

Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation
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www.buildourcommunity.ca

Zakaria Abdulle
Board Chair and President, Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR)
1 King Street West, Suite 4800-99 Toronto ON, M5H 1A1

April 29, 2024

Members of the Economic and Development Committee
City Council and Alejandro Bravo
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Economic and Development Committee,

As Board Chair of the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR), I write to express my support for the Downsview Area Secondary Plan proposed by City of Toronto Staff. The community benefits proposed in the plan being considered by you have the potential to make a significant and lasting impact on quality of life and access to opportunity in northwest Toronto and I believe Northcrest is the right community partner to see the plan through.

Toronto's Somali community has made significant contributions to Toronto's social and economic fabric, especially in the city's Northwest. The Downsview Area Secondary Plan offers a crucial opportunity to address inequalities and create a more equitable landscape for our – at a time when we need it most. The SCCR plays a vital role in meeting the diverse needs of Toronto's Black community, serving as a hub for services for all residents and preservation of cultural heritage.

But we need help. That's why I'm particularly pleased with the Community Development Plan's focus on prioritizing opportunities for historically underserved communities. This plan makes a significant stride towards inclusivity, emphasizing collaborative projects that showcase effective private, government, and public partnerships. The implementation of the Secondary Plan holds the potential to deliver substantial benefits to our community, promoting inclusive growth and empowerment. In my roles as Board Chair and President of the SCCR, I've worked closely with the City of Toronto to ensure Somali and Black community voices are heard at City Hall. The approval of this plan will be a major milestone in my work and ongoing efforts. I also want to say that I've been impressed by Northcrest's commitment to supporting diverse communities across Toronto. For instance, their sponsorship of the SCCR's Nuit Blanche exhibition in 2023 exemplifies their commitment and dedication, providing needed support for Somali artists and storytellers. Northcrest's advocacy for social procurement, particularly in promoting diversity within the arts, is commendable. Beyond that, they have consistently demonstrated support for the broader Black Community, including the Somali community, through various initiatives.

I thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to serving the needs of the Somali and Black communities across Northwest Toronto. I urge you to carefully consider the approval of the Downsview Area Secondary Plan, recognizing its potential to enrich and empower our community for generations to come.

Best regards,
Zakaria Abdulle

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