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Evergreen

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Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee members,

I would like to congratulate you and City Council on this landmark report in support of Toronto's incredible Ravine System. As a supporter of Evergreen, I am thrilled to see the report recommend a new intentional and coordinated framework, vision and approach to the management of Toronto's ravine system. We know that Toronto's Ravine System is one of our greatest assets touching nearly every neighbourhood in Toronto, and providing opportunities for recreation, learning and relaxation for millions of residents in a natural environment.

The adoption of the Ravine Strategy is a crucial step in protecting the natural ecosystem of the Ravines, and plays an important role in mitigating impacts and risks from climate change. The Ravine strategy offers the City of Toronto the opportunity to take bold steps towards conservation, access, new public spaces and parks, natural feature enhancements and flood protection.

It appears well understood that the maintenance and improvements to our ravines and the physical infrastructure located within them is crucial, and yet in a city with competing financial priorities, sustainable financing can be challenging. At the same time, there appears to be recognition that there is significant untapped potential for financial resources and other stewardship support from the private sector to be unlocked in the event that the strategy, planning and the governance of projects is appealing and sound.

Given this, the recommendation to convene a table of "Ravine Leaders" to consider such issues is an opportunity to find the right structures and conditions through which the City may productively partner with, and leverage private philanthropic support, as well as community support for actions to protect, invest in and celebrate this unique and precious asset. There are precedents, both home and abroad, for shared governance structures related to public space that have met with tremendous success.

As I have seen first hand through our collective work on the Lower Don, while progress is being made, we have a long way to go for the true potential of this incredibly valuable space to be fully demonstrated. As we continue to invest in and rapidly densify our urban built environment, equally significant thought and resource must be applied to preserve and thoughtfully utilize our adjacent natural spaces. Our ravine system is the largest and most significant of these, connecting diverse neighbourhoods to each other and their communities to the natural environment.

I urge you and the Executive Committee to support the recommendations outlined in item EX27.8m, and reconfirm your support for a thriving Toronto Ravine System. Few cities in the world have this opportunity.

All the best,

