

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM47.29	ACTION			Ward: All
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Exploring Opportunities to Create a New Community Cultural and Recreation Centre with Toronto's Somali Community - by Councillor Frances Nunziata, seconded by Mayor John Tory

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Frances Nunziata, seconded by Mayor John Tory, recommends that:

1. City Council, in principle, support the establishment of a Somali Community Cultural and Recreation Centre in Toronto to serve the diverse programming needs of community members of all ages, including children, youth and seniors while also being a hub to preserve and celebrate the rich contribution and histories of Toronto's Somali communities.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Executive Director, Social Development and Finance Administration, and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to work with the Somali Cultural and Recreation Centre Steering Committee in Toronto and the impacted Councillors to explore potential partnerships for a new community cultural and recreation centre, including by conducting a feasibility assessment that examines:
 1. the most appropriate location for this community centre; and
 2. funding opportunities.

Summary

Toronto is home to one the largest Somali communities outside of Africa. Somalis in Toronto have been instrumental to the civic, cultural, economic and political development of the City and have substantially contributed to its growth as a world-class City. For example, Somali businesses cultivated in this City serve the global community and Somalis continue to be cultural ambassadors for this City in the arts, sports, technological innovations and sciences.

While the Somali community continues to thrive, it also faces significant systemic barriers due to anti-Black racism and Islamophobia. Many studies, including the work of the City's Confronting Ant-Black Racism Unit, and also the testimony of Somali residents at City Council or local boards have documented the deleterious impacts of systemic racism on the prosperity of this dynamic and vibrant community. In addition, action 7.1 in the Confronting

Anti-Black Racism Action Plan calls on the City to "improve recreation spaces in neighborhoods with high proportions of Black residents".

Somali Torontonians are actively engaged in discussions to create a Somali Cultural and Recreation Centre to serve the community's needs and celebrate the community's rich culture.

We are requesting City of Toronto staff to explore the possibility of replicating successful models of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto and the Tamil Community Centre with the Somali community.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM47.29