
2004 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE: Toronto Zoo Attendance January – February 2004

2004-02-27

BAC Issue / Background:

The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to the request from the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting on February 18th, related to *attendance at the Toronto Zoo in January and February 2004, with comparisons to prior year.*

This request resulted from the inquiry to provide the BAC with an update on attendance statistics from January and February 2004. The objective was to see if there was any evidence of a recovery in attendance versus 2003 at this point and confirming the accuracy of our 2004 projection.

Key Points:

The following table outlines the Toronto Zoo attendance statistics for January and February 2004:

Attendance	2004	vs Budget	vs 2003
January	11,964	(3,636)	1,249
February	22,990	7,990	8,719
Year-to-date	34,954	4,354	9,968

Variance Note: over / (under)

Interpretation:

As can be seen from the table, the attendance variance is unfavourable versus budget in January and favourable to the previous year. The shortfall versus budget in January may be partly attributable to the extreme cold weather. February 2004 was significantly ahead of budget and the previous year due to the unusually warm weekend on the 28th and 29th and the extra day on a weekend compared to last year.

The favourable variance year-to-date versus 2003, while encouraging, is not a very good basis for projecting attendance for the year versus 2003. This is due to the fact that approximately 70%-80% of annual attendance occurs in the April – September timeframe, while the remainder is generated in the first and fourth quarters. It should also be noted that the first outbreak of SARS did not occur until late March 2003, with the second outbreak in June 2003.

Conclusion:

It is too early to project the 2004 attendance with any degree of confidence or accuracy.