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Parks & Environment Committee

Re: Yellow Creek/Vale of Avoca - Update

Dear Chair & Committee Members,

Wards 22 and 27 are home to some of Toronto's best-used ravine and trail infrastructure. These natural features are important green spaces and critical environmental assets. Our ravines channel storm water safely into Lake Ontario, provide healthy community spaces, important natural habitats, serve as a place of respite for residents, and as a connecting network for our communities. Unfortunately, in spite of all that our ravines do for us, Toronto has been falling behind in keeping these assets healthy and stable. Yellow Creek and the Vale of Avoca are prime examples of a ravine space that has been ignored for too long.

With the request of neighbouring communities, the Parks and Environment Committee supported our previous motion to undertake a report on the feasibility and process to develop a Master Plan for the Yellow Creek and Vale of Avoca area. The intention of this Master Plan was to undertake a review of ravine trail conditions, assets and maintenance beyond the scope of geomorphic systems and erosion analysis.

The recommended Master Plan EA, as put forward by staff, represents an opportunity to integrate community-identified concerns into a holistic analysis of the ravine's full needs. This is an opportunity both to plan for the long-term investments required in Yellow Creek, as well as to pilot a process and create a template for ravine needs assessments elsewhere in Toronto.

Recommendations:

1. Request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry & Recreation expand the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA to include assets beyond geomorphic systems and erosion-impacted infrastructure, as well as a long-term maintenance plan. This must include, at a minimum, an inventory and state of good repair of all existing facilities, including the trail network, an analysis of ecological integrity, and identification of the departments or agencies responsible for implementing and maintaining all planned improvements.
2. Request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry & Recreation develop the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA in consultation with a working group comprised of relevant community stakeholders and that this working group be formed at the earliest opportunity to inform the EA process for its full duration.
3. Request that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry & Recreation use the Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Master Plan EA as a template for future ravine studies and as a costing model for what is required to bring Toronto's entire ravine system into a good state of ecological repair.

Respectfully submitted,



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