

Establishing the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre in the Association of Community Centres

Date: May 26, 2026
To: Economic and Community Development Committee
From: Executive Director, Social Development; and
General Manager, Parks and Recreation
Wards: Ward 8, Eglinton-Lawrence

SUMMARY

The City of Toronto operates ten community centres, known as the Association of Community Centres (AOCCs), managed by volunteer Boards of Management appointed by City Council. These multi-purpose facilities serve as catalysts for neighbourhood transformation—providing inclusive spaces that strengthen civic engagement, build local leadership capacity, and advance equity-focused outcomes. All Board-approved programming is carried out by AOCC staff, who operate as City employees within the AOCC [Relationship Framework](#), ensuring operational accountability and alignment with City standards. The Council-adopted [AOCC Expansion Framework](#) and [Implementation Strategy](#) affirm the AOCC model as essential social infrastructure that advances equity, social cohesion, and neighbourhood resilience.

This report seeks City Council approval to establish the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre as a new Board of Management under the former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, Recreation and Community Centres, and the AOCC Relationship Framework. Early approval reflects the lead-time required to operationalize an AOCC, providing sufficient time to form the Board, recruit an Executive Director, develop governance policies, onboard staff, and advance critical financial planning and grant development.

The Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre marks the first expansion of the AOCC portfolio in over 30 years, a generational milestone for the model. The Centre will be co-located within the redeveloped Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre and Child Care Centre, a major civic investment delivered as part of the Toronto Community Housing-led Lawrence Heights Revitalization. This integrated, co-located approach aligns community development, recreation, and child care services within a single neighbourhood hub, strengthening service coordination, improving access, and maximizing the public value of City-owned infrastructure.

A demographic and service analysis confirms that Lawrence Heights and the surrounding neighbourhoods exhibit elevated community need, limited access to stable community spaces, and significant population growth linked to ongoing redevelopment.

A phased approach to activating governance, staffing, and resourcing is proposed and aligns with the AOCC Expansion Implementation Strategy. Operational costs will be incorporated into the forthcoming AOCC Facilities and Operations Plan, with an update to be reported to the Economic and Community Development Committee in 2028, including associated funding requirements for consideration through the City Budget process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, and the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, recommend that:

1. City Council establish the Board of Management for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre as a new local and city board comprised of 12 total members (11 public members and the Councillor for Ward 8 - Eglinton-Lawrence) operating in accordance with former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, Community and Recreation Centres, and the Relationship Framework for the City of Toronto and Association of Community Centre Boards of Management, each as amended, for the property at 5 Leila Lane and 2A Flemington Road (Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre), effective on the date of Community Council's appointment of public members by:

- a. Amending former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, Community and Recreation Centres, to add a new section 25-36, 5 Leila Lane and 2A Flemington Road (Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre), as outlined in Attachment 1 to the report (May 26, 2026) from the Executive Director, Social Development and General Manager, Parks and Recreation; and
- b. Amending the Relationship Framework for the City of Toronto and Association of Community Centre Boards of Management to add a new Schedule 11, Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre, as outlined in Attachment 2 to the report (May 26, 2026) from the Executive Director, Social Development and General Manager, Parks and Recreation.

2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, in consultation with the City Clerk, to conduct the recruitment and screening of members of the inaugural Board of Management in accordance with the City's Public Appointments Policy, and to make recommendations to Community Council for approval in 2027.

3. City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with the City Solicitor and Social Development, to make any needed technical or stylistic changes necessary to update the Relationship Framework for the City of Toronto and Association of Community Centre Boards of Management, including to update and correct bylaw and statutory references, and titles of City officials in the first quarter of 2027.

4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development and General Manager, Parks and Recreation, to report back in the first quarter of 2027 with amendments to the former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, Community and Recreation Centres, to update references to statutory authorities, City staff positions and notice and appointment requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no immediate financial impact from the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report.

Capital Investment:

The Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre will be co-located within the redeveloped Lawrence Heights Community Recreation and Child Care Centre, a significant civic investment delivered through the Toronto Community Housing-led Lawrence Heights Revitalization. This facility will integrate community development, recreation, and child care services. It will be the first Association of Community Centres (AOCCs) to leverage a city-redevelopment and operate under the Integrated Facility Model endorsed by City Council through the [Strategic Expansion of the Association of Community Centres](#) report.

The new Lawrence Heights Community Recreation and Child Care Centre will replace the existing Lawrence Heights Community Centre, which will remain operational until construction of the new facility is complete. Capital funding for the development will be administered by Parks and Recreation, which retains responsibility for delivering the co-located AOCC and recreation centre project.

Funding for the final phases of the Lawrence Heights Community Centre redevelopment is included in the 2026–2035 Capital Budget and Plan, including capital funding required to construct the child care centre, the recreation facilities and AOCC-related space, with construction anticipated to begin in 2027. The AOCC will be fully developed into the Lawrence Heights Community Centre and represents an immaterial percentage of the Centre's total square footage, allowing for the co-location of the AOCC.

Ongoing Operating Budget Impact:

The establishment of a volunteer Board of Management in 2027 will not result in incremental impact on the 2027 and 2028 operating budgets. The creation of a new AOCC will result in material operating impacts in future years. The establishment and sustainability of the AOCC will be a multi-year initiative, requiring ongoing funding to support core administrative and governance functions in accordance with the relationship framework between the City of Toronto and the AOCC.

Operational planning will be addressed through the forthcoming AOCC Facilities and Operations Plan. This plan will serve as the primary mechanism for defining multi-year

operating requirements, transition resources, and implementation timelines to support the phased establishment and ongoing operation of AOCCs.

For the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre, core administrative funding is proposed to be phased in gradually, subject to annual Board requests and City Council approval in future budget processes. The projected [Core Operating Phasing \(EC24.2\)](#) aligns funding with governance activation, staffing ramp-up, and the expansion of operational responsibilities.

Incremental budget pressure would begin in 2028 at \$0.1 million to support basic startup needs, including hiring the Executive Director, activating governance, and establishing essential administrative systems. As the Centre transitions to full operations, incremental budget pressure is projected to reach approximately \$1.9 million annually, reflecting mature operations and sustained service demand.

Further assessment and due diligence are required to fully define the scope, costs, and delivery approach. Any proposed funding commitments will be subject to the City's affordability metrics and capital prioritization framework, and approval through the applicable future budget process.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The AOCC Implementation Strategy ([EC24.2](#)) introduces AOCCs as a viable community development option within Toronto's broader network of social infrastructure. AOCCs serve as catalysts for neighbourhood transformation—advancing social cohesion, community resilience, wellbeing, and civic engagement for equity-deserving groups. The establishment of the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre will have a positive equity impact by enhancing access to inclusive, community-based programs and access to community development facilities for children, youth, families, and seniors in the Eglinton-Lawrence area.

By establishing a new AOCC, the City is taking a targeted, place-based approach to addressing documented service gaps and systemic barriers in Lawrence Heights. Local demographic trends reveal a convergence of social and economic vulnerabilities, including higher concentrations of low-income seniors, children and youth, and a large proportion of residents who identify as visible minorities and first-generation immigrants. A significant reliance on rental and subsidized housing, combined with median household incomes markedly below the City average, contributes to heightened financial and social instability. Taken together with strong cultural diversity and a growing youth population, these conditions result in elevated demand for accessible, community-based supports, particularly for seniors living alone, young people facing limited education and employment pathways, and households experiencing housing precarity and income insecurity.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 25 and 26, 2026, City Council adopted the report entitled “Lawrence Heights Revitalization (Phase 2) - Toronto Builds - Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications - Decision Report – Approval”, permitting the second phase of the Lawrence Heights Revitalization, which includes the Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.PH28.4>

On November 12, 13 and 14, 2025, City Council adopted the Association of Community Centre Expansion Implementation Strategy. The Strategy establishes AOCCs as a viable community development model and advances place-based assessment guidelines, scalable facility models, and the development of an AOCC Facilities and Operations Plan to modernize existing AOCCs and advance citywide expansion efforts.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EC24.2>

On July 25, 2024, City Council adopted the report, entitled “Targeted Expansion of the Association of Community Centres to Support Community Development in Toronto”, and directed Executive Director, Social Development and other relevant divisions and agencies to report back in the third quarter of 2025, with recommendations to advance the City of Toronto’s Association of Community Centres Expansion Framework, including an Implementation Plan and Resourcing Strategy.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EC14.7>

On November 8, 2023, City Council adopted the report, entitled "Association of Community Centres Settlement of Operating Results for the Year Ended 2021", and directed the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to undertake a feasibility study on opportunities to add new AOCCs in the City, funded from unspent AOCC funds for 2021, and to report on the scope of the study to the January 11, 2024 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX9.6>

At its meeting on April 12 and 13, 2011, City Council adopted the report entitled "Managing Through Agencies and Corporations," which requested the City Manager review the practices and governance of several City agencies, including AOCCs. Council endorsed accountability mechanisms, such as requiring Council to approve the board bylaws of all agencies that regulate the internal conduct of the agency's business and affairs.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2011.EX4.6>

At its meeting on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, City Council adopted the Relationship Framework for the City and AOCC Boards of Management, which delegates authority to AOCC Boards to oversee the business and affairs of their community centres, establishes the scope of Board responsibilities and reporting requirements, and sets out the conditions and supports that foster an effective and collaborative governance relationship between the City and AOCC Boards.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/pof7rpt/cl017.pdf>

On April 14, 15, and 16, 2003, City Council adopted Policy and Finance Committee Report 3, Clause 11, entitled "Governance Review of the Association of Community Centres (AOCCs)", which reaffirmed the City's responsibility to provide core administrative funding to AOCCs, established the expectation that AOCC Boards operate within Council-approved budgets, and confirmed that administrative surpluses be returned to the City, while any deficits require Council approval to be addressed. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/council/cc030414/pof3rpt/cl011.pdf>

COMMENTS

Advancing Community Development in Lawrence Heights

AOCCs as Social Infrastructure

The City of Toronto has ten community centres that are managed, operated, and maintained by volunteer Boards of Management, collectively known as the Association of Community Centres (AOCCs). These Centres are multi-purpose facilities that provide public space, programs, and services to enhance the quality of life for the communities they serve. AOCC staff are City employees who carry out programming approved by the Board of Management.

The City Council-adopted [AOCC Expansion Framework](#) (2024.EC14.7) and [Implementation Strategy](#) (2025.EC24.2) affirm the AOCC model as essential social infrastructure that advances equity, social cohesion, and neighbourhood resilience. Lawrence Heights provides the first opportunity to apply the AOCC Expansion Framework and Implementation Strategy by leveraging a significant City-led redevelopment in an area with demonstrated social need.

Building Lasting Social Infrastructure through the Lawrence Heights Revitalization

The [Lawrence Heights Revitalization](#) is a Toronto Community Housing (TCHC)-led, multi-phase redevelopment initiative that is transforming one of the City of Toronto's largest social housing communities into a mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhood, in alignment with Council-approved planning and housing objectives. The revitalization includes replacing 1,208 TCHC rent-geared-to-income housing units, delivering 4,000 new market units, reconfiguring the public street network to improve connectivity, and creating new parks, open spaces, and community-serving amenities.

In addition to physical redevelopment, the revitalization is guided by the City Council-approved [Lawrence Heights Social Development Plan](#) (2012.CD14.10), a community-informed framework that ensures neighbourhood transformation is accompanied by sustained investment in social cohesion, community leadership, service access, safety, and economic opportunity. The Social Development Plan recognizes that large-scale redevelopment places pressure on existing residents and service systems, and affirms the need for accessible, locally grounded social infrastructure to support residents through periods of change and in the long term.

An AOCC Facility will Address Community Needs in Lawrence Heights

Understanding Community Need and AOCC Suitability in Lawrence Heights

Lawrence Heights is located within two City of Toronto [Social Planning Neighbourhoods](#): Yorkdale-Glen Park (31) and Englemount-Lawrence (32)—both designated as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) under the City Council-approved [Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy \(2014.CD27.5\)](#). Demographic analysis highlights a community characterized by strong cultural diversity, growing youth and senior populations, and significant socio-economic pressures.

The application of the AOCC [Place-Based Assessment Guidelines](#) identifies Lawrence Heights as exhibiting both elevated community need and strong suitability for targeted investment in community development. Key indicators reflect pronounced socio-economic pressures—higher than the City of Toronto averages—including labour market vulnerability, housing affordability challenges, and heightened demand for youth, senior, and adult supports, alongside a limited supply of stable community service space, with many services operating from precarious locations or short-term facilities. At the same time, population density, strong transit accessibility, and the scale of ongoing redevelopment support the long-term viability.

Taken together, these conditions provide a clear, evidence-based rationale for applying the AOCC model in Lawrence Heights as an appropriate response to documented community needs, service gaps, and sustained neighbourhood change.

Application of the AOCC Integrated Facility Model in Lawrence Heights

A central component of the Lawrence Heights revitalization is the redevelopment of the Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre, approved by City Council as part of Phase 2 of the Lawrence Heights Revitalization ([2026.PH28.4](#)). The Centre is a four-storey, approximately 80,000-square-foot facility that will include a 10,000-square-foot child care centre. It is intended to serve more than 48,000 residents and will replace the existing community centre, expanding capacity to meet sustained population growth.

In this context, the AOCC's Integrated Facility Model, as outlined in the AOCC Expansion Implementation Strategy ([2025.EC24.2](#)), provides a governance and service-delivery framework that co-locates an AOCC within a newly developed or redeveloped City-owned Community Recreation Centre. This model supports the delivery of both community development and recreation services within a single civic asset and is particularly suited to neighbourhoods with high population density, demonstrated service gaps, and significant public investment in new or revitalized social infrastructure.

Defined Service Roles within the Integrated Facility Model

The model establishes a clear, complementary approach to service delivery, with distinct roles for the AOCC and Parks and Recreation. Consistent with the AOCC [Expansion Framework](#), the AOCC will lead community development functions, including resident engagement, partnerships with grassroots groups and organizations, the facilitation of equitable access to space, and the delivery of community- and social-

focused programming. To support these functions, the model includes approximately 1,500 square feet of co-located, exclusive-use space for AOCC administration and programming, complemented by access to recreation facilities.

Parks and Recreation will deliver a comprehensive range of core recreation services for children, youth, adults, and seniors, including sports, fitness, aquatics, and general interest programming. Services will be offered through a mix of registered and drop-in formats to support broad and equitable participation. In addition, Parks and Recreation will provide structured programs, such as After-School Recreation Care and CampTO, to support families and enhance year-round recreational opportunities.

A shared facilities agreement will formalize coordination between the AOCC and Parks and Recreation, ensuring clear service roles, effective and efficient use of space, and a seamless, cohesive experience for residents accessing both community development and recreation services.

Advancing Community Development Through the AOCC Model in Lawrence Heights

In alignment with the AOCC [Expansion Framework](#) and [Implementation Strategy](#), the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre will operationalize community development outcomes by prioritizing the needs of populations facing systemic barriers—including children and families, youth, seniors, and newcomers. Programming and service delivery will continue to be refined through ongoing community engagement, consultation with Social Development, the Program Advisory Body, and future governance by the Board of Management, ensuring the Centre remains responsive, inclusive, and aligned with Council-approved policy objectives. Table 1 outlines the proposed programs for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre and the corresponding community development priorities.

Table 1. Proposed Community Development Priorities for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre

Program Focus	Community Development Outcomes & Service Priorities	Examples of Program Types ¹
Children and Families	Strengthening early childhood development, family stability, and social inclusion by improving access to coordinated, culturally responsive supports that reduce barriers to participation and enhance family wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EarlyON programs and family drop-ins - After-school and summer programs - Parenting workshops and family skill-building - Settlement and newcomer services - Family health and wellness initiatives
Youth	Supporting positive youth development, community belonging, and economic participation by creating safe spaces, pathways to skills development, leadership, and employment, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth drop-in and programming - Mentorship and leadership development - Employment readiness and entrepreneurship initiatives - Technology and digital skills programs

¹ Illustrative program types reflect preliminary service priorities informed by place-based assessment and early community engagement. Final programming will be determined by the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre Board of Management, informed by the Program Advisory Body, partner contributions, funding availability, and coordination with Parks and Recreation.

Program Focus	Community Development Outcomes & Service Priorities	Examples of Program Types ¹
	opportunities for meaningful engagement during and outside of school hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food security and life-skills programs
Adults	Enhancing community resilience and economic stability among adults by reducing social isolation, strengthening skills and employability, and facilitating access to mental health, learning, and community participation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital literacy and computer training - Employment preparation and entrepreneurship initiatives - Mental health and wellness support - Cultural and community-building programs - English conversation circles
Seniors	Promoting healthy aging, social connection, and independent living by addressing isolation and access barriers through inclusive, age-friendly programs and practical supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology and digital literacy support - Walking clubs and wellness activities - Seniors' cafés and social programs - Form-filling and system navigation - Intergenerational activities

Establishing the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre

Intentional and Ongoing Community-Centred Input

In October 2025, Social Development, in collaboration with Parks and Recreation, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), and the local Councillor's office, hosted a community engagement event to introduce the AOCC model and support early program planning for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre. The event featured breakout sessions inviting residents and community stakeholders to share input on service priorities, community needs, and future programming opportunities. Building on this engagement, Social Development launched an open application process for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre Program Advisory Body (PAB), which received more than 50 applications from local community members and stakeholders.

Members of the PAB were selected through a standardized evaluation process to ensure broad representation and meaningful inclusion of lived experience. Applications were assessed on connection to the Lawrence Heights community, demonstrated interest and relevant skills, lived experience of poverty and intersecting barriers, diversity of identity, and the ability to contribute unique perspectives. Launched in January 2026, the PAB comprises 23 members, including 15 TCHC tenants, six youth, two seniors, six service providers, and five former members of the Parks and Recreation Community Advisory Committee who contributed to the design of the new Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre.

To date, the PAB has advised on local needs, priorities, and service gaps, and has provided feedback on program concepts, community engagement approaches, and the proposed name for the new AOCC. Through this work, the PAB has helped ensure that AOCC planning reflects neighbourhood context, lived experience, and community perspectives, while laying the groundwork for future operational and governance structures. Participation in the PAB also serves as a capacity-building opportunity,

supporting the development of governance, leadership, and community engagement skills that may position participants to serve on the future Board of Management.

A New Board of Management, Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre

Establishing the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre requires City Council's approval of a bylaw (Attachment 1) to create a new Board of Management and to set out its composition, authorities, and delegated responsibilities. The new Board will operate in accordance with the former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, *Community and Recreation Centres*, and the City Council-approved AOCC [Relationship Framework](#).

The Board of Management will oversee the governance, strategic direction, and community-focused mandate of the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre, which will operate as a local City board with delegated authority from City Council. Its role will include establishing policies, guiding program priorities, ensuring financial accountability, and advancing community development objectives aligned with Council-approved frameworks and local community needs. The Board will be composed of 12 members in total, including 11 appointed members of the public and the Ward Councillor by right of office, consistent with City Council direction ([2011.EX4.7](#)). In keeping with AOCC governance requirements, a majority of public members must reside within the Centre's approved catchment area.

For the inaugural Board, public members will be selected through an open, transparent, and equitable recruitment process administered in accordance with the City's Public Appointments Policy, in collaboration with the City Clerk's Office and Social Development. Outreach will prioritize candidates from the Lawrence Heights, Neptune, and Lotherton communities and seek a balance of lived experience and professional expertise. Candidates will be assessed on governance, financial oversight, community leadership, and alignment with the AOCC's mandate. Final appointments are subject to Community Council approval. Afterward, Board members will participate in a comprehensive orientation led by the City Manager's Office and Social Development to support effective governance and operational readiness. Future Board appointments will follow the process set out in the Relationship Framework.

A Community-Informed Catchment Area to Maximize Service Impact

Under the AOCC [Relationship Framework](#), each AOCC operates within a defined catchment area established by its Board of Management to ensure services are locally responsive and accessible. City Council approval is required when changes to a catchment area would result in a material financial impact on an AOCC's administrative funding, including a 10% increase or decrease in the catchment population.

As outlined in the AOCC Implementation Strategy ([EC24.2](#)), there is no standardized formula for determining catchment area boundaries. Catchment areas are established on a case-by-case basis, informed by key considerations such as geographic reach, identified service gaps, alignment with planning frameworks, and community input.

The Lawrence Heights PAB defined the catchment area for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre (Attachment 3). It is bounded to the north by Lawrence Avenue West and Briar Hill Avenue, to the south by Highway 401, to the east by Bathurst Street and William R. Allen Road, and to the west by Dufferin Street and Caledonia Road. This catchment aligns with the Social Planning Neighbourhood boundaries of Yorkdale–Glen Park (31) and Englemount–Lawrence (32), both designated as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). It also includes the Lawrence Heights Revitalization Area, the adjacent Neptune and Lotherton communities, and surrounding neighbourhoods with documented service gaps and limited access to social infrastructure.

Financial and Strategic Planning

The redevelopment of the Lawrence Heights Community Recreation Centre and Child Care Centre, scheduled to open in 2030, offers an opportunity to implement the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre through a co-located approach. Planning and operational readiness will align with key milestones to enable timely service activation.

Phased Governance and Leadership to Support Organizational Startup

Staffing for new AOCCs is phased to support effective governance, organizational startup, and operational readiness. A Board of Management is expected to be established in 2027 to oversee the recruitment of an Executive Director, with the role commencing in 2028. The Executive Director will provide overall organizational leadership to support the Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities and to guide the Centre's strategic direction as it transitions to operations.

Approximately two years before opening, the Executive Director will build the foundational operational team to support service launch and organizational readiness. Initial staffing will focus on core management and support functions across programs, operations, fundraising, partnerships, and finance, supplemented by administrative and coordination roles. Staffing levels will scale as opening approaches to ensure the AOCC is fully operational, financially sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

Phased Resourcing Strategy to Support Launch, Program Readiness, and Sustainability

Under the AOCC [Relationship Framework](#), the City must provide facilities and core administrative funding to AOCCs, while AOCC Boards are accountable for generating and managing program revenues through fundraising, space rentals, and membership and user fees. For the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre, core administrative funding is proposed to be phased in gradually, subject to annual Board requests and City Council approval in future budget processes. The projected [Core Operating Phasing \(EC24.2\)](#) aligns funding with governance activation, staffing ramp-up, and the expansion of operational responsibilities. Funding would begin in 2028 at \$0.1 million to support basic startup needs, including hiring the Executive Director, establishing governance, and setting up essential administrative systems. As the Centre transitions to full operations, funding is projected to reach approximately \$1.9 million annually, reflecting mature operations and sustained service demand.

Program Specific Funding to Support Preopening Program Development

Consistent with the Relationship Framework and the AOCC Expansion [Implementation Strategy](#), fundraising will be a critical component of the Centre's long-term program sustainability. New AOCC Boards are encouraged to pursue charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency, which enables issuance of tax receipts, expands eligibility for grants, and attracts private donations to support programs and capital enhancements.

The AOCC will proactively pursue program-specific funding opportunities to support early program development and the phased hiring of frontline staff. Securing external program funding during the pre-opening period will support early recruitment and onboarding, pilot testing and refinement of program models, and overall operational readiness, enabling efficient activation of services upon the Centre's opening.

Next Steps for AOCC Activation and Implementation

To advance the establishment and activation of the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre, the following steps will be undertaken:

1. **Continued Community Engagement and Needs Identification:** The Lawrence Heights Program Advisory Body will continue to lead community engagement to identify service gaps, access barriers, and emerging priorities, ensuring that future AOCC programs and services are grounded in local needs and aligned with the Lawrence Heights Social Development Plan.
2. **Board-Led Policy and Strategic Planning:** Following its establishment, the AOCC Board of Management will lead policy development and initiate a strategic planning process to guide the Centre's next phase of development. This process will produce a *Program and Service Plan* and a *Fundraising Plan*, informed by community input, City policies, environmental scans, and stakeholder engagement, and approved by the Board to support long-term sustainability and accountability.
3. **Operations and Space Coordination with Parks and Recreation:** Parks and Recreation will coordinate with the AOCC Board of Management on space use and programming at the Community Recreation Centre. A shared facilities agreement will be developed to outline roles and responsibilities, facility maintenance and management approaches, scheduling of programs in recreation spaces, labour relations considerations, health and safety requirements, and principles to enable equitable community access.
4. **Integration into the AOCC Facilities and Operations Plan:** All operational costs and resourcing requirements for the Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre will be incorporated into the multi-year AOCC Facilities and Operations Plan, with a planned report to the Economic and Community Development Committee in 2028.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Amendment to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 25, Community and Recreation Centres

Attachment 2: Amendment to the Relationship Framework for the City of Toronto and Association of Community Centre Boards of Management

Attachment 3: Lawrence Heights Neighbourhood Centre Catchment Area Map