
2005 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE: Accreditation & State of Good Repair

Issue

In order to ensure the accreditation status of the Toronto Zoo and maintain a state of good repair, it is imperative that measures related to animal welfare, animal behavioural enrichment, and additional maintenance are funded in 2005. This issue is the highest priority for the Toronto Zoo.

Background

In the 2004 budget process, the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) recognized that funding reductions to the Toronto Zoo in previous years had resulted in extreme pressures on the maintenance program and related preventative measures. Accordingly, the actions and efforts of the BAC in recommending an increase to the approved 2004 budget of the Toronto Zoo were certainly appreciated. Completed work included replacement of sidewalks to ensure public safety, replacement of cracked glass in several exhibits, animal holding improvements, and new radio's and CCTV equipment for purposes of security and safety.

The Toronto Zoo is now over 30 years old and maintenance of the site to ensure a state of good repair remains a key issue in 2005. Additional resources are now necessary to properly maintain the site and support the current infrastructure requirements of the Toronto Zoo. The workload to maintain a state of good repair throughout the site and to ensure public safety has increased significantly in recent years due to site expansion (African Savanna, Gorilla Rainforest, Zellers Discovery Zone). Work on previously deferred repairs needs to continue and a preventative maintenance program re-established to address accreditation and inspection issues identified by American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), and the Ministry of Agriculture (OMAF).

The 2005 budget request of the Toronto Zoo includes the additional staff required to support a preventative maintenance program and complete the previously deferred repairs. Other issues relate to maintenance of our high voltage equipment, the acquisition of required safety equipment and materials for maintaining the facility. General repairs, maintenance and safety measures are required to ensure visitor well-being and should be included in the 2005 operating plans.

Additionally, animal care standards are increasing and to address related AZA, CCAC and OMAF accreditation and regulatory issues, resources and staffing are necessary to ensure the adequacy of animal care, improve the level of clinical veterinary care for the animal collection, and to provide greater support for the Zoo's conservation and education programs. Currently, the two full-time Veterinarians providing coverage for the Animal Health Centre and emergency coverage 24/7 average 30-40 extra hours per week between the two positions. This accreditation issue presents extreme pressure during times of absence and as a result the 2005 budget request includes the required staffing. Additional accreditation issues include various exhibitry upgrades necessary to ensure safety of the animal collection and provide behavioral enrichment opportunities.

Implications

The implications of not attending to these key operating budget issues will be a deferral of important maintenance measures resulting in further deterioration of exhibits and building components. This will lead to more costly repairs or replacement in the future and the potential liability of public safety concerns not being addressed. Inadequate safety equipment could result in non-compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. A high voltage maintenance program is imperative and has been identified as an issue by the Electrical Safety Authority and the absence of such a program increases the risk of electrical equipment failure. In the event of an electrical failure, heat and ventilation of pavilions could potentially be cut-off and the condition of animal holdings would be severely impacted and animal welfare could be compromised.

If the accreditation issues are not addressed, the risk to the status of the Zoo as an accredited facility could be compromised. The implications to the reputation of the Zoo caused by a loss or qualification of its accreditation status would be significant. The resulting impact on public perception would likely be reduced attendance and an obvious corresponding reduction in admission and other revenues.

The baseline cost to ensure that the needs of animal care, animal behavioral enrichment, exhibit safety and state of good repair plans are met on an annual basis is approximately \$750,000. Accordingly, the 2005 Operating Budget submission of the Toronto Zoo to the City of Toronto includes \$432,000 in new & enhanced business case documentation outlining many of the maintenance and safety needs, and a further \$147,000 related to animal health and welfare.

Current Status and Next Steps

The 2005 Operating Budget of the Toronto Zoo has been submitted to the City of Toronto. The EMT recommendation recognizes some of the pressures facing the Toronto Zoo and includes an amount of \$235,000 related to accreditation, maintenance and state of good repair initiatives. However, the analyst report also includes an unallocated adjustment of \$400,000 for actions of operational efficiencies yet to be identified. In its partnership with the City of Toronto, the Toronto Zoo has always been, and will continue to be, very conscientious and efficient in managing the financial resources provided by the City. In 2004, the Toronto Zoo started to recover from the significant impact of severe funding reductions from several years ago. The implications of implementing the proposed unallocated adjustment of \$400,000 would effectively negate some of the impact of the progress achieved in 2004 and mitigate the potential for further progress in 2005.

Prepared for: Budget Advisory Committee

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