

**From:** [Somali Workers Network](#)  
**To:** [Executive Committee](#)  
**Cc:** [somalicentrecc@gmail.com](mailto:somalicentrecc@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Endorsement Letter Attached: Request for Long-Term Land Lease for Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR)  
**Date:** April 7, 2024 8:12:59 PM  
**Attachments:** [SCCR Endorsement letter .pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to bring your attention to the attached letter of endorsement regarding the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR)'s request for a long-term land lease with the City of Toronto.

The SCCR's project holds immense significance for our community, particularly for the Somali community, which is one of Canada's largest Black communities. The proposed center aims to serve as a vital hub for fostering a sense of belonging, nurturing creativity, facilitating community engagement, and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Somali people in Canada.

Since its inception in 2014, the SCCR has been actively involved in various social justice initiatives, collaborating with unionized workers and other stakeholders to address pressing issues such as mental illness and violence. The proposed center aligns with these efforts by providing a platform for community work, recreation, and the documentation of Somali culture and heritage.

As outlined in the attached letter, numerous organizations and individuals have expressed their support for the SCCR's endeavor, emphasizing its importance in promoting inclusivity, diversity, and social cohesion within our city.

I kindly urge you to consider the contents of the attached endorsement letter and support the SCCR's request for a long-term land lease. By doing so, we can contribute to the creation of a vibrant and inclusive space that celebrates the rich tapestry of cultures that make up our city.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

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**Sarah Ali**  
**Co-Chair**  
**Somali Workers Network (SWN)**  
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**SOMALI  
WORKERS'  
NETWORK**

47 Densley Ave, North York, ON M6M 5A8  
somalionetwork@gmail.com

Date: April 7, 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**

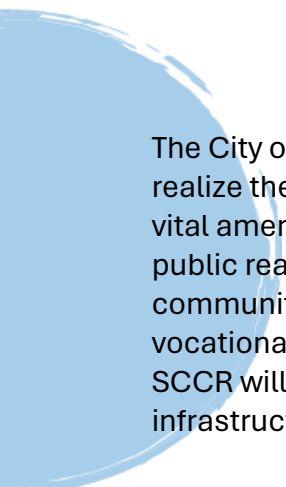
Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors,

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. In 2014, the network of unionized workers concerned with social justice issues formed to build bridges between the labour movement and the Somali community, and to advocate and address social issues, including mental illness and violence. The Somali network is one of several diversity networks of the Toronto and Region Labour Council,

Canada's oldest and largest labour union with 205,000 members. Other networks reach out to Toronto's Chinese, Filipino, Tamil, and Ethiopian and Eritrean communities.

"Inclusion and equity is about creating space for workers to share realities and needs, paving the way for leadership from within. The dignity of every worker is essential for a healthy and vibrant workplace," said labour council spokesperson Kiruthiha Kulendiren, adding the networks "recognize that they face obstacles defined by who they are."

The network's constituency is both young and older Somali-Canadian workers, as well as Canadian-born and university-educated twenty somethings who struggle to find full-time jobs.



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,



**Sarah Ali**

Co-Chair of SWN

Ccd: **Abdi Haji Yusuf**

Co-Chair of SWN

