help of a wise tutor. It is a tale of "... how all things begin good and it is only through the social world and man's meddling that they become evil (Aitken, 2001: 31). Valentine (1996a) identifies Rousseau's work as the catalyst for constructing young people as either 'angels' in need of protection or 'devils' that are threatening and wild.

The 'angels' and 'devils' construction leaves young people in an ambiguous position in relation to the rest of society and their access to public space. Young people as innocents are considered vulnerable and in need of care and protection from the dangers of the world and its public spaces (Valentine, 1996a; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Malone, 2002). It portrays young people as potential victims "... under attack from unruly gangs, prone to the savages of strangers and threatened by the excess of environmental dangers, such as traffic ..." (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000: 63). Conversely, young people are also considered a threat to the stability of urban spaces. The congregation of groups of young people is perceived as a hazard and an undesirable presence in public spaces (Breitbart, 1998; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). In this light, young people are a disruption of and an uncontrollable threat to the adult-ordered city (Sibley, 1995b; Valentine, 1996b; Breitbart, 1998; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Malone, 2002; Matthews, 2003). Low-income youth are doubly marked. Poverty heightens the association of young people being either 'at risk' or 'risks'. Young people are considered to be in need of protection from the socio-economic factors identified with poverty, or associated with the crime, violence and deviant behaviour that is said to stem from impoverished surroundings (Breitbart, 1998).

There are real results of the view of young people as either victims or troublemakers. It shapes how young people access and make use of the urban environment and the extent to which they are involved and considered in the planning of our cities. The understanding of public space as adult

space is partially maintained by the segregation of young people (Fog Olwig and Gullov, 2003). Davis and Jones (1996) describe this process as “parking” young people in the set places that are considered safe and acceptable. This segregation of space has evolved from Western, middle-class ideals relating to what is good and acceptable behaviour of young people (Ward, 1990; Fog Olwig and Gullov, 2003; de Connick-Smith and Gutman, 2004). The urban public landscape for young people places an emphasis on schools and playgrounds (de Connick-Smith and Gutman, 2004). The broad social consensus that young people should learn and play in spaces designed specifically for these purposes has four implications: that 1) supervised spaces for young people that keep them off the streets are more suitable environments for them (Aitken, 2001); 2) unregulated public spaces, like streets, alleyways and open areas are considered unacceptable spaces for young people (de Connick-Smith and Gutman, 2004); 3) the need for supervision and containment portrays the public sphere as dangerous and corrupting, which further emphasizes the need for young people to be within the safety of private and controlled environments (Valentine, 1996b; Aitken, 2001; Malone, 2001); and 4) those young people who do make use of adult-oriented space are socially and morally judged and viewed as un-childlike (Valentine, 1996a; Fog Olwig and Gullov, 2003; Nieuwenhuys, 2003). The limited place of young people in urban environments is also reflected in the funding of spaces for young people. These spaces are usually the sites that suffer the most during times of fiscal restructuring (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997).

Considering the implications of the segregation of young people into adult-determined appropriate spaces, it is not surprising that there is documentation of the retreat of young people from urban public space. There are different factors that are believed to contribute to this. Urban form and its associated lifestyles both play a part. The development of high rise apartments, office blocks and suburban-style housing inhibits young people’s autonomous access to public space (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). The access to technology at home, such as the Internet, video games and

television, has led to young people pursuing home-based activities (McNamee, 1998). The chauffeuring of young people by their parents between acceptable 'islands' also limits the presence of young people within the urban public realm (Qvortrup et al., 1994; Collins and Kearns, 2001). Moral panics and 'teenophobia', adult fears that young people are increasingly involved in crime, drugs and are in a downward spiral of developing into non-contributing members of society, have also contributed to the retreat of young people from public space (Lucas, 1998). This has restricted the access of young people to public spaces through different mechanisms, including legal and regulatory and what Iveson (2002) terms a form of cultural imperialism. The latest wave of 'teenophobia' has resulted in law and order measures in many cities (Simpson, 1997; Lucas, 1998; Collins and Kearns, 2001; Kraack and Kenway, 2002). Curfews are a common feature of removing and controlling the activities of young people in public spaces (Collins and Kearns, 2001). Collins and Kearns (2001) explain curfews from three of Valentine's (1996a) perspectives: that adult hegemony of public space is an absolute given; that public space is a key factor in adults' (re)production of their authority; and that if parents are not seen as managing their children in an appropriate manner in public spaces, the state has the right to act *in loco parentis*.

Curfews are the tangible evidence of the wider displeasure of adults towards the presence of young people in urban public space. Young people gathered in groups on the streets and in parks are viewed by some adults as disruptive and generally upsetting (Kraack and Kenway, 2002). Business owners tend to view young people as a deterrent to attracting customers (Lees, 2003). As such, young people are often positioned as intruders and illegitimate users of public space (Breitbart, 1998; Malone, 2001; Lees, 2003). Being cast as illegitimate users positions young people as both invisible and highly visible at the same time (Sibley, 1995b). Not belonging means that they are not considered as part of the overall picture and therefore their presence is conspicuous. This is a problem because despite the evidence of retreat from public space by some, there is evidence that

public spaces are still important for a substantial number of young people (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Percy-Smith and Matthews, 2001; Churchman, 2003). For these young people, public space plays important roles in establishing their youth culture and carving out their place within an adult world (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Aitken, 2001).

Although public space is in many ways spatially determined for young people by powerful adults (Aitken, 2001), it is the arena that young people use to shape their day-to-day lives (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Aitken, 2001; Percy-Smith and Matthews, 2001). Matthews, Limb and Taylor (2000) and Matthews (2003) use 'the street' as a catch-all term for public space. Their work in the UK with young people from impoverished public housing estates demonstrates that the street represents a 'fuzzy zone' that offers young people the opportunities and space to break away from the limitations of childhood, but that their presence is still uncomfortable for many adults. For young people from low-income families and in public housing, public space plays an important function for recreation and leisure (Corrigan, 1979; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Day, 2003; Matthews, 2003). Corrigan's (1979) and Skelton's (2000) works show that hanging out, often viewed as 'doing nothing' is indeed doing something. It is a part of growing up and exerting independence and developing knowledge about the social and physical environments (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Aitken, 2001; Nolan, 2003) and is not the cause of delinquency and trouble that as it is interpreted through many adult eyes (Corrigan, 1979; Skelton, 2000). Public space beyond the segregated playgrounds and school yards is important to consider for young people because they show a definite preference to make use of the public realm of the streets, alleyways, and open spaces (Corrigan, 1979; Hart, 1979; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Percy-Smith and Matthews, 2001; Churchman, 2003). This is not because they are pushed out onto the streets because there is nowhere else to go, but simply because they like to have the choice of being outside of the confines of the home and supervision of spaces like youth clubs.

3.10 The place of young people in revitalized public space

Public spaces have become a fundamental building block for urban revitalization efforts (Mitchell, 2006). Sidewalks, parks, city streets and plazas all are part of publicly funded revitalization of public spaces that are used to attract interest in private property redevelopment (Mitchell, 2006). Although public and private space are often conceived of and linked together, there is growing concern that public space through revitalization is being expropriated by private interests and purposes. Public space is now increasingly defined by its economic function (Iveson, 2002; Nolan, 2003). This is part of urban revitalization's image-boosting goals that are to attract investors, shoppers, tourists and employers (Nolan, 2003; Spaans, 2004). This has created, or replaced, public spaces as spaces of economic consumption where non-consumption is considered a form of deviance (Sibley, 1995a). Day (2003) shows how this difference in purpose and use of public space can become reality in how notions of pedestrian use of a neighbourhood are approached and incorporated into urban revitalization. "Do they imagine 'walking' primarily as 'strolling' – a leisurely accompaniment to window-shopping and coffee on a weekend morning? Or is 'walking' imagined as essential transportation for grocery shopping, errands, and travel to work for families without cars or drivers' licenses?" (Day, 2003: 89). How the public space of sidewalks and walkways are organized and their visualized uses demonstrate the interplay between public and private interests and consumption and non-consumption. This not only indicates use of public space, but also status (Turner, 2002).

The commercialization of public space has also been accompanied by an increase in surveillance and policing (Smith, 1996; Collins and Kearns, 2001; Blomley, 2004). This has resulted in stricter codes of behaviour and use of public space (Breitbart, 1998; Atkinson, 2003) and is "justified by and increasingly shrill language of 'zero-tolerance', 'compassion fatigue' and straightforward class hatred" (Blomley, 2004). The penalties for not conforming are becoming more and more harsh (Sibley, 1995a; Atkinson, 2003). Young people are often not considered during the

planning process for urban revitalization, and when they make use of public space it is interpreted as not acceptable or legitimate use (Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Lees, 2003; Nolan, 2003). The revitalization of public space in many ways demonstrates the ‘angels’ and ‘devils’ construction of young people and the efforts to restrict and control their access to public space. Lees (2003) documented the treatment of young people in Portland, Maine after the city centre underwent revitalization. She outlined the social and economic reasons for objections to their presence in the revitalized public space. Socially, adults found large groups of young people intimidating and were worried about what young people were up to if left to their own devices. Economically, young people did not consume the services of local shops and restaurants and proprietors believed that they scared other customers away. The municipal response was to institute law and order measures through enforcement of loitering and move-along laws. These types of responses place young people in a category similar to others who do not consume local goods and services, like the homeless and the very poor.

3.11 Engaging young people in the urban planning process

Young people are often an underrepresented group that is powerless and lacking legitimacy in the urban planning process (Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway, 1999). Typically they are considered ‘less than adults’, rendering them less important (Moore, 1986; Holloway and Valentine, 2000), and this is reflected in the training and orientation of planners and their methods of engagement (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005; Frank, 2006). However, there are good reasons for planners to consider the perspectives of young people. Not only do planners have an ethical and legal responsibility towards all citizens, including young people, they are also strategically situated to involve young people because of the diverse settings within which planners work (Checkoway, Pothukuchi and Finn, 1995; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Knowles-Yanez, 2005; Chawla et al., 2006).

The general absence of young people in urban planning engagement and policies is the result of a number of different factors. Young people are often cast as future citizens, and this places them in a position of becoming, rather than in the here and now (Simpson, 1997; Bridgman, 2004a). As citizens-in-training, they are not afforded the same democratic opportunities as those that they will grow into receiving as adults (Simpson, 1997; Frank, 2006). It also creates a social construction of young people as immature, irresponsible, and incapable (Simpson, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999; Reay and Lucey, 2000). This has created an adult-oriented world that does not necessarily mesh with the outlooks, needs and activities of young people (Andrews, 1981; Moore, 1986; Hart, 1997; Simpson, 1997; Freeman and Riordan, 2002).

It cannot be assumed that the needs of young people are met through a planning world that is centred on adults (Simpson, 1997). However, urban planners do address young people indirectly and because they organize the elements that make up the urban environment, they ultimately play a very important role in how young people experience their city (Freeman and Riordan, 2002). Examples of planning's indirect consideration of young people include facility provision, like parks, playgrounds and daycare, issues of safety and design, the location of access ways for public buildings and the location of developments with negative impacts, like busy roads and commercial developments (Checkoway, Pothukuchi and Finn, 1995; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). Often, young people are considered a by-product of the family unit (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). Planning that addresses the concerns of families and parents are assumed to also address those of young people (Chawla et al., 2006). However, the lives of parents and their children are intertwined; this does not always represent the views or the need of young people as individuals (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Chawla et al., 2006).

This use of the family as the means to include young people in urban planning efforts, or the tendency of planners to “keep kids in mind” rather than engage them in the planning process

(Checkoway, Pothukuchi and Finn, 1995) is also a reflection of the training that planners receive (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Knowles-Yanez, 2005; Frank, 2006; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). The adult-centred world is reflected in the focus of their studies and practice (Freeman and Riordan, 2002). As a result, planners have little professional knowledge of how young people relate to the urban environment and how to go about involving them in the planning process (Andrews, 1981; Frank, 2006). Freeman and Aitken-Rose (2005) undertook a study of New Zealand planning departments to determine how planners incorporate young people into planning decisions. In addition to young people not being a significant planning concern, they also found that planners find the engagement of young people a difficult task to undertake because they do not know how to go about it. Although there is an increasing range of publications and initiatives that advocate youth engagement in planning, such as the UN's Child Friendly Cities and Growing Up In Cities projects and Hart's (1997) and Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway's (1999) guides for participation, these have been aimed at local governments and agencies that work with young people generally and not planners specifically (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). The authors and supporters of these initiatives tend to come from different backgrounds like geography, urban studies, social work, rather than planning (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005).

There are further obstacles to involving young people that stem from perceptions, expectations and the ephemeral state of youth. Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway (1999) and Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1999) both identify how the views of adults can create barriers to young people's participation. Matthews, Limb and Taylor (1999) believe that adults can question the appropriateness of involving young people in political situations as well as being uncertain as to the shape and outcomes of participation. Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway (1999: 8) outline three adult-created obstacles: adults view young people as problems and not as resources; adults plan programmes/projects without involving young people in the process; and adults do not share their

power with young people. Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway (1999) also believe that young people may lack confidence in their abilities or are unsure of how to express their ideas. The reality that being young is not a permanent state of life is also a challenge for youth engagement (Malone, 2002). These factors can make it difficult to attract and keep the interest of young people in a project.

3.11.1 The benefits of incorporating young people into the planning process

Recognition of child rights and the sustainable development movement have acted as driving factors to encourage planners to incorporate young people into the planning process (Frank, 2006). The ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) acts as a catalyst to codify and promote youth participation in their communities (Hart, 1997; Simpson, 1997; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999; Chawla and Malone, 2003; UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2004). This recognizes young people as autonomous individuals outside of family, schools and institutions and gives them the right to express their views (Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Kellett, Robinson and Burr, 2004). Young people are also considered the ‘keystone species’ in the search for urban sustainability – they will be the best indicator of success and the warnings signals of failure (Chawla and Malone, 2003; Chawla et al., 2006). Young people themselves as well as the larger community benefit from their input into the planning process. Participation can teach young people about democracy and contribute to open-mindedness, social responsibility, sense of self and self confidence as well as feeling more connected to their community (Hart, 1992; Checkoway, Potukuchi and Finn, 1995; Delgado, 2006; Frank, 2006). The involvement of young people increases the resources available for communities and enhances the civic capacity of society as a whole while also giving adults and young people an opportunity to better understand each other (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Chawla, et al., 2006; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999; Frank, 2006).

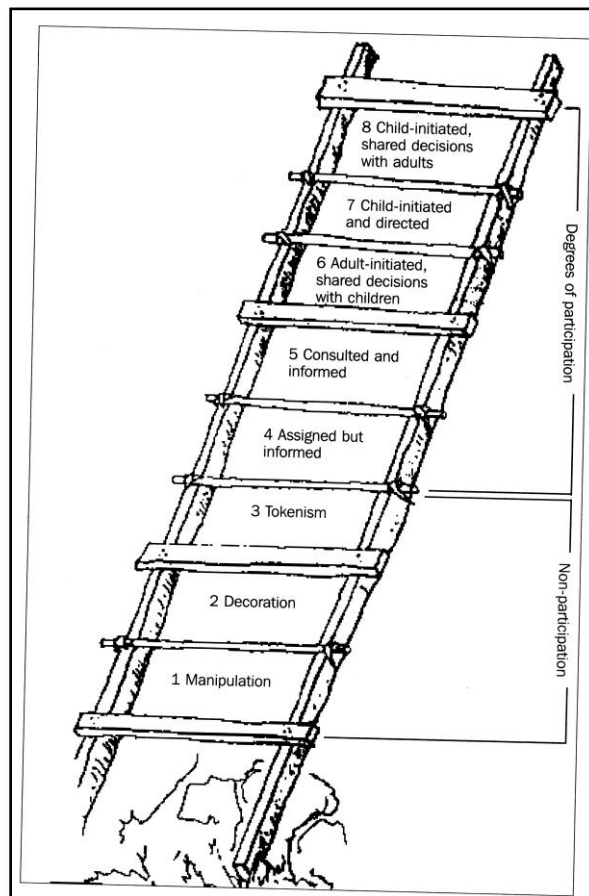
Chawla et al. (2006) state that young people are not a special interest group, but that they do require special attention from urban planners for a number of reasons, including because they are

more vulnerable to risks in the environment than adults; they are especially affected by traffic because of their size, exposure to pollution and their safety from vehicles; safe and stimulating spaces are rarely considered from their perspective when developing community spaces; and in the past planners have viewed young people as passive recipients rather than as active resources. Another condition for the special attention of planners to young people is the differences in how to approach participation. This requires a shift in the forums of engagement and the role of the planner.

Sherry Arnstein (1969) introduced the concept of the Ladder of Citizen Participation to illustrate the different means of public involvement in planning and the legitimacy of each participation approach. Hart (1997) adapted Arnstein's typology to demonstrate the different ways that young people are involved with adults planning and development. This is a useful adaptation because youth participation has become a hot topic in urban planning (Bridgman, 2004b), but attempts at engagement do not always go very deep into a community, or perform much more than window-dressing functions (Hart, 1997; Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway, 1999).

On Hart's ladder (see Figure 3-1), the lowest three rungs (manipulation, decoration and tokenism) do not represent true involvement because they are designed and controlled by adults and young people take part only in their prescribed roles. Manipulation is when young people's participation is used to communicate the adults' message. Decoration occurs when adults make use of young people to promote a project but do not feel that young people are capable of understanding the issue themselves. Tokenism, the most common form of youth involvement, is when young people are engaged in order to fulfill symbolic participation and not to truly voice an opinion.

Figure 3-1: Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



The higher rungs of the ladder Hart classifies as representing more genuine forms of participation. These incorporate the element of choice. Not all young people will want to participate at the highest levels, but planners should endeavour to provide for the opportunities should they choose to get involved. Projects that make use of the 'assigned but informed' rung of the ladder are those that young people may not have initiated themselves, but have an understanding and sense of entitlement over the issue. 'Consulted and informed' projects are run by adults who make an effort to consult with young people who have been informed about the process and give opinions that are taken seriously by the adults. The next rung of the ladder places young people in a position where decision-making is shared with adults. The highest rungs, 'child-initiated/child-directed' and 'child-

initiated/shared decisions with adults' demand that both young people and adults involved are competent and have self-confidence. They require that young people are mature enough to work cooperatively with others and that there is a foundation of trust between young people and adults.

By using the ladder metaphor, Hart provides a reference guide to make sure that genuine involvement actually takes place. In the same book, *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*, Hart points out the need for planners to shift how they conceive their engagement practices if they wish to climb the ladder of young people's participation. Others have reiterated this idea. Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway (1999) urge planners to reconsider the notion that community service, recreation and after-school activities, adult-run forums and school curricula constitute engagement. While these activities do contribute to young people's learning, they do not necessarily qualify as engagement. When attempting to reach out to young people, planners also need to consider how traditional participation techniques will work with young people. Adult-oriented participatory planning methods typically involve written surveys, interviews, conferences and roundtable discussions, but these are not the most effective ways to gain the opinions and insights of young participants (Breitbart, 1995; Hart, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Delgado, 2006). There is no agreement in urban planning on the most successful strategies for the engagement of young people, so there is no such guide as Nick Wates' (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook*, which spells out principles, methods and scenarios for positive and effective local participation in planning and design decisions. However, there is general consensus that methods for use with young people need to be chosen wisely and there is a need for active, interactive, and 'hands on' approaches (Hart, 1997; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Delgado, 2006). Active neighbourhood exploration and the use of visual methods to articulate their views not only allows for all levels of abilities, but also permits them to set the agenda, have greater control and participate on their own

terms (Breitbart, 1995;1998; Hart, 1997; McIntyre, 2000; Kellet and Ding, 2004). Hart (1997) outlines how this can take shape in practice and suggests specific methods for success, categorised generally as artwork, mapping and modelling, interviews and surveys, and media and communication. All of these methods lend themselves to individual as well as group activities.

Artwork includes drawings, storyboards and collages. This method is useful because it is familiar, enjoyable for most young people, as well as inexpensive. It is important to allow young people freedom to create what they see as fit, or there is the danger that the exercise may be too reminiscent of school exercises. With freedom, young people will often incorporate symbolic and metaphorical images. However, the adults viewing and using artwork for analysis need to be genuinely interested in the messages and use this as a point to initiate further discussion.

Mapping exercises can be intimidating, so there is the need to emphasise the knowledge that young people already have of their environment. When used properly, the method can reveal local features that young people feel are important and relevant to their daily lives. These maps can provide the basis of discussion that might not have emerged if relying only on words. These maps can range from the very small, where the participant uses one sheet of paper, to the very large, such as a walk-on map, where a sheet of canvas on the floor or ground allows for young people to walk around and fill in as per their vision. Walk-on maps are most useful when young people already have clear ideas about what they would like to place on the map.

An extension of mapping is modelling. Creating a model that can be manipulated by participants is a way to capture the emotion and detail that young people associate with their environment. In order for young people to take the model seriously, it should be as realistic as possible or made by the participants themselves. When working with young children, who are likely

to have difficulty imagining themselves mentally into a small-scale model, it is useful to simulate a full-size version wherever possible.

Hart's next method is one that is typically not associated with youth-friendly methods: the interview. He believes that a properly conducted interview "can dramatically change an adult's opinion of the capacities of a young child" (172). It is also important to note that his idea of an interview reverses the roles often pictured with this technique. Hart's youth-friendly interview involves young people conducting the interview and adults or other young people as the 'interviewees'. In order to limit intimidation, it is best for young people to conduct their interviews in groups of two or three and allow for time for them to practice their questions with other children.

Hart's visions for surveys go beyond the ranking kind associated with pencils and paper. He recommends undertaking surveys in a group setting that place emphasis on observation followed by mapping/recording the data. These include inventories, environmental issues and landscape surveys. An important aspect of these surveys is including activity. Walking through the neighbourhood or doing a site visit are not only important for building participants' awareness, but they give an opportunity to point out the other senses that they feel are important to their appreciation of the environment. On these expeditions, participants play the role of detective rather than passive observer (178). They are not about young people demonstrating what they have formally learned, but what they feel deserves attention and needs to be explored further.

Media and communication is about the written word, working with young people to publish articles in newsletters, magazines and the Internet, as well as other more visual approaches. Getting young people involved through journalism requires significant commitment on the part of adults to help coordinate and foster the skill set of participants. Photography and video are other means of media that help bridge any gaps associated with language and writing abilities. Photography is

identified as a particularly useful tool to get young people to focus on specific positive and negative elements of their neighbourhoods. Children of very young ages can successfully use automatic cameras. This places the process and end product more within the control of participants. Although the technology associated with making video is very attractive to young people, it requires a lot of work and skill training to create a finished product that will meet their expectations.

Hart also includes performance within the media and communication categories. This may take the shape of music, dance or drama and puppetry. These mediums can convey powerful messages beyond what can be learned from interviews. They are also ways that young people can identify common themes and communicate ideas to others. “It is difficult for parents to stay away from a performance by their children, so the message reaches an extremely large audience” (189).

The most important lessons to take away from Hart’s summary of appropriate methods for use with young people is that there is the need for flexibility and that there needs to be room to allow for data sources other than the written word. All of these methods place an emphasis on young people being able to cultivate and express their own knowledge. This means that the researcher’s timeline may need to adjust to the participants. Investigating with methods that go beyond the written word means that there is a need for creativity and leaving room for other forms of expression to come to the surface.

In addition to using different methods when working with young people, planners may also need to modify their role and how they go about building relationships. When working with young people, planners need an awareness of the barriers that may arise because of images of authority and age (Graue and Walsh, 1998; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). This can be addressed in various ways. Using appropriate methods rather than transposing adult-oriented techniques will help to build understanding and relationships between planners and young people (Freeman and Aitken-

Rose, 2005). It requires planners move away from their role as expert decision-maker and rather think of themselves as working in partnership with young people and those organizations that work with and know young people best (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005; Frank, 2006). Part of this change in role from expert to partner involves preparation for the limited patience that young people may have for authority, professional roles and time-scales (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999).

3.11.2 Parallels in planning thought

Despite the gaps in knowledge and interest on the part of some planners towards the involvement of young people, there are streams of planning thought that are useful when considering the importance of youth engagement. The rational planning model common in the world of bureaucratic government does not always address the needs for local involvement or incorporate the social elements of planning (Chaskin, 2005; Hoernig et al., 2005). This has led to new approaches to planning that emphasize the process and work towards greater citizen involvement (Friedmann, 1993; Innes and Booher, 2004; Hoernig et al., 2005). In addition to fulfilling any legal requirements, planners undertake public participation in order to develop more holistic plans by incorporating citizen's local knowledge, to advance fairness and justice by reaching the disadvantaged and to gain public legitimacy (Innes and Booher, 2004). Increasingly, planners are called upon to address multiple publics and build relationships across a diverse urban landscape (Friedmann, 1993; Taylor, 1998b; Umemoto, 2001; Watson, 2006). This entails a shift in how planners approach public engagement in order to be more inclusive of young people. There are challenges associated with working with diverse publics, both in terms of the demands for skills and time. Although Innes (1998) and Innes and Booher (2004) claim that developing connections is what planners do best, there are those that believe that planners need to spend more time developing relationships in order to develop a better understanding of cities and their residents. Graham and Healey (1999) and Friedmann (1993) call for planners to strive for non-Euclidean forms of planning that emphasize objectives measures which out

of necessity result in ‘face-to-face interactions in real time’. Friedmann (1993) emphasises face-to-face interactions in order to validate local knowledge and to promote mutual learning between the planning expert and the affected population. De Certeau (1993) and Dear (1995) follow in this line as well, encouraging planners to get to know the day-to-day patterns of the street and local neighbourhoods and understanding them from the ground as seen and experienced by their residents, rather than as part of a sanitized vision of the city from above. Age necessarily becomes a factor when planners consider how a neighbourhood is perceived and valued (Talen, 2000), and so becomes part of the knowing and understanding that de Certeau and Dear refer to.

Certain streams of planning theory work towards inclusivity and are particularly applicable to the context of the engagement of young people. Collaborative and communicative planning are based upon the ideal of democratic participation by all who are affected by a plan, not just those who are in a position to influence and implement planning change (Healey, 1997; Taylor, 1998b). Although not always applied to working with young people, the communicative approach places different voices and meanings on an equal level and give planners the task of negotiating interactions and dialogue (Healey, 1997; Margerum, 2002; Murtagh, 2004). The application of collaborative planning to involvement of young people comes from its base in long-term face-to-face group processes that involve two-way communication flows (Godschalk and Mills, 1966; Healey, 1997; Margerum, 2002). In order to be effective, planners need to become skilled in developing relationships, and communicating and negotiating with different groups (Innes, 1998; Taylor, 1998b). Healey (1997: 29-30) provides a list of the key emphases of collaborative planning. These include:

- Recognition that development and communication of knowledge and reasoning take many forms, from rational systemic analysis to storytelling and expressive statements in words, pictures or sound;
- Recognizing individuals do not arrive at their ‘preferences’ independently but learn about their views in social contexts and through interactions;

- Recognition that people have diverse interests and expectations, and that relations of power have the potential to oppress and dominate not merely through the distribution of material resources, but through the fine grain of taken-for-granted assumptions and practices;
- Realization that public policies concerned with managing co-existence in shared spaces which seek to be efficient, effective and accountable to all those with a ‘stake’ in a place need to draw upon and spread ownership of the above range of knowledge and reasoning;
- A realization that planning work is embedded in its context of social relations through its day-to-day practices and has a capacity to challenge and change these relations.

These emphases are considered with the broader public in mind, but are particularly pertinent for working with young people. They very much parallel the movement towards adapting methods to make them more valuable for working with young people and recognizing and incorporating the views of young people into planning.

Despite its merits, collaborative planning however is critiqued for its lack of consideration of power. Although it places value on the input of all citizens, those who do not have strong political voices and knowledge of the system can be difficult to engage (Murtagh, 2004). Access to these voices rests on the abilities and values of the planner. In the case of working with young people in the planning process, this would not only require the skills to develop appropriate communication methods that go beyond the verbal and the planner’s traditional participation tool kit, but also the basic consideration that young people are an important group to contact and meaningfully involve. The subordinate position of young people and their lack of recognition have typically meant that they have been served by advocacy or equity planning efforts. Advocacy efforts, which became popular in the 1970s, expand planning’s purview beyond traditional land-use planning (Forester, 1989; Metzger, 1996). When some planners began to work towards the integration of social issues into government institutions and to attempt to enact the advocacy vision from within government administration, it became known as equity planning (Metzger, 1996). Advocacy and equity are planning concepts, but the planners that would most likely work with these ideals are not often found within city planning departments (Friedmann, 1987; Metzger, 1996). They are more likely to work within the fields of

housing, community development and management (Metzger, 1996), or work in conjunction with community agencies that lobby or run programmes for the poor, like soup kitchens or food pantries and local youth programmes (Blank, 2005). However, Brooks (2002) argues that advocacy and equity planning have also left a mark on city planning departments as well. Many larger city planning departments have staff and resources allocated for neighbourhood-level planning. This is often understood from a conventional planning standpoint, but as Brooks (2002:117) points out, planning at the neighbourhood level gives “planners the opportunity to develop advocacy-style relationships with grass-roots organizations.” Traditionally associated with ethnicity, gender and poverty, young people are increasingly being included on the list of populations in need of consideration and are being added to the urban equity agenda (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999).

Advocacy or equity planning is a means for planners to deal with multiple publics and to address the social and economic inequalities that stem from poverty (Davidoff, 1965; Krumholz, 1982; Friedmann, 1987; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). In this role, the planner becomes an agent of social change because at its foundations, advocacy works towards participation that moves beyond tokenism or manipulation (Forester, 1994). In this sense, planners are not acting only on behalf of a particular client, but to ensure all publics are given voice within the planning process. Davidoff (1965) saw advocacy as planning’s mechanism to encourage democratic urban government. From his perspective, advocacy is a way to include citizens with the participatory process, where ‘inclusion’ means not only citizens being heard, but also being well-informed about the underlying reasons for planning proposals. Booher and Innes (2002) criticize advocacy planning as an extension of the idea of planner as expert working for a client. This implies that there is not an equal exchange of information and communication, and that the planner is in a position to advocate as they see fit. From this perspective, advocacy can take the form of planning for young people rather than planning with them (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). However, Forester (1994) argues that advocacy is

already virtually mandated whenever planners are encouraged to undertake meaningful consultation and public involvement. Planners do not shape just documents, but the participation process - by determining who is contacted, who participates, and who persuades whom - not just by shaping which facts citizens have, but by shaping their trust and expectations (Forester, 1989).

3.12 Intersections between the existing literature and this study

My particular study sits at the intersection of these three areas of literature and provides a Canadian example of young people's perspectives on public housing revitalization. I make use of the literature to place my own research within the broader field of knowledge to draw out a conceptualization of how young people define and value local public space. Many studies have looked at the patterns of young people, what they consider positive or negative components of their urban environment. My particular interest was to develop a study that worked within a public housing development that is undergoing revitalization and did not show significant evidence of input from young people in the planning process and implementation. As a result, I developed a research strategy that could be influenced by young people and where public space could take the dimensions assigned by them.

3.12.1 Youth engagement

This study is based on the premise that planners are obligated to involve young people and can reap benefits from their participation. This provides the platform for the other elements of this study. While this reflects my own personal values, it is also substantiated in the literature. According to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, young people should be involved in processes that affect their communities, and this includes participation in planning and development (Hart, 1997; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999; Chawla and Malone, 2003; Frank, 2006). If planning is considered from a collaborative standpoint where planners work with different stakeholders and make an effort to engage those who have little or no political voice, this is an easy fit. It corresponds with

the ideals of equity and public diversity promoted by Davidoff (1965), Forester (1989; 1994) and Innes and Booher (2004).

The challenge of incorporating multiple publics is that each individual represents a set of complex identities (McDowell, 1996; Epstein, 1998). I understand that young people themselves represent a diverse group of people and it is important to recognize multiple childhoods (Aitken, 2001; Nieuwenhuys, 2003), but in the attempts to emphasize the diversity of individual young people's experiences, there is a danger that commonalities and how to incorporate their opinions and viewpoints will be lost (Aitken, 2001; Matthews, 2003). For this study, I look at certain elements that are part of shared experience. Age and location are common factors in my research.

The literature outlines several benefits to involving young people in the planning process, for young participants and plans alike. Young people can develop self-esteem and skills to prepare them for future civic responsibilities as adults (Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway, 1999). The *Growing Up In Cities* project has demonstrated different ways that young people approach their urban environments. Plans are also more likely to be successful because they have engaged a population that has a unique perspective that is 'closer to the ground' both literally and figuratively (Morrow, 2003). Young people are much less likely to be disruptive and destructive in areas where they have been involved in the planning and development phases of a project (Hart, 1997). Chawla and Malone (2003) show how the channels of communication are opened between young people and adults facilitating understanding and trust. This study contributes to the literature regarding young people's perspectives on neighbourhood design, positive and negative aspects of public space as well as their ideas about how to address neighbourhood challenges. It also demonstrates the disconnects that can arise from not incorporating young people into the planning process.

The literature not only addresses why young people should be involved in urban planning, but also how. This is incorporated into how I consider participation and appropriate engagement techniques. There is consistent mention in the literature that child and youth friendly methods are not the same as those used with adults (Hart, 1997; Breitbart, 1998; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). The structure and formality of methods used with adults does not necessarily translate well when working with young people. Transposing adult-oriented methods is the downfall of many planners' attempts at youth engagement (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999). Education and community service are also confused with participation (Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway, 1999). I make use of Hart's ladder metaphor to understand the past engagement efforts that have taken place in Regent Park with young people.

When Hart's ladder is applied to the citizen engagement process used for the Regent Park Revitalization Plan, it does not appear that young people were involved in a meaningful way. Young people were involved through their schools in education and awareness exercises and through adult-directed discussion forums (Meagher and Boston, 2003). Not only does this reflect Mullahey, Susskind and Checkoway's (1999) observation that most planners confuse what represents participation, the lack of clarity in how this influenced the planning process and outcomes does not give the input of young people much legitimacy. The intent of my research was not to bring about youth-led community change, like that used in the *Growing Up In Cities* projects, but I wanted to create a study that would gather meaningful input from young people. Based upon the literature, this requires more than interviews and needs to be activity-oriented (Hart, 1997; Breitbart, 1998; Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Delgado, 2006). This study complements the literature by demonstrating that a multi-method, participatory approach with young people can generate valuable data. The study also gives some indication for planners about what is involved in working with this age group in such a setting.

3.12.2 Public space

My research deals with the multiple concepts of space, place and public with the understanding that all of these ideas take on different meanings for different people depending on their point in history (Smith and Low, 2006) and how that historical moment in time positions age, gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Malone, 2002). My concern with public space is how young people consider and perceive local public space within the context of public housing. My approach to space follows in the tradition of viewing space as socially produced and not a container and is made up of both its physical location and characteristics and social meanings. Although some make a distinction between space and place, nearly all of these authors, such as Mandanipour, Shields and Massey, draw upon Lefebvre, who uses the term space to incorporate space as well as its meaningful place functions.

Matthews (2003) and Matthews, Limb and Taylor (2000) use the street as a metaphor for all neighbourhood public space. This is a valid construction and has been used by others considering young people and their relationship with public space (Corrigan, 1979; Skelton, 2000). Matthews (2003), Matthews, Limb and Taylor (2000) and Skelton (2000) consider how young people use and access public space. Breitbart (1998) investigated how young people assess their neighbourhood quality and reputation. Morrow (2003) asked young people to evaluate their public housing and identify physical elements that liked and disliked. Many times, young people's views and uses of the environment are contrasted against those of adults (Schnee, 1998; Chawla and Malone, 2003). These studies demonstrate that young people have a need for public space and have their own perspective on it. For my research, I felt it was important to build upon this ideal of public space being an open construct. Youth engagement is based upon the belief that young people have competent and unique contributions (Hart, 1997). My study develops on both open ideals of public space and the distinctive viewpoints of young people by leaving the interpretation of public space open to definition by young people and by giving them the opportunity to consider both the physical and social environments. By

doing so, I contribute to the literature on public space and planning with young people. By asking young people to share their ideas about public space, I came to conclusions that vary significantly from the existing literature.

3.12.3 The connections to public housing revitalization

My approach to public housing and its public spaces is done at the neighbourhood level.

Neighbourhood is recognized as an important factor for young people in terms of their health and well-being (Ellen and Turner, 1998) and their feelings of security and culture (Bauder, 2001). I acknowledge that there are different ways to define neighbourhood, such as by spatially determined boundaries or social and activity networks and that each individual may have a different interpretation of neighbourhood (Galster, 2001). Regent Park is a physically marked area that is separated by street pattern and building types from the surrounding areas. It is also defined by poverty, its name and reputation, all of which have spatial consequences. Based on these factors, I adopted an approach to neighbourhood that centres on physical boundaries.

Public housing revitalization is nested within the broader urban revitalization literature. This provides background to the context of Regent Park as a case study. Regent Park is undergoing significant physical and social shifts. It follows the principles of 21st century public housing revitalization efforts (Franck, 1998; Day, 2003). These revitalization plans are based on ‘defensible space’ and emphasize the distinctions between public, private and semi-private spaces (Franck and Mostoller, 1995; Franck, 1998; Day, 2003). Although these plans are intended to foster community and safety, semi-private spaces often encourage social homogeneity (Byers, 1998). This leaves young people, who are often already considered illegitimate users of public space (Breitbart, 1998; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003), in a position that needs to be understood more fully. By opening up the definition of public space to study participants, and by building on what others have already written about young people’s pattern of use in public space, this study can lead to a better understand the

expectations of not only different socio-economic groups, but age groups as well. The results from this study challenge the literature that asserts that neo-traditional design is the most beneficial design for public housing revitalization for fostering community and safety. This study reveals that there is need for further investigation into the connections between design and community building.

3.12.4 Planning implications

The planning implications of this study relate to how planners construct young people and their involvement in the planning process. The unique viewpoints of young people may lead to different ways that planners come to understand public spaces.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature in the areas that provide the foundation for this study. Revitalization of public housing, the concepts relating to public space as the position of young people in urban planning were all considered. The literature provided the starting point and helped shape my ideas for how to approach and structure my research.

Chapter 4

Methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how I undertook this study. I based my study on activity-based sessions that made use of participant-led walking tours, photography and collages as well as interviews and discussion groups. This chapter provides the details of my research design, methods of data generation and analysis as well as study limitations.

4.2 Research Design

Yin (1984) describes a research design as an action plan for getting from here to there, and between 'here' and 'there' are a number of steps, including the collection and analysis of data. My research addresses two elements: 1) perceptions of public space; and 2) how to incorporate the voices of young people into future planning processes. Normative values underlie both elements and there are different research strategies to deal with both of these components. Because of my interest in how young people perceive public space and their associated narratives and interpretations, I chose a qualitative, four phase approach. My research is also grounded within a particular context. Many studies involving young people are done through case studies, and my research follows in this tradition.

The multi-method approach is inherent to qualitative studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). For this research project, I made use of key informant interviews, activity sessions with young people based on a neighbourhood tour, photography and artwork, discussion groups and observation. When developing my research design, I tried to address the shift in how young people are positioned in research. Many academics and some planning professionals recognise that there is an unmet need for youth participation and involvement; to further youth engagement requires a rethinking of what it

means to access the voices of young people and their views on urban environments (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). I worked towards addressing this need by making use of participatory methods for this study. Much of the recent academic work that focuses on young people has emphasized participatory methods that are adapted for use with younger age groups (see Hart, 1997; Breitbart, 1995, 1998; McIntyre, 2000). The attention to adapting methods for youth engagement is to ensure that the research process is valuable for participants and researchers. Adult-centered methods can restrict the full participation of youth by limiting what young participants contribute and share during the research process. Adapting methods to suit young participants increases the chances of participants feeling that they actually contributed to a project as there is more potential for them to voice their true opinions and perspectives. When researchers make the effort to pursue youth-centred methods, they are far more likely to gain an appreciation of how young people's understandings, rather than how young people fit into the adult interpretation of a particular situation. Participatory approaches are a valuable means for data generation because they can address the power differentials that occur between researcher and participant (Robinson and Kellet, 2004; McIntyre, 2000). The emphasis is placed on the views of participants rather than structured by the researcher. This places more control over the research process in the hands of participants as they guide the researcher through the project. This is particularly relevant when working with young people if the researcher will likely be an adult. The issues of socio-economic status and ethnicity can also be mitigated with these approaches (Chawla, 2002; Hart, 1997). The following sections outline the multiple methods used in this study and the rationale behind them, as used in this study.

4.3 Research stages

My study involved various methods that related to the phases of the study and the targeted population. The nature of the study meant that the stages did not always take place always in complete

chronological order. The majority of key informant interviews with those working with young people in Regent Park took place before or at the same time as the activity sessions with young people. However, some interviews took place after these sessions were completed. In the first stage of my research I established contact with individuals and organizations in the Regent Park community. It was during this stage that I determined the parameters of my study in terms of age of participants, recruitment, and modified my research design. During the second stage, I interviewed key informants who were connected to my research either by their work with young people in youth programmes or schools, or by their affiliation with the Regent Park Revitalization Plan. In the third stage, I undertook a series of two activity sessions with study participants. In the fourth stage, I convened discussion groups with young people to follow up on the issues identified in the activity sessions (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1: Research stages

Stage 1: Community contact	Stage 2: Key informant interviews	Stage 3: Activity sessions	Stage 4: Discussion groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preliminary meetings with adults -Consultations with young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Open-ended, semi-structured interviews with adult key informants at Regent Park and city levels -Snowball technique -Developing relationships with youth workers -Preliminary analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pilot activity sessions Recruitment from youth groups and Sunday in the Park -Walking tours and photography -Categorizing photographs -Collages and their summaries -Participant observation -Preliminary analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Open-ended, semi-structured questions -Elaborate on and confirm/correct preliminary analysis

4.4 Stage 1: Community contact

The process of gaining entry into a particular setting to conduct research is important because it influences the kind of research that can be completed (Shaffir, 1991). Prior to this research, I did not have any contacts with people living or working in Regent Park. In order to develop a network of people and an understanding of the neighbourhood, I needed to spend time establishing relationships and becoming familiar with Regent Park.

I developed an outline of methods prior to beginning work in the Regent Park neighbourhood. Methods for this study needed to fulfill the different goals of academic research, including validity, reliability and transferability, as well as my own goals of appropriate methods for youth engagement. Prior to meeting with adults and young people in Regent Park, I did have a multi-method research design and I did want to make use of activity sessions and photography with young people. However, I sought feedback on the research design before any action was taken. Critique came from both adults and young people in the Regent Park community. Seeking feedback from the community was important for two reasons. It served as a check to ensure that the methods would be effective and acceptable for Regent Park, especially in light of the neighbourhood's noted study fatigue. It was also done in the spirit of collaborative planning in order to avoid the planning and research projects where young participants are only planned for and treated as objects of study. Critiques from adults and young people helped shape the details of the methods, as well as helped me develop contacts and knowledge about Regent Park.

4.4.1 Preliminary meetings with adults

The emphasis of my research is on the views and perspectives of young people, but adults act as gatekeepers. Adults that work with young people have certain legal responsibilities to protect youth within their care. Getting to know key adults was the first stage of my relationship building within Regent Park. The first person I spoke with was a representative of the Regent Park Tenants'

Association in January 2005. Working with young people was beyond her purview, but she did provide other connections. I used these contacts and the TCHC's Regent Park Community Services and Facilities Study's list of neighbourhood youth organizations to develop a list of stakeholders that I contacted by both email and telephone. I contacted seven agencies and two responded. One of these responses was from a local community development agency. After meeting with their youth worker and explaining my study, he introduced me to people at key local agencies and schools. His introductions provided the access I needed to connect with adults working with Regent Park's youth, and subsequently to young people.

In March 2005, I presented my project separately to three different Regent Park youth organizations. They provided feedback in four areas: targeted age group, engagement methods, the nature and extent of youth participation in Regent Park, and remuneration for participants. The original age range I had identified for my study was 12 to 16. Research on perceptions of urban environments tends to focus mainly on younger children (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000). It was for this reason I initially was interested in working with teenagers. The comments I received from agencies on my initial target population demonstrated how childhood is socially constructed (James and Prout, 1990). Due to social and economic conditions within the Regent Park neighbourhood, the concepts of child and teen are experienced and defined differently from the wider understanding that a child becomes a teenager around the age of 13. The high number of single parent households in Regent Park often places young children in positions of responsibility in caring for younger siblings and other household duties. Many children often witness violence and crime and others become enmeshed in the drug and gang culture as message and product deliverers. For these reasons, younger children are considered teenagers in Regent Park. Because I wanted to capture the opinions and perspectives of teenagers, I accommodated the local notions of who is a teenager and I extended the age range to include 10 to 16 year olds.

The agencies also cautioned me about the study fatigue experienced by Regent Park residents. The high profile nature of the Regent Park revitalization initiative subjected residents to significant research and media interest. Residents were growing tired of surveys and this could affect their willingness to participate in another study using these methods. Concerns were also raised about the reading and writing skills of young participants. Language barriers and learning disabilities are common in Regent Park. For these reasons, the youth workers encouraged fun activities that would not require a great deal of reading and writing. Finally, remuneration was considered important to show appreciation and to value their participation. Providing food and cash as forms of honorarium were also considered appropriate means of recruiting and retaining participants.

4.4.2 Consultations with young people: working their ideas into the research design

The consultations with young people were also an effort to be more inclusive and participatory in the research process. One local youth agency made provisions for me to organize two separate consultation sessions with young people. The first session involved five people and the second had 13. These meetings were not for recruitment purposes but instead were to give young people an opportunity to critique and provide input on the research design, and to ask questions about the proposed research. Their feedback shaped elements of the design. Their preference was to do activities in a group setting. Their preference is common, and is recommended by others who have conducted research with young people (Breitbart, 1995, 1998; Graue and Walsh, 1998; Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004). This preference, according to those at the consultation sessions and the literature, is based on comfort levels. Being with friends and peers can be less intimidating than working one-on-one with the researcher (Hart, 1992; Graue and Walsh, 1998). Group interactions and conversations also add to the richness of the data (Breitbart, 1995; Graue and Walsh 1998; Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004). Although those involved in the youth consultations wanted activities to take place in a group setting, they were unanimous regarding use of cameras and art.

They felt that those who participated in the activity sessions should have their own camera and to create their own art work.

The number and length of activity sessions was also determined based on the input from these groups. The majority felt that two activity sessions to be the most acceptable for the project and indicated that they would most likely participate in sessions that would take approximately an hour. This preference was based on what they felt other youth would feel was reasonable in terms of commitments for interest and the time to accomplish the tasks I had outlined. Although not identified as a reason by these youth, there is also value in giving time to pass between sessions that involve photo voice and artwork. It gives time for participants to reflect on their ideas and opinions (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006). In addition to creating art with their photographs, many young people suggested that I bring to the second session exercises related to their photographs and public spaces in order to remind them of what they had done in the first session. As the youth workers had expressed, they expected to receive something for their efforts and commitment. In addition to refreshments and money, they also wanted to take away a copy of their photographs. I also believed that it was important that participants received things they considered valuable and appropriate as appreciation for their involvement. As a result, I built into the project budget the cost of the development of double prints, food and drink, and a \$10.00 honourarium for each participant.

4.5 Stage 2: Key informant interviews

I interviewed 14 key informants who worked in the community or were connected with the revitalization plan. Two other informants declined an interview and six others after repeated attempts could not be reached. A summary of the key informant interviews is provided in Table 4-2. The snowball technique was used to develop the list of informants. This process begins with one or a small group of individuals who are then asked to identify or provide the contact information for

others who would also be relevant to the study (Palys, 1997). Individuals were contacted by phone and email and I would indicate who had recommended that I interview them. If the informant agreed to an interview, I would then send a summary outlining my research as well as a consent form for the interview. The time and place of the interview was determined by the interviewee. Interviews were semi-structured and were usually between 30 and 45 minutes in length. All of the interviews were conducted in person, tape recorded and later transcribed. Each interview was divided into five sections:

- definition of public space,
- the social mix and street design of the Regent Park Revitalization Plan,
- how public space is incorporated into the plans for the new Regent Park,
- how young people figure in the plans for the revitalized neighbourhood,
- how young people participate in the planning process

Table 4-2: Summary of key informant interviews

Informant	Number
Affiliated with local organisation providing youth programmes	7
Affiliated with local organisation	1
Youth representative from tenant council	1
Local elementary teacher	1
Parks and Recreation Department	1
City Planning Department	1
TCHC	1
GHK Planning Consultant	1

Key informant interviews fulfilled three purposes. 1) In many cases recruitment of young people is facilitated through adults. Interviews with adults working for organisations with youth programmes provided an avenue to gain access to young people. The interview gave me an opportunity to explain my project and in a sense, involved me being interviewed. Key informants usually asked me about my education, my personal and professional experiences working with young

people, and why I was interested in Regent Park and what I hoped to gain from my study. 2) My background knowledge and understanding of the Regent Park context was developed through these interviews. The key informant interviews provided me with an opportunity to gain the perspectives of those who have professional and personal experiences from Regent Park. Through these interviews, informants shared their neighbourhood knowledge and helped me build my list of Regent Park contacts. 3) The interviews helped lay the foundation for relationships with youth workers. These relationships were a great benefit to me and proved a significant asset throughout my study.

4.5.1 The importance of relationships with youth workers

Building relationships with youth workers is one element of this study that deserves further comment. Youth workers gave generously of their time to help me identify participants and shared their knowledge of the neighbourhood. Their experiences in Regent Park provided information on what to do and not to do while in the neighbourhood. They pointed out people and places to avoid. They also told me how to carry myself when I walked through the neighbourhood alone or with participants: with purpose, accompanied after dark, and without my own camera. They also gave me some hints about recruitment, suggesting that if I offered to pick up and walk participants home before and after our sessions, some young people may be more likely to participate. This is a gesture that encourages participation by developing trust by coming to meet them at the arranged time. This helps to build accountability on the part of participants, increasing the likelihood of their involvement in a project. Finally, meeting participants before a session and walking them home afterwards demonstrates that you care about them.

Building relationships with youth workers also helped establish my credibility with other youth workers and young people. I encountered some difficulties contacting youth workers on my own. However, introductions provided by youth workers on my behalf proved quite useful in securing interviews and meeting times. My association with a youth worker also supported my

recruitment efforts. Young people often mistrust those from outside of Regent Park. Youth workers would introduce me to young people as their friend. It also helped that many of the times that I spent in the neighbourhood for observation purposes I was also with youth workers, and this showed young people that I did not only spend time with the youth workers for the sake of the few sessions that I needed them.

Youth workers helped tremendously locating participants that were late coming to the activity sessions. The youth workers know these young people and their parents very well. They know their cell phone numbers, their friends and their hang outs, so they have more information than I to draw upon when trying to find any particular participant. It also meant that if participants who had signed up did not come, they had not just let me down, they also let their youth worker down. Youth workers also acted as the intermediary if a participant needed to reschedule a meeting time. All of the participants had my contact phone number and email. But the phone number was long distance and not all had access to the internet from home. Participants would contact their youth worker who would then contact me.

The youth workers provided a great deal of support. They were concerned about my physical safety and my emotional health. They would accompany me when I wanted to spend time in Regent Park for observation. If a session finished after dark, they would walk or drive me out of Regent Park. When word began to spread that participants received a \$10.00 honorarium for participation, they expressed concern for my safety. From that point forward, they made sure that I had an escort out of the neighbourhood. They also would check in with me and see how I was handling the Regent Park environment. This became an important support when I unfortunately witnessed a stabbing that took place a few paces away from me. I was able to talk to people that listened and understood my reactions to that experience.

4.6 Stage 3: Activity sessions with young people

The third phase of my research is made of different components. These include the pilot session, the series of two activity sessions, follow up discussion groups. Observation was an aspect of all of the elements as well as my efforts towards building relationships with participants.

Planners utilize different techniques to engage people. These include interviews, surveys as well as visual methods. There are common themes in the research methods literature when working with young people: activity-based methods, use of visuals, and observation. Interviews and surveys are tools to gain information on specific questions and can be adapted to better meet the needs of working with young people (Kellett and Ding, 2004). These techniques often include brainstorming and ranking exercises (Hart, 1997; Kellet and Ding, 2004). Visual methods include mapping exercises, photography, drawing and art, whether produced by researchers or not (Harrison, 2002). Visual methods are effective at addressing and transmitting information that can be affected by social, racial and language barriers (Al-Kodmany, 2002). Hart (1997) considers task-based activities more engaging and effective than questionnaire and talk-based activities. The introduction of activities that place an emphasis on art and visuals, such as collage making, drawing, and photography, break down language skills barriers. The use of these forms of data generation allows for young participants to share ideas and feelings that may not have been considered by the researcher at the outset of the project (Hart, 1997). The need for activity and methods to engage young people in a manner that will provide rich and valuable data led me to consider incorporating visual methods into my research design.

One of the more recent tools used to gain young people's perceptions and feelings towards their environment is photography (Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004). It is identified as an effective and creative means of engaging young people to express their thoughts about their local neighbourhood (Delgado, 2006). Wang, Yuan and Feng (1996) refer to this technique as 'photo

voice'. This approach to research is particularly applicable when the participants involved in a study are not traditionally involved in decision-making processes (Wang, Yuan and Feng, 1996). It also allows for and welcomes creativity and reflexivity (Gauntlett and Holworth, 2006). Photography is considered a youth-friendly approach on various levels. It gives participants more freedom and control over a research project (Tucker and Matthews, 1999; Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004; Einarsdottir, 2005). This can balance the distribution of power between adult and child; researcher and participant. The very nature of taking photographs requires activity. This means that it is more likely to be engaging and enjoyable. It is also a method that provides an avenue for expression that does not rely on language. This allows for those who have difficulties with reading, writing, and speech to still meaningfully participate (Aitken and Wingate, 1993; Dodman, 2003; Einarsdottir, 2005; Delgado, 2006, Wang, Yuan and Feng, 2006).

Like all research methods, the use of photography has its drawbacks. The primary disadvantage of this particular method is that it emphasises the visual and neglects the other senses. Only what is photographable can be photographed (Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004) and photographs rarely tell the entire story on their own (Adelman, 2001). Photography is often used as a self-directed exercise where the researcher is not present while photographs are taken. Examples of this include Dodman's (2003) work looking at how elementary school students perceive urban and rural settings, Aitken and Wingate's (1993) investigation of interactions with the environment by children from different social and ability backgrounds, and Einarsdottir's (2004) study of primary students' perceptions of their classroom.

For a better understanding of those un-photographable senses as well as contextual factors, some researchers accompany young people while they are taking photographs. Breitbart (1995) and Tunstall, Tapsell and House (2004) regard the actions and interactions of young people while they go about taking photographs as very valuable information that assists considerably in interpreting and

analysing the data. Breitbart (1995, 1998) invited participants to take photographs as a group while walking through the neighbourhood together. She found that this not only allowed her to better understand the photographs by hearing first-hand the associated commentary, but also gave her an opportunity to have a tour from the perspective of young people, observe the participants as they navigated their way through the neighbourhood, as well as providing time to build relationships with participants. Tunstall, Tapsell and House (2004) feel that observing the photography exercise gave insight and accuracy when analysing and coding the photographs. The experience of taking photographs can also be incorporated into further stages of study. Breitbart (1995, 1998) had participants take cues from their photographs to develop artistic street banners. Hart (1997) and McIntyre (2000) feel that collages and art that make use of photographs can reveal symbolism, metaphors and opinions that may not be gained through more formal means.

The benefits of photography as a research method made it appropriate for use with young people in Regent Park. It is a technique that has been used in a variety of settings where participants have diverse backgrounds and abilities. Visual methods are most often used in visual anthropology and visual ethnography, but are less often applied outside of these fields (Mason, 2005). Photography is a tool widely used in education, recreation, and urban studies. Applying it within an urban planning framework shifts the focus from taking photographs for a particular educational project or of a specific environmental feature and places an emphasis on the engagement process and the urban environment in general.

The advantages of observing the process of taking photographs was an important element that was built into the research design for the present study. Photographs for this research in Regent Park were taken during a participant-led walking tour through the neighbourhood. Rather than have taking photographs be the only task-oriented activity, and working upon the recommendations and conclusions of Breitbart (1995), McIntyre (2000) and Hart (1997), collages were also incorporated

into the research project. The photographs and collages formed the foundation for the more talk-oriented methods.

4.6.1 Pilot sessions

Three girls between the ages of 12 and 13 took part in my pilot activity sessions. These sessions were in Waterloo, where the girls lived. The purpose of the pilot was to test the process of walking through a neighbourhood in a group and what I needed to be aware of during the activity. Although the conditions and socio-economic status of the pilot participants were not the same as those in Regent Park, there were some connections. The girls had recently moved from the University of Waterloo’s old family student housing residence into the newly-built family student housing. This gave them pertinent foundations for taking photographs of neighbourhood elements that had undergone significant change. The lessons learned from the pilot exercise pertained to the explanation of the goals of the project to participants. The pilot participants were keen to photograph what they thought would be the perceptions of others, and not necessarily theirs. This was applied to the Regent Park context by emphasising this in the explanation of the purpose of the photographs and having a discussion on why their individual opinions and reflections were important.

4.6.2 Recruitment of participants: community rather than the classroom

Table 4-3: Sources and numbers of participants

Recruiting source	Number of signed up to participate	Actual participants
<i>Sunday in the Park</i>	14	1
Local organizations	24	12
Walkways	4	0
Total	42	13

Recruitment of volunteers for the pilot sessions was done through friends and acquaintances.

Recruiting within Regent Park took place over several months and was more challenging. I contacted local organisations that provide services for young people in order to interview key informants and to

ask permission to recruit participants from their youth groups. Two organizations agreed to me approaching young people that took part in their youth programmes and a third contributed meeting space. I also used *Sunday in the Park*, a Regent Park event that takes place every July, for recruitment. I also recruited a few young people from the walkways of Regent Park. This happened while on the neighbourhood walking tours and they expressed interest in what the group was doing. I visited weekly scheduled youth groups to sign up participants through local organisations. I visited these youth groups between May and October 2005. These meetings revolved around giving young people time and space to socialize while making and eating dinner. While we ate, I explained my project. *Sunday in the Park* consisted of setting up a table in affiliation with Dixon Hall, a local community development organisation, and talking to parents and young people walking around in the area. In each scenario, young people were given a permission form for their parent/guardian to read and sign. Recruitment from the local organisations was more successful than *Sunday in the Park* and the walkways. None of the four who were recruited from the walkways participated. A total of 14 potential participants signed up at the table at Sunday in the Park, but only one girl actually did participate. Twelve of the 24 that signed up through the local organisations participated. In all, four walking tours took place between June and November 2005: three groups of four participants each recruited through local organisations and one with a participant who signed up at *Sunday in the Park*.

The majority of research with young people is done within the school setting (Hart, 1997; Alderson, 2004; Robinson and Kellet, 2004). The logical reason for this is that schools are where we typically find young people. However, Hart (1992) claims that it is no accident that almost all research involving young people takes place within school settings. Schools and their classrooms are typically associated with adult authority and come with codes of behaviour (Hart, 1992; Flewitt, 2005). This gives young people recruited from schools limited freedom of choice and raises ethical questions regarding voluntary participation. Young people may not feel that they can truly decline

their participation (Hart, 1992; Alderson, 2004; Robinson and Kellett, 2004). There are also concerns that the authoritarian structure of a school can shape the data and may not truly reflect the feelings and beliefs of young participants (Hart, 1992). Participation rates are however likely to be higher when recruiting in schools than in other areas (Hart, 1992).

It may have been easier to recruit participants from Regent Park's local schools, but the above criticisms of research within the school setting had me strive for other means. The targeted age also limited the usefulness of the classroom route. Regent Park is serviced locally by elementary schools, but Regent Park's high school population is spread across the city's secondary schools. This meant that a more local avenue was needed.

4.6.3 Locating and reminding participants

Each activity session involved meeting at a pre-arranged spot at a specific time. This presented a challenge in Regent Park. Three youth workers cautioned me that young people often needed many reminders and physical tracking down to get them to come to events. I called each participant three days before our meeting and again the day before. These phone calls also served as an opportunity for me to talk to parents and answer any of their questions. I offered to meet each participant in front of their building, and many participants took me up on this. For those that did not show up at the meeting time, I would call again and search for them in the neighbourhood. The youth workers would often help me call and track down participants affiliated with their youth group both before and at the time of the session. The need to locate and remind participants resulted in sessions starting late, usually 30 minutes to one hour later than the agreed upon time.

4.6.4 First activity session

The first session involved four components: explaining the project; discussion of public space; a participant-led walking tour in and around Regent Park; and taking photographs of the

neighbourhood. As a group, participants brainstormed about what they considered public space and compiled a list of public spaces. Before embarking on our neighbourhood tour, I had participants discuss potential places to take pictures and what route we should take. I used a map of Regent Park with key landmarks outlined to aid in this discussion. Before starting out on the neighbourhood walking tour, I gave each participant a disposable, 27-exposure camera. With the exception of the first walking tour, I carried a GPS unit with me to track the path taken by each group. I recorded the photographed spaces along the route. These recorded points are referred to as waypoints in the GPS system. The GPS unit served to structure and augment my field notes and conversations with participants. At the beginning of the session I told all the participants about the GPS unit and it was something they were very interested in. I asked them to suggest names for the waypoints and to call to my attention anything they felt should be marked on the route. I made notes at the end of each walking tour session of my own observations and experiences because I did not feel that note-taking was appropriate on the walking tour exercise. The marked points served as my field notes in real time. Reviewing the GPS track and the labelled waypoints jogged my memory and helped me think about the experience from the viewpoints of the participants.

The participants decided where to go within the neighbourhood and what route to take. However, we needed to stay outside of the residential buildings. This limitation was based on safety considerations and was a condition of the participating organisations and ethics approval. The hallways of the residential buildings in Regent Park are sometimes scenes of crime and drugs. These also take place on the streets and walkways of Regent Park, but being out of doors offers more avenues to avoid direct contact with these activities. Also, some residents are territorial. Going inside residential buildings may have resulted in residents objecting to us being there if they were part of the Regent Park population that ascribes to the strong divisions between North and South Regent.

4.6.5 Second activity session

At the second session, participants sorted their photographs, used these categories to create a chart and to illustrate their points, and created collages. As recommended in the consultations that I had with young people, the initial exercises for the second session were the reminder exercises. These included ranking the photographs by importance, identifying how often they would go to their photographed spaces, what spaces they would most likely go to if they were starting from home, and whether they go to each photographed space alone, with friends, or with parents. In many cases, the reminder exercises were a hindrance and needed to be modified. Participants with learning disabilities found the exercises stressful. On more than one occasion I was told that the exercises were too much like school and they wanted to get on to making things with their photographs. The methods were supposed to be engaging and fun, and the reminder exercises often fell short of these objectives. After the reminder exercises, a chart was made as a group with the headings Like, Dislike, Change, and Same. I came to the session with the chart started based on my own observations. Participants modified and completed the chart as a group and I acted as the recorder. Each participant accounted for their own individual differences by writing their own changes on the chart either with words, arrows, or pictures. Each participant had a different coloured pen in order to track their changes. Participants were enthusiastic about making the chart. After completing the chart, participants were given scissors, markers, glue and coloured construction paper to make something out of their photographs to demonstrate their views of public space. I did not place any parameters on the art that they made with their photographs. I had given them instructions to take photographs of what they liked and disliked and what they would like to see stay the same and change, but I did not instruct them to stay within those parameters for their artwork. I told them they could use their photographs in any way they saw fit to put across their ideas about what they felt about Regent Park's public space. As group we also talked about how art is subjective, using the

neighbourhood murals as an example, and that their art was to show what was important to them as an individual. Each participant chose to make a collage. These ranged from using almost all of their photographs to making use of a select few. I wanted each participant to have the freedom to choose to emphasize what they felt were the important elements of public space and demonstrate this from their own particular perspective. I was also very aware that I could not promise neighbourhood change and that the participants were anxious about the revitalization plan. I did not want to force any participant to deal with the idea of future change if they did not want to and thereby heightening their anxiety, or create an atmosphere where participants believed that this work would have a direct impact on future plans.

In addition to working with their photographs to create a piece of artwork, each participant explained what it represented and how it should be interpreted. Work had been done in a group setting, but each participant chose to explain their collage to me in private. My approach towards the collages and their explanations was based on Gauntlett and Holzworth's (2006) perspective that task oriented activities where participants actually make something gives time for a reflective process resulting in data not based on an instant response but rather thoughtful reflection. The collages and the accompanying explanations acted as tools for participants to communicate their own meanings and understandings of public space. The collage explanations took the shape of semi-structured interviews, with the participants determining the path of the conversation. I asked for clarification and other questions to have them elaborate on their points.

4.6.6 Stage 4: Follow-up discussion groups

I overheard and had many conversations with participants during the walking tours and the collage making. I wanted to address this information in a more detailed manner than through my field notes. I also wanted to ensure that I had interpreted their statements and themes of their photographs and collages accurately. I asked all of the participants to take part in a one hour, semi-structured follow-

up discussion group. I created notes on chart paper on the recurring themes from the walking tours, photographs, and explanations of collages. I brought their collages to the discussion group as well as selected photographs to serve as examples for each of the themes. When I began the discussion I clearly stated that I wanted to officially record their stories and for them to confirm or correct how I had understood what they had told me about their views on Regent Park's public spaces. Ten agreed to come, and five did, four girls and one boy. Ultimately, three discussion times were scheduled in order to talk with the five participants: two discussion groups each attended by two and one with one participant. These discussion groups took place in May and June 2006.

4.7 Observations of young people's behaviours and actions

Field observations are a hallmark of research of work with young people. Many youth studies reflect on the richness of data gathered from conversations with and among young people (Hart, 1979; Breitbart, 1998; McIntyre, 2000; Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004). Matthews (1992) emphasises that undertaking observation and participant observation with young people requires careful negotiation of boundaries and relationship dynamics. While adults may remember what it was like to be young, they cannot disguise ourselves as the young people they once were. The context and nature of the research will help shape the observations.

I incorporated observation into my study on two different levels. The first was to develop my understanding of Regent Park in general and involved walking around the neighbourhood or sitting in a public area in Regent Park with a youth worker. The times that I waited for adults before their interviews and for young people to come to the activity sessions were also opportunities for observation. The neighbourhood tours also served as a time for observation. In both instances, field notes were recorded after these experiences.

4.8 Building relationships with young participants

Just as establishing relationships with youth workers was an important part of my research process, so was getting to know the young participants. The interactions that I had with participants varied between groups and individuals. Interacting with participants was important for participant-observation, but was also an important part of participants developing a certain level of acceptance of me in order for them to share their private stories and viewpoints. This was a central part of the activity sessions and the follow-up discussion groups. I developed these relationships after spending periods of time with the different groups of participants as well through my efforts to gain their confidence and acceptance in me as an outsider to Regent Park.

Understanding public space involves the social dynamics that occur in that space. For the Regent Park context, this was partially demonstrated by how participants carried themselves much differently in each situation. The codes of community culture came through in their behaviour in public space. The way that the participants interacted with me changed depending on whether we were outside and walking around in Regent Park or indoors. When we were outside, they might joke around with each other, but not with me. In general, they came across as quite tough in the manner that they walked, stood and talked. When I would smile at them, they usually would not smile back. Two participants later explained to me that smiling and laughing is not how people in Regent Park behave and that this kind of behaviour is associated with rich people that they did not like. But during the activities that were indoors, there was a shift in their personalities. They were much freer with their laughter and smiles and they would joke around with me. This was also the time that they further developed their personal stories that they would allude to while walking around outside. I believe that this had to do with the amount of time we had spent together as well as how I structured (or did not structure) the following sessions.

Completion of this project would have been very difficult if I did not have some level of acceptance from participants. I was asking them for their time and effort, but also for them to speak about some things that they did not really like talking about. Sharing stories about violence and cataloguing the dark side of the neighbourhood they call home was uncomfortable for them. Some told me I was lucky they liked me, otherwise they would not have shared their stories because they hated even thinking about what had happened.

There were several components towards developing acceptance. The first was setting aside time for their questions and concerns. Participants frequently asked personal questions about me and general questions about the revitalization plan. I was always asked if I was from Regent, why I was doing my project here, why I was interested in what they had to say, and if I was getting paid to do the project. Other common questions included my age, where I did grow up, and if I had brothers and sisters. Their questions about the revitalization plan related to how I found out about it and if I knew about the different rumours (which they held as fact) about the stumbling blocks to the plan's implementation. Rather than deflecting these questions, I invited them. As researchers, we ask others to make themselves vulnerable to us while we ourselves remain protected behind our role of distant in order to remain objective (Fine et al., 2000). However, in order to develop more accurate data, researchers need to also give of themselves (Beauregard, 1998). In this spirit, I answered their questions honestly, and this helped build the foundation of acceptance.

I was also honest about how much I needed their input. I told them that the success of my project depended on their commitment. If they did not want to do the project, my feelings would not be hurt if they said no. But if they said yes and did not show up, I would have invested time and money that I could not get back. Even after discussing with them my level of commitment to the project, many were still surprised that I called, picked them up and met them when I said I would. These participants had had experiences where people from outside of Regent Park had made future

plans but had not followed up on them. The mere fact that I actually came back was another way that I forged relationships with participants.

Other non-verbal elements played a role in developing my rapport with participants. How I dressed and how I carried materials were choices, but my gender and age are not. I took my cues on what to wear based on how those who work within the community dress. I did not want to look like one of the people that key informants and participants complained about – rich outsiders that come and poke and prod around and then leave. So jeans, t-shirts and sneakers became my Regent Park uniform and I carried everything that I needed in a backpack. I turned 30 while conducting my fieldwork, and dressed this way, I was able to take advantage that I can look a bit younger than my years. Participants responded to this. Not only did it act as an ice breaker – when one would find out my age they would ask others to guess my age – but it also helped with the issue of researcher as outside figure of authority. This is a key issue in field work in any community, but particularly when dealing with young people (Robinson and Kellet, 2004). I never intended to try to pretend that I was one of them and camouflage the fact that I am at least twice or three times the age of the participants, but I believe that how I dressed and carried myself helped break down any notions that I was an authority figure. It is difficult to assess how much being a white female affected my connections with participants. Most of the participants were female and just under half were white. This no doubt had some influence on participants' expectations and reactions and was reflected in the roles that I took on with each group.

Each group had their own unique dynamic. This required me to be flexible not only to how activity sessions were structured, such as timing and location, but also their expectations of my role. Meeting times had to be flexible, and often needed to be rescheduled in order to accommodate events in participants' daily lives, such as unforeseen family emergencies, babysitting, injuries, and homework. I also needed to spend much more time in Regent Park than the time allocated for each

session. My roles involved moving beyond being the group facilitator and into the areas of mentor and with some, verging towards peer. Many youth leaders expressed their desire to for me to act as a mentor and discuss with participants options of healthy living, education and respectful relationships with teachers, law enforcement and friends. The prospect of being cast in this light made me a little nervous. Who was I to come into their lives and give advice? However, this role did evolve naturally. The time during collage-making and on the walks to pick-up or drop them off at home were times for conversations on these topics. It was not at all uncommon for participants to ask about university requirements, how to get a student loan, how much school suspensions count on your record, ways to stay out of trouble at school, the cost of living on your own, problems with friends and boyfriends, how to write a resume and go about a job search. Some participants treated me much more as someone from their age group. They would refer to me as their 'girl'. When they would speak about the 'richy-rich' people they said they hated, they would qualify it with a 'no offense' and many participants told me quite clearly that if they did not think of me as a friend, they would not have come back for the following sessions.

Developing relationships with participants was also accompanied by establishing boundaries. This required negotiating the limits between being open without being "too" open (Angrosino and Mays de Perez, 2000). Establishing rapport that went beyond friendly politeness was a necessary step. Successful research hinges on interactions between the researcher and participants will always become personal (Dandekar, 1988). This means that the notions of bias and sample contamination need to be restructured along different boundaries. Although participants let me know that they liked me, I did not try to become a central aspect of their daily lives. I also did not give my perspective on their stories and activities that they shared with me. The larger problems that some of the participants face, such as learning disabilities or destructive behaviour, I brought to the attention of youth workers.

4.9 Ethics, confidentiality and anonymity

The issues of ethics and confidentiality apply to both the adults and young people that I worked with in my study. Youth workers suggested that I should go up to groups of young people hanging out in the neighbourhood and ask them to take part in my study right at that point in time. This strategy may have resulted in more participants, but it did not work for the ethical requirements of this study. Because I worked with young people under the age of 18, I required the signature of each participant's parent or guardian. The participants themselves gave assent, but could not give consent.

Adult key informants and young people alike looked for assurance that I would keep their comments confidential. From the perspective of key informants, they did not want critical comments of their organization or the revitalization plan to be made public. Some young people shared very personal stories, sometimes involving other people, and spoke of things that they usually did not talk about. They did not want others knowing their private events and thoughts. I developed a code system so that all data would be presented in non-attributed form. Adults are identified by their work affiliation. The code 'RP' is used for key informants associated with a local agency and includes youth workers, directors of youth agencies, tenant council representatives and faith groups. There are nine adults in this category. The code 'C' is used for key informants from institutions or organizations that have a city-wide scope but are connected to Regent Park through the nature of their work. This category includes planners, those employed by the city, TCHC and the school board and includes five of the key informants. In order to maintain the anonymity of young people, all their names have been changed. This information is presented in Table 4-4 along with each participant's age and sex.

Table 4-4: Participants by age and sex

Participant Pseudonyms	Age	Female (F) or Male (M)
Chantal	10	F
Farah	10	F
Alisha	12	F
Elena	12	F
Rebecca	13	F
Maggie	13	F
Carlos	14	M
Jen	14	F
Jared	15	M
Jessica	15	F
Melissa	15	F
Cindy	16	F
Scott	16	M

4.10 Research validity, reliability and transferability

Each study needs to show that it is valid and reliable. In the case of qualitative case study research, validity is determined based on whether a study's findings can be analytically generalized beyond the immediate case (Yin, 1984). This does not mean the exact replication of a case, but rather the general transferability of the principles of the findings to cases with similar conditions (Yin, 1984). In order to be reliable, research needs to be recorded in a manner that allows another researcher to follow the steps (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This is done through establishing a chain of evidence and providing detailed descriptions of both findings and the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Table 4-5: Methods and data by research questions and objectives

Questions and objectives	Methods	Data generated
Young people’s definition of public space	a) Brainstorming session in first activity session b) Discussion groups	-Categories of spaces considered public -Explanations of why these spaces are considered public
Youth perspectives on positive and negative elements of public space	a) Participants’ categorizations of photographs in second activity session b) Collage explanations c) Discussion groups d) Participant observation	-Trends in photographed spaces -Themes in collages and explanations -Spaces identified as positive -Spaces identified as negative -Ideas about what revitalization plan should change -Views on what should stay the same after revitalization -GPS tracks
Youth definitions and perspectives compared to revitalization plan	a) Analysis of secondary sources: Regent Park Revitalization Plan; Design Guidelines; Official Plan amendments b) Key informant interviews c) Collage explanations d) Discussion groups e) Participant observation	-Guiding principles of Regent Park Revitalization plan -Comparison between revitalization plans for public space and information gathered from young people -Participants’ thoughts regarding how the revitalization plan may affect their use and access to public space
Use of appropriate engagement methods for young people and their integration into planned neighbourhood revitalization	a) Literature review of young people and participation b) Analysis of 2003 youth consultation process for revitalization plan c) Key informant interviews d) Participant-led walking tour e) Visual and activity based methods of photography and artwork f) Participant observation	-positive elements of these engagement methods -drawbacks of methods -Potentials for future use

Triangulation is a means to ensure validity and the credibility of the study results (Yin, 1984). Miles and Huberman (1994) consider triangulation as multiple approaches to a study and can take on different applications. Triangulation can be by data source, by method, by researcher, or by data type. It is also a means to gather greater understanding and perspective on a topic of study. This is an

important quality of triangulation because each researcher views their study through the lenses of gender, socio-economic status, language, race and ethnicity – there are no objective observations, only observations that are socially situated (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The various methods and sources and the data generated to address my research questions and objectives are presented in Table 4-6.

4.11 Data analysis and management

Data were generated from different sources, both word and image based. Interviews, activity sessions and collage explanations were audio recorded. Discussion groups were video recorded. In all situations, participants gave permission for these recordings. These recordings were transcribed. My notes from participant observation were recorded after my experiences. These notes included my thoughts, feelings and questions. I used NVivo, a qualitative software package, to conduct and organize my analysis. NVivo is the digital equivalent of the hands-on approach towards qualitative data management that typically involves the researcher using highlighters, pens and index cards to manually group words and passages by code and theme (Miles and Huberman, 1994). NVivo is particularly useful because it acts as a management tool for large amounts of data and gives the freedom to apply codes determined at the outset of the study as well as ones that are developed through a more iterative process. I could also account for related themes and ideas through NVivo's tree function where I could establish code hierarchies through NVivo's system of sibling and children nodes. By using this tree system, I started with general themes such physical space, social elements of space, violence, and new residents. Each of these would develop several children. Physical space had children nodes like walkways, streets, murals, garbage, and playgrounds. Social elements of space had nodes for friends, family, adults, and undesirable people. The children nodes for violence addressed the stories of assaults, robberies and deaths as well as gangs. New residents developed nodes related to hopes and fears of their future neighbours. By working with these themes,

connections emerged. Understanding the physical public space of Regent Park from a youth perspective is tied to the social importance of spaces and that this understanding also involves piecing together the conflicting perceptions of the same space as simultaneously positive and negative.

I made use of open, descriptive and interpretive coding approaches that involved an iterative process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). My initial codes were descriptive in nature where I applied general categories that related to my research objectives. I relied on my field work experiences to guide me and worked towards developing more inductive codes by reading through transcripts and my notes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These codes are descriptive, the most basic of coding strategies (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Rose, 2001). The interpretive coding came after I spent a great deal of time working with NVivo and had become familiar with the themes that emerged from my data. Interpretive coding develops out of an understanding the research context and involves making implicit and explicit interpretations of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Rose, 2001). At these later stages of coding, I could make connections between different interpretations of public space and associated understandings and relationships.

Rose (2001) writes on the difficulty of reducing the rich material of a photograph into a series of codes. This challenge is due to the multiple meanings that can be read into a photograph, the intentions of the person who took the photograph and the interpretation of the person who views it. Rather than categorizing the photographs based on my own assumptions, this was done by participants when we charted what was liked and disliked about public space and what should change or be kept the same.

4.12 Reflections and limitations

The limitations of this study relate to the small size of the sample and the time line of the project. The first neighbourhood tour took place in June 2005 and continued through to November. Once the winter season began, the tours were no longer feasible. Regent Park looks different under a blanket

of snow, making it impossible to photograph certain neighbourhood elements. I also did not feel that it was right to ask young people without proper winter clothing, a common situation in Regent Park, to spend an extended amount of time outside in sub-zero weather. The Regent Park Revitalization Plan involves demolition of the neighbourhood in a series of phases. Once demolition had begun in February 2006, my research with young people in form of neighbourhood tours could no longer take place. My decision not to make use of local schools for participant recruitment likely resulted in a much smaller sample. I was aware that this would probably happen, but it was something that I was willing to risk in order to gain more honest responses and develop a greater understanding of participants' views of public space. It was also important to me that participants took part in the activity sessions because they wanted to and not because they felt they had to or were trying to impress their teacher. The language used and behaviour of participants with each other and me suggests that they felt freer to express themselves and control the research process and outcomes. The ethical requirement for parental signatures also played a role in restricting my sample size. If I had acted on the suggestions of youth workers, I could have likely increased the number of young people in my study. The smaller size meant that I was able to get to know the groups better than if more young people had been involved.

The sample of young people is treated in aggregate as an entire group. The weakness in this is that gender and cultural differences are important in perception and experience in urban spaces (Sibley, 1995b). Like with other population groups, there is also the need to recognize multiple experiences of childhood and youth (Aitken, 2001). There is a mix of gender, ethnicities and ages in my sample. However, there are not enough cases in each category to draw conclusions based on these elements. The multiple methods that I used with these young people were my attempt to generate findings that were reliable and could be generalized to other contexts.

The use of a case study involving young people, although a common approach, does have its drawbacks. Youth is ephemeral and this study represents a brief snapshot in time. The perspectives of the participants are likely to change as they grow older and potentially move out of Regent Park. This fact cannot be helped and is one of the realities of working with young people (Malone, 2002). It is an element of this study that needs to be considered when drawing conclusions, making recommendations and seeking to replicate the study.

4.13 Conclusion

I used a qualitative, multi-method approach for my study of young people's perceptions of public space in Regent Park. I developed a research design that gave consideration of youth-friendly data collections methods. I collected data through key informant interviews, a series of activity sessions with young people, follow-up discussion groups and participant observations. These methods allowed me to develop the research context, develop relationships with young people in a more informal setting, and gain an understanding of how young people define, categorize and value public space. The limitations of a small sample size are partly a result of ethical obligations and my decision to create an atmosphere where participants were not obligated to take part and would feel more open to express their opinions. The increased time spent with the smaller sample resulted in richer data and increased my understanding of their perspectives on public space.

Chapter 5

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data generated from the work done with young participants in Regent Park. The findings are presented in four sections. The first section identifies how participants defined public space. The second section describes the experiences and activities of the walking tours. The third section analyzes the themes that emerged from the participants' photographs, collages and discussions.

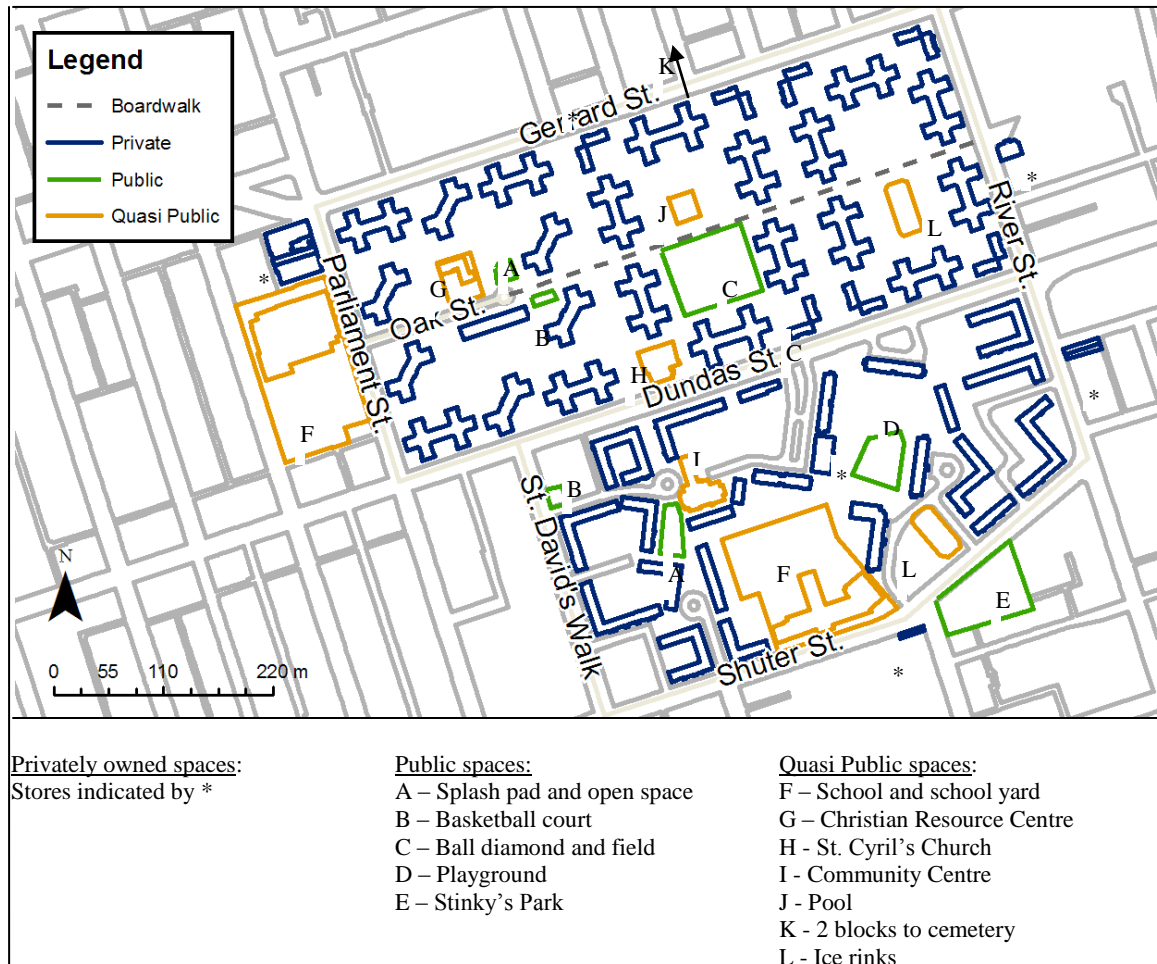
5.2 What is public space?

The role of public space in the lives of young people has been considered from various perspectives. These include the marginalization of young people due to the privatization of public space (Lees, 2003), the restricted access of young people to public space due to regulation and parental fear (Collins and Kearns, 2001; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Valentine, 1996a), and the provision of a space that is not fully within the adult domain (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000). All of these perspectives build upon accepted definitions of public space where what is public is defined by what is private. However, the participants in this study described their neighbourhood public spaces in terms of access and proximity rather than based upon a public-private binary.

Participants already had knowledge about urban planning and public space. They had their own ideas about what constituted public space. All of the spaces that they listed as examples of public spaces were from within Regent Park or the immediate surroundings. Among the important criteria for the public space definition were that they were able to go to the particular spot, that they felt comfortable there, and that they could go with or find friends there. Spaces they defined as public

stretch the conventional view of public space to include not only spaces most often considered public, but also quasi-public and privately owned spaces.

Figure 5-1: Public space as places we can go: incorporating private, public and quasi public spaces



5.2.1 Public realm

The traditional definition of public spaces offered by Carr et al. (1992) provided the foundation for the public space category. This involves spaces that include features that had been planned for recreational purposes or part of the larger public sphere. Playgrounds, including the smaller

playgrounds throughout Regent Park, and the large playground in South Regent, basketball courts, the baseball field, and Stinky's park² were the examples given by all of the participants.

The walkway network is a defining feature of Regent Park. This design element was incorporated into defined public spaces. However, the Boardwalk received special attention and was frequently listed as a separate public space.

5.2.2 Quasi-public spaces

Many of the spaces that the participants considered public fall into the quasi-public category. These are the spaces that are technically open to the public or are maintained through public funds, but have operating hours, rules and regulations for the use of the space, and often times, are subject to adult supervision. The community centre, local youth clubs, meeting spaces for youth groups, school buildings, school yards, the pool and the ice rinks were the examples that were common across all of the participants. Carlos and Cindy also considered local churches a public space. Chantal, Elena, Jen and Jared listed the local graveyard as well.

5.2.3 Private spaces

Privately-owned spaces figured prominently in participants' discussions of what qualifies as public space. These private spaces did not provide a point of comparison in order to differentiate between public and private, but were included in what is considered public. Private spaces included commercial and residential spaces. All participants agreed that the stores in and around Regent Park were part of their public space. Many also considered their home a public space. This may reflect a combination of a different understanding of the home as a private space within the context of public housing as well as young people's perspective on public spaces as areas where they feel comfortable and that they belong.

² The park located across Shuter Street from Blevins Avenue is referred to as Stinky's. The origins of this name come from the time when cats used the playground area sand as their community litter box. Apparently, this no longer happens as much, but the name has stuck.

5.3 Walking tours: the intersection of social and physical public space elements

De Certeau (1993) encourages urban planners to go beyond the bird's eye view that is so typical of planning and to seek out ground-level, experiential understandings of the city and its neighbourhood. The walking tour exercise went beyond the practical aspects of the photograph-taking exercise. It fulfilled other features as well. Because I had my own personal guides, the tours became a key part of my education about Regent Park. The young people were knowledgeable guides. This parallels the young person as neighbourhood expert as documented by others, such as Moore (1986), Hart (1997), Simpson (1997), and Chawla (2002). On the walking tours, they demonstrated that they have their own understandings of the urban public realm and this involved both physical and social aspects of public space.

The walking tours also provided opportunity and time for me to get to know participants and for them to get to know me. While walking through the neighbourhood and between snapshots, I conversed with participants either one-on-one or as a group. I also actively listened to their conversations and commentary about public space. The benefits of accompanying young people on this sort of exercise are similar to those of Breitbart's (1995) and her neighbourhood tour with a group of young people in a low income neighbourhood in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Accompanying participants on the walking tour gave me first-hand experiences of the routes taken by participants as they moved through the neighbourhood. My observations and experiences helped me understand the stories behind the photographs.

With the exception of the first walking tour, I carried a GPS unit with me to track our route. Along the way, I marked public spaces that were popular spots for photographs. Each tour was unique, since they took place on different days with different participants, but common trends became apparent in the topics of discussion and the spaces considered important in and around Regent Park. At first glance of the GPS tracks, each group may appear different, but the photographs and the

narratives that accompanied the photographs and the reasoning for taking the photographs were very similar across each of the groups.

5.3.1 Where to go and what to see: maps of walking tour routes

Each walking tour incorporated both physical and social features of public space. Landmarks and physical configurations and spatial forms were considered in conjunction with relationships and community culture. The maps of their neighbourhood routes and the marked waypoints demonstrate this. The walking tours were a large part of how I came to understand Regent Park and the participants, so I believe that it is important to provide a summary of where each group went and what they documented on their tour. This section outlines the routes each group took.

Walking tour #1

The first walking tour took place in June 2005 and involved five young people recruited from a local youth centre. This walking tour does not have a GPS map, but based on field notes and their photographs, I can retell their route (see Figure 5-1). They started at the meeting space for their youth group and ended at the Regent Park community centre. The majority of their walking tour route followed the network of walkways. Little time was spent walking along the boundary streets, and with the exception of Dundas Street., these boundary streets were not crossed. They discussed going to Stinky's park, but this involved crossing the street, so they decided against it. This group focused on taking photographs of people, including friends and intimidating individuals.

the activities that she and her friends and younger siblings did in the walkways, playgrounds and open spaces.

Figure 5-3: Second walking tour route



Waypoints legend

1. Start point	14. Garbage
2. Playground	15. Pot hole
3. Children playing	16. Dumpster
4. Houses	17. Community Centre
5. Houses	18. Children in wading pool
6. Pool	19. Nelson Mandela Park P.S.
7. Field	20. Construction
8. Walkway	21. Cul-de-sac
9. Wading pool	22. Mural
10. Apartments	23. Parking lot
11. CRC community garden	24. Garbage collector
12. Lord Dufferin P.S.	25. Stores in Regent Park
13. Parliament St. Stores	26. Group of people/end point

Walking tour #3

Figure 5-4: Third walking tour route



Waypoints legend

1. Start point	11. Basketball court/lot of former 51 division
2. South ice rink	12. Fire Dept./ 'hot firemen'
3. Garbage	13. CRC/community garden
4. Community garden	14. Basketball court
5. Nelson Mandela Park P.S.	15. Pool/Gang
6. Graffiti	16. North ice rink/People
7. Community Centre	17. Store
8. Dumpster	18. 'Hooker alley'/prostitutes
9. Mural/People	19. DVP look-out
10. Housing	20. End point

The third walking tour involved four participants from a local agency. This walking tour was at the end of October 2005 and started and finished at the agency. This group's route was different from the others. They spent an equal amount of time on the boundary streets as on the local

walkways. They also crossed River Street and went into the alleyways behind the buildings and to the lookout over the Don Valley Parkway. Friends and homes were important considerations for the route. Each participant took photographs of each other, friends they came across in the walkways, and their own home. But the emphasis for these participants was to photograph spaces and elements that they did not like and wanted to change. For them, these are found on the boundary streets and across the street. This emphasis was established from the outset of the walking tour when participants said that what they wanted to show me the most about the neighbourhood were the “crack heads” and “whores”.

Walking tour #4

The fourth walking tour was at the beginning of November 2005. The group was made up of four participants recruited from a local agency. We started and finished the walking tour at the agency. This group's route was mostly contained within the boundaries of Regent Park. Little time was spent on the boundary streets. River Street was crossed in order to get back to the agency. The most time was spent on the Boardwalk in the hopes of running into friends. Besides friends, this group placed an emphasis on physical features that could be improved and social elements that they want to see stay the same. Aspects of the physical environment included housing, traffic, graffiti, ruined benches and broken equipment were important features of the physical environment. Sense of community, hang out spots, and local culture were central to the social environment. Events that attracted a lot of attention were the passing of a police car and heavy traffic flows.

Figure 5-5: Fourth walking tour route



Waypoints legend

1. Start point	9. Basketball court
2. South ice rink	10. CRC community garden
3. Graffiti	11. Pool
4. Nelson Mandela Park P.S.	12. Field/benches/litter
5. Stores in Regent Park	13. North ice rink/wading pool
6. Mural/People	14. Dumpster
7. Community Centre	15. Boundary street/end point
8. Boardwalk	

5.3.2 Summary of walking tour experiences and observations

Each walking tour served two key purposes. 1) It allowed participants to provide tangible detail through photographs and real-life demonstrations to the discussion on how they define public space. 2) It also provided an opportunity for participant-observation. This proved an important part of

understanding what the photographs represented and the underlying narratives to their photographs and collages.

5.4 Dimensions of public space in Regent Park

The walking tour, the exercises at the second activity session and the follow-up discussion sessions all explored participants' understanding of public spaces including both physical and social elements. The participants' visual representations and verbal dialogue on public space accord with the way Lefebvre (1991) theorises space as both physical and socially constructed and perpetuated. It is the result of social action as well as the precondition for social action (Milgrom, 2003). This section presents the information generated from how participants categorized their photographs and walking-tour experiences, their dialogue from activity sessions, collages and collage summaries and the discussion sessions. Both of these categories are discussed below. The majority of the photographs to illustrate each of the categories have been drawn from the collages.

The collages themselves provided participants the opportunity to focus on what they felt were the most important aspects of public space. They also provided the foundation for further exploration into their ideas through their explanations of their collage. In the descriptions of their collages, participants were often very specific about why they chose each photograph and frequently photographs were cut into smaller pieces and embellished to draw attention to a particular feature. In order to preserve the detail, segments of the collages are used in this chapter to illustrate and highlight the perspectives of the participants. The collages in their entirety are in Appendix A.

5.4.1 Physical elements of public space

The physical category can be sub-divided into four areas relating to: 1) the built environment, 2) programmed recreation space, 3) garbage, and 4) housing. Although housing is part of the built environment, it garnered enough attention from the participants to warrant its own category. Design

relates to the built environment and includes the planned and not officially planned features. The next two sub-categories, programmed recreation space and housing, could be also considered part of the design, but received a great deal of attention separately, and therefore warrant their own consideration as physical public space factors. The final sub-category is garbage and litter.

Built Environment

Participants frequently documented the street pattern, the aesthetic elements of the neighbourhood, including community gardens, murals and graffiti, schools and local stores.

Walkways and streets

Most other urban neighbourhoods have a local street pattern; Regent Park has a system of walkways and parking lots with intermittent local streets. Participants made a clear differentiation between the value of walkways and small, local non-through streets and the busier boundary streets. Generally, they preferred the walkways over the boundary streets. The boundary streets were described as boring, physically and socially unsafe, and inconvenient. Walkways were considered a better place to hang out and find friends. Participants also liked the meandering and maze-like nature of the walkway network and cul-de-sacs. Walkways and the smaller, non-through streets also represented the young people's main means of getting around the neighbourhood for efficiency and safety. Walking through the neighbourhood and having the freedom to cut across the mega block structure was much faster than walking around on the boundary streets. Safety was considered on two levels. First, the busy car traffic and the lack of effective cross-walks on the boundary streets led to avoidance of the boundary streets. For many participants, the linear pattern of the boundary streets and people that you find there also caused safety concerns. The walkway system meant that if needed, you can run away from trouble. Several participants said that they avoided the boundary streets because they had been yelled at, threatened or grabbed by the drug dealers and prostitutes that

wander the edges of Regent Park. Once on those streets, there was nowhere to go to get away from these people.

It's good to have the zig zags because you never know when some guy is going to jump you and if you know Regent like the back of your hand then you can zig zag through and confuse them and get them lost. But I also like the zig zag paths because say you want to go out for a really long walk, you can zig zag through Regent and go for a really long walk and never really leave it (Cindy).

The street's too open so when you're trying to cross the street. There's cars still driving and so it's unsafe (Melissa).

The streets are boring. Why would we go there? No one else is there (Jen).

Figure 5-6: Streets and walkways

Top - Examples of disliked boundary streets. Left: segment of Scott's collage; Right: Jared's photography of Dundas St. Bottom-Walkways and non-through streets. Left: walkway from Carols' collage; Right: Farah's photograph of a cul-de-sac



The Boardwalk had a special place in the network of walkways. The Boardwalk is the wide pedestrian walkway in Regent Park North that follows what used to be Oak Street. It begins at River Street and terminates at a cul-de-sac near Parliament Street. It represented a key hang out spot. It

was where you could always find or go with your friends, walk, and hang out. Cindy felt that it is “mainly the perfect place for everyone to hang out to do whatever”. Farah described the Boardwalk as “beautiful when you see mothers walking with their strollers with their babies”. All of the participants considered the Boardwalk a quintessential element of Regent Park. From their perspective, it is a place for everyone. Jessica summarized the Boardwalk’s neighbourhood importance:

It’s just kinda like it cuts something right in half, right in the middle and it separates everything. There’s sections of it. Up here there’s the basketball courts and the more of the athletic people. More in the middle is the little kids running through the poles and on their bikes and playing around. And down around the darker corners and at night and around the corner of the building at that corner is where the gangs are drinking and down more there’s people playing baseball. So it’s like everybody’s there. ...It pretty much leads to everything.

The reintroduction of through streets is a key part of the revitalization plan “... for safety reasons and for aesthetic reasons. In order to connect to the broader community, it is really important that all of these thoroughfares be opened up” (C3). According to C4, through streets “will alleviate a lot of the current problems that are happening in Regent Park right now with ill-defined public space.” This view was not shared by all of the key informants. There were those concerned about safety and the “worry over getting a pizza delivered to the door” (C1) over the sense of community that is fostered in a walkable neighbourhood. RP5 reflected, “It is one of the paradoxes of this revitalization that you are going to tear down community to create community. There is already a strong community here.”

Although the adult key informants did not provide a united perspective on the benefits of replacing the walkway system with through streets, the participants were unanimous. They did not like the idea. Because the network of walkways was so important to them and they did not like the current boundary streets, it is not surprising that they did not greet the redevelopment plan’s

reintroduction of through streets with enthusiasm. During the walking tours was the first time that any of the participants had heard about the new street plan. They were quite vocal about their displeasure of this aspect of the plan and used phrases like ‘that sucks’, ‘that’s stupid’ as well as asking why. Their key concerns related to where they would go with friends, the inconvenience and potential safety concerns of living in a neighbourhood based on a grid pattern, and the disruption of traffic. The replacement of the Boardwalk with a street generated mainly negative responses. Their objections revolved around the prospect of losing a community-defining feature.

The Boardwalk is nothing replaceable. If you’re trying to replace it with parks, that isn’t going to work. There’s no point (Rebecca).

They need to keep the Boardwalk. Because without the Boardwalk, this area isn’t Regent Park (Cindy).

Figure 5-7: Segments of collages showing the Boardwalk.

Left-Maggie; Right-Farah



Although all participants listed the walkways, and the Boardwalk in particular, among the spaces that they liked, the lack of lighting, benches, repairs to the pavement and litter were common physical features that they would like to see change in the revitalization. This not only included providing more lighting and benches, but also increased maintenance. In their opinion, there was need for more vigilance in replacing smashed bulbs and broken and vandalized benches and increased community litter collection. If these measures were taken the network of walkways could only be improved. Jessica stood out from the rest. The poor or non-existent lighting and gang activity on the

Boardwalk led her to reserve judgement about the plans for the new Oak Street. In her mind, through streets would mean that the city would have no choice but to install and maintain lighting, and that this may deter the gangs.

The use of gates and fences to shape and reshape and walkways was also something that Elena, Rebecca, Carlos and Scott wanted changed. Gates and fences have been put in place in certain areas in order to make it more difficult for drug dealers and other criminals to elude the police and to discourage their uses of those spaces. RP4 believed that this had a significant impact on how young people moved around the neighbourhood. The participants felt that these gates and fences punished them for the crimes of others by restricting where they could go and how they could get there. Elena and Rebecca said that these gates only served as sign posts and reminders of drugs and violence. Scott thought that “With the gates, it’s like we’re in jail.”

Figure 5-8: Gates blocking walkways

Left-'It's like we're in jail' (Scott's collage); Right-Gated off walkway by community centre (Rebecca's collage)



Community gardens

The built environment in Regent Park also includes space set aside for community gardens. Some of the community gardens consist of plots available to residents to plant vegetables; another is a flower garden in South Regent. Participants listed community gardens as an element of public space that they appreciated. They liked the greenery and felt that they added to neighbourhood

beautification. The most commonly photographed garden was the vegetable garden located in front of the Christian Resource Centre (CRC). The garden near the large playground in South Regent was also photographed frequently. Keeping and increasing the number of community gardens was a suggestion made by participants as a way to improve the quality of Regent Park's public spaces.

Figure 5-9: Community gardens
From Cindy's (left) and Jared's (right) collages



The appreciation of community gardens was tempered by the need for maintenance. According to Maggie, this did not happen nearly enough for the flower garden in South Regent.

You can't just plant things and then leave them to turn to mud! And then it fills with garbage. It just ends up looking ugly. I mean, holy!

Local elementary schools

The elementary school buildings and yards featured prominently in photographs and collages. The proximity of these schools closely connected them to Regent Park's built environment. Most of the participants attended school, so it was a defining aspect of their daily lives. Schools represented where they spent a great deal of their time, the symbolic value of education, as well as recreation space. Alisha said that the schools were important "... because it's the way you get ahead in life because without an education you're nothing." Chantal and Jen strongly agreed with this comment. This sentiment was echoed by other groups as well. The building and the yard of Nelson Mandela Park Public School was represented in nearly all of the participants' photographs. It represented an

important landmark and interconnected with the neighbourhood. The school yard was an important place to go and hang out and play. Jared was the exception and said that he hated school so much that he never went to a school yard outside of school hours. Only those who attended Duke of York and Lord Dufferin Public Schools photographed and used these schools in their collages.

A few listed the school yard as a space that they wanted to see change. These changes were similar to those for the walkways. They felt that there was a need for increased lighting and a reduction in the number of adults drinking and doing drugs around the building.

Figure 5-10: Photographs of schools incorporated into collages

Top- left: yard of Nelson Mandela Park P.S (Elena); Right: front entrance of Nelson Mandela Park P.S. (Jen); Bottom left -View of Duke P.S (Chantal); Right – Lord Dufferin P.S. (Farah)



Community art - murals

There is a series of murals throughout Regent Park. Each presents a community-oriented, inspirational message. The murals were a large part of the photographs and collages. Participants took photographs of a number of the murals; each participant photographed the Stop the Violence mural at Sackville Green. For them, it showed that someone cared.

You look at that and in a way at least someone is trying to stop the violence around here (Melissa).

Everywhere there's violence, but in Regent it's a bit stronger than other areas. And people know it. And it makes it seem like such a bad place. But for someone to go out and spend their time and money and work so hard on something just to show that they care and show that they know it shouldn't be happening and that people shouldn't be living like this, makes a big difference even though it's just a painting (Jessica).

Participants wanted to see the murals retained as part of the new Regent Park. But there was some scepticism about whether that would happen.

I doubt they'll put it back. I don't know. I just doubt it. *Because you don't think...* I don't think they'll think it's important. I don't know (Maggie).

'Stop the violence' is somewhat of a slogan in Regent Park. When we came across a fight on the first walking tour, one of the onlookers attempting to break up the fight kept yelling "Stop the violence! Stop the violence!" This made people laugh. I thought that it was curious the mural that bore the statement that made young people laugh was also the subject of their photographs and collages and identified as something they liked about public space and wanted to see part of the new neighbourhood. When I asked about this apparent contradiction, it was explained from two perspectives. The first was the difference between preaching and being left to your own reflections, and the population who benefits from violence.

When someone says “Stop the violence” it doesn’t really go through the kid’s head. But if it’s on the wall and you’re walking past it every day and all the time, it starts to sink in (Rebecca).

You’re seeing the message, and in a way of things you want to see stop, like stop the violence and stuff like that and once you see it, it connects through your mind differently, right? But when you hear it verbally, yeah, to some kids it’s funny. Like when my mom walks up to me and says, “Stop the violence”, yeah, of course I’m laughing. But when I see it on a wall, it’s totally different (Cindy).

They laugh because some people just want to fight. They don’t care about getting hurt, or what happens to them or anyone else. So of course they don’t care and they think that’s funny (Chantal).

Figure 5-11: Examples of murals

Top left and bottom right: Alisha; Top right: Elena; Bottom left: Jared



Graffiti: history or vandalism?

Graffiti was also considered a form of public art similar to the murals. The graffiti in Regent Park is not a planned aspect of the design, but there is some graffiti that was considered an important characteristic of public space. Most valued the graffiti that tells the story of Regent Park and serves

as a memorial to those who have died. Like the murals, the community stories shared through graffiti was something that they hoped would remain in Regent Park.

The graffiti is good sometimes. ...It can still have a good message (Scott).

The graffiti is like important remembering. It is for the people who got shot and died (Elena)

I don't mind graffiti all that much because they're spraying the graffiti to send out a message – the look what's happening in Regent Park. Look who just died, you know? It sends out a message to whoever killed this person - watch out, the cops are coming for you, and not only that, but look what you've done, you've ruined a life and stuff. It just sends out a message to whoever done it (Cindy).

But not all graffiti represented community history. Some graffiti, such as spray painted swear words and tagging, symbols certain individuals use identify their work and territory, was viewed simply as vandalism, labelled disrespectful and thought to make Regent Park look worse than it really is. The dislike of vandalism-style graffiti was expressed in a variety of ways:

It's the nicknames and stupid stuff like that. That's just ridiculous. It's not really telling the story as you have it, it's making a story. It's making it worse than it really is and everything like that (Jessica).

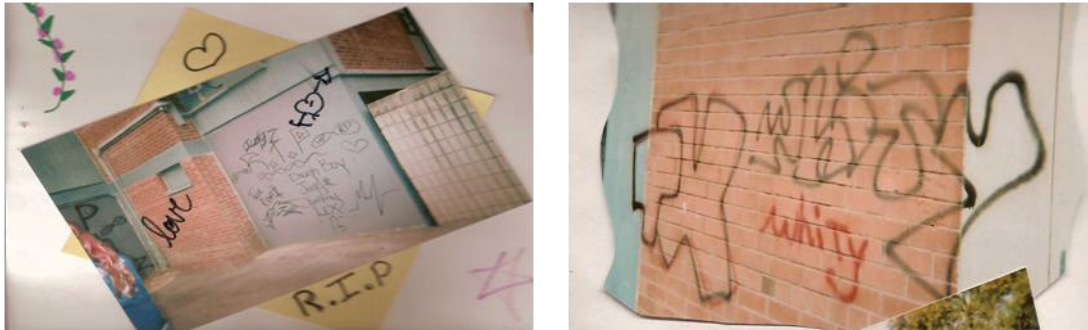
It makes the place look dirty, really old and messy (Jen).

I like some graffiti but some people just write stupidity. Like swearing to other people and stuff (Carlos).

Melissa stood out from the rest. She viewed all graffiti as vandalism and destructive. In her view, removal of all graffiti would be a positive change.

Figure 5-12: Segments of collages devoted to graffiti

Left - Graffiti as community history (Elena); Right - graffiti as vandalism (Scott)



Stores

Local stores represent the final element of the built environment. Participants distinguished between the stores within Regent Park and stores near Regent Park. The stores near Regent Park were further categorized as ‘good’ stores and ‘bad’ stores.

Figure 5-13: Examples of stores in collages

'Bad' stores (Left: Jared; Right: Cindy)



Participants consistently commented on the poor quality of the stores in Regent Park. They felt that there was nothing that they wanted at these stores. The criteria for whether a local store was good or bad depended mainly on the people who worked in the store, the selection of items and the prices.

The best store is Stinky's. They're nice people (Jared).

Parliament has some nice stores, nice stores that have pretty things and food. They have things you need and not so expensive. So much better than those couple of stores you have over there (Farah).

I love B³. That's right by my house. It's a perfect store, right. Every time you walk in there and you're a kid, he knows your name. He's like part of the community and stuff. And he's not like T.O. Fine Foods and he's not going to charge you twenty-five bucks for a dusty old chocolate bar (Cindy).

The new types of stores that will possibly become part of the neighbourhood were a topic of discussion on all of the walking tours. There were doubts about how this would improve Regent Park in general and for them specifically. New businesses, like luxury car dealerships, are already moving into the areas around Regent Park, but the participants did not feel that these were services geared towards residents of public housing. They were also concerned that competition from larger chains might close the local stores that they liked. This was something they did not want to see happen.

Why do I want a bunch of noodle huts and little cafes here? It's not like I'll be going there (Scott).

I don't care about new stores. I still can't buy nothing (Maggie).

If you open up a new store, and we lost B's store, kids are going to hate it because if you walk into a store and they're not even going to know their names (Cindy). The same with Stinky's (Rebecca).

I just like cars, and that's ok. You just notice the little things that are starting to come around and you're like, that's when you know new people are coming. Those stores and places selling nice cars aren't for us (Jessica).

³ B is the initial of the person who runs a local variety store across the street from Regent Park.

Programmed recreation space

The spaces in this category are those planned with particular recreational uses in mind. Sports, structured play areas and supervised activity spaces are all represented in their photographs, collages and discussions.

Programmed sports areas

Photographs and collages reflected the importance of programmed sports areas, particularly basketball courts, pool and ice rinks. However, they garnered negative comments regarding maintenance and access. They complained of the garbage around the pools and ice rinks, the long lines for the pool in the summer and the access to the rinks restricted only to the winter months. Several participants suggested that the ice rinks could be open year round and used in the warmer months for ball hockey or roller-blading.

Participants consistently commented on the lack of maintenance of the basketball courts. Missing hoops rendered the standards useless. Several documented this in their photographs and incorporated it into their collages. They saw little point in providing a court if it was not maintained for use.

Figure 5-14: A useless basketball standard

From Scott's collage



Play areas: playgrounds and grass

Features planned with perhaps younger children in mind, such as wading pools, playgrounds and school yards, were also considered important. For many participants, playgrounds in particular were not only for little kids. Similar to the baseball field and school yards, playgrounds were not necessarily valued for their intended use, but for their potential as hang out and meeting spots. RP1, RP2 and RP3 identified lack of maintenance, broken glass and other hazardous waste as a key issue for young people and their safe use of neighbourhood public space. The litter and broken glass around playground equipment and the lack of grass around play areas were seen as drawbacks to these areas. Farah also noted these as drawbacks for the wading pools.

All around the playgrounds is glass where ever you look. Sometimes there's needles, condoms, other garbage (Jen).

All the grass is gone. It makes everything dusty and dirty. What I want is to see some nice grass to sit on when we go and play. And the litter needs to be cleaned up too (Farah).

Figure 5-15: Examples of playgrounds
From Jen's (left) and Farah's (right) collages



Youth Centres

The community centre in South Regent was another subject of photographs by all of the participants. They all categorized it as a positive element of public space and wanted it to remain in the new Regent Park. Scott did say that he liked the community centre because it kept him out of trouble in the summer, but few participants said that they went there with any regularity. The regulation, supervision and the prospect of running into people that they don't like were reasons given for not using the community centre. Despite this, they still wanted to have a community centre and liked knowing that it was there should they wish to use it.

Figure 5-16: Regent Park Community Centre
From Carlos' (left) and Farah's (right) collages



The participants recruited from youth programmes also referred to the organizations that supported their youth group as positive public spaces. These spaces were appreciated for the opportunities to enjoy themselves and as a means to stay out of trouble. As with the community centre, they liked to have the option of having somewhere to go when they did not wish to be hanging around in the neighbourhood.

Housing

Housing warrants a category of the built environment all of its own. C2, C3 and C4 defined the lack of differentiation between the space associated with housing and the spaces designated as part of the larger public realm a key problem in Regent Park. Because of this, housing is a defining feature of Regent Park's public space. On the walking tours, photographs were frequently accompanied by a stream of narration. Photographs of housing were narrated the most. Chantal kept repeating 'This all has to go. It just has to go'. Farah commented throughout her tour about the negative aspects of high-rise apartments. Jen, Jared, Jessica and Cindy echoed these sentiments. 'Ugly' and 'rundown' were commonly used to describe the housing. The comments below illustrate how they viewed the poor outdoor maintenance and appearance.

Some of the houses, they kind of look bad. It looks bad on the outside, like you're in New York of something. Like some place that's really bad. Like Brooklyn (Carlos).

I put pictures of buildings because the outsides are all ruined and beaten and rough (Elena).

I do feel my house is ugly because of the ways it's falling apart. ... My house is falling down (Cindy).

Figure 5-17: Negative images of housing

Left: Elena; Right: Carlos



Indoor maintenance was also a key topic and relates to their public space definition that incorporates the private sphere. The exchange between Jessica and Maggie is an example of one of the discussions about the indoor conditions in the buildings.

Jessica: The insides of the buildings are never cleaned. I mean, clean the elevator because when people spit on the buttons, no one wants to touch it. I didn't even live in a building with an elevator –

Maggie: - Or piss!

Jessica: Yeah, that's horrible.

Maggie: Piss in the staircases! Eeww. I mean, it's dirty. I'm not going to say it, but somebody did something more than piss in the staircase. And the janitors have to clean the floors and everything like that. Someone puked on the floor and it was there for like two weeks. The janitor didn't do nothing.

Jessica: Yeah, I lived here for what, four or five years, and ever since I moved in there was a hole in the ceiling because the toilet used to leak and the drywall started chipping and falling off. And they never fixed it until the week we moved. The week before we finally moved out they finally fixed it.

Most had specific views on the best types of housing. These were based upon aesthetics, comfort, sense of community and safety. Low-rise, ground oriented housing addressed these features.

There should be no high-rises. Nothing over four floors. And we need balconies. All apartments should have balconies. People need to be close to outside and be able to get fresh air (Farah).

Well, hopefully when they build it they aren't going to put the buildings right beside each other. There should be houses that aren't attached ...I think they shouldn't have buildings like condominiums. If they have buildings, like have small buildings, like no big apartment buildings (Maggie).

It [tall buildings] makes them look like low-class buildings. I mean, if they did build some low buildings, like some of the buildings here in Regent Park are three floors, which is perfect (Cindy).

Apartments are the bad life of Regent. You never know what people are going to be doing in there (Carlos).

Figure 5-18: Segments of collages about ideas for better housing
Left - Carlos; Right - Farah



Alisha and Melissa were noted exceptions. They preferred high rise buildings. Alisha liked how the windows caught and glistened in the sun and thought this made them beautiful. Melissa lived in one of the high rises. She said that she liked them because it was where she had lived for most of her life.

As much as indoor and outdoor maintenance was disliked and something that they all wanted to see change, housing also carried the meanings and symbols of home. The thought of tearing down their home was upsetting. Some questioned the need to completely reconstruct the entire neighbourhood. Chantal, Farah, Cindy, Rebecca, Carlos, Maggie and Jessica felt that the low-rise buildings needed a coat of paint and increased and continued maintenance, but demolition was not necessary.

All they need to do is give a fresh coat of paint because up here (pointing to a photograph of townhouses in South Regent) they really need some paint. Give it a fresh coat of paint and maybe change out roofing and stuff. They could make it look like an up-class town and all they need to do is repaint it. They don't need tearing down (Cindy).

I don't like the colour of the bricks because it does make the area look really grimy. But if they had different colours of bricks, maybe something like that, or would do something with the colour of the bricks. ... But all they need to do is take down certain parts or paint over the bricks, or something like that (Rebecca).

Figure 5-19: Segments of collages to show buildings as home

Left - Jared; Right - Scott



Garbage

The smell, look, and in some cases, hazards of garbage caused concern for all of the participants. Garbage dumpsters were described as overflowing and smelly. Participants viewed the close proximity of the dumpsters to the walkways as a problem because the sight and smell of them encroached on their use and enjoyment of the walkways. They documented general litter with distaste, as well as the hazards of broken glass and used condoms and hypodermic needles. They had strong feelings about how the litter situation should be handled. Although they felt that some people needed to show more pride in their community, they felt a great deal of the responsibility rested with TCHC to do the cleaning of litter and the city needed to collect the garbage dumpsters much more

often. Photographing a worker in the process of collecting litter made Farah happy. She used this photograph to illustrate the need and benefits of garbage collection.

The garbage cans are burnt and overflowing garbage. There's no point to them (Scott).

The dumpsters are always so overflowing. Like the one outside of my building is never not full... And it is stinking. And that's where my brother needs to play (Farah).

Every walkway I walk on has glass, condoms and everything that you can name is there. It needs to be clean (Maggie).

Figure 5-20: Garbage reflected in the collages

Top: left - 'useless' garbage cans and overflowing dumpster (Scott); right - unsightly litter (Jessica);
Bottom: left - overflowing smelly dumpster (Melissa); right - 'a person actually cleaning up around here' (Farah)



5.4.2 Social elements of public space

Social elements play an important function in how participants perceived their neighbourhood public spaces. The broad social category can be divided into four sub-categories: culture, police, violence and prospects of new residents. With exception of violence, what is liked about each sub-category is balanced by what is disliked.

Culture

Friends and family

Friends and family were consistently described as an important feature of public space. Friends included young people their own age, younger youth, and youth workers. For many participants, their extended family also lived in Regent Park and the importance of family went beyond the immediate household. Friends made up a large number of participants' photographs and were included in many of their collages. They represented a sense of belonging, security and fun in Regent Park's public spaces.

As long as you have friends and family in Regent Park, you're safe.
(Cindy)

Without friends and family, you're nothing. (Maggie)

You need your friends. Without them, nothing would be no fun.
(Jared)

Figure 5-21: Examples of segments of collages dedicated to friends

Top left: playing basketball (Jared); Top right: skipping (Jen); Bottom left: 'all my friends' (Alisha); Bottom right: 'My little baby girls and N. (Jessica)



Friends and family provided the foundation of the community culture. During the walking tours many participants often spoke about how things were different in Regent Park from other areas – the way people dress, talk, and carry themselves – and how they appreciated this. They felt it set them apart and created a sense of belonging. Scott incorporated this element into his collage.

And the picture of my ear and earring. It represents how people dress and how people stylize. The picture of my shoe and pants is like how people dress and how I dress. ... It represents the culture and style. It's how you know who's from here. *And that's good?* Yeah. It's how you're part of things (Scott).

Figure 5-22: Representation of community culture

From Scott's collage



The revitalization of Regent Park involves the temporary and permanent relocation of families. The prospect of losing friends and family as neighbours represented a negative and inevitable side effect of the revitalization plan. The relocation of these valued people created concerns about how they would still be able to have fun and feel like they belong in Regent Park.

Intimidating people

Intimidating individuals contrast against the positive elements of friends and family. Part of negotiating public space in Regent Park is dealing with gangs, drug dealers and the homeless (RP2). They also presented the darker side of community culture as they create and perpetuate Regent Park's negative image. Intimidating people fell into two distinct categories. The first were adults drinking and doing drugs in their hang out spots, drug dealers, the homeless and prostitutes on the periphery of the neighbourhood. They were given various labels, such as crazies, creepy, and weird people. Gangs and wanna-be gangs constituted the second category of disliked people.

Threatening people elicited both fear and annoyance. There was the apprehension that something bad might happen if you were around these types of people, and trying to distinguish between a group of people hanging out and a gang. Access to hang out spaces was sometimes limited because of trying to avoid these people, which participants described as 'not fair' and as something

that should not be allowed to happen. Intimidating people were something that participants wanted to see change.

There's always broken bottles over there [by the Regent Park South ice rink], every time you walk by. Some of them are doing drugs. Some of them are drinking. Some of them are doing other dirty grimy things I don't want to mention. Some people are bad and I try to keep my brother away (Jen).

My next picture is like another group of people [see Figure 5-21]. It's in North Regent by the ice rink. They're just sitting there and talking, and really, I don't think it's a gang, just a group of people who like to chill with others. I don't know. *How can you tell?* Really, you just have to pay attention. Figure it out. I don't know. (Rebecca).

Figure 5-23: 'I don't think it's a gang'
From Rebecca's collage



Police

RP1 identified the police as one of the biggest issues for young people and their use of public space:

I think the biggest issue is probably the security and the police don't have enough of a presence in the community to know who's high risk and who's not, who's a dope dealer and who's not. So our kids get it. I think that very deep there is a fear in our institutions of approaching the guys who are committing the criminal activity. So those guys continue to commit the criminal activity and they look like they're doing their jobs because they jack up a bunch of 14-year-olds on the street.

RP8 also believed that young people were unfairly targeted as criminals.

Usually when youth are hanging around outside, they are considered drug dealers.

Many participants also cast the police in a negative light. On the walking tours, sighting a police car was a photograph-worthy event. The majority of participants had had some level of first-hand experience with the police. All had experienced being told to move along, others had been questioned about certain events and activities, and some because of shoplifting at local stores or more serious charges, such as uttering death threats and assault. They complained that the police treated any group of kids hanging out together as a gang. They did admit that sometimes the police could be helpful, but they placed an emphasis on sometimes. The majority of time, the police could be counted on for lack of response and action, harassment, and false accusations.

Some cops are good, but some of them are crooked. They'll say, "Oh, your friend snitched on you, so maybe you should snitch on him," or "If you don't tell us all we want to know, we'll tell all your friends you're a snitch" (Scott).

Sometimes they're nice and sometimes they can, like, pin stuff on you (Carlos).

Really, the police are assholes. They don't do anything ... really, it's pathetic (Cindy).

Despite their negative view of the police, some believed that increased police presence with a different attitude would be a good idea. They would usually laugh when they made this suggestion, since they were quite critical of the police. In their opinion, a positive change would be if the police focused on the true problem people in Regent Park. This included drug dealers and users, gang members, and prostitutes. The different attitude that they would have the police adopt meant that the police would not harass groups of young people hanging out.

But others were unsure if this could actually change and Carlos completely disagreed. He felt the police were too much a pain now and it could not possibly change for the better in the future.

Figure 5-24: Segments of collages incorporating the police

Left - Scott; Right - Rebecca



Violence

The intimidating people and the lack of police action come together in the violence sub-category. This includes both actual and threatened violent acts. During the walking tours and while categorizing photographs, participants would talk in general about the jumpings, beatings, shootings, and stabbings that had happened in the neighbourhood and who they knew who had had these experiences. These stories were expanded in the discussion groups and in their explanations of their collages. Several participants had intimate experiences with Regent Park's violent side. They had been beaten, one to the point of hospitalization, threatened at knife-point, robbed, and they had had friends and family shot and killed. For these participants, violence was not something to be glorified and they wanted it to stop. It was almost unanimously placed in the Dislike and Change categories. The exception to this was Jared. He was part of the group who came across a fight during their walking tour. When his group was creating the chart of their photographs and walking tour experiences, he placed the fight in the 'Like' category and it was something that he wanted to see stay the same in the neighbourhood. He had his reasons for this.

But I think the fight was funny! *Why?* I like watching [fights] because they're exciting. *Exciting? What makes them exciting?*

Everyone comes running and things start happening and it's just something to see.

Figure 5-25: Capturing violence

Left – one of Rebecca's photographs showing a friend posing at the site of a shooting; right - Chantal's photograph of a fight



Gangs

Regent Park has a reputation for gangs, and this was commented on during the walking tours and was incorporated into some of the collages. Gangs were tied to the culture and perpetuation of violence because of the vicious circle that erupts from attacks and reprisals that grow out of defending and carving out territory for drug dealing. Key informants also considered it a cycle for many young people in Regent Park.

Imagine the impact of the witnessing the violence in the neighbourhood and the drug dealing. That has a great impact on our kids. It is an easy buck to be made for a broke kid, so they get coerced and they fall into the trap (RP1).

Participants blamed the gangs for the broken lights as well as feeding the problem of wanna-be gangs.

Jessica and Maggie summarized the problem of wanna-be gangs in Regent Park.

Jessica: They think they're all that because they know older gang bangers and the older gang bangers get them to do the stuff they don't want to do so that they don't get into trouble for it and they're still young so they won't get charged as an adult. And they all think that it's all like 'We're in with them. We're in with them' but it's just

that they're using them for them to do it. And even with all that they still act all big because they have their protection.

Maggie: Plus the older people are getting the younger ones to sell and deal everything because they don't want to get caught. So they're getting the young ones to do it. And they're stealing, and they can do whatever they want.

The gang culture also provided the foundation for the division between North and South Regent. Key informants who worked within the community told me that some residents did not cross the Dundas Street divide – two of the informants bore Northsider tattoos themselves. When I asked participants about the division between North and South, they would give an explanation of the geographical division between gangs. Although they said their movements were not impeded by the divide, they admitted that sometimes it did affect them through general, broad brush identification with a gang by virtue of their address within Regent Park.

That has a big impact on everybody through the fact that you're North so you're Crips and you're South so you're Bloods. Even if you do live in South, and I don't flag anything, I don't rep red, I don't rep blue⁴, just the fact that I lived in South, I was automatically a Blood. I was stereotyped just because of the area I was living in. People are naïve and get caught up in that. It's stupid and makes things difficult (Jessica).

The difficulties that Jessica made reference to happened on the first walking tour. A young boy stopped Chantal at the large playground in South Regent and told her that he did not recognize her, so she must be from North and she should get out and go back to where she came from. Jen dealt with the boy by calling him a wanna-be gang banger and to leave Chantal alone. Jen's words were enough, and the boy rode away on his bike yelling obscenities over his shoulder.

Many participants connected the system of walkways to avoidance and safety from violence. Keeping the network of walkways was one way that Melissa, Maggie, Rebecca and Cindy felt that could feel safer because they would feel like they always had a place to run. Other common

⁴ Jessica's references to 'flagging' and 'repping' mean wearing colours in order to identify with a gang. In this case, red is associated with the Bloods and blue with the Crips.

suggestions were to increase the lighting, especially along the Boardwalk where the gangs tend to congregate, as well as increased police action. Participants were unanimous that the main way to deal with the violence was to get rid of the people who caused it. They felt that as long as those who perpetuated violence were in the community, this aspect of Regent Park could not change, no matter how the street pattern was changed and the new neighbours.

Prospects of new residents

New residents and how they may change the current neighbourhood dynamic was a common topic during walking tours, categorizing photographs and in the discussion groups. Their feelings ranged from anger to apprehension to scepticism. The fact that new residents would be wealthier than the current residents of Regent Park caused the most upset. All participants described the new residents as rich. How they defined 'rich' was very much connected to why they were so upset about the prospect of new, more affluent residents moving into their neighbourhood.

For participants, being rich is defined as money and a bad attitude. It was the combination of access to money, flaunting it and looking down at those who are poor.

You keep saying rich people. [They're] A higher class of people that have money, they aren't in [public] housing, they own cars, they own condos. OK. How am I going to explain this? But really, it's not just about the money and the car, it's about how you flaunt it. The way you show it. Like, oh yeah, I have a Mercedes-Benz so I'm better than you and I live in a condo so I'm higher than everyone else and I have to pay this much rent and you guys are paying \$400.00 and I'm paying \$4000.00 every month. (Jessica)

There was anxiety about being marginalized in their neighbourhood by those who had more money than they did and would use their status to take over and change neighbourhood spaces. Rebecca and Cindy explained their conception of 'rich' and their fears in a discussion group:

So what in your mind is rich? What would you say that is?

Rebecca: Money.

Yeah, but how much money counts as a rich person?

Cindy: More than what I carry in my pocket, which is nothing. ... I hate rich snob-nosed people. They always talk about how much money they have compared to others. That's what I hate about them. I hate how they sit there and say how they have all this money and we've got shit. It's like, I don't care. I know I have nothing. You don't need to remind me.

Rebecca, what do you think of as a rich person?

Rebecca: The same thing. You have money. I mean, I don't have money every day. Rich people have money every day. And it's not racism, but they're going to take rich people and put them in private parts and we get –

Cindy: -we get public.

Rebecca: Yeah. We get public. It's sort of like white people can't go to that school, you know?

Cindy: It's exactly like that. It's not racism –

Rebecca: - It's not colour, but ...

Cindy: Yeah. It's not colour ...

Rebecca: It's what you have.

Cindy: Exactly. It's by what you have. It's by income and it's stupid.

They viewed the impact of new residents on public space with different social and economic backgrounds with trepidation. Most of this was based on how they felt that the new residents would react to their music in particular as well as to them hanging around in the neighbourhood. Their predictions called for more neighbourhood conflicts as a result.

It'll just mean that there'll be more fights around because the rich people will be calling the cops on us and they're going to want to argue back about why you're doing this and that (Elena).

It'll be worse because they sit there and call the cops if your music is just like up to 20. They'll call the cops if they hear the music. It's pathetic. ... They're going to complain about people smoking in their backyards, people smoking out on the streets. They're going to

complain about everything. “Oh, they’re dirtying up our area, so why don’t you get rid of them” and stuff. It’s going to be like a bloodbath practically (Cindy).

Just those kinds of people [rich people] don’t like seeing kids outside.... You can go outside only a little while but you have to be inside every day. That’s what I mean. Adults don’t expect kids to be going outside. They expect them to go to school, come home, do their homework, eat, and go to bed (Maggie).

In addition to conflict between new residents and Regent Park’s young people, there was also the strong feeling that new people moving into the neighbourhood would avoid and shun them.

They might treat you like when a lady is walking down the streets and she starts to clench her purse more. How’s that going to make you feel? It’s going to make you feel like shit because, oh, just because I lived here from before doesn’t mean that I’m going to run up on you and take your purse and shoot you and everything like that (Jessica).

Because if rich people come in here they’re going to act like you’re all poor. They’re going to act like you’re poor. *How do people act like you’re poor?* The way they talk. Not just how they talk, but how they’re gonna be. It’s gonna be ‘You’re poor. Don’t talk to me, blah blah blah’ (Maggie).

There were a few participants who looked upon new people moving into Regent Park as an opportunity to make new friends. As long as their new neighbours were nice to them, they would be friendly back.

There was a general scepticism about the possibility of social mix addressing Regent Park’s problems with violence and drug trafficking. Without using the specific terms and language, they criticized environmental determinism. They questioned three points of the plan. First, they questioned who would actually move into the neighbourhood. None were convinced that any sort of decent person would move in and actually stay for any length of time. The problem residents of Regent Park would ultimately cause new, more affluent people to move. In the words of Jessica, “new buildings and streets don’t change the way people are used to living.” Second, they doubted how the neighbourhood would not become segregated. In their eyes, the mix of public and private

housing and those with money living alongside those without did not bode well and would not necessarily serve to connect them to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Not only did they feel that the new, wealthier residents would ultimately control public spaces, but their presence would be a constant reminder of what they do not have. Third, they felt that something needs to be done to make sure that a) the current problems in Regent Park would not be part of the new Regent Park and b) to stop Regent Park's problems from affecting the surrounding neighbourhoods. Addressing the issues associated with living in Regent Park, such as poverty, gangs, drugs and prostitution, would not necessarily be solved by erecting new homes and moving in new residents. If these issues were not attended to, they felt that the current plan to connect Regent Park with its surrounding areas may cause Regent Park's problems to "contaminate" (Jessica) Cabbagetown and "it might ruin other neighbourhoods" (Carlos).

5.5 Would findings be different with more boys?

The initial studies of young people and public space largely focused on boys, particularly those from working-class families. One of the prime examples of this is Corrigan's (1979) work looking at teenage boys in Sunderland in the UK. Until very recently, girls have been next to invisible in investigations public space because "girls were assumed to be located within the private sphere, at home, a supposition which continues to be repeated in contemporary texts" (Skelton, 2000: 83). Girls were said to interact with pop culture and friends in the privacy of their bedrooms (Katz, 1993). In recent years, girl-focused studies have increased with the goal of expanding understandings of how girls understand and relate to their environments (Skelton, 2000; Tucker and Matthews, 2001). My intention never was to conduct a girl-only or even a girl-dominated study. In fact, different key informants told me that male youth have a stronger voice in Regent Park than girls because the girls are harder to engage. They warned that I would have difficulty in recruiting girls in my target age group and I would need to make a concerted effort to reach them. My recruitment process did not

follow their predictions and the reverse happened. More boys did indeed sign up to participate, but in the end they did not show up to the sessions.

When this trend became apparent, I began asking participants if they felt that having more girls involved in the study shaped the findings. Cindy said she thought that the themes would have 'been the same but using different words'. This thinking was shared by other girls. They also believed that the same issues would have come forward, but perhaps there might not have been the same level of concern or desire to see some things change. This was because boys were viewed as central actors in creating the problems in Regent Park, such as litter, violence, and joining gangs. I had the opportunity to ask two of the male participants their opinion on this matter. They felt that the involvement of more boys would not have changed the results at all.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the information generated from work with young participants. This included the brainstorming sessions on defining public space, the routes and experiences from the walking tours, and the themes of public space that emerged from the categorizing of their photographs, collages and follow-up discussions. The key findings from data sources are that public space is not defined by what is private, but rather in terms of access. For them, public space is much broader than open park space and the planned public realm. It also includes quasi-public and privately owned spaces. The walking tours demonstrated that participants preferred to spend more time within the boundaries of Regent Park and took more photographs of things that they liked within the neighbourhood rather than outside of it. The themes from the photographs, collages, and discussions can be categorized by physical and social elements. Both physical and social features were important to how participants identified and perceived Regent Park's public spaces.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides reflections on the research findings presented in the previous chapter and places the findings within the broader planning context. I discuss the broad understanding of public space that was offered by participants. This is followed by outlining the positive and negative outlooks of young people on Regent Park's public space, including both social oriented elements and aspects of the physical, built environment and their contradictions. The young participants' perspectives on streets and walkways do not match with the revitalization plan. They also have concerns about how public space in Regent Park will change because of new residents.

6.2 Young people, public space and public housing revitalization

In the literature, public space exists on different levels, being simultaneously a physical, social and mental object (Gottdiener, 1985; Lefebvre, 1991). On the physical plane, it is the spaces of the urban landscape that provide the forum for day to day activities as well as relaxation and recreation. This broad spectrum of spaces includes parks, greenways, playgrounds, public squares and sidewalks (Carr et al., 1992). These physical components of public space give rise to further theories about how public space is created and perpetuated. Social and mental understandings of public space are central to how public space is designed, regulated and maintained.

Through use of his spatial triad, Lefebvre (1991) incorporates the different process and relationships that shape space. The space that most planners and architects operate in, the world of maps, plans and models, is representations of space. This is also the space of the most dominant and powerful in a society, as this is the space that works towards controlling space in terms of what it looks like, how it is used and by whom. The qualities of abstract space, and its associated exchange

of goods and commodities, contrast representations of space against representational, lived space and spatial practice, the ways spaces are used. These parts of the triad include the symbolic and use meanings of users. However, each part of the triad interacts with the others and results in the production of space. Urban public space is the result of inherent social processes that involve both spaces being consumed through their uses and created purposes and produced through the different meanings and understandings that citizens attach to particular public spaces (Madanipour, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991; Gotham and Brumley, 2002). This study has demonstrated the tensions between the values associated with space. Public housing revitalization and the plans to improve the neighbourhood are largely part of the realm of abstract space and exchange value. The young people involved in this study approach space from a perspective based on use value, where their meanings and symbols associated with their neighbourhood public spaces have not translated into the plans.

One of the important aspects of discussions related to public space is the extent to which it is truly public in nature. Analyses of public spaces reveal a range of publicness, with young people frequently limited in access (Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). Young people are some of the most frequent users of public space (Ward, 1990), but they typically face challenges and marginalization in urban public space. Young people are either regulated out of public space, or are limited in their uses of public space (Valentine, 1996a; Collins and Kearns, 2001), or carve their spaces out of primarily adult-oriented landscapes (Matthews, 2003; Chawla et al., 2006). Spaces for young people, such as playgrounds and recreational spaces, are also dominated by adult perspectives (Bartlett et al., 1999; Hart, 2002). It is somewhat ironic that spaces designed specifically for young people are typically underused because they do not capture the interests of young people (Ward, 1990; Bartlett et al., 1999; Hart, 2002). This is accompanied by the growing documentation of the street as an important public space for young people (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Matthews, 2003). Public space may be based on adult values, but it plays an important role in the lives of young people

for 'hanging out', informal recreation, as well as stretching the boundaries of adult supervision. All of these reasons point to the need to consider young people as one of the multiple publics to involve in the planning process.

This study demonstrates that for young people in public housing, public space is a broad concept and that they have their own interpretation of public space elements. It is another example of how space can simultaneously take on many different meanings. In Regent Park, young people have an understanding of public space and its features that interprets public space from a different angle than is presented in the revitalization plan. Young people find ways to adapt to adult-oriented spaces and to create their own understandings of and niches in urban public spaces (Thomas, 2005). This study shows that young people's perspectives on public space may provide a different version of positive and negative elements of neighbourhood public space. This is of importance to planners for ethical as well as more pragmatic reasons. Planners should play a role in developing civil society based on democratic ideals (Carp, 2004; Watson, 2006). To ignore the perspectives of young people "...proceeds from a model of socialization in which civil society is entirely passed down to children, rather than one in which children participate in building that society" (Hart, 2002: 146). If planners are willing to listen to and engage with young people, not only do young people benefit educationally, but they also tend to feel more connected to their community and can act as community resources for planners (Frank, 2006). Understanding how young people view their surroundings has more practical benefits for planners as well. It reduces waste of limited resources in providing spaces and services that do not meet the needs or desires of young people (Bartlett et al., 1999). Neighbourhood projects that involve young people are likely to see a reduction of delinquency and vandalism (Hart, 1992).

This research from Regent Park gives planners something to think about when considering planning for public neighbourhood spaces. Interviews with key informants revealed that one of the hopes for the revitalization effort is the physical redesign of the neighbourhood would influence the

behaviour of residents in public space. The application of Newman's ideas of defensible space, the clear demarcations between public and private space, came through in C2's beliefs in what was currently lacking in Regent Park, and what the revitalization plan will address.

The idea of the redevelopment is to clarify the distinctions between what is public space and what is private space, and what's semi-public and semi-private so that those things can correspond more to how people perceive space and what their behaviour is and so forth (C2).

However, this is based on the assumption that all people interpret and value public space in the same way. It also works on the presumption that all groups need strong signals to divide public and private realms in order to feel they live in a viable neighbourhood. This study adds to the growing body of literature that explores the 'grey' areas of the public-private binary. These grey areas are the ways in which design and formal and informal regulation of public spaces give legitimacy to certain uses and users and discredit others (Miller, 2007). Young people's perspectives on public space often fall into one such grey area as they are not usually part of the planning process. It shows that planners have another perspective that is worthwhile considering because it is different and may lead to more cohesive community public spaces.

6.3 Working with a broad definition of public space

One of the outcomes of this study is that there is a further element of public space to consider when addressing young people and public space: how they understand how it is defined. As mentioned above, young people carve out their place in the urban landscape and this may lead to using public space in ways that may not have necessarily been intended. As an adult and a non-resident of Regent Park, I wanted to start at the cornerstone of this research and determine what young people consider to be public space. For young people in Regent Park, public space translates into an open and all-inclusive concept.

The notion that public spaces are places where you feel free to go challenges the boundaries that are constructed around private and public space. It does not fall in line with the position of the key informants involved with planning for Regent Park. According to them, in order to have good public spaces, there is also a need for good private spaces as well. To accommodate this perspective of young people towards public space requires a shift in thought from one where space is defined based on sense of belonging rather than ownership. Introducing defined private space will clearly make divisions of space based on proprietorship and makes use of Newman's 'defensible space'. An extension of this is the sense of ownership that people feel over public spaces. Blomley refers to this as 'un-real estate' where people feel that a particular space is theirs and seek to control the activities and users within it, even though it is within the public domain. Jacobs' 'eyes on the street' also builds on this idea about residents having a role in maintaining the quality and safety of public spaces. Whether actual or sensed ownership, it places those with the most social and economic power in the strongest position to shape public space. The views of the young participants towards public space focus on where they feel like they fit in and in the words of Rebecca, "Just the places where we hang out, you know, where you find your friends".

From the perspectives of Regent Park's young people, as it affects them, the division between public and private spaces is an artificial one as they consider private and quasi-public spaces already part of their public realm. This broad definition of public space on the part of young people gives rise to two challenges for planners when working with young people and public space. First, the adult assumptions of public space may limit or not line up with the understandings of young people. In Regent Park, key informants distinguished between 'public space', like streets, parks and open space, and 'programmed space', such as recreational facilities, youth clubs and school yards. The young participants did not distinguish between the two. Miller (2007) asserts that there are many subtle ways people understand public space and explores the different interpretations of governments,

private business and citizens. She considers public space from an adult perspective and shows the many different activities for which adults seek out public space, from protest to leisure to consumption. This study reveals that young people also have their own interpretations of public space that do not always parallel those of adults. This can lead to misinterpretation on the part of both young people and adults. Young people may not understand exactly what they are being asked and adults may believe that young people are saying one thing when in fact they are saying another. This requires clarification of how public space is defined and the flexibility that adults are willing to give young people when working in this area.

Contextual factors may have helped to give rise to this broad public space definition as ‘perceived publicness’ can vary by socio-economic status and housing tenure (Gotham and Brumley, 2002; Day, 2003). Residents of lower-income and public housing neighbourhoods do not differentiate between public and private spaces to the extent of those living in more affluent neighbourhoods. Those living in lower-income housing often make use of the space surrounding their dwelling as an extension of their home (Gotham and Brumley, 2002). They are more likely to make use of these spaces for social gatherings and activities unlike those in higher-income neighbourhoods who are more inclined to use their own private spaces (Day, 2003). This affects views on uses of public space; residents of public housing and private housing have different perspectives (Pader and Breitbart, 1993). Public housing tenants are more likely to accommodate children playing and hanging out in walkways and courtyards, groups congregating outside and the noise that is associated with these activities (Pader and Breitbart, 1993). Young people in lower-income neighbourhoods are also much more likely to stay close to home and make use of immediate public spaces (Ellen and Turner, 1997; Bauder, 2001; Day, 2003). In the current urban landscape where young people are increasingly scheduled and chauffeured to islands of recreation and supervised activities (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Collins and Kearns, 2001), poorer young

people have more freedoms to make use of their local public spaces because their parents lack the funds and time for them to take part in these activities (Hart, 2002). Although the quality of public space in these neighbourhoods may not necessarily be safe or sanitary, young people in these neighbourhoods have more opportunities to use public space (Hart, 2002).

Placed within this framework, the expansive definition of public space generated with young people in Regent Park is an extension of these findings. How various groups define public space is another slant to the accepted notion that different groups of people invest differing yet co-existing values to public space. This group of young people defines and values public space in a very different way than how public space and solutions for public housing are being presented by TCHC and in other areas of the planning and urban revitalization literature. These discrepancies have not been overly apparent, but a revitalization plan that emphasizes divisions between public and private space and introduces social mix may leave little room for the interpretations of young people living in public housing.

6.4 Young people's attitudes towards physical and social elements of public space and the Regent Park Revitalization Plan

Euclidean space is no longer considered an adequate view of the urban landscape (Gottdiener, 1985; Healey, 2004; Innes and Booher, 2004; Massey, 2005). Planners are encouraged to understand the diverse meanings that residents attach to their surroundings (Sandercock, 2004; Watson, 2006).

Interactions with others are an important part of how people feel connected to a space and the culture that develops in a neighbourhood (Whyte, 1980; Ellen and Turner, 1997; Popkin et al., 2004). This research demonstrates that neighbourhood public space is a combination of different elements. In the case of Regent Park, young people consider both physical and social elements to be contributing factors to positive and negative elements of public space. Physical and social factors of public space are intrinsically linked in the explanations of young people in Regent Park. The relevance of physical

features is often discussed through the events and activities that take place there. This is in keeping with other studies about neighbourhood, including neighbourhood satisfaction (Kearns and Parkes, 2003) and attachment (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). The young participants have ideas on what they would like to keep the same in their neighbourhood or have it changed by the revitalization. However, each physical and social positive often has a shadow side. This section provides a discussion of the ideas put forward by participants and places them in the context of the revitalization plan and the wider literature.

6.5 Staying off the grid

Previous studies of young people in revitalized public housing developments have focused on educational, health and employment prospects and the impacts of relocation (Pettit, 2004; Popkin et al., 2004). By focusing on public space aspects, this study shows there are further implications for young people as a result of revitalization. Changing the physical and social make-up of the neighbourhood may not mesh with their experiences and values. One of the most striking findings of this study was that the core elements of the revitalization plan for Regent Park and other public housing initiatives across North America are not welcomed by young people. They did not like the idea of social and physical integration into the rest of the urban fabric. There are several criticisms of revitalization plans like the one being implemented in Regent Park, including that these plans tread close to environmental determinism and questioning the likelihood of social mix as a key factor in neighbourhood rejuvenation. The concerns of the young people involved in this study include these issues, but also show the differences in how they interpret the value of their neighbourhood public space and the changes that result from revitalization.

The Regent Park Revitalization Plan places an emphasis on opening up Regent Park that is intended to create a healthy community through increased physical connections, permeability and

defined spaces (Regent Park Urban Design Guidelines, 2005). The physical design of Regent Park's revitalization is centred on neo-traditionalist values, most commonly associated with new urbanism. One of the critiques of new urbanism is that in its application of universal values, it assumes commonality (Katz, 1994; Grant, 2007). Applying this type of planning serves to exacerbate the lack of understanding that planners tend to have of young people and how they can be integrated and valued in the planning process. Many planners already feel that their profession has little to do with the needs of young people, or that at best they plan for this group indirectly (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). Talen (2000) states that whether a neighbourhood is considered successful or not is relative. Age and socio-economic status are key, but often overlooked, factors in influencing perspectives on success (Talen, 2000). This is a central point in studies of revitalized downtowns where young people are not welcome in public space if they do not fulfill the role of consumer (Collins and Kearns, 2001; Malone, 2002; Lees, 2003). The findings of this research demonstrate that age also contributes to how street pattern is assessed. The very qualities that are identified as severe problems in Regent Park and other public housing developments, such as its island-like nature, lack of permeability and through traffic, are those that were valued by the participants.

6.5.1 Walkways

According to this study, walkways are an important feature of public space for young people. Walkways are a key element in getting around the neighbourhood quickly as well as for hanging out with friends, and because of their many directions, also an element of safety. This is an important finding when taken in the context of the plan for Regent Park's revitalization because they were all adamant that walkways should remain a central feature of the neighbourhood. They identified the Boardwalk in particular as a walkway to preserve.

The Boardwalk amplified the qualities of public space that were represented by the neighbourhood walkways. Participants believed that it was public space for the entire community and was irreplaceable as a street. Cindy summarized the significance of the Boardwalk by describing it as 'the spine of Regent'. But the group portrayed two sides of the Boardwalk. They all spoke about how the Boardwalk was important for hanging out with friends and for walking around the neighbourhood and described it as 'beautiful', 'fun' and 'the place to be', but it was also presented as a space of violence and fear. The lack of lighting and the presence of gangs on the Boardwalk caused concern and worry. When discussing these elements of the Boardwalk, it took on a very different meaning. They told stories of robberies and jumpings, assaults on girls, and avoiding certain people in order to stay out of trouble. From an adult perspective, and the rationale behind the revitalization plan, reversion of the Boardwalk back to a through street will address the issues of fear and violence by having more traffic going through the space. However, the solutions put forward by young people did not come from a physical perspective. They did not consider changing the physical design, but instead stressed the need for maintenance and services. More lighting and repairing broken lights as well as more policing efforts were considered the most effective ways to address the problems of fear and violence.

The young participants in this study were unanimous in their opinion about the walkways, but the response of key informants on this was not. It varied from understanding to dismissive. Some agreed with the youths' perspective and opposed the reintroduction of through streets for the safety and sense of community for young people. Others would pause for a moment, admit that they had never thought about the importance of walkways, but felt that it was in the best interests of young people to live in a more 'normal' looking neighbourhood. Yet others treated this as a trivial point. The general feeling was that young people in Regent Park were very resistant to change, but because they are kids, they are resilient and therefore can adapt to change quickly. C5 stated quite simply,

“Adults know better than kids.” Key informants associated with the revitalization plan also did not recognize the importance of the Boardwalk and this is not reflected in the revitalization plan itself. This may be due to lack of understanding the significance of the space. For these informants and according to the plan, the Boardwalk was only known as Oak Street and the majority of key informants felt that a through street will be a much needed improvement. Although they seemed interested in the study’s findings, they stood by the principles of the plan.

The value that young people place upon walkways as part of their public space and adults’ lack of knowledge, and in some cases lack of appreciation, of this demonstrates what has been documented about young people and public streets in other cases. Some assume young people are on the streets because there is a lack of playground or leisure spaces and that it is unsafe or inappropriate, but in many cases they actually choose to play and hang out in the streets (Whyte, 1980; Moore, 1986; Skelton, 2000; Matthews, 2003). In Regent Park, the walkways are the streets, but without the dangers posed by traffic and the added knowledge that neighbourhood residents are the most likely users. They viewed the walkways as a source of convenience, recreation, leisure, safety and community and worried that this would be displaced by through streets. The modernist ideals that shaped Regent Park and public housing from the same era are criticised by planners (Sewell, 1994; Franck and Mostoller, 1995; Carmon, 1997), but it was this very organization that the young participants appreciated. They liked how the inside of the neighbourhood was organized, and wanted to “keep it like a park. It is Regent *Park* you know” (Rebecca).

6.5.2 Connections to public spaces in the surrounding neighbourhoods

One of the goals of the revitalization plan is to provide Regent Park and its residents with more connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods. However, for young people, being off the grid and an island-like neighbourhood helped foster a sense of belonging and safety. RP5 described Regent Park as a gated community. As a gated community, there is a culture and status associated with

living in Regent Park that is different from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Bauder (2001) looked at how young people from a neighbourhood of concentrated poverty constructed their physical and social urban boundaries. He found that the neighbourhood was a factor in how they thought of their identity and culture and that young people would work towards adapting their speech, dress and comportment in order to blend into other areas outside of their own neighbourhood. The gated community culture of Regent Park also went beyond how young people dress and speak. A number of the participants used it as part of their email address. The key informants' tattoos also demonstrate what an effect Regent Park has on how they view themselves and the importance of where they are from:

They can't just tear the place down. I mean, it's on my skin (RP1).

Most of the time, the young participants defined positive public spaces as within Regent Park. However, some public spaces that they consider important are officially outside of the boundaries of Regent Park. School yards, Stinky's park and some local stores, and for a number of participants, the local graveyard, were all considered spaces where they hang out and that they frequently use. These connections are affected by the street pattern as well as social factors.

Young people did not like the busy boundary streets. They considered these streets to be unattractive, boring because this was not the space to find friends, and unsafe due to vehicular traffic, drug dealers, the homeless and prostitutes. Therefore, anything that required them crossing or spending time on these streets needed to be worthwhile and still maintain a feeling of being part of Regent Park. Schools were important sites because they were part of most of the participants' everyday routine and represented education and making something of oneself. These schools are exceptionally close to Regent Park and are not difficult for the youth to access. The close proximity of Stinky's Park to the homes of many of the participants made it an important public space, but they

did not like crossing Shuter Street, a main arterial street, to get to it. The lack of stores that young people considered decent within Regent Park led them to look for other local stores. Young people would only make the time and effort to cross boundary streets to go to stores that they felt had something more to offer than the stores already in Regent Park, and only to those where they felt comfortable. The personalities of the store employees and owners as well as the cost and quality of the merchandise were key factors in this.

The boundary streets not only acted as the boundaries of Regent Park, but in many ways also were the boundaries to the young people's comfort zone. On the walking tours, they expressed little desire to venture beyond Regent Park, except to document negative public space elements for the project. In the discussions, they also explained the lack of interest in spending time outside of Regent Park. They did not like witnessing lifestyles that they cannot afford or risk 'richies' looking down on them or viewing them as a threat. In their own way, these young people were demonstrating the cautions that are made against physical determinism. Just because amenities are close by does not mean that people will use them and mix together creating a common culture and community (Talen, 2000; Purdy, 2005). These young people considered the planned through streets as a source of new boundaries and as a new way of dissecting their community. What is presented in the plan as a means to create more connections, they view as an inconvenience. From their perspective, it is much easier to get around in Regent Park than have to walk through neighbourhoods based on a block pattern, something they have experienced by going to the youth clubs that are in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The lack of through streets saves them time as well as gives them a sense of security and safety. The new stores were only seen as potentially replacing the ones they liked now and could be more places that they would feel uncomfortable and poor.

6.6 The physical environment

In addition to through streets, the revitalization plan also intends to alter the nature of the housing in Regent Park. Although there were some elements of the built environment that participants wanted to see changed by the revitalization plan, there were also some that they very much wanted to stay the same. At times these appear to be contradictory.

6.6.1 Housing

The second area of discrepancy regarding the physical environment between young people and the revitalization plan pertains to housing. As with the Boardwalk, this category tells two stories. The first involves the ugliness and how the neighbourhood is obviously public housing. The uniformity and lack of maintenance inside and out are reasons why young people would like to 'see it all go'. But there is another side too. This story that portrays the housing, acknowledged as inferior and undesirable, as home. Not all young people in Regent Park can call home a safe or happy place. But for the participants in this project, home was important and not something to be torn down.

The very deteriorated condition and severe lack of maintenance on their homes to date and the long wait time for repairs led these young people to question the prospects for the future. There was the hope that new, wealthier residents would not want to live near dilapidated housing. This was tempered by the more jaded perspective that there has not been interest in maintaining the neighbourhood thus far, and that public housing residents will be relegated to the certain buildings that will eventually see the same run-down fate as the current buildings in Regent Park.

There is also the question of how changing the housing may change how Regent Park feels as a community and as home. People tend to define themselves by their neighbourhood and by how others view their community from the outside (Bauder, 2001; Reay and Lucey, 2000). Kearns and Parkes (2003) also state that the culture that develops in poor neighbourhoods tends to outweigh

expressions of neighbourhood dissatisfaction. In these cases, unacceptable circumstances become normal (Ellen and Turner, 1997). This may provide a foundation for the sentiments of these young people. For them, housing is one of the tangible ways that Regent Park is set apart and gives them an exclusive identity. The differences between them as residents of Regent, and ‘richy rich kids’ or ‘snob noses’ from elsewhere was an important distinction for them. For all the disrepair and ugliness, they did not want to lose what the housing represents.

6.6.2 Murals, graffiti and gardens

Murals and community gardens represented a large part of participants’ photographs and collages. For the participants, the series of neighbourhood murals were important for life lessons and to show that they were not alone. The revitalization plan specifically calls for the integration of public art into the new Regent Park through a public art master plan. This plan is to identify key sites and commissioning opportunities that will reflect the natural, cultural and built form heritages of the neighbourhood (Regent Park Urban Design Guidelines, 2005). Initial thematic guidelines have been put forward in the Regent Park Urban Design Guidelines (2005). For natural heritage, art commissions include the Don River and its watershed and the Carolinian forest region. Suggestions for cultural heritage are aboriginal settlement and colonial and post-colonial immigration. Built form heritage theme includes agricultural/rural settlement patterns; Victorian Toronto (grid tree lined street pattern); 1950s housing development. These initial themes are varied and reflect a diverse array of topics, but do not capture any of the themes currently part of the murals that so resonated with all of the participants.

Similar to the murals, young people valued community gardens for their aesthetics as well as for the sense of community they represented. Gardens are described as beautiful as well as symbols of people working together and spaces to pause and reflect on the environment. The other side to their perspective on gardens as public space was their lack of maintenance. In this neglected state,

gardens became ugly and they wondered about the point of creating them in the first place. They lamented the garbage and overgrowth that had taken over the flower garden in South Regent.

In the eyes of young people, graffiti was a strong visual statement. One considered it a definite negative in all cases, but the majority viewed some of it as an important historical and social record of Regent Park and wished to see it preserved. This is something to consider in the new neighbourhood. All residents, particularly new ones, are unlikely to share the perspective of graffiti as community history. However, if this is the standpoint of young people who remain in Regent Park, it may pose a challenge if there are attempts to eradicate graffiti as they may not be on board with these efforts.

6.6.3 Garbage and lack of neighbourhood maintenance

Tunstall, Tapsell and House (2004) document that young people are very aware of the state of their environment. The *Growing Up in Cities* project has demonstrated in different contexts in the developing and the developed world that young people are sensitive to the sanitation and cleanliness of their surroundings. It is not a surprise that young people in Regent Park do not appreciate garbage, litter and general lack of upkeep of their neighbourhood. The proximity of garbage dumpsters to walkways and their overflowing state as well as the litter and general maintenance was offensive to young people. They interpreted this, as with the lack of maintenance on their housing, as a demonstration that TCHC did not care about the residents of Regent Park.

Young people make use of marginal spaces (Ward, 1990), or what Andrews (1981) calls SLOAP: spaces left over after planning. These left over spaces are usually the largest part of adult recollections of favourite play space. Formal playgrounds usually do not figure prominently in these memories. It is usually the spaces “forgotten by planners” that are remembered the most (Hart, 2002). This demonstrates both the lack of integration of young people into planning as well as the

formal spaces for young people not meeting their needs and expectations. This directly relates the location of dumpsters, how frequently these dumpsters are emptied and neighbourhood maintenance to young people and how they evaluate public space. This finding from this study in Regent Park demonstrates how the practical reasons behind sanitation services may not be so practical from the perspective of young people. It also shows how inaction and lack of coordination in municipal departments filters down to young people and affects their public spaces. C2 admitted that there is not enough effort in managing responsibilities for Regent Park:

Right now, even between the TCHC, the City and the Transportation Department and Parks and Rec. [Recreation] it is not well understood who has responsibility to maintain what. And so usually people just don't bother because it's easier to not maintain something than to maintain it. But that isn't good for the quality of life of the people who live there.

This is a clear statement to planners who are unsure that their field includes direct consideration of young people (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005).

Young people are very effective when it comes to providing insights into environmental planning (Hart, 1997; Chawla, 2002; Chawla and Malone, 2003). These issues are very pertinent to their daily experiences, so they have relevant perspectives and ideas that adults may not have considered (Hart, 1997; Chawla, 2002). Young people are the principle users of outdoor public spaces and are the most influenced by their design and maintenance (Cooper Marcus and Sarkissian, 1986). Involving young people is also a good foundation of working towards creating neighbourhood plans that will last. Their participation not only represents a more holistic approach but also gives young people an idea about their responsibilities towards the environment (Hart, 1997; Bartlett, 2002; Chawla, 2002).

6.7 Attitudes towards neighbourhood change

Participants thought about other elements of public space that may change as a result of revitalization.

C4 commented on Regent Park's youth and their fear of change.

The one thing I've noticed when I've been out there and seen the work of the students at Lord Dufferin and Nelson Mandela [elementary schools] is that kids don't like change. And this surprised me. ...They're afraid of losing their friends, they're afraid of going to another school, they're afraid of all kinds of things.

In addition to worries about losing their friends and family as a result of the relocation process, they were also anxious about the addition of new, private residents into their community. Many were afraid that the priorities of the neighbourhood would shift towards these new residents.

6.7.1 Family and friends

The social elements of Regent Park's public space are just as important and in many ways complement the physical elements. This research serves to underline that approaches towards understanding public space also need to incorporate social processes (Lefebvre, 1991; Malone and Hasluck, 2002; Morrow, 2003; Conticini, 2005). The sheer number of photographs of family and friends demonstrates how important people are to the youths' understanding and appreciation of public space. Other work that has made use of photography with young people in order to access their ideas about their neighbourhood or the environment has placed an emphasis on the physical. Dodman (2003) used photography to investigate how young people evaluated the urban and rural landscape. In Morrow's (2003) work with young people to determine their values on neighbourhood space, she specifically directed participants to take photographs of neighbourhood objects, but the social environment still found its way into her study. People ultimately ended up representing a large part of the photographs. Tunstall, Tapsell and House (2004) and Breitbart (1995) found that posing with friends was an important part of the process of documenting elements that young people liked and disliked about their surroundings.

The importance of people in public spaces may be a function of the age of the participants. Public spaces provide an important arena for hanging out (Corrigan, 1979; Skelton, 2000; Matthews, 2003), and hanging out requires companions. Through adult eyes, hanging out looks like doing nothing and can be interpreted as threatening and as idleness on its way to trouble, but it is in fact doing something (Corrigan, 1979; Malone, 2002, Lees, 2003). Given the time and space, young people hanging out transfers and develops peer culture (Hart, 2002) and is needed for learning about social identities (Bartlett et al., 1999; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000; Hart, 2002). However, those their own age were not the only significant people for public space. Family members, younger children for whom they babysat and neighbours were cited as examples of important people that made Regent Park home and contributed to the positive community culture. However, it was not just residents that were important people. Youth workers were also photographed and considered trustworthy, understanding, and community leaders. For youth workers, young people made an exception to their distance to others from outside of their neighbourhood and they were willing to suspend their beliefs about who is a rich person and how they behave.

6.7.2 Friendships and relocation

Relocation is part of the revitalization process. Because friends are such a large part of what the Regent Park young people appreciated about public space, they linked the disruption in friendships to public space. Moving is a stressful event for young people (Pettit, 2004). It is a life event that they usually have very little control over, but affects large parts of their lives. Moving is connected to lower achievements at school and breakdowns in relationships with parents and other adults (Pettit, 2004). These disruptions are important to pay attention to, despite the belief of some adults interviewed that young people can get used to anything, and that the young people in Regent Park are particularly resilient. For teenagers, moving is very significant because this age group is often heavily invested in their friendships (Pettit, 2004). At the early stage in the redevelopment when this

research was conducted, these participants were anxious about breakdowns in their friendships and peer groups. Not knowing when or where they would have to move only exacerbated their worry about losing their friends. This points to the need to continually offer information and updates on the progress of the revitalization plan. These need to not only be geared to the heads of households, but to young people as well. By involving young people in the information process they may feel that moving is not something that is an unknown future event that will happen to them.

Despite their agitation about losing friends, some were optimistic about making new friends. As long as people were nice to them, they were happy to welcome them into the neighbourhood. Others had reservations that relate to their attitudes towards the neighbourhoods and people that are beyond the boundaries of Regent Park. They did not believe that their community would survive the activities and values brought in by new residents. They predicted conflicts.

In the US and the UK, it is found that there is not often a great deal of interaction between different socio-economic groups (Cole and Goodchild, 2001; Hoatson and Grace, 2002; Popkin et al., 2004). Not only does this challenge the notion of community building through proximity, but it also does not help facilitate bridging the gaps between community values towards public space. There is noted conflict between public and private housing residents on how public space is used, managed and maintained (Pader and Breitbart, 1993; Hoatson and Grace, 2002).

6.7.3 Neighbourhood culture

Family and friends are a contributing factor to the culture of Regent Park. The preference of staying within the neighbourhood boundaries is partly due to their knowledge of community culture. This parallels work that shows how young people differentiate themselves from the world of adult culture (Aitken, 2001; Lees, 2003) and the spatial elements of local culture. Dress and style can vary across a city and is used as an identifier (Bauder, 2001). This neighbourhood culture cultivated

neighbourhood knowledge. In Regent Park, they felt safer because they knew short cuts through the neighbourhood, had allies in friends and family and knew who and where to avoid. Public housing residents in Gotham and Brumley's (2002) study had well-developed knowledge of safe and dangerous areas and people in their neighbourhood. Gotham and Brumley developed the terms 'hot zones' to describe these unsafe sites. Young people, starting from a very young age develop knowledge of their local area that is associated with purpose and how they and other use the space (Hart, 1979; Cahill, 2000). This knowledge is usually accompanied by developing names and associating events with specific spaces (Hart, 1979). In Regent Park, young people have done this as well. The Boardwalk and Stinky's Park are examples of this. Other names, like 'hooker alley', are more specific about the negative connotation of the space and their knowledge of what takes place there. Other spaces, even though they may not have a name, are invested with their knowledge of Regent Park, such as the gated walkway beside the community centre that was the site of a shooting, or the benches typically occupied by a certain gang.

Their neighbourhood knowledge shaped where to go and how to get there and how to behave en route. How people dressed and carried themselves gave cues of who lived and belonged in Regent and who did not. They took pride in knowing how to navigate the spaces and people of Regent Park. For some, the revitalization meant that people and places, the good and the bad, would no longer be easily identified. They worry over their access to public space, with only being permitted in "the publics". They are concerned about conflicts about public space uses. They are already anticipating that their local culture and knowledge of it would become irrelevant in the new neighbourhood.

6.7.4 Programmed recreation and leisure spaces

Young people are not projected to be the dominant demographic in the revitalized Regent Park. This will not only change the dynamic within the neighbourhood, but the expectations and uses of public space.

Youth will probably be, I don't want to call them a less important stakeholder, but they will be a smaller group in proportion to the rest of the population probably 15 years from now. We're anticipating that the non-TCHC residents will not have that many kids. Which means parks, I shouldn't just say parks, but that means there are going to be challenges bringing all the stakeholders together and the fact that some might not have the same skills to voice their interests as other groups (C2).

This deserves the attention of planners for equity and developing community relationships.

In the interests of equity, the needs of young people should not be lost in the trend to direct attention and resources to older populations (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Freeman and Riordan, 2002). Some of these public spaces, like school yards, youth clubs and the community centre are neighbourhood institutions that have long catered to young people. The transition between public space in a public housing development to public space in a mixed neighbourhood can be difficult, and one of the key problems is how these spaces are used by young people (Schnee, 1998; Hoatson and Grace, 2002). Planners can take a proactive role and negotiate the roles, uses and expectations of public space of new and continuing residents.

Young people in Regent Park did indicate how important the walkways are to them. However, young people still did appreciate the public spaces traditionally considered appropriate spaces for young people. These spaces were important for play, being with friends, as well as keeping them busy so they stay out of trouble. Some of these spaces were for youth organised, impromptu gatherings and sports, such as basketball courts, fields, and playgrounds, but others provide more structured activities as well as a neighbourhood presence. Youth clubs and the people that worked at these spaces were photographed and presented as 'fun' as well as safe places and people. School yards were another important public space for hanging out and playing sports. Even the Regent Park community centre at Sackville Green, which was apparently not heavily used by the participants, was still considered important as it represented an option of a place to go.

The biggest criticism was that these spaces did not offer enough hours of operation, were not used to their full potential, or poorly maintained. The lack of maintenance sometimes created wasted space, such as broken basketball standards in North Regent or closed ice rinks and garbage-filled splash pads. Once these spaces became unusable, they morphed into undesirable public spaces and sometimes became the hangout for 'creepy people' or 'the crazies'.

6.8 The different positions of adults in public space: 'creepies' and 'crazies' versus the 'richy rich'

The literature presents young people as navigating an urban landscape that is designed and catered to adults and that young people must manoeuvre their way through this space (Breitbart, 1995; Matthews, 2003; Thomas, 2005). This casts young people as transgressors into the adult world (Valentine, 1996b; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). Young people involved in this study did not always follow this. How they positioned themselves and their access to public space changed depending on the group of adults in question. They placed themselves very differently when discussing certain disliked people, like drug dealers, gangs, 'wanna be gang bangers' and prostitutes, that are associated with criminal, violent and socially unacceptable behaviour. From their perspective, these adults encroach on their use of public space and are illegitimate users of public space.

They employ different strategies with these undesirable people, all of which have spatial consequences for their use of public space. Creepy and crazy people are one of the reasons to avoid venturing past the boundaries of Regent Park. According to these participants, you are more likely to run into trouble on the outside of Regent than if you stayed inside. The other common tactic was to either avoid the spaces where these adults would congregate, like the closed ice rinks and splash pads, or to go another way when you could see them coming in your direction. The multiple walkways give the opportunity for young people to use all three of these approaches.

Part of understanding the social meaning of public space for the participants was their understanding their place within the current Regent Park and the immediately surrounding neighbourhoods. For them, socio-economic status changes access and uses of public space. From their perspective, money is related to power and regulation over space. This echoes the sentiments of those who write about the visions of the dominant class being the ones that have the ability to shape the urban landscape (Lefebvre, 1991; Arthurson, 2001; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004). This has indeed been a concern in other neighbourhoods that have been revitalized through what Neil Smith (1996) deems government led gentrification. New residents with different values and the power to exert them over space slowly displace the local meanings and uses of original residents (Blomley, 2004; Freeman, 2006). The concerns of Regent Park's young people follow those of the critics of the demolition and social mix solution to public housing. The assumption that these measures will create community is countered with evaluations that show that original residents often lose established support networks and often do not benefit from the physical neighbourhood upgrades (Smith, 1999; Popkin et al., 2004; Pomeroy, 2006).

The wariness, and sometimes outward bitterness, expressed towards the idea of social mix is a combination of factors based on wealth and age. Their reservations are three-fold: 1) because they are public housing residents, their activities in public spaces will be curtailed because new, wealthier adults will not want to see them around, 2) they will have fewer places to go because they will not be welcome in the private and semi-private parks and walkways and 3) social mix will not be successful addressing the social issues facing Regent Park and the drug dealing and prostitution continues, pushing out decent new residents and attracting less desirable ones, leaving Regent Park with even fewer 'good' people. Unlike their position on deviant adults as transgressors in public space, these adults were approached as public space's controllers and shapers. When discussing these new

residents, they would place themselves in a position that is in line with the literature that identifies young people as unwelcome and restricted users of public space.

6.9 Discrepancies in narratives

There are discrepancies between the photographs, collages and the explanations and discussions about what the participants liked and disliked about Regent Park's public spaces and how they would like to see them change or stay the same. On the surface, this may appear as young people changing their minds or that they are not knowledgeable or inconsistent data. However, acknowledgement of these discrepancies is not only an element of qualitative research, but an opportunity to accept that how these young people value public space is contextual and subjective and that spaces and people do not have single, unique identities (Reay and Lucey, 2000; Massey, 2005; Thomas, 2005). Thomas (2005) found that inconsistencies in the narratives of young girls were the most revealing aspect of how they understood their place and roles in a consumerist society. She asserts that all of us have multiple understandings of who we are and how we relate to the world. This is also true for public space. Public spaces can be interpreted in many different ways at the same time. The same space can be "simultaneously safe and confining, liberating and dangerous" (Reay and Lucey, 2000: 415).

This is an important factor to keep in mind when considering how certain public space features are valued in Regent Park. Young people in public housing neighbourhoods are sensitive to the negative portrayal of their neighbourhood and how they rationalize this with the alternate, locally understood positive aspects of their neighbourhood (Reay and Lucey, 2000; Malone and Hasluck, 2002). The paradox of Regent Park is readily recognizable. It is described on one hand as a vibrant community and a home to its residents and on the other as a scene of violent crime and in need of demolition (Regent Park Collaborative Team, 2002). Jessica and Maggie related stories about how some people were afraid to come to their homes because they lived in Regent Park. They would

laugh and say that it really isn't that bad. But at the same time, they each had had personal experiences with violence. Their seeming contradictions are an extension of the reality of Regent Park. The Boardwalk is considered the quintessential element of Regent Park's public space, but it is also associated with gangs and violence. The housing is at once considered ugly but also represents home and community that may be lost in the new physical environment. Recreation spots and community beautification efforts are appreciated and valued, but are often not sufficiently maintained. New, future residents are regarded with hope as well as resentment. These are not contradictions; each presents a partial reality of public space. It would be short-sighted and incorrect to focus on only the positive or negative aspect of public space without seeing how it connects to the other. Each presents a segmented view on its own, but together they represent a complex, situated picture of public space.

This study demonstrates that the measures to improve the negative elements need to take into consideration what is considered positive at the risk of losing what is appreciated and valued about the different components of public space. This is especially pertinent to plans that offer physical solutions to broader social problems. For the young people involved in this research, the changes to the physical layout of the neighbourhood will take away much of what they socially appreciate about Regent Park.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the key points that emerged from the findings of this study. This included young people's broad definition of public space and what this means for planners when working with young people. The physical and social overlap of the importance of public space is another important element of public space for young people. The revitalization plan for Regent Park does not match with how young people define public space and does not address what they believe are important,

positive public space elements. In many ways, they contradict the popular notions of public housing revitalization solutions.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Reflections and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a summary of my reflections on this research experience. I consider the success of the various methods I used, the outcomes of my approach towards recruiting participants as well as girls versus boys. Following these reflections, I provide recommendations that are derived from my experiences and findings for planners seeking to involve young people.

The foundation for my study was my interest in how young people understand neighbourhood public space and what I perceived was a population not fully considered in the Regent Park Revitalization Plan. Regent Park represented an appropriate location of this research because it is undergoing extensive change. It is also being used as an example for future public housing revitalization in Toronto and is based upon the current trends in public housing revitalization, including neo-traditional design and social mix. This study also makes a contribution as a Canadian example of planning and young people, which is important as Canadian planning does not often recognize young people in its day-to-day activities (Bridgman, 2004a). I also worked towards developing a research design that would facilitate meaningful participation for young people and a process in which their participation was not forced and where they felt comfortable to express their ideas.

7.2 Reflections

Part of the research process involves reflecting on what worked and what did not in order for future researchers to use and build on the most appropriate techniques and knowledge. Self-reflexivity is especially important in the field of youth participation (Cahill, 2007). Umemoto (2001) feels that one of the challenges that researchers must face in order to undertake participatory research is the ability

to truly appreciate ‘walking in another’s shoes’. This requires not only sensitivity but the time and the recognition that reflection is an important part of the research process. Working with young people often requires the research process to be an iterative one (Sime, 2008). This requires using the tools of qualitative researchers, like personal notes recounting field experiences and active listening (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In this way, the iterative research process can parallel what Schön (1984) calls learning to adjust, or reflecting-in-action. Importantly, self-reflexivity is not something that is only possible for planning academics, but for practitioners as well (Schön, 1984). One of my objectives was to adapt youth-friendly methods to a planning context. This included using a recruitment process that did not rely on schools. In the end, more girls participated than boys. I consider these elements in the following sections.

7.2.1 Photography and activity sessions

The literature emphasizes activity-based, participatory methods when working with young people. In recent years, photography has emerged as a useful tool to gain the perspectives of youth on their environments. Using more youth-appropriate methods helps the accuracy of data generation in two ways. These methods are more likely to reveal more accurate findings as young people are more likely to share their viewpoints than in adult-oriented surveys and interviews. Youth engagement methods that incorporate photography are considered particularly useful to help redistribute the power between an adult researcher and young participants. For this study, I was particularly aware of the power differentials between myself and young participants. I believe the activity sessions and photography assisted in balancing this out. Participants had the freedom to identify what they felt are important public spaces in their neighbourhood on the walking tour and in their photographs. They were further able to bring forward what they believed to be the most important parts of public space in their art.

One of the drawbacks of photography is that it is subjective and its meaning can change depending on its audience (Adelman, 2001; Rose, 2001). Photographs cannot capture the other senses and emphasizes the visual (Tunstall, Tapsell and House, 2004). I invested a great deal of time to organize the walking tours, including reminding and locating participants and accompanying the groups on their neighbourhood tours. I believe that this was time well spent. It gave me much more of an appreciation and understanding of what the photographs represented, including the feelings and other senses that accompanied the scenario in which the photograph was taken. Examples include Farah's photograph of a city worker picking up litter was actually a statement of lack of maintenance and garbage, photos of smelly garbage dumpsters, and participants' reactions while taking photographs of police and the former site of Metro Police Department 51 division.

7.2.2 Access to young people: recruiting through youth groups rather than schools

Most youth studies make use of schools for their recruitment efforts. The fact that this is where young people are consistently found in large numbers is the primary and most obvious reason for this. Education and school-based studies are key areas of research focused on young people (Sunaina and Soep, 2004). At the outset of this study, I believed that while recruiting through schools and school programmes may have provided access to a greater number of participants, it would not have meshed with my intentions of creating a youth-oriented research design. Participation should be an opt-in, not an opt-out, process, raising ethical issues about how much participation in the school setting is a result of captive participants feeling pressure to please their teacher (Hart, 1997; Flewitt, 2005). The formal classroom setting may also influence participants' responses resulting in less accurate data (Hart, 1997). Both of these attributes of school-based research conflict with the notion of using youth-oriented methods in an effort to balance the power between adult researcher and young participant.

I believe that seeking an alternative venue to schools for recruitment was a useful way to develop relationships with young people that would not have occurred in a school setting. The school setting is formal and carries with it implied and explicit power dynamics between young people and adults (Hart, 1997; Flewitt, 2005). This provides a challenge when trying to balance the power between adult researcher and young participant. The language and the experiences participants shared may not have taken place in the classroom. Some of my participants experienced regular suspensions, could not attend school because of peace bond restrictions, or attended school irregularly. Through my neighbourhood-based recruitment process I was able to access young people who would not be described as community leaders, those young people who are most likely to participate and articulate their opinions. However, there are some changes that I would make if I were to do this study again.

Locating and recruiting participants was a large part of the time I invested in this study. Participants seemed to like me and identified this as a key element of why they were willing to share very personal experiences and insights, and many seemed genuinely interested in this project and made sure that their opinions were accurately recorded. Nevertheless, the sample size is small. I think that this was the trade-off of not recruiting through schools. But my setting off into Regent Park on my own with the friendly assistance of youth workers did not adequately address the challenges of participation in Regent Park. The 'culture of non-participation' label is frequently applied to neighbourhoods like Regent Park, but my interviews and conversations with those who work in the neighbourhood give more insight. RP2 stated that young people in Regent Park grow up in a culture of immediacy that is crisis oriented. The implication of this is that young people do not value or plan for the future, whether that is the future of next year, next month, next week, or tomorrow. Another community worker, RP3, frequently expressed frustration of a problem that he believed agencies themselves had helped create. There is such a desire to reach out to youth in the

community that young people are given multiple chances to participate in a project. If young people do not show up at an assigned time and place, they are always afforded other chances to get involved. As a result, he believed that many Regent Park youth do not feel accountable to fulfill any commitments they make to participate.

In retrospect, there are ways that I could have worked within these challenges of immediacy and unpredictability. Each participant needed their parent/guardian's consent to participate. This took time and planning. Incorporating more participant observation would have helped mitigate this obstacle. Community groups and agencies obtain permission forms for participation in youth groups. By volunteering with or partnering with a local community group or agency, I might not have needed to repeat the parental consent form process and would have only needed to secure the assent of the young participants.

7.2.3 Involving girls in research and planning initiatives

On my initial visits to Regent Park, community workers told me that girls are more of a challenge to reach than boys and that the youth story of Regent Park is very much a boy-oriented story. This may be for a number of reasons. There are many diverse cultures in Regent Park and this could be a reflection of different cultural views on participation in general and female participation in particular. Immigrants from authoritarian countries may have had different experiences with public participation. Government corruption and fear of reprisals may make them apprehensive about voicing their opinions. In some cultures, girls are seen as belonging within the private realm of the home and therefore should refrain from public consultations. The high number of single-parent, large families also puts an emphasis on older children needing to care for their younger siblings. Finally, boys are usually seen as a larger part of the visible problems, such as crime, vandalism and gangs, and therefore receive more attention. Projects are more likely to be oriented towards male participants.

Regent Park is not unique for having a focus on boys. This is something that is generally found across urban neighbourhoods. For many years, boys have received much of the attention in terms of programming and study. This is because boys are thought of to be troublemakers, so there are more preventative programmes for them (Hart, 1997). This has also come through in how boys have dominated the research interests in youth cultures and their use of urban space. In recent years, researchers have recognized that there is a gap in how the urban environment is understood from a girl's perspective. My study involved boys, but not enough to contrast male and female points of view, and unlike the works of Katz (1993), Skelton (2000) and Thomas (2005) that sought out a girl-only perspective. The larger proportion of girls was not a goal of mine but an unintended outcome. But the fact that more girls participated in a neighbourhood noted for its lack of girls' involvement deserves some reflection, especially with the increased efforts to develop research that sheds light on girls' perspectives and experiences.

There are two areas that may have influenced the higher proportion of girls. The methods may have been more attractive to girls. Hart (1997) recounts the gender differences in the learning styles between girls and boys in the classroom. Girls would much rather make use of conversation and develop group consensus around ideas whereas boys are more likely to learn through argument and prefer individual activities. The group work, creative expression and telling their stories may have made the girl participants in this study feel that their participation was worthwhile. The freedom to work their own ideas into the project may have been more appealing to girls than boys. I as a researcher may have had an influence. I put thought into how I presented myself when I was in Regent Park. I have learned the importance of this from my past experiences working with young people from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. I have worked and volunteered with young people in various capacities. I have taught drama and directed children's plays and worked as a remedial and English as a Second Language instructor. I have also volunteered in different

capacities. In the summer of 1997, I volunteered on a farm outside of Hilo, Hawai'i that provides social services that frequently target indigenous young people in the area, including conflict mediation, environmental education, and food bank facilities. I took part as a volunteer with the Region of Waterloo Public Health Department's Teen Esteem programme where women visit elementary schools to talk to grade 7 and 8 girls about issues such as body image, goal setting, and relationships. My relationships with younger members of my family and friends' teenage children have kept me familiar with fashion, music and other elements of popular culture. I was aware of my language and dress and made an effort to appear at least somewhat 'cool'. For instance, I would never wear my comfortable old running shoes that I would wear for my days of walking to and around my university campus for a day in Regent Park. They were simply too old and out of date. These efforts may have resonated more with girls than boys.

Being a community outsider put a number of layers of distance between me and the participants, including socio-economic status and in some cases ethnicity. The fact that they were much younger than me added another layer. I did take into account my appearance in order to play up the fact that I can look a little younger than I actually am. This helped lessen the distance somewhat, and may have been that much more effective with girls. I am female, and having once been a teenage girl, I am obviously more versed in what it means to be a girl than a boy. The combination of me being female and somewhat youthful lessened the distance between me and girl participants than the distance between them and a much older, male researcher.

This has some implications for future research that wishes to either develop a balanced gender view in communities where girls are difficult to engage or seeks a girl-only perspective. As with all research that involves face-to-face contact, the skills of the researcher are important. When working with young people, researchers may need to take extra care to blend in sufficiently into the context. But is also important to consider other aspects of a researcher that may make participants

more comfortable to give of their time and share their experiences. These are the elements that are beyond the control of the researcher, like their sex and age.

7.3 Working towards the incorporation of young people's perceptions of public space into urban planning: study recommendations

Young people have historically been viewed as less than adult (Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

Appropriate spaces for young people have traditionally and culturally been defined as separate and distinct from the rest of the urban, adult landscape (Valentine, 1996a; Malone, 2002; Nieuwenhuys, 2003). This has created challenges for young people to be included as a relevant population for planners to consult and consider.

Planners have typically addressed young people indirectly through facility design, safety issues and location and access to community services (Freeman and Aitken-Rose, 2005). But there are good reasons for planners to go further and give direct consideration to young people in the planning process. These go beyond the rights of young people to participate in planning as outlined by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child and the responsibility public bodies have to all citizens, regardless of age (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1999).

Planners are increasingly called upon to hone their skills in working with and giving credence to multiple diversities (Umemoto, 2001; Rahder and Milgrom, 2004; Watson, 2006). This recognition of diverse publics results in young people deserving attention as part of this movement. Not only is this a difficult proposition from a practical perspective as planners seldom have received this sort of training (Freeman, Henderson and Kettle, 1999; Umemoto, 2001; Frank, 2006), but it also means shifting already established social values and physical landscapes. The often cited desirable objectives of planning, like sense of place and successful urban neighbourhoods, have long been

based upon adult objectives, but have served young people as well. Recent studies have illustrated how bringing the perspectives of young people to the fore aids urban planning for reasons related to civic capacity building and enduring urban plans.

Urban propinquity still does matter, especially to those that are tied to their local neighbourhoods by age and disadvantage (Graham and Healey, 1999; Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2004) and planning has not always done the best job in connecting to the everyday life of lived spaces (Madanipour, 1996; Umemoto, 2001; Carp, 2004). Seeking the opinions of young people helps planners keep apprised of the local level by a group that is strongly connected to their local neighbourhood. Reaching out for the perspectives of young people is still relatively new. Hart (1992; 1997) demonstrates how young people have creative insights into planning issues when asked in an appropriate and meaningful manner.

This study shows how creative and different young people's ideas are towards public space and that these do not always overlap with mainstream planning. Their views towards neighbourhood public spaces do not include through streets and they suggest more social than physical solutions to their neighbourhood's problems. The physical solutions they do suggest are much less extensive than what is proposed by revitalization. Their perspective on public space is much broader than the conventional. For them, the social and aesthetic elements of public spaces are just as important as the physical organization of space. These young people are not saying that nothing should be done to improve their neighbourhood, or that there are not some very serious problems, but they would likely place an emphasis on different areas and approach revitalization another way. These viewpoints were not expressed through typical public engagement methods used by planners. The research process also meant deviating from measures that researchers often put in place to ensure the required distance needed for academic objectivity. However, these young people demonstrated through their

photographs and collages that they are knowledgeable, have opinions, and are articulate given the opportunity to express themselves.

The research process is an important part of how data was generated. This project involved a number of actors and required flexible, qualitative data collection techniques. This combination of fieldwork experiences and empirical contributions leads to three observations that planners can apply to situations that involve working with young people, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas.

7.3.1 Establish a community network

Young people are not likely to know urban planners and there is a high chance that planners they encounter are not from the neighbourhood. It is already a noted challenge to work with diverse groups. Establishing relationships with others already in the community not only provides grounding in the context of the neighbourhood, but also opens up opportunities to meet and work with young people as well as adding to the credibility and trustworthiness of the planner for young people.

Establishing this network takes time and effort. Shaffir (1991) describes this as a continuing process that is far from straightforward and involves negotiation and renegotiation.

It is likely not practical to expect a practicing planner to devote the time I needed to invest in this study. This makes establishing a community network for planners that much more important. This type of study would be much more feasible if done with the cooperation of community groups. Having an existing network to draw upon would have saved time establishing the project and recruiting young participants.

7.3.2 Involve young people from the outset

None of the key informants knew of avenues for young people, other than those in their 20s, to participate in decisions affecting Regent Park. One of the adults interviewed admitted that they had done a poor job involving young people in the planning of the Regent Park revitalization process and

that they are working on rectifying the situation. Adding in the experiences and viewpoints of young people later in the process means that young people are part of the process in a segmented fashion. It fuels suspicion, misinformation, and anxiety and does not address and feelings of resentment about change. Rather than feeling like they are part of the process, they are left with the impression that change is simply happening to them. Several young people were frustrated by this. Maggie was incredulous about planners and other adults from outside of Regent Park coming to talk to them about the revitalization plan. “They come and ask us what we want. They tell us they want us to stay out of trouble and in school and all that. And then what do they ever do that shows that they listen?”

Involving young people from the beginning will help to facilitate building relationships and maintaining their confidence that their voices are valuable as well as increasing their skill sets. If planners actually listen to young people, this will also draw attention to particular areas where there are potential disconnects between adults and young people. Noise and conflicting uses of public space between adults and young people are identified by Pader and Breitbart (1993) and Schnee (1998) as key issues in revitalized public housing neighbourhoods. Young participants in this study also anticipated these issues. Involving them throughout the process may help to avoid these conflicts later.

Involving young people from the outset should not be only about avoiding disputes. It is a way to identify areas that young people are passionate about and where they could very easily be integrated into planning projects, such as community gardens and murals. C4 believed that gardens present an avenue for the involvement of young people in the revitalization process. She referred to a corner of Regent Park where a garden is being put in and involving young people in the process.

We’re going to bring in kids from the K Club, youth groups and camps to put things in place. To help do the planting, help dig up whatever and be part of the process of revitalizing this little part.

Considering young people in this study also identified maintaining these gardens as very important, there could also be consideration for the involvement of young people in the ongoing maintenance.

Neighbourhood art, either through formal, organized murals or graffiti, was identified as very important aspects of public space. The current themes suggested for neighbourhood art in the new Regent Park do not coincide with any of the themes of the existing murals. Considering the value that young people place on the murals, this is something that could be revisited. The style and messages of the graffiti currently in Regent Park may be an element that is worthwhile being worked into the suggested art themes for the revitalized neighbourhood. Community art is one way to show the history of a neighbourhood and the meanings residents attached to the area before it was built up or redeveloped (Hayden, 1997; Radher and Milgrom, 2004). Involving young people in art is a way to give them some say in their neighbourhood public spaces and to show that their memories have not been erased from the neighbourhood.

7.3.3 Expand communication with other departments and agencies

The work of planners has traditionally addressed young people indirectly. This can become more direct when working with other departments and agencies that routinely provide for young people, such as boards of education, parks and recreation, as well as not-for-profit groups. This not only ensures that there is not overlap of initiatives, but also that there is an understanding of how planning decisions affect these programmes. Increasing this communication will work towards accomplishing two things: expanding planners' knowledge of local neighbourhood activities and developments and developing planners' skills for working with young people. In large-scale, long-term projects, it may be necessary to consider an on-site office that coordinates planning initiatives and gives residents a place to go for information and with their questions. This extends the purpose of community contact and coordination of services beyond consultation. Given the broad definition that young people have

of public space, if this office operated to create a welcoming environment for young residents, it could eventually be considered as one of their public spaces.

With these observations in mind, planners can consider three elements when working towards involving young people: rethink the position of collaboration and equity in the planning process; take into account engagement methods in the public participation process; and carefully consider the means of community entry.

7.3.4 Revisit planning's communicative and equity roles

One of the common debates in planning theory is the actual role of the planner in practice. Are we to provide expert advice and guidance, or are we to act as community facilitators and advocates? This particular study is another example of how the communicative role of the planner is an important aspect of the community engagement process, but that it is also needs to be accompanied with the recognition of social equity.

Working with young people fits into the areas of collaborative and communicative planning as both recognize the importance of involving diverse groups in the planning process. This is also understood as a long-term commitment that is to at least work towards creating a democratic planning process, not one where the most powerful have the most and final say (Forester, 1989; Margerum, 2002). Collaborative planning recognizes that knowledge and reasoning come in many forms and that all sources of knowledge are valuable (Healey, 1997). This approach to planning embraces diversity, including those that do not typically have access to the planning process. Young people do not have a political voice and so sometimes their voices can be lost in the clamour of others.

Equity and efficiency are often portrayed as at odds within planning. In order for planners to take into account equity, it is assumed that it must be at the expense of efficiency. Efficiency, because it is clearly definable and measured, is easily justified as why is worth pursuing (Forester,

1983). It is assumed to be a positivistic concept. Equity, in contrast, seems vague and subject to interpretation. However, efficiency “only has meaning when strong normative assumptions about the character of “free” market conditions are made (Forester, 1983: 3) making the argument that the values of one is in direct conflict with the other misleading. Taking a planning approach that works from mainly the standpoint of efficiency ignores issues of power and authority. Power plays an important role in determining what counts as knowledge and how it is interpreted (Flyvbjerg, 2003). Although equity and advocacy planning typically take place outside of planning departments (Freidmann, 1987; Metzger, 1996), those working within more mainstream planning offices still confront the issues of equity on a very regular basis (Forester, 1983; Brooks, 2002). For this reason, it is important for planners to consider the principles of equity and advocacy planning. It cannot be the equity planning of old that was built on a model of the planner as expert working on behalf of a client (Booher and Innes, 2002). Social equity needs to be approached as part of the current planning practices of today that embrace strategies for planning for multiple publics (Sandercock, 2004; Manzo and Perkins, 2006), where young people happen to be one of these multiple publics.

7.3.5 Rethink engagement methods

Planners are strategically situated to involve young people because they work in diverse institutions and have a responsibility for public engagement, which presumably extends to young people (Checkoway, Pothukuchi and Finn, 1995). However, as has been noted by several authors, including Breitbart (1995), Hart (1997), Freeman, Henderson and Kettle (1999) and Delgado (2006), participatory techniques used with young people need to differ from those used with adults. The written surveys and interviews typically employed with adults do not usually work as effectively as more visual and active engagement methods (Breitbart, 1995) as used in this study.

In addition to the types of methods used with young people, there also needs to be increased awareness of what constitutes young people’s participation. Many confuse educational exercises and

community service with participation (Checkoway, Pothukchi and Finn, 1995). There is also a difference between consultation, which is about seeking views, and participation, which involves young people in decision-making (Sime, 2008). While all forms of involvement can lead to valuable experiences for young people, participation in the guise of consultation and educational activities can generate disillusionment for young people (Sime, 2008). Participation is not just about doing a required legal step in the planning process. It is also about planners gaining valuable insights into how planning initiatives affect a local population. Participation is about the exchange of facts, ideas and values. Ideally, it will create an atmosphere for information to flow back and forth between the planners and participants and foster social learning (Friedmann, 1987; 1993). This approach to planning participation values the knowledge of young people rather than viewing it as partial or in a state of becoming because of their lack of experience of alternatives.

Technologies can also be further explored in order to effectively involve young people. The GPS unit that I carried on most of the walking tours ended up being an important part of the walking tour experience for the participants. My original intention for the GPS unit was to have a tangible documentation of where we went in and around the neighbourhood. I did not use it as a covert tracking device, but incorporated it into the walking tour experience. For these young people, who are very technologically savvy, this was a technology that they were interested in and lent a purpose to the tour. It was also a further way for them to indicate what they identified as important public spaces in and around Regent Park. Al-Kodmany (2000) and Elwood (2006a) discuss the transition that GIS technologies have made to incorporate non-Cartesian representations of space, including photographs, sketches and qualitative data. This gives room for individuals' and groups' experiences, perceptions and emotions that are not quantitative but are tied to particular spaces (Elwood, 2006b). Elwood (2006b) considers the use of GIS to complement qualitative studies 'qualified GIS'. This

presents another area that academics and professionals alike can apply methods that can be more inclusive of young people.

To encourage planners to consider how to appropriately involve young people, there needs to be a shift in the education and training of planners. Radher and Milgrom (2004) call for the introduction of cultural sensitivity training for students in the form of participant observation with unfamiliar cultural groups. They believe that this is needed for students to develop into effective planners. I feel that it is important to extend this to working with young people as well. Bridgman (2004b) has made efforts to incorporate this into the classroom through exploring how the Child-Friendly Cities initiative applies to current strategies in place in Canadian cities. However, this was done at the graduate level and in one particular class. It would be useful to incorporate this into the broader planning curriculum. The aging population has led to an emphasis on how to face challenges associated with accommodating the elderly. This makes it that much easier to overlook the needs of young people. However, planners' responsibility towards equity calls for a balance between all ages. It also provides an avenue to discuss and question planning theories that some hold as truths. The young people who took part in this study strongly value the neighbourhood design that is condemned for its flaws. This underlines the importance for planners to learn that theories are not universal.

To help with this shift in planning education to help planners recognize the importance of engaging young people as part of diversity and how to appropriately engage this group, the Canadian Institute of Planners can further develop their guide on working with young people. Currently, the guide is structured around grade levels and the school curriculum. This organization is useful, but it follows the approach that planning with young people is about educating them about the planning process, rather than how planners can go about valuing and making use of information they receive from young participants.

Some authors have noted the need to reassess the role of researchers and planners as distant, objective and detached. Beauregard (1998: 96) believes that it is “Only by opening oneself to communities and establishing trust can the planner understand what planning means to others.” Fine et al. (2000) cast doubt on the expectation and effectiveness of asking for others to reveal personal information and stories of themselves and to make themselves vulnerable while revealing little or nothing of ourselves and remaining invulnerable. Developing relationships with young people in Regent Park was not a one-way process. I needed to give of myself as well. I opened up about myself on different levels: why I had my specific research interests, my own personal background, as well as my own experiences growing up and at school. This was a necessary part of the research process not only to gain the trust of participants but also for them to share their own perspectives and stories.

The bureaucratic structure and the constraints of time and resources create challenges for planners to pursue more youth-friendly engagement methods (Frank, 2006). The use of more appropriate engagement methods may give access to more accurate findings and more meaningful participation, but it does require more time on the part of planners and this means more resources. Planners themselves are not decision-makers so even if they have the time, training and finances to be reflexive and adapt engagement practices, this may not mesh with political will. The initiatives that planners can undertake are decidedly dependent on the political environment (Brooks, 2002). As such this recommendation does not hold a lot of weight if it does not seem likely to be implemented, especially when it needs to be accompanied by a shift in social, political and professional views of young people’s engagement. For this reason, this recommendation needs to be considered with the following recommendation on agents of community access.

7.3.6 Agents of community access

Planners have a vested interest and responsibility in the views of young people, but face challenges in gaining their insights due to the time required to develop relationships and for appropriate engagement techniques. This means that planners can reconsider how they gain community access and how to expand the planning team that works with young people. The day-to-day activities of youth workers, youth clubs and other municipal departments and agencies provide an opportunity for planners to either use these opportunities for developing cooperative relationships or for the engagement process with young people.

People that already work with young people also fulfill an important function of support network. Working in neighbourhoods like Regent Park exposes people to a setting that is likely different to the one that they already know. There are consequences to this. I found it particularly painful to see young people who cannot read, are self-destructive or have little faith in themselves. By working with those who have connections within the neighbourhood, these young people can be directed to existing community resources. It is also good to be able to share dismay and frustration over these circumstances.

7.4 Conclusion

My reflections and recommendations are based on the study findings and my own observations from working with young participants in Regent Park. These are based on a research process that developed useful data as well as helping me gain a valuable research experience. Both the reflections and recommendations provide directions for those undertaking future research and planning with young people. I addressed my research questions through a multi-method approach. The study findings revealed that young people define public space in a broad fashion. This has practical as well as theoretical implications for planners. This study also demonstrates that young people have clear ideas about positive and negative elements of public space, and that these elements are not necessarily

mutually exclusive. The current revitalization plans emphasize clear demarcations between public and private space and the integration of public housing back into surrounding neighbourhoods. This does not mesh with the findings of this study. This research shows that young people are not always fully considered in public housing revitalization plans that draw on principles that are linked to environmental determinism and do not allow for differing ways that public space is valued.

Regent Park originally satisfied the visions of housing advocates by addressing the shortage of quality housing in post-war Toronto as well those who wanted to improve the physical and social landscape of the downtown. Even though good intentions may have played a role in the creation of Regent Park and other public housing neighbourhoods like it, modernist planning principles ignored the community networks and relied on changing the physical environment to address complex social problems. This study reveals that in some ways the current revitalization of Regent Park may be repeating history. The revitalization plan seeks to unify the larger community by physically re-integrating Regent Park with its surrounding neighbourhoods and using income mix as a way of socially transforming the neighbourhood. This has not left room for groups, like young people, that understand and value neighbourhood space in different ways than the universal norms that are being applied in the revitalization. As a result, planners need to reconsider points of community access and further develop their community networks in order reach and incorporate young people's points of view into neighbourhood plans. It also requires revisiting some of the theoretical debates in urban planning, including rethinking public engagement and planners' roles in equity and advocacy.

Appendix A
Collages











like



like

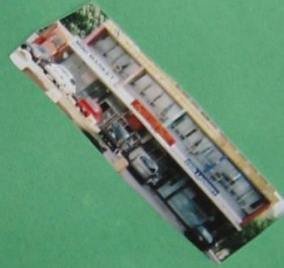


like

like

Don't like

Don't like











lack of respect garbage gangs
 lack of communication
 drugs prostitutes liars violence
 how you don't know if your going to be safe if your alone

the fact that there is a center for people to hang out at instead of on the streets.

I like that the don valley parkway is so close because I love nature

I like how the Salvation Army has squads for the which is safe!

do like!

don't like!

pollution

clouds

Trash!

D.V.P

Kids

Cars... fast cars...

there is alot of good things about Regent park. But there is alot of bad things about living here and really just Regent park in general. If we weighed out the bad and good the negative and positive about Regent park I would bet the negative would deffinatly out weigh the positive! Because I have lived in Regent park for about 4 years now at first it wasnt all that bad untill I started talking to people that lived here before me. I didnt know who they knew and I got involved in the wrong crowd of people and ended up paying for it later because of the person I trusted most. In the end I was jumped and almost lost everything. I would give anything to move out of Regent park!

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