

Attachment 1 – Ravine Strategy Achievements by Guiding Principle

The Ravine Strategy provides an intentional and coordinated vision and approach to managing Toronto's ravines on an ongoing basis through a series of 20 actions under five guiding principles: Protect, Invest, Connect, Partner, and Celebrate. The following provides an update on key deliverables, by guiding principle, of the Ravine Strategy since January 2020.

Principle 1: Protect

Ravines are important natural refuges in the city, and contain most of Toronto's Environmentally Significant Areas, forests, wetlands, floodplains, and many varieties of plants and animals, including significant species. They support biodiversity and provide essential habitat for wildlife, including globally important flyways for migrating birds.

Since January 2020, considerable work has happened to advance the protection of ravines, including:

- Enhanced restoration and invasive species management by staff, contractors and volunteers through additional annual investments in the PFR Operating budget. Invasive plant species were managed in more than 720 hectares of ravine land by staff, contractors and volunteers.
- Planted more than 100,000 trees, shrubs and native plants each year in Toronto's ravines by the City and the TRCA through the efforts of staff, contractors and volunteers.
- Established the dedicated ravine litter picking program in 2020, a year earlier than originally planned. Program staff have removed 252 tonnes garbage and metal removed from 333 hectares of ravine land since the program was established.
- Initiated the Ecology Working Group that brings together academic partners and subject matter experts from TRCA, Parks Canada, and the City to identify research needs and work together to improve the natural environment in our ravines.
- Updated the Toronto Green Standard Version 4 to require that landscaped area within the Ravine Protected Area be planted with 100 per cent native plants, ensuring at least 50 per cent of those come from a regionally appropriate seed source (including trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants).
- Established 314 ecological monitoring plots in 2019 and 2020 to collect data on ravine health, through a partnership with the University of Toronto. Data collected through this pilot supports management, planning and policy needs.

Principle 2: Invest

Long-term, and sustainable investments in the ravine system is required to manage the increasing pressures facing ravines and to support healthy ravines. City Divisions, including Toronto Water, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Transportation Services, and City Planning as well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) invest millions of dollars every year in the ravines through both capital and operating budgets.

In 2022, the City is planning to invest \$118.1 million in Toronto's ravines through \$12.6 million in the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation and \$105.5 million in the 2022 Council Approved Capital Budget across a variety of City divisions including PFR, Transportation Services and Toronto Water as

well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This high-level estimate of investment supports park enhancements; ravine access including improvements to accessibility; environmental initiatives; multi-use trail, cycling, pedestrian and public realm improvements; bridge state-of-good-repair work; watercourse erosion mitigation projects and channel stabilization to protect watermains, sewers and other assets; and repairs to stormwater outfalls and ravine stormwater management ponds.

Since January 2020, considerable work has happened to advance investment in ravines, including:

- Increased funding for capital projects through other levels of government. The City has commitments and submitted applications for a total of \$47.9 million from the federal and provincial governments to support implementation of the Ravine Strategy (see Section 3 of the staff report for more details)
- Continued alignment of projects inter-divisionally across the ravine system, as part of the work of the Capital Planning and Design Coordination Working Group. Participating Divisions included PFR, Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Engineering and Construction Services, Solid Waste Management Services, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). This group identifies opportunities to coordinate, combine, or augment the timing, sequencing, and design of construction of projects in order to minimize the impact on the ecosystem, reduce costs, and provide opportunities for invasive species management and restoration.
- Further refined capital project waterfall for currently identified unfunded Ravine Strategy projects to position the City for future funding support through federal and provincial programs, including upcoming application intakes for the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, and the Ravine Campaign.

Principle 3: Connect

Ravines play an important role in the urban landscape by bringing nature to people. Creating opportunities for people to connect with ravines is essential for the health and well-being of the community as well as for the future state of ravines. Toronto's ravine system also provides significant placemaking and placekeeping opportunities to reflect the integral connection that continues today between Indigenous communities and Toronto's natural spaces and waterways.

A number of key initiatives, which will help connect people to the ravines, have been initiated and/or completed since January 2020:

- Supported ENAGB ("Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig - A Place for Healing Our Youth" – "Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying – Where Did We Come From?") and their partners at Memtigwaake Kinomaage Maawnjiding, the Lodge at the Humber River. (see Section 5 of the staff report for more details)
- Exploring a new name, Wonscotonach Parklands, to create an identity for the network of interconnected parks and trails in the Lower Don Valley. Indigenous communities have been consulted on the name and further engagement and consultations are under way prior to a formal naming.
- Secured funding for wayfinding in five trails through the federal and provincial ICIP COVID-19 Resilience Fund to be implemented by December 31, 2023.
- Ongoing collaboration between Transportation Services, PFR, TRCA, Toronto Water and external partners to implement elements of the Bikeway Trails Implementation

Plan and Cycling Network Plan through construction of new and improvements to existing multi-use trails in ravines, as well as neighbourhood connections.

Principle 4: Partner

Unleashing the energy and resources required to achieve sustained impact for the ravines requires that the City work collectively across diverse sectors including business, other public institutions, non-profit organizations, community groups, Indigenous groups, residents and community volunteers.

In addition to the new and enhanced initiatives outlined in IE22.4 'Increasing Engagement in Ravines through Partnerships', since January 2020, the City and its partners have:

- Launched the 'InTO the Ravines' program, in partnership with Park People, and the Loop Trail, in partnership with Evergreen, to expand outreach to communities. (see Section 4 for more details)
- Launched two student internship programs to engage youth in Toronto's ravines and develop pathways to employment in the sector. In 2021, the Young Ravine Leaders, in partnership with LEAF, provided 24 youth with a free four-week training and mentorship program. The Ravine Youth Team, in partnership with the TRCA, provided 18 youth with paid summer employment in the last two years.
- Piloted a program in 2021 with Toronto Nature Stewards to enhance environmental stewardship opportunities for communities and groups, which engaged 195 volunteers in nine sites encompassing 12 hectares of land. The pilot will continue in 2022 and help inform the development of a framework to support community-led stewardship in Toronto's ravines, along with further engagement with the City's residents associations and Indigenous organizations interested in ravine stewardship.
- Added a new site for the 2022 season of PFR's Community Stewardship Program at Cottonwood Flats in the Don watershed, in partnership with the Toronto Field Naturalists.
- Held first stakeholder meeting with representatives of charitable organizations and community groups to develop framework for community-led environmental stewardship in ravines.
- Identified opportunities to support BIPOC communities to connect to and celebrate Toronto's ravines through Toronto Urban Fellow's research of best practices and conversations with partner organizations, community advocates and organizations, and BIPOC community members

Principle 5: Celebrate

No other city has a ravine system like Toronto. Expansion of stewardship and celebration activities in ravines are essential to fostering respect and an understanding of these special places.

Despite the challenges with public gatherings due to COVID-19 that resulted in the cancellation or postponement of numerous events including Ravine Days in 2020, City and partner programs have succeeded in finding new and innovative ways for Toronto to celebrate the ravines since January 2020 including:

- 96 outdoor and virtual Ravine Days events, held October 2 to 11, 2021 to celebrate the fall colours, hosted by a dozen community partners as well as Toronto Museums and the TRCA, promoted through a marketing effort led by PFR in collaboration with the partners. More than 3,000 people participated on tours, rides, events and online workshops related to the ravines. Toronto's Poet Laureate, Al Moritz, was engaged to write one "ravine haiku" for each day of Ravine Days, shared through social media.
- More than 700 volunteers joined the Urban Forestry's Parkland Naturalization Programs in 2020 and 2021 to help restore Toronto's ravines and natural areas through 127 events, planting over 6,500 native trees shrubs and wildflowers, stewarding over six hectares of natural parkland, and maintaining or improving over four kilometres of natural trails.
- The Ravine Strategy has been selected as the project for the inaugural year of the City's ArtworxTO AiR program, bringing visibility to the arts as a significant civic process and a meaningful integration of art into the everyday business of city building.