



James Pasternak
Councillor | York Centre - Downsview

Toronto City Hall
City Hall, 100 Queen St. West, 2nd Floor, A22
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

14 April 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

RE: Indigenous inclusion and consultation in the Toronto Ravines Strategy and Stewardship Manual

Dear Colleagues,

Toronto's ravine system is one of the many unique jewels of our city, a series of distinct urban forests and river systems that play a vital role in sequestering carbon, managing wildlife, mitigating floods, as well as an important resource for passive recreational activities. While we are fortunate to have this incredible asset, the ecosystem and biodiversity of Toronto's ravine system has been in decline, subject to such stresses as land development, climate change, and land misuse. Ensuring the viability of these spaces will be critical not only for the overall health of our environment, but for all Torontonians as well. The Toronto Ravines Strategy and the associated Stewardship Manual review chart a path for the protection of our ravines, and the principles outlined in these documents will determine our success in this important endeavor.

As it is noted in the UN IPCC 2019 Special Report, key to our ability to combat the degradation of land and climate change is the role that indigenous peoples and local knowledge play in the frameworks we create. While the stewardship manual sets out to provide a guiding document for Torontonians to become stewards of their ravines, a greater incorporation of indigenous perspectives will ensure protection of these lands are guided by indigenous and local knowledge

Recommendations

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee recommend that:

1. City Council request that General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation assess whether there is an appropriate weight and emphasis of indigenous and local knowledge in Toronto's Ravine Strategy and Stewardship Manual, and that any further work or review of the stewardship manual include the Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle (ILSC) and any other indigenous groups or stakeholders who wish to be consulted in the process.

Sincerely,

Councillor James Pasternak
Toronto - Ward 6, York Centre - Downsview
Chair, North York Community Council