



Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program



SNAP PROFILE

**Forging new partnerships for Multi-Unit Residential (MUR)
and Industrial Commercial and Institutional (ICI) renewal**



MUR AND ICI

Revitalization Challenges

There is a growing need to transform the legacy of aging apartment towers and ICI properties to achieve sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation goals and community resiliency. Toronto's Tower Renewal Program has identified that the Toronto area alone contains 2,000 postwar towers, the second largest concentration in North America. These towers house over one million residents, some of whom are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Furthermore, underutilized, forgotten spaces surrounding these buildings are underperforming in terms of their ecological and social services. Privately-owned public spaces, such as shopping malls and places of worship, are playing increasingly important roles in our social fabric.

Private ownership can pose an obstacle for government program delivery in MUR and ICI buildings, both in terms of the number of individual property owners and the traditional reluctance to invest public funds in for-profit businesses. Furthermore, many tower retrofits require the cooperation of both the building owner and the tenants, however the costs and benefits may not be equally apportioned and may result in disincentives for one or the other. Similarly, the business case for institutional or commercial property owners may be unclear, relative to the cost and hassle of taking action.

SNAP'S STRATEGIC SOLUTION

New partnerships and business models

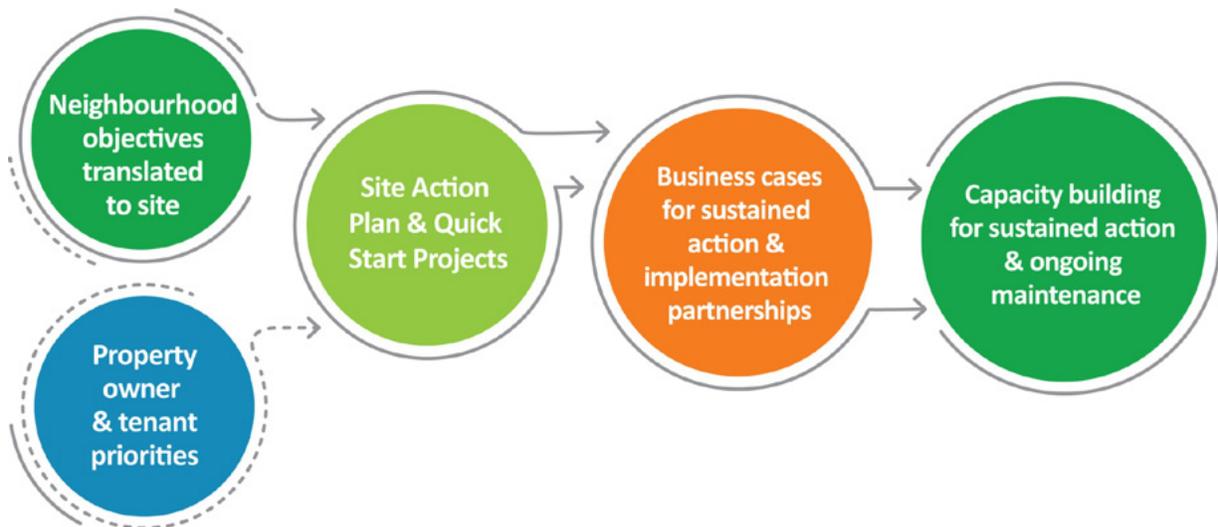
SNAP identifies and responds to owner and tenant interest to secure engagement and begin to develop a trusted working relationship aimed at delivering an initial project of interest. A key area of initial focus is on the revitalization of underutilized public spaces – these “privately-owned public spaces” often serve thousands of people in areas where public parkland is limited, and as such, are worthy of investment for their revitalization and generate multiple outcomes. Using a variety of new partnership and resourcing models, from crowd-sourcing to social enterprise to non-traditional grant seeking, SNAP helps to make the desired projects happen. Two strategies, in particular, have been instrumental in the success of SNAP projects. These include partnerships with philanthropies willing to invest in private lands and capacity building for local social enterprises and community groups so that they will feel ownership and ability to sustain the project after SNAP has gone.



San Romanoway Revitalization partners (L to R): Brian Denney, TRCA; Andrea Cohen Barrack, Ontario Trillium Foundation; Carmen Perez, Real Property Management Service; Phyllis Brown, Resident; Camilla Dalglish, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation.

Figure 1

SNAP MUR Renewal strategy



CASE EXAMPLES

Multi-Unit Residential

SAN ROMANOWAY TOWER REVIVAL

Black Creek SNAP, Toronto¹

Climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts are not limited to public infrastructure; achieving targets also requires commitment from, and action by, private landowners. This is particularly important in neighbourhoods where availability of public land is low. Collaborative approaches are needed to accelerate implementation.

Through neighbourhood-scale planning, the Black Creek SNAP identified strategic retrofits necessary to address a range of sustainability targets across public and private property. Market research provided insights into key drivers that enabled the SNAP to design projects that would provide a business case for private landowners and garner strong support within the community. One project involves the revitalization of privately owned public spaces at a multiunit residential property and shows how innovative partnerships can achieve multiple outcomes and benefits for landowners, tenants and the broader community.

Sited at a 1960s private, affordable high-rise complex housing 4,500 residents, this green infrastructure project is transforming three underutilized hectares of low permeability land into a vibrant community space with hundreds of trees, beautiful allotment gardens, Toronto's largest orchard, pollinator gardens, art installations, and shaded seating areas with rainwater harvesting. Through implementation partnerships with NGOs, landowners, and the City of Toronto, the space is furthermore being used as a springboard for green jobs and a social enterprise training ground. The tenants' interest in better access to fresh produce, as well as social enterprise and training opportunities, provided the inspiration for this project. A variety of environmental, local food and social programming grants were secured to support

implementation. Ongoing maintenance is led by the residents. Owners' initial fears with regard to liability, maintenance, and tenant support were successfully addressed in this pilot project, which highlights the business case for property owners to work with the public sector to achieve public policy objectives on private land, while also improving tenant retention, investing in their properties, and increasing property value. Collaborating to introduce green infrastructure into renewal projects has proven to be an all around win for the residents, the property owners, the city, and TRCA.

Table 1

SAN ROMANOWAY REVITALIZATION – BY THE NUMBERS

- ✓ 148 balcony gardens
- ✓ 8 residents hired and 200 trained in balcony gardening
- ✓ 426 native trees and shrubs planted
- ✓ 63 allotment gardens
- ✓ 24 fruit trees planted in urban orchard
- ✓ 19 residents trained in fruit tree care certification
- ✓ 1500 native, water efficient and pollinator plants
- ✓ 9 residents trained in horticulture certification
- ✓ 95 residents trained in urban agriculture
- ✓ 12 residents starting green social enterprise
- ✓ 146 active volunteers

¹ Reprinted and adapted with permission from Winkelmann, C. "In a SNAP. A Neighbourhood-Based Approach to Integrated Infrastructure Renewal. ReNew Canada. May/June 2016.



“I liked very much that we were encouraged to have a say and select whatever ideas or dreams that we thought would make a difference to us in the fulfillment of the San Romanoway Revival Project. This got us residents on board right from the project launch....For me, through this project we have become a thriving, transformed, enthusiastic and involved community – people of all ages and all walks of life working and living together side-by-side.”

– **Phyllis Brown, San Romanoway Resident**

“I am one of the graduates of the Tree Care Program for this community. The people that really benefit from this training are stay at home parents, low income workers, students and the whole community. My personal reason of signing up for the training was for enlightenment about what it takes to care for a healthy tree. I always felt bad when I look back and see that our community is suffering in terms of not able to afford to buy healthy food, and instead buy junk food...Many people wonder: How do you save money? It is by getting your fruits from your own backyard with no cost.”

– **Charity Fejokwu, San Romanoway resident.**

Our Partners:

Real Property Management Service, CAPREIT, Greenwin, City of Toronto, Metcalf Foundation, W. Garfield Weston Foundation, Garden Club of Toronto, FoodShare, Orchard People and resident champions.



Environmental awareness & Community pride through arts and culture



Skills training and fruit tree care

RUSSET HOMES CO-OPERATIVE DE-PAVE PARADISE

Burnhamthorpe SNAP, Mississauga

A great example of the removal of an underutilized asphalt basketball court and replacement with a garden and sitting amenity area. Partnership with EcoSource, a local not-for-profit environmental education group, who helped facilitate the project and engage residents, while TRCA/SNAP provided technical contributions of the landscape design and network connections during project construction.

Our Partners:

Ecosource, DePave Paradise and Russet Homes Co-operative



HARVEST HI-WAY

Burnhamthorpe SNAP, Mississauga

Delivering balcony gardening skills and community connections as an initial engagement strategy to connect with champion building owners and 40 tenants. Securing input and partnerships for the development of a comprehensive neighbourhood tower revitalization program.

Our Partners:

City of Mississauga and Sheridan Nurseries



ENERGY EFFICIENCY SOCIAL RESEARCH

Brantford project support

TRCA's Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP) installed Airsource Heat Pumps in four MUR units in partnership with a private property owner. SNAP provided important tenant and property management engagement and social research. Significant electricity reduction was recorded and lessons learned on behaviors and perceptions from residents involved were documented and shared.

Our Partners:

Sustainable Technology Evaluation Program (STEP), Cricket Energy, The Atmospheric Fund (TAF), The Bloom Centre for Sustainability and JAMA property management



Institutional/Commercial

GREEN PARKING LOTS

County Court Courthouse & Jane/Finch Mall

In partnership with TRCA's Partners in Project Green Eco-business Program (PPG) and University of Toronto Landscape Design students, SNAP secured innovative designs that helped institutional properties and commercial businesses to incorporate greening initiatives.



BRAMPTON GOLF CLUB

Golf Course Irrigation Water Supply and Municipal SWM Pond Retrofit

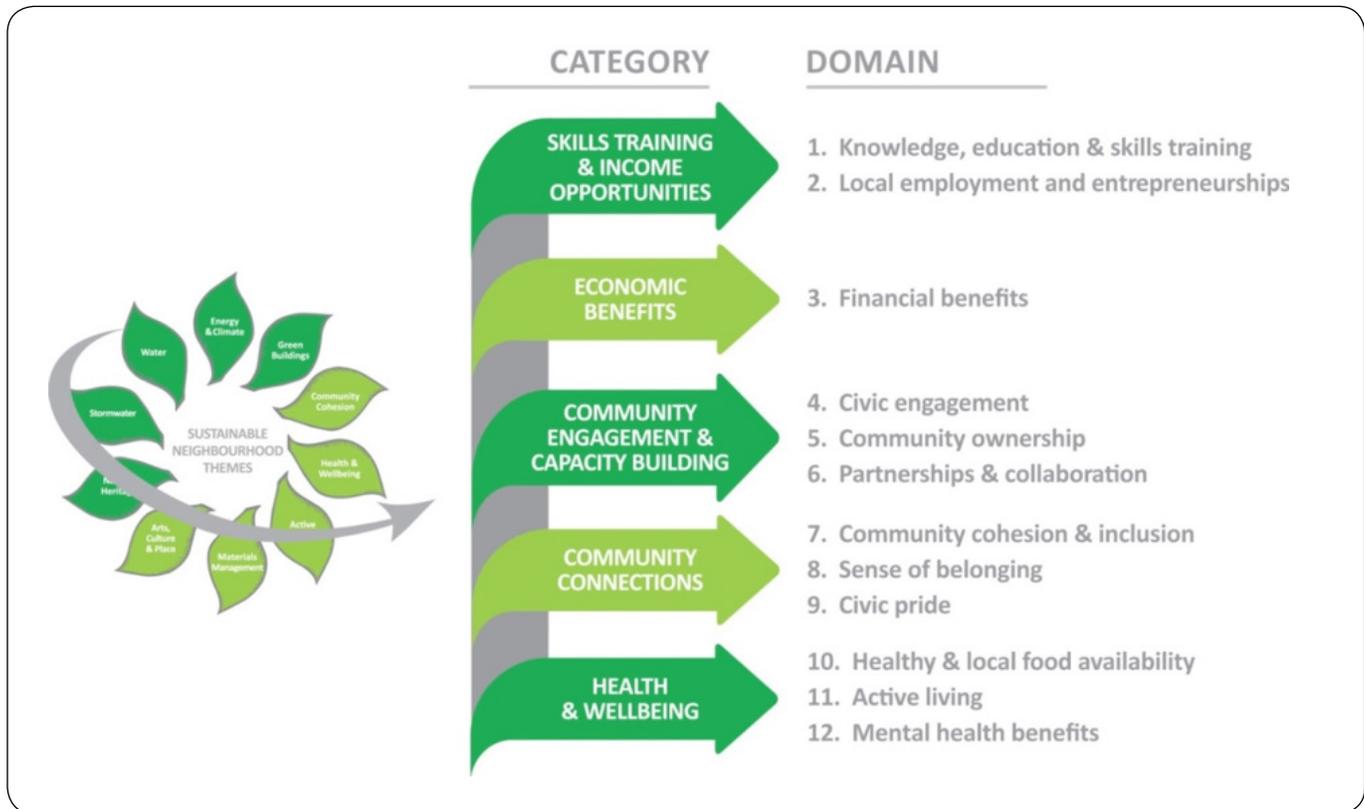
By taking a neighbourhood approach to sustainable action planning, SNAP matched a private golf course's need for a new low cost water supply with the Region of Peel's objectives for improved water efficiency and the City of Brampton's interest in retrofitting an old stormwater management pond to achieve multiple outcomes. The resulting pond retrofit design will create the opportunity for stormwater re-use for golf course irrigation. SNAP partnered with PPG to prepare a business case for the golf course showing a 3-5 year return on investment for various design schemes. The City's Environmental Assessment study for the stormwater pond will be complete in 2017 with construction targeted for 2018. Earlier SNAP projects with the golf club resulted in extensive naturalization plantings along Etobicoke Creek and development of a multi-year partnership that has provided the basis for the larger initiative.



SNAP's Broader Socio-Economic Impacts

SNAP's MUR and ICI revitalization projects have resulted in hundreds of native tree and shrub plantings, pollinator garden installations and improved stormwater management. In addition to environmental outcomes, SNAP's approach delivers resonating benefits associated with socio-economic indicators of healthy and resilient communities.

Figure 2: SNAP's socio-economic indicators



Strengthening neighbourhood connections

SNAP is connecting tower communities with surrounding single family homes, through programs that improve access to food, create social enterprise opportunities and facilitate inter-generational and inter-cultural interactions. *Read more about these programs in SNAP Impact Area - Strengthening Community Health, Wellbeing and Resilience.*

Observations/Take-aways

- There is great opportunity to achieve key sustainability objectives through revitalization of under-utilized private spaces.
- Understand the needs and motivators of your target audience.
- Capacity building among tenants, local organizations and property managers for sustained programming and maintenance is especially important for revitalization projects on private property.

What's Next?

Burnhamthorpe SNAP Tower Program

A one-window tower engagement program to increase tower sustainability and climate change resilience through increased uptake of indoor and outdoor water and energy retrofits. It also seeks to achieve co-benefits in tower community health and well-being. It supports a range of objectives and targets outlined in the Burnhamthorpe SNAP Action Plan, City of Mississauga and Region of Peel sustainability and climate change strategies, as well as those of the local utility partners. The multi-objective program delivers one-on-one meetings with towers across the neighbourhood and is using strategic demonstration projects to showcase retrofit action and benefits as a model for other towers across the city.

The program design benefited from City of Toronto's Tower Renewal program, BOMA Canada, Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO) and Greater Toronto Apartment Association (GTAA).



SNAP – A Progressive Approach to Implementation

SNAP is a proven solution for sustainable urban renewal and climate action that places neighbourhoods at the centre of the implementation framework. SNAP helps municipalities and community partners improve efficiencies, draw strong local support and build innovative partnerships for implementation of a broad range of initiatives in the public and private realms.

See other SNAP Profiles in this series:

- Extending the reach of home renovation programs
- Advancing integrated infrastructure projects
- Forging new partnerships for MUR and ICI renewal
- Strengthening community health, wellbeing and resilience

In collaboration with:



Contact Us

To learn more about SNAP, associated activities and ways to get involved contact:
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A program of:

