



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICE

September 6, 2019

Councillor James Pasternak and
Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall,
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto, Ontario,
M5H 2N2.

Attn: Ms. Nancy Martins

Dear Councillor Pasternak and Committee Members:

Re: Agenda Item IE 7.8 Toronto Biodiversity Strategy

As an important part of Toronto's fabric, the University of Toronto is pleased to write in support of the Toronto Biodiversity Strategy before you today.

As part of the development of this Strategy, the U of T was pleased to host the Urban Biodiversity Workshop, a two-day event co-hosted by the City and the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design. The first day included a panel discussion with invited experts, while the second day - which was also part of the City's formal consultation process - was a day-long workshop that asked a range of community advocates, stakeholders, subject experts, and students to learn about and to share advice with respect to the draft Biodiversity Strategy. Some 40 persons, from 20 organizations, gave up their time for a full day and participated in the Workshop.

In addition, the University has played an important role in helping to understand the dynamics of Toronto's ravines and the challenges they are facing, through the study of the natural urban systems by members of our Faculty of Forestry over the past summers.

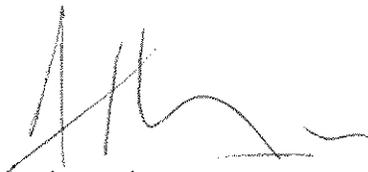
In 2019 the City entered into a partnership with the Faculty to establish an ecological monitoring program for Toronto's ravines and natural areas. Two hundred permanent monitoring plots have been established in ravines and natural areas throughout the city where data will be collected on plants at all spatial layers (ground, shrub, sub-canopy, canopy), on such issues as: floristic quality, invasive species (the type and abundance), woody debris, re-generation of trees and shrubs, and tree health will also be collected. This data will help to define baseline ecological conditions and derive indicators of ecological integrity to track success of management interventions and ecosystem changes over time. This same protocol is also being used by several other municipalities across southern Ontario and will allow for vegetation quality comparisons across larger landscapes.

Masters students from the Faculty have been in the Rosedale ravines this summer, carrying out extensive work on Japanese knotweed and Norway maple, two major invasive species limiting the future health of the City ravines.

It should also be noted that through active forest research and through our teaching programs, we provide extensive expertise in forest ecology and ecosystem management, and as well student training to help build and share the key knowledge to enhance the ecological integrity of the ravines and lives of all Torontonians.

The University is pleased to offer continued support to the City in advancing their Biodiversity Strategy goals and to bring scientific expertise to the restoration of Ecological Integrity and Biodiversity in our ravines.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Thomson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Thomson
Chief of Government Relations

Encl. City of Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy

CC: Meric Gertler, President
Vivek Goel, Vice-President, Research and Innovation