

## Planning and Growth Management Committee

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**From:** Jake Tobin Garrett <jgarrett@parkpeople.ca>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 12, 2015 4:34 PM  
**To:** Planning and Growth Management Committee  
**Subject:** Toronto Agenda Item 2015.PG4.3  
**Attachments:** Park People\_Bill 73 Response.pdf

**Categories:** Communication

To the Members of the Planning and Growth Management Committee,

Please find attached a letter from Park People to Minister Ted McMeekin regarding the proposed amendments related to the Planning Act introduced through Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 that pertain to parks and open space planning.

Sincerely,  
Jake Tobin Garrett

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**Jake Tobin Garrett**

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Minister Ted McMeekin  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
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Re: *Bill 73: Proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*

Dear Minister Ted McMeekin,

Park People is pleased to see many of the suggested changes within *Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act* related to park planning. Park People recently released a report, *Making Connections: Planning parks and open space networks in urban neighbourhoods*, which touches on some of the issues identified within *Bill 73*. This report can be downloaded at [www.parkpeople.ca/makingconnections](http://www.parkpeople.ca/makingconnections).

We are supportive of the amendment to require municipalities to prepare and adopt a parks plan that measures and outlines the need for parkland, including the requirement to consult with school boards, communities, and other stakeholders. We are also supportive of the amendment to require municipalities to produce an annual report that outlines parkland acquisition account balances and park purchases.

To further strengthen this requirement, we request that:

- Municipalities be required to outline in this annual report how acquisitions relate to the goals and priorities of the adopted parks plan in order to measure and track progress year-to-year.
- The annual report be written in plain language so as to be easily understandable, and clearly posted and shared with the public.

In addition to the changes proposed in *Bill 73*, we suggest further amendments that would help address the challenges of creating parks in municipalities that are growing in density. These suggestions stem from research undertaken for our report, *Making Connections*.

Specifically, we suggest

- Amending *Section 42* to allow funds collected through the cash-in-lieu provision to be spent on licensing lands within hydro corridors to create new parks. In some communities, the best and most cost-effective manner of increasing parkland is within hydro corridors. Currently, these licensing fees are carried within the operating budget, despite the fact that new parks are being provided for communities—a key purpose of *Section 42*.
- Amending *Section 42* to allow more flexibility in how parkland reserve account funds can be spent, specifically recognizing that building new parks and open spaces within the public right-of-way is an allowed use, as well as connections between parks, such as pedestrian bridges. Acquiring new land for parks can be cost prohibitive in some areas, such as downtown Toronto. Many North American cities have turned to the land they own within their public right-of-way to create new parks. Additionally, linking parks together creates a more connected and accessible park system. Clearly indicating that these are an allowed use of *Section 42* funds would provide municipalities with the flexibility to find the most efficient way to create a network of parks and open spaces.

Sincerely,

Dave Harvey  
Executive Director, Park People