



## Network for the Advancement of Black Communities (NABC)

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April 6, 2024

Attention: Toronto City Council

RE: **Supporting a Barrier-Free Long-Term Land Lease with the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation for City-Owned Land**

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Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors,

We are writing in support of the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR)'s request for a long-term land lease with the City of Toronto. The project led by SCCR will build an important place of belonging for the Somali community, one of Canada's largest Black communities. It is planned as an important public space that will be a focal point for Somali creativity, community work, recreation, and for archiving Somali culture and heritage in Canada.

NABC is an organization that works to catalyze the collective wisdom and collaborative action of Black organizations and leaders in Canada to dismantle systemic racism and other structural barriers facing individuals from Black communities. We play our roles through convening, knowledge mobilization, service coordination, capacity building, research and systems change. In relation to housing, NABC is currently incubating a national Black Canadian Technical Housing Centre supported by CMHC and the Government of Nova Scotia. We have also launched a national Black Canadian Housing Network that brings together various organizations and groups across the country, including SCCR. In the early phases of SCCR's work, NABC provided a foundational capacity building grant to support the incredible vision of community leaders behind SCCR.



The City of Toronto has a historic opportunity to respond to over 40 years of community work to realize the SCCR social infrastructure project, fulfill a local need to animate public spaces, deliver on vital amenities such as the proposed cultural spaces, childcare, gymnasium, aquatic facility, and public

realm improvements. In addition, the SCCR's project will bring important services to the community and key anchor partners that have the potential to provide high-quality educational, vocational, recreational, health services and cultural programming. This important project by the SCCR will serve as a catalyst for long overdue federal and provincial investments in social infrastructure for our diverse Black communities.

We urge you to immediately and unanimously adopt a positive decision that advances a long-term land lease for the SCCR and to clearly demonstrate the city's unwavering commitment to barrier-free investments in Black-led social infrastructure projects.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director