

Social Planning Toronto

2 Carlton Street, Suite 1720
Toronto, ON M5B 1J3

April 8, 2026

Re: EC27.3: City of Toronto Inclusive Economic Development Framework

Dear members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

Social Planning Toronto (SPT) is a nonprofit community organization that leads community research and advocacy to improve equity, social justice and quality of life in Toronto. Our team has helped to inform the City of Toronto's Inclusive Economic Development Framework, which is currently under review as Agenda Item [EC27.3: City of Toronto Inclusive Economic Development Framework](#), with the goal of advancing community wealth building initiatives.

Despite being one of the wealthiest cities in the world, Toronto is the [child poverty capital](#) of Canada and holds the highest level of [income inequality](#) across the country. In 2025, the City of Toronto released [Sidewalks to Skyline - A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy](#), which established a commitment to developing an Inclusive Economic Development (IED) Framework to ensure economic benefits for communities that have not benefitted from economic growth in the past, such as Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities, and to establish key targets for an inclusive economy, such as household income growing relative to the cost of living. Over the past year, the City has committed to a partnered approach to IED that built on input from community partners through a working table to clarify divisional roles and responsibilities that can advance IED through City of Toronto levers, policy and program areas, and determine a governance and accountability model to coordinate and monitor IED initiatives. We thank the City for embarking on this very important work and including SPT in this process.

The strength of the IED Framework lies in its ability to evaluate the Action Plan for Toronto's Economy in its commitment to advancing the social and economic rights of Toronto's residents, as opposed to simply focusing on economic growth. It will also be important to ensure the framework upholds its commitment to democratic processes that are accountable to communities that have not historically benefitted from economic growth. For SPT, we are particularly interested in the framework's principle of creating the "conditions for communities and workers to build wealth and for wealth to remain and circulate in the local economy." Over the past year, SPT alongside Evenings & Weekends Consulting has been working with the City of Toronto and the Atkinson Foundation to understand the history and future of [Community Wealth Building](#) (CWB) in Toronto. CWB is a transformative approach to IED that focuses on democratic control and community ownership of local assets, and the City of Toronto can play a critical role advancing this work.

As we move forward with the IED framework, we look forward to working with the City and other community partners to help shape and enable policies, programs, and resources that support community-led initiatives that transform ownership within Toronto's economy so that it benefits all residents—such as community land trusts, worker co-operatives, credit unions, and non-profit and public ownership models—as well as support organizations, institutions, and businesses that are economically uplifting historically disadvantaged communities—such as living wage employers and cultural legacy businesses. The economy is stronger when it works for all.

The City of Toronto is a key driver of the economy as an employer, purchaser, builder, land owner, policy maker, and funder, and we hope that this framework can enable the City to look internally and leverage its own tools to advance inclusive employment and raise the floor of working conditions, such as building commitments towards living wages in the public sector and adequately resourcing contracts supported by public funds to uphold this commitment.

To advance the framework, we recommend that the City of Toronto continue its democratic and partnered approach to IED by convening the Inclusive Economic Development Working Table on a regular basis to guide and inform the implementation of the IED Framework, including an ongoing review of its indicators and targets. We also recommend that the City of Toronto expand the membership of the working table to include community wealth building practitioners, such as community land trusts, social enterprises, co-operatives, living wage networks, and anchor institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ms" followed by a flourish.

Mercedes Sharpe Zayas
Project Manager, Social Planning Toronto