

October 23rd, 2023

Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Connected Communities: Advancing Year-Round Trails Between Earl Bales Park and York Mills Station

Dear Chair McKelvie and Infrastructure and Environment Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of BYCS's Bicycle Mayor of Toronto in support of the motion *Connected Communities: Advancing Year-Round Trails Between Earl Bales Park and York Mills Station*.

Toronto's ravines are vital spaces for our communities and for too long many have been inaccessible. This has needlessly disconnected neighbourhoods, reduced opportunities for children and families to easily and affordably access recreation opportunities, and pushed more pedestrian and bike traffic onto busy roadways. Advancing a year-round trail connection in this section of our ravine system would be transformative in several important ways.

A few additional reasons for the Bicycle Mayor's support:

One: I help organize a Kidical Mass Toronto ride called Active in the Ravines Community Event Series. This is a group ride for children, their families, and the young at heart. We visited Humber River in Etobicoke, Black Creek in North York and Dov Valley River in East York. It's been such a successful year-one session that we are well on our way to plotting out year two. We've had multiple families that have already asked about the likelihood of exploring the specific trails between Earl Bales Park and York Mills Station during both the winter and summer months. We would love to be able to add this exciting exploration to our Ravine Series.

Two: I've been very excited to add input to ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed Loop Trail Project. It seeks to create a continuous, 81-kilometre off-road, multi-use ring trail, which includes; bringing together five Ravine Priority Investment Areas, 22 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, the Humber River and Don River ravine systems, the waterfront and neighbourhoods along the Finch hydro corridor. It also includes the Meadoway, the multi-use trail that is currently in development that links the Don River ravine with the Highland Creek and Rouge National Urban Park along an existing hydro corridor. The trails between Earl Bales Park and York Mills Station would be an amazing access corridor, giving additional access points to explore.

Three: The Cycling Network Plan for The City of Toronto isn't just about our main streets and local neighbourhood roads. It's about working to make travel by bike safer and more inviting, which helps ease congestion, creates a cleaner environment, and promotes physical activity. It's so wonderful that our ravines aren't behind glass. They are living, breathing parts of our city. Social Infrastructure. When managed properly, they can allow residents to explore more of our city for education, sport, and pleasure. The trails between Earl Bales Park and York Mills Station could do just that.

I look forward to the first rides, with people of all ages, through this amazing corridor in the future.

Sincerely,



Lanrick Bennett Jr. He/Him
Bicycle Mayor of Toronto TO



Equity, Civic Engagement & Protection of the Environment

Learn more about the Bicycle Mayor Program here <https://bycs.org/our-work/bicycle-mayor/>