

Submission by: Harry Jongerden, Executive Director, Toronto Botanical Garden

To: Executive Committee of City Council

Re: Ravine Strategy

September 26, 2017

On behalf of the Board, staff, 1900 members and 500 volunteers of Toronto Botanical Garden, I would like to offer the wholehearted support of our organization to the Ravine Strategy. It is a vision to restore, protect and provide access to our City's most important natural asset. It's a vision that aligns with Toronto Botanical Garden's mission to connect people to plants, and with our vision to become a botanic garden that is renowned not only for its display of nature's beauty, but as a dynamic hub for plant-centred learning, conservation and research.

We commend Council and City staff for your leadership in bringing forward a Ravine Strategy in remarkably short time. The interdisciplinary approach from so many City divisions also provides a template for action that will eliminate silos in order to address many more challenges and opportunities in our city. We are particularly pleased that you are embracing, in this effort, non-profit partner organizations that are capable of mustering money, expertise and grassroots support for an initiative so vast and important that governments look beyond themselves for support.

You have our support. Implementing the Ravine Strategy and creating a viable botanic garden go hand in hand in Toronto. TBG may be the smallest botanic garden in North America, but we have been working in partnership with PF&R staff to create a much bigger and more impactful garden that's capable of becoming one of the world's great botanic gardens. People derive tremendous pleasure and serenity from the beauty we create, but TBG will be renowned for its ravine restoration, for its advancement of conservation biology and for bringing people into an appreciation and understanding of the importance of healthy natural ecosystems to themselves and to all life on earth.

As this all occurs under the umbrella of the Ravine Strategy, and in consideration of Economic Development and Culture's role in developing the strategy and analyzing its economic impact, we wish to make one more point. Some months ago, when Houston announced that it would give an old golf course to the botanical garden society for a new botanic garden, City staff conducted an economic impact study that predicted an annual benefit of \$100,000,000 to the local economy. In Philadelphia this year, the economic impact of the area's botanic gardens was measured at \$252,000,000 annually. Our impact will be of this order of magnitude when the new Toronto Botanical Garden is created within the ravine system. And we will be accomplishing this within a visionary framework that you will have set in place. Thank you for that vision and thank you for this opportunity.

Harry Jongerden

[director@torontobotanicalgarden.ca](mailto:director@torontobotanicalgarden.ca)

416-397-1346