



MIDTOWN RAVINE GROUP

A consortium of residents associations working for better ecological balance and improved park use in ravines in Midtown Toronto.

May 23, 2021

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Chair,
and Members
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
City Council
City of Toronto

[email To: iec@toronto.ca](mailto:iec@toronto.ca)

Dear Chair McKelvie, Members:

Re: Item 22.4: Partnerships in Ravines

We are writing to thank committee members for their support of initiatives to improve the state of Toronto ravines, to express our appreciation of the work of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation staff to advance those initiatives, and to urge additional programs.

We are particularly grateful for work undertaken to move stewardship initiatives forward. The pilot of the Manual for Stewardship in Ravines and Natural Areas represents a significant move toward utilizing the potentially large number of volunteers who can expand what PFR can do within City budget constraints to improve the ecological integrity of Toronto's ravines. We look forward to a positive outcome of the 2021 pilot PFR has launched in conjunction with Toronto Nature Stewards and are eager to see full implementation of this program in 2022.

We also welcome the expanded investment of operating and capital funds in ravine improvements. Midtown ravines include a ravine in sore need of remediation and repair—the Yellow Creek ravine between Mt Pleasant cemetery and Roxborough Avenue—and we look forward to the completion of the geomorphic study currently underway and the necessary stream repair that will follow. As participants in the staff/citizen Yellow Creek Working Group chaired by Councillor Layton, we are keen to see the completion of a Master Plan for remediation of the trails and natural environment that will follow the erosion control work on the YellowCreek stream. The Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in a major increase in citizen use of the recreational potential of the Vale of Avoca ravine, an increase that will only be expanded by the expected growth in population of the Yonge St corridor and Davisville. This expansion in use only increases the urgency of developing and implementing a Master Plan for the ravine that will accommodate such use while at the same time protecting ecologically sensitive areas.

Beyond this, we want to comment on the scope of other PFR initiatives aimed at expanding civic participation. We appreciate the work PFR does to provide opportunities for supervised conservation events and applaud the initiative to hire more students for summer work in the ravines. Both programs have the potential to be significantly expanded. We hope and trust that plans for doing so will be included in the report on Ravine Strategy implementation forthcoming in 2021 Q4.

We hope, too, that the Q4 report will deal with other private/public partnership issues.

A substantial part of Midtown ravines consists of privately owned land. We are eager to promote a combined private/public partnership of private land owners and PFR that will result in a comprehensive holistic approach to dealing with invasive species and otherwise improving the state of Toronto ravines. We have not found it easy to work with PFR in doing so, partly because of the inevitable challenges of integrating privately sponsored work with PFR initiatives. Invasive species do not respect fences, and there is not much incentive for private land owners to improve ecological integrity on one side of a fence if the City does not have a program for similar work on its side of the same fence. A program encouraging this type of private/public partnership is sorely needed through the City. We hope that PFR will be able to report progress on this in the Q4 report.

We are also keen to be able to initiate privately sponsored work on City in Midtown ravines. We would like to be able to raise funds to undertake such work in conjunction with PFR, but here too there is a lack of an enabling PFR program. Again, we recognize the difficulties. We urge this committee to do what it can to provide the staff resources PFR needs to advance this.

In summary, we applaud the work that has been undertaken. There is much more to do, and we hope that this Committee and Council will support PFR initiatives to do more.

Yours truly,

John Bossons, Co-chair
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Toronto, Canada M4T 1B4

Tim Ross, Co-chair
84 Douglas Drive
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cc: Mayor Tory
Janie Romoff
Wendy Strickland
Kim Statham

The Midtown Ravines Group is an incorporated non-profit organization formed by seven Residents Associations in Midtown Toronto. The member associations are the ABC Residents Association, the Bloor East Neighborhood Association, the Deer Park Residents Group, the Moore Park Residents Association, the North and South Rosedale Residents Associations, and the Summerhill Residents Association.
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