

Wednesday October 25, 2024

RE: EC16.2 - Sidewalks to Skylines: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy (2025-2035)

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

The Toronto Community Benefits Network is a community-labour network with a mandate to support Community Benefits Agreements and ensure local benefits are secured from public infrastructure and development in Toronto.

Since 2015, the TCBN has supported over 2,000 people from local communities into good jobs and opportunities as part of equitable hiring and local workforce development initiatives associated with community benefits commitments. Such projects have also been able to redirect over \$100M in spending to local small and medium sized businesses and social enterprises through social procurement.

Action Plan for Toronto's Economy

TCBN welcomes the Action Plan for Toronto's Economy. We are particularly interested in Priority #2 which focuses on Quality Jobs and the Inclusive Economic Development Framework (IEDF) which is referenced to come next month. We offer three key recommendations that:

1. Uphold commitment to anti racism and inclusion as part of 'Building Back Stronger'
2. Ensure communities facing economic exclusion and systemic barriers are centered in development and monitoring of the IEDF and that there is clear alignment amongst the Action Plan and IEDF
3. Recognize the direct control the City has, as a public institution, through its municipal levers, policies, tools and as an employer to drive inclusive economic growth as it already is doing

A Commitment to Building Back Stronger

During the pandemic, the City convened a Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group with community, labour and business stakeholders to provide objective, informed and constructively critical advice on priorities for recovery. The #2 [recommendation](#) committed to action on anti-racism and inclusion:

Specific interventions to make meaningful structural change and ensure that Black, Indigenous, and equity deserving groups have better access to the city's economic and cultural benefits and opportunities. - Building Back Stronger Report (2020)

We urge the City to uphold such commitments to anti-racism and inclusion as part of this Action Plan and IEDF. It is not enough for the City to play a coordinating role when it comes to confronting systemic inequities, rather must be intentional and demonstrate leadership in its use of municipal levers, equity strategies and Plan to Confront Anti-Black racism as mechanisms to drive meaningful structural change.

Centering Communities in Inclusive Economic Development

The IEDF must prioritize the input and participation of communities who have been impacted by economic exclusion and systemic barriers to economic participation due to race, gender, abilities and other markers of social location. There is significant data and stats that show that inequality is getting worse in Toronto and how Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples are disproportionately overrepresented in low wage and precarious employment. In the development of this Framework, the TCBN would like to be involved in identifying and shaping the solutions, key actions and indicators.

City-led interventions to drive inclusive economic growth

In recent years, the City has developed and continues to refine various strategies, policies and programs like the Community Benefits Framework to leverage its investments and purchasing decisions, to have a positive impact in making our economies more inclusive and sustainable while prioritizing good quality jobs. The City has direct control over its purchasing, procurement and hiring decisions. Such initiatives should be highlighted explicitly in the IEDF and actions should seek to refine, enhance and strengthen each of these policies, programs and levers.

Action	Measures	Existing Initiatives
Hiring and Workforce Development	Creating equitable pathways for access to good jobs and benefits for residents	Community Benefits Framework TTC inclusive hiring practices and reporting
Procurement	Leverages its own purchasing power and procurement	Social Procurement Program
Contracting services and building infrastructure	Creates opportunities for local workers and action for real, measurable targets for equitable hiring and fair wages	Fair wage policy and office Community Benefits Framework TCHC Phase 4 and 5 revitalization
Land use planning	Incentivize inclusive commercial activity, private sector community benefits plan, community development plans in secondary plans	Casino Woodbine Expansion CBA Downsview Community Development Plan IMIT local employment
Affordable housing	Incentivize affordable housing and affordable housing on City land	HousingNow



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