

October 31st, 2025

Attention: City of Toronto Executive Committee

Letter of support for EX27.6 - Reimagining Weston Lions Arena through a Nominal Lease with MLSE LaunchPad

Dear Chair and members of the Executive Committee,

We the undersigned are youth and community members from across Ward 5 and neighbouring wards and writing to inform you of our collective support to have a MLSE Launchpad in our community.

It is important for us to stress that the Weston Lions Arena in its current form was never a welcoming, fair or accessible space for many members of the community and surrounding neighbourhoods. A lot of has changed in the neighbourhood, but one thing that has not changed is the fact that many youth and community members do not have easily accessible indoor recreation space.

As a group of concerned youth and residents, we want you to hear from us about why we want MLSE Launchpad in our neighbourhood.

Our biggest challenges is not having a space available to wider community. There are limited options for space and programming on evening and weekends, and as you know our community and neighbouring communities have been deeply impacted by violence. Also, while Black Creek has the closest recreation center, is not safe for many community members and the basketball court is not used. The space is particularly inaccessible in the winter and is annoying to travel to in the cold weather. Having a space closer to home means that there will be more safer options and easier for us to access programming and services.

We also want to share what we feel are important things that this committee, City Council and the City of Toronto need to consider for a Launchpad site in our community. As youth and community members we are asking for the following things:

1. Local Jobs:

- **Living wage jobs** for locals who want to do **engaging, community work** that supports youth and families (e.g. coordination and mentorship roles)
- **Construction and trades training** opportunities, **and hiring existing qualified skills trade people** for local jobs in the renovation of the arena.

2. Multi-Sport Programming:

- Free and accessible programming for **basketball, football, baseball, and soccer**, as well as space for **training and weightlifting**.
- Accessing the **Humber River valley** for outdoor programming such as **camping, fishing, and survival training**.

3. Youth Programming:

- Offering creative and fun spaces, like a **gaming zone** and a **music studio**.
- Offer **giveaways**, like gift cards, and **trips** for youth.
- Making sure programming is available on evenings and weekends.

4. Life Skills:

- Training on everyday skills, such as **CPR, financial literacy, money making, sewing, cooking, nutrition, driving**, and more!
- **Programs and support for families**, such as mothers and caretakers, and offering **gender-inclusive space and programming**.

5. Wrap-Around Supports:

- **Mental health support**, including counselling, chill zones, and a safe space to let out anger.
- Building a **commercial kitchen** that is accessible to the community and offering **free food programs** for community members.

We the undersigned urge this committee and City council to vote to the Weston Lions Arena, reimagined as a MLSE Launchpad. This is not something that is 10 years away, this is something that community will have available to them in the next 2-3 years. This is an opportunity to make more safe, fair and accessible spaces and programming that caters to more Weston community members and neighbouring communities, not just for a small group of people.

Thank you,