

Mayor John Tory and Members of Toronto City Council
100 Queen St. W.
City Hall, Second floor, West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

July 15, 2019

Dear Mayor Tory and Toronto City Councillors

Re: Community Benefits Framework

OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants is writing to you in advance of your deliberations and vote tomorrow on a Community Benefits Framework for Toronto, to call for a minimum 10% hard target for diversity hiring, and ensure a strong social procurement process.

OCASI is the provincial umbrella organization for immigrant and refugee-serving agencies in Ontario. More than 60% of our member agencies – more than 100 organizations – are based in the City of Toronto.

The City of Toronto has done some good work on putting the framework together, led by the Economic and Community Development Committee and with critical input from the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit to ensure the experiences of Black people and people African descent are included.

We especially applaud the leadership role of the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) in bringing community voices to this important discussion. We echo the TCBN in calling for a minimum 10% diversity hiring goal for all trade or craft working hours on any development project the City plans to build, buy, authorize or incentivise, and opportunities to strengthen the Social Procurement Program.

Statistics show that 30% of Ontario (51% of Toronto) is racialized, yet in the construction industry, only 1.2% of racialized people are registered apprentices. Thus the City's proposed goal of 5-10% will have barely any impact in giving Black and Indigenous youth, and people of colour and other underrepresented groups an opportunity to share equitably in Toronto's prosperity.

All four projects negotiated with the TCBN, including the Eglinton Crosstown LRT have established 10% as the standard. Further, while industry stakeholders are fully committed to the goal, they say they want to see a level playing field where their competitors have the same requirements. Other cities across North America from Seattle, to Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Portland have set goals above 20%.

Equally, we believe the Community Benefits Framework gives City Council a good opportunity to analyze and strengthen social procurement policies so intended outcomes are achieved. The City adopted the Social Procurement Policy in 2016, requiring City divisions to apply social

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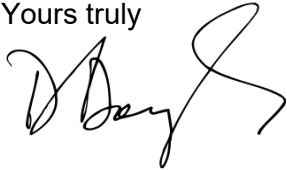
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procurement strategies in purchasing or tenders. A progress report to Council was expected in 2018 but was not provided, and we are yet to learn about the impact of this initiative. The Social Procurement Policy can be made more accessible to diverse supplies by setting more pre-qualifications, and through breaking down of contracts and other requirements.

We urge you to adopt a minimum 10% hard target for diversity hiring, and proactively ensure the Social Procurement Policy is accessible to diverse suppliers.

Yours truly



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Executive Director

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