

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM43.7	ACTION			Ward: All
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Authorization to extend the InTO the Ravines partnership with Park People - by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to extend the InTO the Ravines Program until December 31, 2022.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and execute an agreement with Park People on behalf of the City to implement the InTO the Ravines Program for a term expiring on December 31, 2022, renewable at the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation's sole option (and subject to annual budget approval) for up to three additional terms of one year each, expiring on December 31, 2025, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Summary

In January 2020, as part of the Ravine Strategy Implementation staff report (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX12.1>), Council directed the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to develop and implement the 'InTO Ravines: Nature at your doorstep' program in partnership with the national registered charity Park People.

InTO the Ravines was launched that following spring, as a two-year pilot program to connect the people of Toronto to the City's rich ravine system through public education opportunities, community-led programming and micro-grants, with a focus on people who have not visited ravines before or who experience barriers in accessing ravines, including those in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and Ravine Strategy Priority Investment Areas. The current agreement with Park People expired December 31, 2021.

Over the last two years, despite the challenges of launching a community engagement program during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, InTO the Ravines has successfully fostered the development of a deeper understanding of ravine ecology, Indigenous knowledge and the

connection between nature and health, emphasized the guiding principles of the Ravine Strategy, and built the foundation for a long-term sense of connection and care for the City's ravines with Toronto residents.

InTO the Ravines has directly engaged over 2,700 people, through community-led events organized by InTO the Ravines "Ravine Champions" and microgrants, as well as self-directed and virtual events such as customized maps for local exploration, a Black history month commentary, and a Forest Therapy event with an Indigenous teacher. More than 200,000 people were also engaged through newsletters, blogs, and social media. At a time when Torontonians needed it most, the collaboration between the City of Toronto and Park People ensured that community-led groups and events across the City were well-positioned to respond to community needs during the pandemic and provided people with a critical connection with nature and community.

The program has been delivered through \$100,000 contributed each of the last two years from existing resources within the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget. The 2022 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Council Approved Operating Budget includes \$100,000 from existing resources to support the program this year. To supplement these funds, the City and Park People have targeted \$100,000 in matching funds to be secured each year through a funding partner to enhance the budget and program visibility. Park People has currently raised \$18,500 in external funds toward this goal for 2022.

This Motion recommends that City Council give authority to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to extend the InTO the Ravines program and the collaboration with Park People to December 31, 2022, with options to extend the program until December 31, 2025, pending annual budget approval. The City of Toronto and Park People look forward to maintaining their collaboration on InTO the Ravines and continuing to do valuable work with equity-deserving communities.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM43.7