

**Date:** January 31, 2023  
**To:** OUR PARTNERS  
**From:** Laidlaw Foundation

**Subject:** Endorsing the Establishment of Somali Cultural and Recreation Centre Project in Toronto

**Dear Partners,**

Public spaces in neighborhoods are one of our most important civic infrastructures in this city. These spaces provide a central physical location for organizing community services, preserving local history and advancing social contributions. They address recreational needs throughout the seasons, advance artistic expressions, and serve as a social hub for people of all ages and abilities. When planned right, these community spaces also serve as an access point that preserves urban green spaces through important design features and programming that contributes to the overall health and well-being for local communities via outdoor leisure and recreation.

With these principles of sustainable community-building at the core of this initiative, it is our distinct pleasure to offer our endorsement and support for the establishment of the Somali Cultural and Recreation Centre (“Centre”) in Toronto. We commend Toronto City Council for passing a motion in July 2022 that commits to and supports the establishment of this Centre.

This Centre is an important community infrastructure project that will tangibly benefit the vibrant and diverse Somali community in Toronto, Black communities, and the residents of the city at large. We are excited that this Centre will serve as a hub of excellence that preserves and celebrates the immense cultural contributions of Toronto’s Somali community and enhances the cultural fabric of this world-class city. Further, we are hopeful the establishment of this Centre will provide a unique and innovative space for community-based organizations to create, build, and grow.

Most importantly, we support this important initiative because it will create a high-quality, accessible public space that serves as the core of Somali community life in Toronto.

Sincerely,

**Laidlaw Foundation**