

To: Board of Management

From: John Tracogna
Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **ROUGE PARK GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Date: 2010-04-23

Summary:

On 2010-02-05, the Rouge Park Alliance unanimously approved the receipt of a consultants' report recommending the creation of a Rouge National Park, the preparation of a "Founding Deal" and other related matters. The Alliance also requested that the report be circulated to its member organizations for comment. Zoo staff have reviewed the Rouge Park Governance Review report and are in general agreement with the conclusions and recommendations. It is recommended that the Board of Management formally endorse the National Park concept, advise the Rouge Park Alliance of its position, and work with the Alliance to achieve this goal.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Board of Management:

- 1. endorse the concept of a Rouge National Park on the lands shown as areas 1, 2 and 3 on Schedule A;**
- 2. support the development of a "Founding Deal" including, but not limited to, the elements of such a deal as outlined in Schedule B; and**
- 3. formally advise the Rouge Park Alliance of its position on the above recommendations.**

Background:

The Rouge Park is the largest natural environment park in an urban setting in North America. It spans an area of almost 4,700 hectares (11,600 acres), from its headwaters in the Oak Ridges Moraine to the beach at the Rouge Marsh on the Lake Ontario shore. The Toronto Zoo is located in the Rouge Park and is designated as a "special management zone". The Zoo is governed and operates separately, but voluntarily conforms to the natural and cultural heritage principles of the Park

The Rouge Park Alliance has 15 members and is responsible for overseeing the planning and management of the Rouge Park. There is a mix of political and staff representatives from the federal/provincial/municipal governments, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Save the Rouge Inc (an NGO active in the founding of the Park). Funding for the Park comes from all three orders of government.

The Toronto Zoo has been a member of the Rouge Park Alliance since its inception in 1995. The Chief Executive Officer represents the Zoo and Ms. Sue Gunton and Mr. Paul Harpley are the alternate members. Other Zoo staff are members of the Alliance sub-committees. Two Zoo Board members also serve on the Rouge Park Alliance. Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker represents Save the Rouge Inc. and Councillor Paul Ainslie holds one of the two City of Toronto seats. Councillor Raymond Cho is appointed as an alternate to represent the City of Toronto.

During 2009, the Rouge Park Alliance undertook a review of the governance and financing needs of the Park for the future. The Alliance commissioned the consulting firms of StrategyCorp Inc. and Hemson Consulting to carry out this review. The report to the Alliance meeting of 2010-02-05 from Mr. Alan Wells, Chair of the Rouge Park Alliance, is appended as Attachment 1. Mr. Wells' report summarizes the need for the study, the process that was followed and the next steps to move forward with the recommendations of the study. The Executive Summary of the consultants' report is appended as Attachment 2.

The consultants researched eight governance models and evaluated these against several criteria. The report concludes that the National Park model is the most promising model, as it meets the criteria and Parks Canada has shown interest as a way of better connecting its mandate and programs to the Greater Toronto Area.

At its meeting of 2010-02-05, the Rouge Park Alliance authorized the Chair of the Alliance to request each of the member organizations to consider the following:

1. the recommendations of the Rouge Park Governance Review Report;
2. the concept of a Founding Deal and elements as they relate to their specific organization;
3. participation with the Alliance to engage the federal and provincial governments in the creation of the proposed federal park governance structure and creation of a joint interpretive/educational centre for Rouge Park.

The recommendations in the consultants' report are outlined on page 13 of the Executive Summary (Attachment 2). Regarding Recommendation 1, the Rouge Park Alliance has requested its member organizations to formally support the National Park concept and the terms for a Founding Deal which is appended to the Executive Summary as Schedule B.

Comments/Discussion:

The Park boundaries are set out in Schedule A, appended to the Executive Summary. The consultants' report recommends that the Toronto Zoo (and the Beare Road landfill site) be excluded from the National Park proposal. In other words, the Toronto Zoo would continue to be located in the Rouge Park and retain its current governance structure and land ownership (mainly TRCA/small portion City of Toronto). This makes sense given the Zoo's specific purpose, its size and the cost of operating the Zoo, in comparison to the Park.

As noted in the Executive Summary, the Rouge Park and the Alliance have reached a critical point in their evolution. The Park is moving from the conceptual stage to the reality of a functioning park and organization. Due to its legal status related to how the Rouge Park Alliance was set up by the Province, the Alliance is not a true decision-making board, but rather an

advisory body. The Alliance cannot own land or accept donations, which is a limitation in managing and being accountable for the Park.

The consultants' review concludes that the Park is seriously under funded, considering both operating and capital funding. From the Zoo's perspective, any new governance model that provides the Park with more stability and funding is beneficial for the Zoo. In those areas where there is commonality and overlap between the Rouge Park and the Zoo, e.g. ecological studies, park security, trails near the Zoo, marketing and promotion etc., additional resources and more effective decision-making only enhances these functions.

In receiving the consultants' report, the Alliance members were unanimously supportive of the consultants' conclusions and recommendations. Given this unanimous support from the Alliance members and the benefits to the Park, it is recommended that the Board of Management support the concept of a Rouge National Park and assist the Rouge Park Alliance in accomplishing this goal.

On 2010-04-23, the Rouge Park Alliance approved the next steps to realize a National Park. The Alliance will be formally requesting the Government of Canada to enter into discussions with the Province of Ontario and the Alliance to carry out the recommendations in the consultants' report. This will include bringing together the appropriate partners to negotiate the terms of a Founding Deal, which will address in more detail: Park vision; boundaries; funding; governance and transitional arrangements.

John Tracogna
Chief Executive Officer

Susan Gunton
Director, Planning & Analysis

List of Attachments:

1. Rouge Park Alliance Governance Review (from Alan Wells, Chair)
2. Governance Review Executive Summary (by StrategyCorp – Hemson Consulting)