



City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee
Date: January 16th 2026

Subject: Letter of Support for a Non-Profit-Led Development at 9 Shortt Street, Eglinton West's Little Jamaica

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee and CreateTO,

The City of Toronto's proposal for 9 Shortt Street presents a vital opportunity to create deeply affordable housing, equitable community spaces, and meaningful economic opportunities in Toronto's Little Jamaica, a neighbourhood experiencing displacement pressures and cultural erasure. We commend the City of Toronto, Councillor Mike Colle and CreateTO for advancing this project.

As CreateTO and Toronto City Council work to prepare this site for future development, which will include the release of an eventual Request for Proposals (RFP), the Little Jamaica Community Land Trust (LJCLT) is requesting that future development at 9 Short Street to be non-profit led and community-serving.

The LJCLT is a Black-led, -serving and -focused community land trust with a mandate to ensure that the cultural legacy of Little Jamaica remains in place throughout accelerating development processes and that the people that make this community home are not displaced in the process. Through our work we are committed to stewarding community assets and resources that allow for self-determination and the creation of thriving Black communities.

The Eglinton West/Little Jamaica neighbourhood has long been a cultural and economic anchor for Toronto's Black community. Our community is under threat of being displaced, as documented by years of community-led research and advocacy. This includes Black Urbanism TO's *A Black Business Conversation on Planning for the Future (2020) Report* which led to the incorporation of the LJCLT, alongside the on-the-ground advocacy of ReclaimRebuildEgWest.

Together, we have documented the displacement of Black-owned businesses due to the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, COVID-19 and gentrification pressures from planning policies such as EglintonConnects. Our work has also identified a core issue, which is

that planning processes that fail to meaningfully engage Black communities, leads to cultural erasure and highest and best use approaches that prioritize profit over people.

Over the past five years, we have been successful at working with our local City Councillors including Councillors Josh Matlow and Mike Colle to advance several motions that prioritize local affordability, community-led planning and community ownership in Little Jamaica. This includes 2020.MM24.36 passed by Council in 2020 to initiate the Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan, a local Planning Framework and a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment. Other motions, such as EC29.8 and EC.12.14 have also been brought forward to advance economic and social wellbeing through programmatic support for Black business owners.

As the Eglinton Crosstown LRT nears an official opening, we have a responsibility to ensure that new development actively repairs harm and builds genuine community wealth. Selecting a non-profit, community-rooted partner for 9 Shortt Street is the most direct way to demonstrate the City's commitment to these goals.

Drawing inspiration from the successful community-led framework for the Parkdale Hub West Block RFP which resulted in the selection of the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT), as well as the precedent set at 140 Merton Street, where the City selected an Indigenous-led non-profit to deliver seniors' housing, we believe 9 Shortt Street must follow a similar model for the benefit of Toronto's Black community.

Specifically, we urge the City to:

1. Prioritize a Non-Profit Development Partner

The future RFP for the 9 Shortt Street site should explicitly require that the development partner be a non-profit housing provider, a community housing co-operative, or a Black-led housing organization with deep roots in Toronto. As demonstrated in the Parkdale Hub RFP, such providers are best positioned to deliver housing that remains affordable in perpetuity (40-99 years) and in ways that are responsive to the social and cultural fabric of local communities. This would also ensure that culturally relevant services could be provided to new and existing residents, following in the precedent set when the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation became the development partner at 140 Merton Street.

2. Ensure Non-Profit Operation of Commercial and Amenity Spaces

The proposed 5,000 sq ft of retail/community space and 12,000 sq ft of outdoor amenity space should be operated by a non-profit entity to ensure community needs guide their use. These spaces should serve as hubs for local cultural programming, small business incubation, community services, and gathering much like the community agency spaces embedded in the Parkdale Hub.

3. Embed Long-Term Affordability and Community Benefits

We support the City's commitment to 20-30% affordable units on this site, but urge that this housing be affordable based on peoples income's in alignment with the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan. Additionally, the project should include a Community Economic Benefits Plan, as required in the Parkdale Hub RFP, that prioritizes local hiring, procurement from Black-owned businesses, and workforce development for equity-deserving groups. Non-profit organizations like the African Canadian Contractors Association and Toronto Community Benefits Network have made sure there is a successful bridge between local procurement processes and marginalized communities for decades across the City of Toronto.

4. Centre Community Voice in Governance

The language of the RFP and selection of a non-profit development partner should also be explicit in working collaboratively with local residents and organizations in the design, operation, and ongoing governance of the buildings. This aligns with the City's commitment in projects like 140 Merton Street, where Indigenous elders and community members were centred in the planning process and the Parkdale Hub site which will draw upon a non-profit housing provider which has strong community governance practices.

In summary, we urge that the Planning and Housing Committee direct CreateTO to structure the upcoming market offering for 9 Shortt Street to explicitly prioritize non-profit, community-based proponents. Together, this development can be a landmark of Toronto's commitment to equitable city-building, one that reflects the resilience, creativity, and vision of the Eglinton West/Little Jamaica community. Let's continue to work together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Anyika Mark
Community Land Trust Coordinator
Little Jamaica Community Land Trust (LJCLT)

Anyika Mark

Relevant City Motions and Items Related to Little Jamaica

- [Black Business Conversation: On Planning for the Future of Black Residents and Businesses on Eglinton West](#)
- [MM24.36 - Supporting Black-Owned and Operated Businesses and Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Eglinton Avenue West's "Little Jamaica"- by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson](#)
- [MM31.11 - Preserving the Past, and Protecting the Future of Little Jamaica - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson](#)
- [Commercial Property Ownership Mechanisms in Little Jamaica](#)
- [Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan Backgrounder by Jay Pitter Placemaking, commissioned by the City of Toronto](#)
- [Little Jamaica & Eglinton West Neighbourhoods](#)
- [EC29.8 - Commercial Property Ownership Mechanisms in Little Jamaica](#)
- [EC12.14 - Supporting Small Business Operators in Little Jamaica](#)