

October 20, 2020

City Clerk's Office
City of Toronto
100 Queen St. W., 1st Floor,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

To: City of Toronto, Executive Committee,

Re: Item 17.1 entitled, Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto

The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is navigating uncharted waters. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged cities and their ability to serve residents like never before.

CivicAction is committed to building a GTHA that is more inclusive and prosperous for all. Our purpose is to boost civic engagement and build better cities. We believe that every sector, community, and person need to be part of the city and the region's re-building. CivicAction was there to help in the SARS recovery and once again, we are here to catalyze people towards a common purpose - a more equitable and inclusive recovery.

The pandemic has coincided with larger movements to address systemic racism. In a region know for its diversity, we must address the lack of inclusion that sadly persists today. CivicAction was pleased to see the City of Toronto acknowledge the need to address inequalities by calling for improved facts and data needed to make more targeted systemic solutions as set out in the Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto Report.

Inclusion must be front a centre as we plan to build back better. For example, job precarity and economic disparity has grown with high-wage earners recovering all their work hours by the summer, while work for those making less than \$20 an hour is still 20% below what it was pre-pandemic.

No one level of government can solve the problems we face alone. In fact, we will need all sectors to step up in new, coordinated ways. Recovery in Toronto cannot be achieved without the complementary recovery of greater Toronto urban region. Our economies are deeply connected and interdependent and therefore to succeed, we must do so together.

We also need a diverse set of voices informing the path forward if our goal is to create a better future. That is why in June 2020, CivicAction brought together 300 civic leaders from all sectors and backgrounds for the Re:Action Forum. Leaders discussed three critical issues facing the region – unemployment, well-being, and trust. You can find the solutions developed at the Forum at the following web address:

<https://www.civicaaction.ca/reaction/forum/>.

As the City looks towards a speedy and equitable COVID-19 recovery, below are some of the areas we believe you should focus and ways CivicAction can help.

Economic Recovery that Reaches the Most Impacted by COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted people in certain communities when it comes to jobs and social supports, especially the intersectionality of women, racialized people, the LGBTQ+ community and new-comers to Canada.

How we rebuild should address how we can create more inclusive and prosperous cities with more equitable opportunities, not just for today but for decades to come. This includes helping women more easily re-enter the workforce by investing in child care; supporting the non-profit and charitable sector so it can continue to provide key community and health services; and removing systemic barriers that communities like Black Canadians face when trying to access and advance in the workforce.

CivicAction supports recommendation #49 of the report and the need to establish, at scale, an emerging women and youth leaders program for people from vulnerable and equity-seeking populations, such as Black and Indigenous communities. We are open to exploring a partnership with the City to achieve an equitable economic recovery, building on our HireNext initiative that focuses on creating HR practices that are more inclusive to diverse, young talent.

Helping Young People Prepare for the Future of Work

Our region's young people also need to be at the centre of an equitable economy. This group has seen their job opportunities severely upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, with unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 hitting a record high of 30% in May and June. It is important we provide ways for young people to train, upskill or reskill to prepare for a very different future of work. A delayed entry to the labour market can cause an economic scarring effect for years after.

Over the course of spring and summer 2020, CivicAction worked in partnership with LinkedIn and partners like the City of Toronto to deliver a series of online training sessions for 300+ youth. The online learning component (provided to almost 2,000 youth and employment service providers) focused on building networks, upskilling, financial literacy, and resiliency. We can continue this work in a more focussed manner and look forward to discussing how we can together, start to close the digital divide that many young people face.

Creating the Conditions for Inclusive Participation

As an organization that brings together rising and established leaders from all sectors and backgrounds, CivicAction can play a key role in connecting the City to the voices, perspectives and ideas of our 2700+ Emerging Leaders Network members and 250+ DiverseCity Fellows alumni. Our programs generate more diverse leadership and create stronger connections across sectors with 15% of DiverseCity Fellows entering executive-level positions and 37% pursuing at least one leadership role in a different sector after leaving the program.

To respond to COVID-19, we created the Re:Action Task Force of Risen and Rising Leaders co-chaired by Councillor Brad Bradford, Letecia Rose and Jodie Rawn to identify key actions

from the voices of our rising leaders. CivicAction has also hosted DigitalDish Town Halls with leaders including an inaugural event in April 2020 with Mayor Tory.

CivicAction is open to working with the City to activate these established groups as you move forward on the recommendations and to convene tables to ensure you have a diverse array of personal, professional, and lived experiences participating. Creating an equitable economy will require opportunities for GTHA residents to become more civically engaged, especially the next generation of leaders.

As the City faces what's ahead, CivicAction is here to help unlock the potential of all sectors and people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Woo', written in a cursive style.

Leslie Woo, CEO

Cc: Chris Murray, City Manager
Councillor Brad Bradford
Zabeen Hirji, CivicAction Board Chair
Tim Hockey, CivicAction Leadership Foundation Board Chair