



Urban Alliance on Race Relations

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Charitable Registration 11928-0022 RR0001

August 13th, 2014

Re: Honouring Nelson Mandela with a Street Dedication

Dear Chair and Members of the City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure Committee,


Since 1975, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR) has organized and responded to issues of race as identified by the community including policing and public safety, discrimination in employment and inequity in education. We have done research on racism and its intersections, and UARR has been a leader on anti-racist public education. Working in alliance with partners and organizations, UARR continues to evolve in response to complex issues such as gender violence in racialized communities and policy solutions to racial profiling.

UARR, like many organizations around the world, which work against racism, has taken inspiration from Nelson Mandela and the struggle against apartheid. As a national and global leader, Nelson Mandela worked against all forms of discrimination, and his message of peace and social justice continues to have global reach. We commend the City of Toronto for considering the honorary naming of a street to honour Nelson Mandela's contributions, legacy and memory.

UARR wholeheartedly endorses University Avenue from Front Street to College Street for the initiative 'Honouring Nelson Mandela with a Street Dedication'. We believe that University Avenue from Front Street to College Street, is a distinguished boulevard and prominent enough to hold this distinction for a leader of Nelson Mandela's stature. Residents and visitors of Toronto that use the storied University Avenue will see Toronto's affinity with Nelson Mandela's legacy, and citizens of Toronto can relate and reflect on this legacy as their own through the streetscape and signage, as a symbolic reminder of "the long walk". University Avenue has longstanding footprints of Toronto's black history, with many years of Caribana parades (prior to its relocation to Lakeshore Blvd.), and Afrofest, which was located for many years at the head of University towards College St. at Queen's Park Circle (prior to its relocation to Woodbine Beach). Public gatherings, community events, diverse celebrations, and rallies often gather on University Avenue from Front St towards College St. at Queen's Park Circle, which is also where Nelson Mandela addressed Toronto Residents during his first visit to the Canada in 1990.

As a fitting tribute, UARR calls on the City of Toronto to grant the honorary naming of University Avenue after Nelson Mandela, thereby keeping the greatness of his legacy alive for the benefit of all the citizens and visitors of Toronto.

Sincerely,



Gary Pieters
President

Urban Alliance on Race Relations
On behalf of the Board of Directors