

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

Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors,

My name is Liben Gebremikael and I am the Chief Executive Officer of TAIBU Community Health Centre. I am 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.

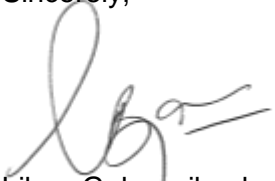
TAIBU Community Health Centre is a multidisciplinary, non-for-profit, community led organization established to serve the Black community in the Greater Toronto Area. We also serve all the residents of the Malvern neighborhood and we have a special focus on the Francophone communities in Scarborough, aiming to improve, promote and protect the health and well-being of these populations. We prioritize quality and culturally designed services delivered through intersectional, equity based and culturally affirming practices promoting holistic wellness, and prevention. The success of TAIBU in serving the diverse communities of Scarborough and the GTA is built on the strong strategic partnership and collaborations with several grass roots community groups and organizations. It is in view of this that we are supporting the SCCR to secure space that will be used to delivery culturally affirming health, social and recreational activities that will promote the health and wellbeing of the Somali community.

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.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



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