

December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Executive Committee  
City of Toronto

**RE: Deputation to the City of Toronto, Executive Committee  
Item EX19.5 – Update on the City’s Transit Expansion Projects  
Support for the Eglinton Avenue East Light Rail Transit Project**

My name is Liben Gebremikael and I am the Executive Director of TAIBU Community Health Centre.

TAIBU is a Kiswahili (African) greeting that translates as ‘Be in Good Health’. Encapsulated in its name, TAIBU was established to provide community health and social services to Black communities across the Greater Toronto Area. Our work aims to improve, promote and protect the health and well-being for Black residents living in the GTA through high quality and culturally designed primary health care services and strategies. We also serve residents of the community of Malvern in Scarborough. In addition to this, TAIBU supports the Indigenous residents of Scarborough through its collaboration with the Scarborough Indigenous Mental Wellness Advisory Council which was established to help keep 'Indigenous Health in Indigenous Hands'. Finally, we offer dedicated programs and services to the Francophone communities in Toronto as the only designated French language health service provider in Scarborough. One of the keys to helping to ensure that all of the above-mentioned populations can access TAIBU's programs and services is by ensuring they can access TAIBU in a safe, affordable and convenient manner. For these reasons we support the building the Eglinton East Light Rapid Transit (EELRT) route to Malvern.

As a representative for the voices and needs of some of the City's most racialized and marginalized communities, we would like to stress the following points:

1. The EELRT must remain the first priority for the City;
2. The \$800M collected by the Scarborough subway levy must be used for rapid transit in Scarborough, namely to build the EELRT; and
3. The EELRT must be extended to Malvern.

It is well established that the EELRT will bring significant economic benefits to businesses and residents and will enhance the infrastructure of Scarborough and Malvern. However, in addition to this, the EELRT will also bring considerable health and wellbeing benefits to Black, Indigenous and Francophone residents of the GTA, Scarborough and Malvern.

Several studies have demonstrated that access to transportation is a critical and crucial social determinant impacting the health and wellbeing of racialized and marginalized communities. Availability of a rapid transit system that directly connects TAIBU, several disparate Scarborough communities and Malvern to the rest of the City means better access to jobs, education, healthier food options and healthcare services as well as strong social network and connectedness.

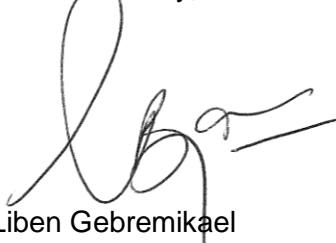
Many health and social status data (however limited these maybe), have shown that Scarborough and, particularly Malvern, is disproportionately impacted by several health and social adversities. The advent and impact of COVID-19 has amplified and intensified these disproportions. If one would overlay the different disparity maps - the diabetes atlas by neighborhood, the population 2016 census map by racialized communities, low income neighborhoods map, immigrant and newcomer population - onto a map depicting the impact of COVID-19, the disproportion becomes glaringly evident.

A key strategic investment to address these inequities that are impacting Scarborough's Black and Indigenous communities is investing in access to affordable transportation. The EELRT is therefore a crucial investment in Scarborough and Malvern.

It is with this equity lens that we are submitting this deputation for the Executive Committee's consideration. We believe in the City's commitment to alleviating the barriers impacting the health and wellbeing of its residents. We also believe in the City's commitment to equity and ending racial disparities among residents, as demonstrated through its various actions and investments made in recent years including the Confronting Anti Black Racism Action Plan and the [TO Support: COVID-19 Equity Plan. We are now urging the City to continue to demonstrate its leadership and make a strategic equity investment to address one of the most crucial social determinants of health and wellbeing for racialized populations – access to affordable, efficient and convenient transportation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if additional information is required or if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Liben Gebremikael  
Executive Director/Directeur Exécutif  
TAIBU Community Health Centre/Centre de Santé Communautaire TAIBU

