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Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

April 13, 2021

To: City of Toronto, Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee

Dear Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee:

Re: AA10.3 Toronto Ravine Strategy Update and Developing Economic Opportunities for Indigenous Businesses

The Small's Creek community wishes to express our sincere support for the City of Toronto efforts regarding Indigenous economic opportunities through the Toronto Ravine Strategy. We strongly support the initial ideas noted in *AA10.3 Toronto Ravine Strategy Update and Developing Economic Opportunities for Indigenous Businesses*. Rewilding and restoration of Toronto's ravines should be done with consultation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples.

As a local community group we are focused on the protection and stewardship of Small's Creek and Williamson Park Ravines. We welcome Indigenous involvement and insight. We are confident that their participation will enrich our collective understanding of and connection with these precious natural waterways. We value the opportunity to partner with Indigenous Peoples. Toronto ravines offer a bridge to connect with Indigenous Peoples, to respect and re-imagine place, to better tell the truth of the land and water, and to celebrate our love and respect for these wild places together.

The ravines are regularly used as places of education and for hands-on learning. Creating opportunities to educate Torontonians on the importance of this land's Indigenous heritage and sharing ways of engaging with the ravines, which our communities use every day, will ensure that generations to come will grow up with a more fulsome understanding and appreciation of the ravines we all know and love.

We also support initiatives that offer Indigenous Peoples ongoing roles and representation on these lands. Work opportunities could include Indigenous Guardians or Monitors to work alongside Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff and the engagement of Indigenous consultants on a project by project basis.

Meaningful engagement of First Nations would have better equipped the City to engage with Provincial stakeholders for a more sensitive, holistic design solution and the Small's Creek community would not be fighting to protect and preserve the ecology of one of the few remaining open creeks in Toronto as well as, the increasingly rare, 150 year old Red Oaks.

Sincerely,

Friends of Small's Creek

