



Update on Yellow Creek / Vale of Avoca

Date: October 30, 2017

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 22 - St. Paul's and Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to the request from the September 9, 2016 Parks and Environment Committee on the feasibility and process to develop a Master Plan for the Yellow Creek and Vale of Avoca area. The Vale of Avoca are the ravine lands surrounding Yellow Creek in Ward 22 - St. Paul's and Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale. It is a highly valued parkland space that includes vital infrastructure such as trails, stairs, bridges, sewers and other public facilities normally found in Toronto ravines.

The Ravine Strategy, approved by City Council on October 2, 2017, will guide the management of Toronto's ravine system. Through the application of the Ravine Strategy Prioritization Framework, the City will be able to prioritize areas where protecting ecosystems while managing recreation use and improving access is needed and to start to identify opportunities for collaboration with internal and external partners.

As part of their Council Approved 2017-2026 Capital Budget and Plan, Toronto Water will initiate a Geomorphic Systems Master Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) for Yellow Creek. This study will recommend a long-term plan to address erosion and protection of existing critical culvert, sewer, and watermain infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. The Parks and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts associated with adopting the recommendations in this report.

Funding for the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan Environmental Assessment described in this report is included in the Toronto Water 2017 Approved Capital Budget and 2018-2026 Capital Plan.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of September 9, 2016, the Parks and Environment Committee considered item PE13.6 and requested that the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A report on the feasibility and process to develop a Master Plan for the Vale of Avoca (Yellow Creek).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PE13.6>

At its meeting on October 2, 2017, City Council adopted EX27.8 with amendments, a new Ravine Strategy for managing Toronto's 11,000-hectare ravine system.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX27.8>

COMMENTS

On October 2, 2017 City Council approved a comprehensive Ravine Strategy. This strategy provides a detailed framework to guide decision making based on a set of key principles to ensure the ecological health of Toronto's ravines so they are fully protected and maintained for everyone's long-term use. The Ravine Strategy Prioritization Framework, which accompanied the Ravine Strategy, outlined how priority areas would be identified to guide future planning and budget exercises aimed at ensuring the protection of these natural spaces, while offering safe and sustainable opportunities for people to connect with, contribute to, and celebrate the ravines. This prioritization framework would be applied as part of the 2019-2029 capital budget process.

In addition, Toronto Water will begin a Geomorphic Systems Master Plan Environmental Assessment study (GSMP EA) for Yellow Creek, starting in early 2018. This Yellow Creek GSMP EA is expected to take approximately three years to complete and will take into consideration past and current erosion control plans, assessments and studies, and identify opportunities and constraints for the watercourse (Yellow Creek) and infrastructure within and adjacent to the stream channel. The focus of this Yellow Creek GSMP EA is to develop an in depth understanding of the erosive conditions and risks within and near to the watercourse, and to develop recommendations that will manage the impact of the erosive forces on infrastructure that interacts directly with the watercourse system. The Toronto Water Yellow Creek GSMP EA will include input and review from Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PFR) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). As part of the GSMP EA process, stakeholders, community members

and other divisions and agencies will also be invited to participate in public information sessions and provide input.

Complementing the principles of the City's Ravine Strategy, the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA can be used as a guide in the planning of future studies and implementation measures. Subsequent studies and activities will need to be planned and included within future capital budget submissions, for 2019 and beyond, to satisfy all of the Ravine Strategy's guiding principles for the Vale of Avoca area. The establishment of a working group, comprised of relevant community stakeholders would be created to support the studies and efforts required to address ravine related, as opposed to watercourse related, issues including public access points and restoration of the terrestrial ecology.

The implementation of recommendations from the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA, as the study is expected to take three years to complete, will be coordinated with other works that may be planned for the Vale of Avoca area. This coordinated approach will be undertaken to minimize neighbourhood and ecological impacts to the overall ravine system, thereby proceeding in alignment with the Ravine Strategy and the City's multi-divisional objectives.

In addition to Toronto Water's Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA, PFR is currently undertaking forest management initiatives (ash removal and associated restoration), ongoing maintenance and repair of park infrastructure and a geotechnical slope investigation in partnership with TRCA in the Vale of Avoca.

CONTACT

Ray Vendrig, Manager, Urban Forest Renewal, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Tel: 416-392-5378, E-mail: rvendri@toronto.ca

Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Tel: 416-392-1894, Email: Jason.Doyle@toronto.ca

Graham Harding, Director, Water Infrastructure Management, Toronto Water
Tel: 416-397-4631, E-mail: Graham.Harding@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Janie Romoff
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation