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Board of Health
c/o Nancy Martins
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
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September 21, 2015

RE: HL6.2 Green City: Why Nature Matters to Health

Dear Members of the Board of Health:

I am writing in support of the excellent Toronto Public Health report, *Green City: Why Nature Matters to Health*, which provides a wealth of important information that points to the value of green space in our city and of investing in our parks and communities.

As a charitable organization working throughout the entire City of Toronto to build strong neighbourhoods by improving and animating parks, Park People understands and promotes the benefits of well-maintained, active, high-quality parks and open spaces that become the heart of communities. We have seen firsthand in communities across the city how bringing people out into parks can increase physical activity levels, build connections between neighbours, increase civic engagement, and make our parks more beautiful, safe, and inclusive.

In particular, the Toronto Public Health report outlines the benefits of high-quality and accessible parks and open spaces for vulnerable populations, such as seniors and lower income communities. "Evidence suggests that the health benefits of green space are more pronounced for lower socioeconomic groups and other vulnerable groups," staff note.

This is important information as the City moves forward on TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, also included on today's committee agenda, and its work in the 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. As the report points out, the benefits of parks are wide and varied. Investing in our parks and open spaces and working with communities in those spaces cannot be seen as a frill, but a crucial aspect of creating a healthier, more equitable city.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Harvey".

Dave Harvey
Executive Director, Park People