

# BU41.1.160

c/o Flemingdon Community Legal Services  
1 Leaside Park Dr., Unit 1  
Toronto, Ontario M4H 1R1

January 8, 2018

Toronto City Council  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Gary Crawford and Members of Budget Committee:

## **RE: Implementation of the Community Benefits Framework**

My name is Prince Sibanda and I reside in Ward 26, Don Valley West. I am a Board Member of Flemingdon Community Legal Services (FCLS). FCLS is a legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario and a member of the Toronto Community Benefits Network. Miyadah Sabrati also resides in Ward 26 and is a member of the Community Services Committee.

Through its mandate to serve the legal welfare of the low income communities, FCLS seeks progressive resolution to the continued exclusion of historically marginalised communities from public infrastructure jobs, social procurement opportunities and employment in projects that directly impact their neighbourhoods. We welcome the leadership of the City in taking the bold steps necessary to confront the above mentioned social issues by developing strategies that are implementable and could lead to real change.

In April 22, 2015, the City directed staff to create a Community Benefits Agreement Framework/Protocol (CBA). (refer to Committee Decision, April 22, 2015 EX5.20 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=9723>). The creation of a Community Benefits protocol was meant to prioritize actions to tackle the biggest challenges that currently face our City: poverty and the exclusion of historically marginalised communities from City generated jobs in social procurement, major infrastructure projects and other green economy initiatives. CBA's have been recognized as smart public policy and smart economics: maximizing Return On Investment by looking at social, economic and environmental returns from every dollar invested. It is also an approach building momentum across North America, with growing success stories in various jurisdictions. Civic & Political leaders increasingly view community benefits as opportunity to advance social AND economic goals through public investment. The full implementation of the CBA Framework will allow us to build strong, equitable communities that are more resilient in the face of poverty.

While Community Benefits is mentioned in the current staff report back on the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017 (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.12> paragraphs 2 and 19) there is no indication that the report called for in 2015 is forthcoming. Instead Recommendation 2 reads:

2. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration to work with relevant City divisions and agencies and report back on the development of a City of Toronto Community

Benefits Framework that includes:

- a) a comprehensive inventory of existing City processes and practices that leverage community benefits outcomes, including analyses of best practices, challenges, gaps, and opportunities;
- b) ways to maximize community benefits outcomes from large -scale private development proposals, through the enhancement of existing City practices and processes, or the leveraging of untapped opportunities

Recommendation 3 refers to the testing of pilot standards for (ii) equitable hiring, and to report back to Executive Committee by the fourth Quarter of 2019 on the feasibility of adopting these standards into City contracts and on their impacts for workers, vendors, and City operations. **However for these plans to be implemented and realized they must be underpinned by adequate financial resources.** *Funding these social justice programs is not optional - it is a necessity.*

The 2018 draft budget put forward by City staff, and signed off by the Mayor, does not include money for social spending on critical matters such as a community benefits framework and other ways to maximize community benefits outcomes from large -scale private development proposals. Funding for a Community Benefits Framework by the City of Toronto will help achieve these objectives.

We request that Budget Committee **support full funding and immediate implementation of the recommendations from 2015 Report** on Community Benefits Agreements Protocol plan as part of the 2018 Budget. The City cannot choose between tackling poverty and tackling issues of racism, gender equity and untapped opportunities. These are intertwined. If we aspire to live by our motto 'Diversity Our Strength' we must implement strategies that include everyone.

We believe in the advancement of a City where all Torontonians can live in a sustainable environment where the attainment of good jobs, inclusion and full participation in civic society is unhindered. It is my hope that Toronto City Council will be equally intentional in finalizing a budget that supports this vision.

We and my colleagues at the Flemingdon Community Legal Services look forward with great interest as the budgetary process unfolds.

Respectfully,

*Prince Sibanda and Miyadah Subrati*

CC: Marjorie Hiley, Executive Director FCLS

Rosemarie Powell, Toronto Community Benefits Network