

SCARBOROUGH MADE

September 20, 2023

RE: EC6.4 - ALIGNING CULTURAL HOTSPOT, LIVE ARTS MENTOR AND YOUTH CULTURAL INCUBATORS STABILIZATION INITIATIVE PROGRAMS TO THE COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY

To the Economic and Community Development Committee,

My name is Sid Naidu, and I'm the co-founder of Scarborough Made, a community arts collective championing Toronto's East through documentary storytelling, public art and creative youth mentorships.

I'm writing this letter in support of agenda item EC6.4 to formalize and align Cultural Hotspot, Live Arts Mentor and Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative Programs to the community grants policy.

As a professional artist developing arts-based programming to support creative economy building in underserved neighbourhoods, Scarborough Made has greatly benefited from being a grant recipient of the Cultural Hotspot Signature Project in 2021 and 2022. The funding from Cultural Hotspot has helped us grow our footprint in the local communities by developing youth employment opportunities for equity-deserving populations in media production and creative placemaking.

As a creator and changemaker who has worked internationally across sectors, including education, international development and the creative industries, I've seen how arts and culture funding contributes to developing strong and vibrant cities.

Arts funding on a localized level can incubate leadership and foster the change needed to empower communities where resources are limited. Participating as an artist in the inaugural Cultural Hotspot programming in 2014 helped shape my knowledge in developing projects like Scarborough Made. City arts funding is an investment that pays itself forward by growing the uncultivated potential of neighbourhoods in Toronto. This impact and need for more arts funding is evident when I witness youth going through our programs and creating innovative arts initiatives that strengthen Canada's creative economy.

In 2024, Scarborough Made will enter its fifth year of programming, and we can attribute our growth and successes to the Cultural Hotspot program, which helped kickstart our initial youth mentorship pilot through funding and valuable guidance from staff who trust and believe in our work. Since our start, we've produced close to 50 stories to amplify the narratives of Toronto's diverse communities. We've developed five public art installations to build community in neighbourhoods where the arts are less accessible, and we've provided employment opportunities to over 25 youth to grow their career in Canada's creative sector.

Programs like Cultural Hotspot prove that Toronto's growth as an internationally celebrated city lies within arts funding, which supports the development of its most diverse communities. Formalizing programs like Cultural Hotspot ensures our continued equitable growth through the arts.

Sincerely,



Sid Naidu
Co-Founder
Scarborough Made