May 14, 2014

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair
and members of the Parks and Environment Committee

Councillors,

Re. Item PE27.1 – Authorization to Enter an Agreement with Evergreen
Regarding Third-Party Fundraising for Lower Don Trail

I am writing on behalf of the West Don Lands Committee to urge you – at
Standing Committee and at Council – to support and adopt the recommendations
of the Acting General Manager Parks, Forestry and Recreation to partner with
Evergreen in fundraising to re-animate the Lower Don Trail.

The link to the ravine system along the Lower Don Trail is key to the West Don Lands Committee’s goal
to promote positive redevelopment of the West Don Lands. We are a coalition of resident, business,
environmental and civil society associations, who have been working for 14 years to build a vibrant,
sustainable community beside the Don River. Today we are seeing our goals realized with the completion
of Corktown Common park and the progress of Canary District, River City and facilities associated with
the Athletes’ Village. When the Pan-Parapan Am Games finish next Summer thousands of new residents
will move into the West Don Lands. They will be using the Lower Don Trail in unprecedented numbers to
lead active lives and connect with Nature.

The Lower Don Trail has been a critical part of the active, healthy lives of a generation living along Don
Valley. Today in many ways, the trail is tired and falling apart. Quite literally parts of it are falling into
the river. But we remember that it was completed more than 20 years ago through the collaborative efforts
of the City – political leaders and staff – and community leaders from Task Force to Bring Back the Don,
cycling groups and others.

This agreement with Evergreen builds upon the collaborative model that built the trail to begin a new era
in engagement between the City and civil society groups to renew the energy and reanimate the will of
citizens to connect with the remarkable city-wide ravine system.

Evergreen is the obvious choice for a partner in this effort. Evergreen has worked since its inception to re-
green our city. They have previously partnered with the City – through Parks, Forestry & Recreation and
Heritage divisions – to rescue and restore the Don Valley Brick Works, making this site a magnet for
locals and visitors to experience healthy urban living in tune with the natural environment. Evergreen has
been an active participant and facilitator for the development of the Lower Don Trail Master Plan, which
guides the work that this partnership anticipates. Evergreen brings to the agreement a powerful track
record as a fundraising force to respect, both for the campaigns’ financial successes and for the integrity
of their management in raising and deploying funds for public goods. Evergreen has developed broad support for their work by reaching out and including community members and groups in their projects and programs.

The West Don Lands Committee looks forward to significant improvements in the Lower Don Trail that would be very challenging to achieve solely through city departmental budgets. The trail is a critical piece of urban infrastructure, and like other infrastructure it needs significant capital investment from time to time, in addition to operating investment that is difficult to maintain when budgets are stretched thin. When thousands of visitors are expected next Summer during the Games, and then thousands more will be moving in to make their homes along the Lower Don, we need to move with resolve to make this trail an amenity we want to show off.

The agreement that this item anticipates is well conceived, in that it operates with a respected partner within a city-wide fundraising policy that ensures accountability and transparency. Most importantly for the West Don Lands Committee, this agreement continues momentum towards building our community into a strong, sustainable one, within a city that is connected, inclusive, healthy, active and beautiful. It begins the renewal of citizen engagement with bringing back a clean, green, accessible Don River.

We urge you to endorse the recommendations before you.

Yours truly,

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cc. Councillor Pam McConnell
Councillor Paula Fletcher
Councillor Mary Fragedakis
Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam