



July 4th 2024.

Ms. Olivia Chow
Mayor
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
mayor_chow@toronto.ca

RE: Deputation to the Economic and Community Development Committee - Downtown East Action Plan - Implementation Update and 2025-2030 Action Plan

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

I write to you on behalf of Neighbourhood Pods TO, a collective of grassroots organizations, community workers, and advocates committed to securing affordable housing and promoting responsible development in our communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our comments and recommendations concerning **Downtown East Action Plan - Implementation Update and 2025-2030 Action Plan**.

We wish to express our strong support for the letter sent by the Moss Park Coalition and highlight the importance of strategic investments in community development initiatives like the Social Development Plan in Regent Park.

The Moss Park Coalition formed in 2021 to advocate for Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) as part of the Ontario Line project and to help identify and amplify community priorities amidst the significant development pressures facing the moss park neighborhood. We have been closely following the development of the Downtown East Action Plan, and we deeply appreciate the hard work of the Economic and Community Development Committee and City Staff in creating this updated plan.

While the new plan addresses many challenges in the Downtown East, we are particularly interested in initiatives like the Dundas Sherbourne Neighbourhood Revitalization Plan. This initiative directly addresses some of the underlying causes of issues experienced by many in Moss Park. Additionally, we are encouraged to hear that the potential redevelopment of Toronto Community Housing properties in Moss Park will be guided by a Community Development Plan. It is essential that local residents' and community members' needs and wishes are central to the redevelopment process.

One of the significant challenges facing the Moss Park community is the lack of formal neighborhood organizations, such as a residents' association. This absence creates barriers that prevent local residents from influencing development in their neighborhood. In response to this, our Coalition will soon be launching the Empower Moss Park campaign to provide a platform for local residents to work together to form a common vision for the future of their neighborhood. We aim to co-develop a list of development priorities and strategies with local residents and stakeholders to inform future public and

private developments in the area. The Moss Park Coalition will be launching this project in July at the Moss Park Summer Festival and are happy to share our results with the City.

Furthermore, we would like the City to consider bringing the Community Benefits Office into early conversations about the Dundas Sherbourne Neighbourhood Revitalization Plan. This would help ensure that we maximize the employment and procurement opportunities available to local Moss Park residents and businesses and allow for the true co-development of this important project. A Community Benefits Agreement would also signal to the Moss Park community that they will be long-term partners in the life of the project, not merely participants in brief consultations or info sessions.

In addition, we want to emphasize the importance of investments like the Social Development Plan in Regent Park. Such investments have been crucial in fostering resident leadership, forming a neighborhood association, and establishing a community governance table. These initiatives have been pivotal in addressing key priorities related to community building, employment and economic development, safety, communications, and support for vulnerable community members, particularly youth and seniors.

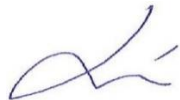
Moreover, we stress the importance of working closely with provincial agencies such as Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario to implement community benefits and rent-geared-to-income housing in Moss Park. By collaborating with these agencies, we can ensure that the development projects not only provide affordable housing options but also incorporate community benefits that promote long-term social and economic sustainability.

By supporting initiatives like the Social Development Plan, we create pathways for resident engagement and leadership, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by development are heard and prioritized. This approach has proven effective in Regent Park and can serve as a model for Moss Park and other communities undergoing significant development.

In conclusion, we are pleased to see the updates to the Downtown East Action Plan highlighting the Moss Park neighborhood, and we look forward to seeing this plan put into action. We stand ready to partner with the City to implement meaningful strategies that link social and economic development in Moss Park in ways that center the needs and wants of current neighborhood residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Walied Khogali Ali', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Walied Khogali Ali

Coordinator

Neighbourhood Pods TO (NPTO)

The Neighbourhood Pods TO (NPTO) embodies a consortium of grassroots organizations, community workers, and advocates, all rallying under a unified mission to bolster the economic livelihoods and enhance the overall well-being of low-income individuals and communities across Toronto.