

From: [Leighana M](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Subject: [External Sender] DEPUTATION LETTER | MAY 31ST, 2023
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Deputation letter for May 31st, 2023

Dear Economic and Community Development Committee / City Council and Deputy Mayor McKelvie,

Deputation by:

Leighana Mais,
Resident of Little Jamaica and the Community Lead of Keele and Eglinton Residents.

I am writing on behalf of Keele and Eglinton Residents also referred to as K.E Residents.

Dear Economic and Community Development Committee / City Council and Deputy Mayor McKelvie,

My name is Leighana Mais, I am a resident of Little Jamaica and the Community Lead of Keele and Eglinton Residents. I am writing on behalf of Keele and Eglinton Residents also referred to as K.E Residents.

Keele & Eglinton Residents (K.E. Residents) is dedicated to fostering equitable and inclusive spaces for children, youth, and community members within the Eglinton West - Little Jamaica community. Through active community engagement, K.E. Residents hosts and supports various projects and events aimed at strengthening neighbourhoods and fostering community connections. In line with our commitment to community leadership, K.E. Residents prioritizes Black-led and Afro-Caribbean leadership, recognizing the importance of empowering these voices.

We are writing in support of the City Council adopting the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism – Year Four Update. The Plan works to address the ongoing impacts of anti-Black racism on the lives of Black Torontonians.

We are grateful for the partnership we have with the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit. CABR and the staff support of Meseret Asneke has proven to be a valuable asset in our work, being the only anchor within the city that truly respects and supports the efforts we undertake as grassroots residents in our community.

Need for ongoing support and investment:

For our work to be effective, it is crucial that the resources and support we receive from the city align with the values and needs of our community. CABR has consistently demonstrated its commitment to reflecting our community and supporting our endeavors. However, we believe it is necessary to strengthen our partnership further to ensure its long-term sustainability. We urge the City of Toronto to increase and provide ongoing support and investments that empower us to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Advocacy for Little Jamaica:

K.E. Residents has been at the forefront of advocating for Little Jamaica and promoting the well-being of the Black residents we serve. The support we receive through our partnership with CABR has been instrumental in giving us the voice and resources required to act as catalysts for ongoing change.

Promoting Black Mental Health:

One notable initiative we undertook with the support of our CABR partnership was a virtual event during Black Mental Health week. This event allowed us to address the impact of gentrification on our community's mental health needs. Through the resources provided by CABR, we were able to successfully facilitate and host the event, ensuring the inclusion of youth of African descent. This initiative aimed to advance the destigmatization of Black

mental health and improve access to resources that address the needs resulting from systemic barriers.

Collaboration with other Black-led initiatives:

Our partnership with CABR has also connected us with other Black-led initiatives that would have otherwise remained unknown to us. This has allowed us to forge collaborations and expand the scope of our work. One significant collaboration was with the Growing in Place framework, which aims to enhance shelter and housing conditions to support Black Torontonians. Through joint efforts, we engaged, surveyed, and conducted workshops to gather authentic statements of needs and desires from Black residents in Little Jamaica, thereby contributing to the betterment of our community.

Increased recognition and the preservation of arts and culture:

As a result of our collaboration with CABR, K.E. Residents gained wider recognition and respect for our work. This recognition has empowered us to give back even more to our community. Moreover, it has reinforced the importance of increasing stable funding in Little Jamaica - to grassroots led initiatives - to preserve the arts and culture that are integral to our community's identity and heritage.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the invaluable support and resources provided by the CABR Unit, which have been instrumental in our efforts to create positive change within the Eglinton West - Little Jamaica community. We call on the City of Toronto to increase and continue strengthening our partnership through ongoing support and investments that enable us to address the evolving needs of our community effectively.