



To: Toronto City Council

Re: GL15.14, Lease and Contract Extensions for City of Toronto Golf Courses

Sept. 29, 2020

The golf courses owned by the City of Toronto occupy prime locations in the city's unique ravine network. Before the golf leases are renewed, Walk Toronto calls on the City of Toronto to conduct public consultations about the best way to use these valuable green spaces for the benefit of all Torontonians.

For example, the Don Valley Golf Course occupies the key link between trails in the ravines north and south of Highway 401. It divides the communities on either side and interrupts what should be a continuous trail system. It also blocks the only safe and attractive route in the area for pedestrians, runners, and cyclists to cross under the 401, since the street route along Yonge Street is interrupted by on- and off-ramps and is highly unpleasant for anyone on foot or bicycle. An easier crossing under the 401 would also improve the connection to the dense North York Centre neighbourhood, whose residents suffer from a lack of adequate parkland provisioning.

The Dentonia Park golf course, similarly, blocks the natural connection between the Taylor Creek trail and the trails in the continuation of that ravine in Scarborough. The Flemingdon Park golf course, meanwhile, complicates the route of the new East Don Trail that serves some of the most heavily populated areas of Toronto.

The City of Toronto has recently endorsed a Ravine Strategy and a Parkland Strategy. The City-owned golf courses are the missing piece of these strategies, and the City cannot claim to be taking a wholistic view of the future of its natural assets without taking the golf courses into consideration.

In the past, when golf was more popular and the city's trail network more fragmented, the location of these courses was not as significant. Now, however, the City has embarked on an ambitious project to make its trail network a well-connected and coherent system for walkers, runners, and cyclists from all walks of life to have free and easy access to trails in all parts of the city. Yet as long as these spaces are restricted to golf, these public lands can only be accessed for a fee, rather than freely by everyone like other City green spaces. At the same time, golf is no longer as popular and many public golf courses are losing money. The renewal of the golf leases is the right opportunity for the City to take the time to re-think how these green spaces are used.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid

On behalf of Walk Toronto