



African Canadian Youth In Action

April 7, 2024

African Canadian Youth in Action
37 Loradeen Crescent
Scarborough, ON
M1B 1T7

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 Councilors,

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.

African Youth in Action is dedicated to empowering youth of African descent in Canada through tailored programs aimed at fostering their growth, safety, and holistic development. Our organization prioritizes keeping Black youth off the streets and away from danger by providing comprehensive initiatives focused on education, employment, safety, and recreational activities. Through initiatives like our Homework Club, we aim to support academic excellence and provide a nurturing environment for learning. Additionally, we prioritize safety through various awareness campaigns and initiatives aimed at safeguarding the well-being of young people in their communities. Our employment programs strive to equip youth with the necessary skills and resources to thrive in the job market, fostering economic independence and sustainability. Furthermore, our sports activities promote physical health and instill values of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance among the youth. African Youth in Action is committed to shaping a brighter future for Black youth in Canada by providing them with opportunities for personal growth, social engagement, and community empowerment while keeping them away from potential dangers on the streets.

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



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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,
Shua Amari
African Canadian Youth in Action

Shua Amari