



James Pasternak
Councillor | York Centre - Downsview

Toronto City Hall

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Attention: CreateTO Board of Directors

RE: Support for a Long-Term Land Lease for the City-Owned Properties to Develop a Future Somali Community Centre and Housing

Dear Board Members,

I am writing in support of the findings of the Feasibility Study (i.e., Feasibility Planning Report, Conceptual Design Report, and Community Consultation Report) completed by the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation in accordance with Motion MM47.29 adopted by Toronto City Council in July 2022. The comprehensive study provides a recommended site in Etobicoke which is suitable and desirable for both the development of a Somali cultural and recreation centre and a mixed-use residential development.

Empowering the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation to leverage the value of these city-owned parcels of land to develop housing and a community centre that hosts a variety of vital amenities such as the proposed cultural spaces, childcare, gymnasium, aquatic facility, and multi-purpose rooms is the essence of a city-building initiative. It is fundamental that we support our diverse communities across Toronto to ensure that they have access to livable and complete communities. In addition, the proposal will deliver an important place of belonging for the Somali community and is expected to serve as a catalyst for long overdue investments in social infrastructure for our diverse Black communities.

This project is aligned with the urgent need for more housing across the city through its proposal to advance a mixed-use residential development with a range of housing types and tenures. This project is also consistent with addressing the critical gaps identified in the City of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019 – 2038 for Etobicoke. The proposed community centre development by the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation will be an important local neighborhood and regional amenity in Etobicoke that addresses the significant existing gap and will encouragingly respond to the more than four decades of advocacy by the Somali community in Toronto.

For those many reasons and the detailed analysis provided in the Feasibility Study, I respectfully recommend that the Board of Directors adopt a positive recommendation by proposing the City of Toronto to enter into a mutually beneficial long-term lease with the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation. I hope that upon your recommendation, we will consider this item at Toronto City Council and approve it as an important city-building priority.

Sincerely,



Councillor James Pasternak

Toronto - Ward 6, York Centre - Downsview

Chair, North York Community Council