

To: Board of Management

From: Chief Operating Officer

Subject: **SMOKE-FREE AND VAPORIZER-FREE DESIGNATION - TORONTO ZOO**

Date: 2019-01-17

SUMMARY:

This report will propose that the Toronto Zoo becomes a designated smoke-free and vaporizer-free environment. This designation would mean the elimination of the use of tobacco products and smoking such as cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, mini-cigars, pipes, water pipes, hookah, shisha, and cannabis on the Zoo site. It also includes the elimination of the use of electronic smoking devices which create an aerosol or vapor, or the use of any oral smoking device. The smoke-free and vaporizer-free designation would initially apply to all guests and eventually all staff who are in, or around, any Toronto Zoo owned, buildings, properties and vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board approve that the Toronto Zoo become a smoke and vaporizer-free environment for our guests effective 2019-05-01, and for our staff effective 2020-01-01.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact with the implementation of this recommendation. Funds are included in the budget for a slight increase in the benefits costs for smoke cessation programs for staff. With respect to impacts on business, it should be noted that within the hospitality and service industry, studies have reported that there has been no adverse effects on the revenues, profits, or employment within these industries following a smoking ban.

DECISION HISTORY:

The Toronto Zoo has always been pro-active with recognizing the need to provide a positive guest experience while ensuring public safety. With respect to the effects of exposure to second hand smoke and in accordance with the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA), the Toronto Zoo restricts smoking to designated smoking areas only. There are six designated smoking areas on Toronto Zoo property for our guests and fourteen staff smoking areas.

The Toronto Zoo remains in compliance with current laws and regulations surrounding smoking. However, with the increased public awareness surrounding the adverse health effects of smoking, and in particular the health effects on children, it is evident that our current smoking policies and processes for both our staff and guests are outdated. The implementation of a smoke-free and vaporizer-free designation affirms our commitment to be leaders in conservation and shows how we value both our guests and staff.

COMMENTS:

As a family-centric attraction, the Toronto Zoo is cognizant of how this new law that permits smoking cannabis in our guest designated smoking areas, may be negatively perceived by many of our guests. More importantly, the impetus for this recommendation is the negative health effects from any type of smoke which are well known and incontrovertible.

Further, our current designated smoking areas may even amplify the effects of second-hand smoke. A recent study from Stanford University finds, that designated smoking areas with multiple people smoking, have toxic air levels equal to smoking indoors. Designated smoking areas also lead to confusion around where smoking is permitted.

The effects of second- hand smoke as a pollutant and a detriment to our health is well known. There is also research that shows the damage that cigarette filters do to our ecosystems. Cigarette filters are not biodegradable, many are made of plastic which stays in the environment for a very long time. These filters and discarded cigarette tobacco, leach toxic chemicals such as tar, formaldehyde, arsenic and nicotine into our soil and waterways which can poison wildlife overtime. Simply, the move to a smoke-free and vaporizer-free designated site is the right thing to do for our guests, staff, community, wildlife and the environment.

The Toronto Zoo would be a Canadian zoo leader with the implementation of a smoke-free and vaporizer-free designated environment for both guests and staff. It demonstrates our commitment to promoting a healthier environment and is aligned with our core values of being leaders in conservation; committed to practicing and promoting activities and actions that benefit wildlife and the environment.

The implementation of a Smoke-Free and Vaporizer-Free Toronto Zoo will contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of our guests, staff and the environment.

CONTACT:

Shane Alexander, Manager
Safety & Security
salexander@torontozoo.ca
416-392-5903

R. D. Hale
Chief Operating Officer