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Toronto Community Benefits Network

FOUNDATION DOCUMENT

On Track to Opportunities:

Vision, Commitment and Objectives for
Community Benefit Agreements

OUR VISION AND COMMITMENT

The Toronto Community Benefits Network envisions Toronto as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a prospering economy. Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are a proven approach to achieve this vision.

A CBA will help ensure that a skilled workforce is ready and available for the completion of infrastructure projects by tapping into the capacity of Toronto's diverse communities. A CBA will contribute to the establishment of a shared framework for workforce development that ties together community based organizations, governments, colleges, training agencies, local unions, professional societies and subcontractors involved in the trades, professions, and ancillary industries. By contributing to the capacity of the training and workforce development system to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner today, a CBA will foster a long term commitment to workforce development through existing training delivery agencies and union training programs.

Accessible transit is critical for the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of our city today and into the future. Transit and other infrastructure projects are engines for neighbourhood and environmental improvements.

The expansion of infrastructure that is envisioned for Toronto will result in opportunities for good jobs in construction and operations. It is crucial that all Toronto-

nians have access to economic opportunities stemming from infrastructure investments. A Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) will develop, resource and implement an economic inclusion strategy to ensure that the diversity of the workers on the LRT project reflects the diversity of the residents of Toronto.

Working in tandem with community-based organizations, labour and other partners, a CBA will implement specific strategies, including targets that expand opportunities among historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups. Outreach strategies will be an important part of reaching groups which include: residents in low income neighbourhoods, including Neighbourhood Improvement Areas; urban Aboriginal populations; racialized and newcomer communities; people with disabilities as well as youth and women who are disadvantaged.

As a community network, we commit to working in partnership with Metrolinx and all other partners on a Community Benefit Agreement that can advance our vision for an inclusive, accountable and thriving City where everyone has a safe, clean, and affordable places to live, work, learn and play.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT AGREEMENTS

A CBA is founded on a shared, legally binding commitment between government, the contracting firm and community to build and complete public infrastructure projects through an effective, efficient, transparent, fair and inclusive process that supports good jobs and prevailing industry standards.

The initial focus of applying the Community Benefit Agreement model is around transit expansion in Toronto. After 15 months of negotiations the TCBN was unable to get agreement from the Province of Ontario to include community as a legally binding partner.

In April 2014, the TCBN signed a Community Benefit Framework, under which there is legally binding agreement for a Community Benefit plan between the government (Metrolinx) and the contractor (Crosslinx Transit Solutions).

The Framework provides a process to which the TCBN can hold the two parties accountable to the Community Benefit plan. The TCBN remains committed to developing three-way legally binding Community Benefit Agreements in Ontario.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide equitable economic opportunities that promote economic inclusion through apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in the construction industry create both long term careers and short-term jobs for all Toronto communities. As entry level jobs they offer opportunities to people who are beginning their careers.

Specific measures should include, but not be limited to:

- » Specific targets and timetables in: pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs;
- » Initiatives that enhance construction job awareness for local residents in the communities along the transit lines;
- » An inclusive training strategy within workplaces.

2. Contribute to the integration of skilled newcomers into Professional, Administrative and Technical jobs

Professional, Administrative and Technical (PAT) job categories are part of every major construction project. Many newcomers to Canada have much needed and valued skills, but may lack professional networks to find jobs in their field. The TCBN will work with workforce development agencies to match skilled workers into PAT jobs.

Specific measures should include, but not be limited to:

- » Resourcing the development of a shared framework of community organizations and workforce development agencies geared to Metrolinx opportunities;
- » Initiatives that enhance PAT job awareness for local residents in the communities along the transit lines;
- » Recruitment, training and employment opportunities connected with the Metrolinx expansion must start with engineering and design work and include ancillary roles, in addition to access to jobs.

3. Support social enterprises and other related vehicles to economic inclusion through commitments to social procurement

Social enterprises are businesses that are directly involved in the production and/or selling of goods, services and training for the blended purpose of generating income and achieving social, cultural, and/or environmental aims. A CBA will be integral in fostering the establishment and successful growth of social enterprises affiliated with the LRT project.

Specific measures should include, but not be limited to:

- » Social procurement policies that enable social enterprises to deliver catering, printing, security and post construction services and/or recruitment and training delivery, plus other services;
- » Social procurement practices that encourage staging contracts so that smaller businesses can have access to tendering opportunities.
- » Work with the Social Enterprise sector to ensure that social enterprise companies can opt in to Metrolinx related contract opportunities if they wish.

4. Contribute to neighbourhood and environment improvements through building new infrastructure

Most residents will experience long-term benefits thanks to physical improvements and street beautification as a result of new infrastructure, access to more transit options and diversification of local economies. The 57 acre site of the Mount Dennis Maintenance and Storage Facility allows opportunities for Community Benefits as do lands acquired by Metrolinx for time limited purposes such as works yards, clearance or tunneling access points.

Specific measures should include, but not be limited to:

- » The Mount Dennis (Weston Road and Eglinton) Maintenance and Storage Facility will be built to a high environmental standard and the former Kodak Employees Building preserved as a resource centre for jobs, training and social innovation.
- » The Yorkgate (Finch West and Jane) Maintenance and Storage Facility will be built to a high environmental standard and include space for community use.
- » The CBA will commit parties to work with appropriate levels of government to mitigate gentrification along the transit lines, and look for opportunities to build affordable housing.

5. Ensure clear commitments and accountability from all parties to deliver to the CBA

Metrolinx and TCBN will work with key stakeholders to finalize a strategy for operationalizing CBAs. It will be built on the shared commitment by all parties to achieve the objectives of the CBA within the context of successfully delivering on Metrolinx project deliverables. The CBA will define the specific roles and responsibilities of Metrolinx and its subcontractors, labour/trades, and other key stakeholders in the Agreement.

Specific measures should include, but not be limited to:

- » A monitoring process to be carried out by the Toronto Community Benefits Network and Metrolinx;
- » Details of how and when signatory partners will be evaluated;
- » Assignment of a lead person who will be responsible for the implementation of the CBA at each of the main project stakeholders;
- » A resource strategy that enables the Agreement's five objectives to be achieved.

Acknowledgement

The original Foundation Document was produced by Karen Lior and Patrick Rettig of the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group (TWIG). Subsequent revisions resulted from a 2-day workshop with community members, experts and key informants organized by the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) April 27-28 2013, and was adopted by the May 22 2013 General Meeting of the TCBN.

The Foundation Document was revised by the February 22 2016 TCBN General Meeting.