

May 20, 2022

Re: *Agenda Item IE30.9 - Ravine Strategy Implementation*

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee:

Park People is writing in strong support of the Ravine Strategy and its continued implementation. It is exciting to see PFR embrace new partnerships with organizations such as the Toronto Foundation and Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig, Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying - ENAGB Youth Program, as part of its efforts to protect, connect and celebrate Toronto's vital and unique ravine system.

We also strongly support the proposed renewal of the InTO the Ravines partnership with the City of Toronto and Park People. If this work was critical before, it's even more critical coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic where Toronto, along with many other cities across Canada, saw an increase in park usage, including the winter months with people seeking safe outdoor options to tend to their physical and mental health.

Through collaborative efforts, the InTO the Ravines pilot project trained 30 InTO the Ravines Champions from local communities and provided 14 community park groups and organizations with micro-grants to host ravine events. Ravine Champions and micro-grants resulted in several ravine-focused events (both in-person and online) that were attended by 2700 people, the majority of whom live in equity-deserving communities, 54% of event participants had never been in a Toronto ravine or visited infrequently and 96% said the event inspired them to explore Toronto's ravines.

The collaborative spirit of the InTO the Ravines program extended well beyond the relationship between the City of Toronto and Park People and included collaboration with municipal departments, issue experts and organizations working in and around Toronto's ravines. In all, more than 125 park and ravine groups and 30 relevant partner organizations were engaged and consulted over the course of the two-year pilot project.

By working closely with community partners, issue experts and municipal departments, InTO the Ravines demonstrate how municipalities can work alongside communities to make our green spaces more vibrant and better protected for the future while promoting residents' well-being.

We look forward to continuing to work with the City of Toronto and community organizations to bring InTO the Ravines to communities in the coming years.

We hope you'll consider continuing to support the InTO the Ravines partnership, as it truly demonstrates the value of collaboration to promote the well-being of residents and green spaces in our cities as well as advance the Protect, Connect and Celebrate principles of the Toronto Ravine Strategy.

Sincerely,



Dave Harvey
Co-Executive Director, Park People

