
2023 CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Ravine Strategy

Issue/Background:

- This responds to a request from Budget Committee, at its January 13, 2023 meeting, to provide a briefing note on the implementation of the Ravine Strategy and the Meadoway, including:
 - the 2023 Tabled Operating Budget for invasive species and litter removal, as well as student internships;
 - proposed 2023 capital investments in the 2023-2032 Tabled Capital Budget and Plan including intergovernmental funding; and
 - additional intergovernmental funding required in the next five years.
- Toronto's ravines have significant ecological value, are places where people seek active and passive recreation, house critical grey and green infrastructure, and contribute significantly to the resilience of the city. They contribute \$822 million in ecological services annually.
- City Council has demonstrated its commitment to the Ravine Strategy and recognizes its implementation requires joint efforts and alignment of inter-divisional capital plans. This is reflected in the City's total 2022 investments of \$118.1 million in Toronto's ravine system. Following the completion of the current budget process, staff will confirm the 2023 total inter-divisional investment.
- The City has taken significant steps to advance Ravine Strategy Implementation and since 2020 has achieved:
 - 1,322 hectares of land managed for invasive species
 - 305 tonnes garbage and metal removed from 404 hectares of ravine land
 - 75 students engaged through paid employment and training programs
 - 143 outdoor and virtual events for Ravine Days
 - 11,000 participants in City and partner events and programs
 - \$47.7 million (committed and submitted applications) from the federal and provincial governments
- Led by TRCA, in partnership with the City of Toronto and with funding from the Weston Family Foundation, the Meadoway will transform 16 kilometres of hydro

corridor primarily between Don River ravine and Rouge National Urban Park into one of the largest urban linear greenspaces in Canada.

- Intergovernmental partnership, collaboration and funding is critical to support the Ravine Strategy, and provincial and federal funding programs have augmented the City's investment in its ravine system.

Key Points:

- In this fourth year of Ravine Strategy implementation, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) continues the momentum through operating and capital investments in 2023.

2023 Tabled Operating Budget

In addition to the \$6.3 million invested since 2020 through the Ravine Strategy Implementation Plan, the 2023 Tabled Operating Budget for PFR includes \$2.9 million base funding to continue with this implementation. This funding will support PFR to undertake litter picking, invasive species management, volunteer stewardship, student internships, Indigenous engagement, and the inTO Ravines program.

2023-2032 Tabled Capital Budget and Plan

- To continue to support implementation of the Ravine Strategy in 2023, the 2023-2032 Tabled Capital Budget and Plan for PFR includes:
 - \$5.0 million total over 10 years (\$0.5 million in 2023) funded from Debt through the City Wide Environmental Initiatives Program for environmentally significant area planning, wetland restoration, and trail improvements in ravines.
 - \$1.7 million estimated carry forward of the \$6.2 million cash flow funding from the prior Capital Budgets, to complete the remaining four projects to be fully reimbursed by federal and provincial governments through Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) COVID-19 Resilience Fund, including approximately \$0.2 million to advance wayfinding in the Meadoway.
 - \$22.8 million for ravine, waterfront and environmental work related to the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF), with \$3.7 million in funding to be reimbursed by the federal government in the 10-Year Capital Plan.

Additional Intergovernmental Funding Required

- Recognizing that multi-government support is crucial to achieving common goals of climate resilience, protecting biodiversity, connecting people with nature, and strengthening partnerships with Indigenous peoples, City Council directed staff to seek intergovernmental funding for the Ravine Strategy through the 2020 Ravine Strategy Implementation Report.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-141693.pdf>

- The City has commitments and submitted applications for a total of \$47.7 million from the federal and provincial governments to support implementation of the Ravine Strategy through:
 - Committed funding of \$6.2 million from the federal and provincial ICIP COVID-19 Resilience Fund, as noted above, for eight projects to be completed by December 31, 2023. A contribution agreement has been signed.
 - \$12.0 million from the federal DMAF funding program for ravine, waterfront and environmental work to be completed by March 31, 2028. A contribution agreement has been signed.
 - An application for \$20.0 million from the federal Natural Infrastructure Fund for five projects to be completed by March 31, 2024. The application was submitted in December 2021 and is under review by the federal government.
 - \$9.5 million for three ravine-based projects as part of the application for the federal Active Transportation Fund to be completed by March 31, 2026. The application was submitted in March 2022 and is under review by the federal government.
- In addition to the \$47.7 million noted above, \$148.7 million in further investments over 10 years is required, of which \$35.7 million would be required over the first five years.
- The Meadoway work continues to be advanced by TRCA through Weston Foundation philanthropy. To augment this continued support, the City's submitted applications for the federal Natural Infrastructure Fund and Active Transportation Fund which includes \$6.5 million for the Meadoway. If approved, this funding, in conjunction with the anticipated investment from the Weston Family Foundation, will continue to advance the Meadoway work until 2026.

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