



EX27.8.3

Park People

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Jennifer Forkes

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

September 22, 2017

Re: EX27.8 Toronto Ravine Strategy

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

We're pleased to write in support of the Toronto Ravine Strategy and the vital importance of ensuring these unique natural areas remain ecologically resilient so that they can be enjoyed by Torontonians for generations to come. We'd like to highlight four areas that we feel are of particular importance.

1. The recommendation to designate a staff person as a "ravine manager" is a welcome one. As the Ravine Strategy makes clear, the ravines cut across many different divisions, agencies, and organizations and it's critical that there be a point person who is able to coordinate different elements and ensure the principles in the strategy are adhered to and move forward.
2. Without well-defined connections and gateways into the ravine system, residents aren't able to fully take advantage of enjoying these natural spaces. Action 12 of the Strategy calls for a plan to address gaps in the system. It's important that ravine entry points and trails are planned to connect with the wider on-street built and planned cycling network to ensure people coming from neighbourhoods farther from ravines have easy access into the system.
3. As an organization focused on helping people activate the power of parks, we are happy to see a recommendation to create a framework to support community engagement in the ravines. However, this is positioned as a long-term goal of the City. Community engagement is critical to ensuring our ravines are loved—but not loved to death—by creating a sense of shared ownership over these natural assets. We recommend moving this work up in the timeline.
4. We would be excited to be part of the philanthropic leaders table on identifying opportunities for partnerships and philanthropic contributions to protecting and animating our ravines. We would also stress, however, that while philanthropy can play an important role, it is not a replacement for core public funding in our ravines. The Ravine Strategy shows us a great path forward in stewarding the incredible natural asset we have in our ravines, but now it must be followed by investment by the City in implementation of its much-needed actions.

Sincerely,

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

Dave Harvey

Executive Director, Park People

