



**JENNIFER  
MCKELVIE**

City Councillor  
Scarborough-Rouge  
Park  
Ward 25

July 10, 2023

Executive Committee  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen St W  
Toronto, ON M5G 1P5

**RE: Authorization to pursue designation as a Model City for the United Nations Environment Programme's Generation Restoration Project**

Dear Colleagues,

The City of Toronto is a recognized leader in ecological restoration, biodiversity planning and urban forest and ravine management. Along with our partners at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the City has been undertaking successful ecological restoration of Toronto's ravines, natural areas and urban forest for decades, through:

- Implementing City Council endorsed strategies, including Toronto's Ravine Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Pollinator Protection Strategy and TransformTO;
- Being recognized municipal leaders in restoring and maintaining Toronto's ravines, natural areas and urban forest through activities such as native tree and shrub planting, invasive species management and prescribed burns;
- Designing and delivering flagship restoration projects, such as Don Valley Brick Works Park, Humber Bay Butterfly Habitat, Beare Hill Park and the Meadoway, which have provided and improved critical wildlife habitat and natural areas for human enjoyment;
- Being the first Canadian city to adopt a Tree Equity Approach to address inequitable distribution of the urban forest, in service of achieving the City Council approved tree canopy target of 40 per cent by 2050, aligning with the City's TransformTO Net Zero Strategy.

City staff are seeking approval to pursue designation of the City of Toronto as a Model City for the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Generation Restoration project. This three-year project aims to promote ecological restoration and to facilitate knowledge exchange between cities. Model Cities will serve as 'champions of restoration' through capacity building workshops, webinars and peer-to-peer exchanges, as well as contributing staff expertise to the development of tools and products to help cities accelerate ecosystem restoration globally.

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The UNEP Generation Restoration project aims to address the challenges to promote restoration, particularly in urban areas, within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). The project will also support ten Pilot Cities located in ODA countries, i.e. countries that receive official development assistance (ODA) or developing countries, to implement ecological restoration projects.

Participation in this program as a Model City will provide an avenue for the City to share our expertise with other cities around the world to improve global efforts towards ecological restoration. A designation from the UN would also bring significant attention to the City's achievements in restoration while providing significant leverage when seeking funding from other orders of government as well as philanthropic donors, who may wish to sustain or scale up these efforts.

This letter recommends that City Council give authority to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to submit an Expression of Interest to become a Model City for the UNEP's Generation Restoration project and enter into appropriate agreements, if selected. The City of Toronto looks forward to this opportunity to share our expertise to contribute to ecological restoration efforts around the world.

**Recommendation:**

Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to submit an Expression of Interest to become a Model City under the United Nation's Environment Programme (UNEP) Generation Restoration Project and negotiate and sign on behalf of the City of Toronto the appropriate agreements with the UNEP, on terms and conditions acceptable to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Please give this letter every consideration.

Sincerely,



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