



STAFF REPORT

To: Board of Management
From: Director, Guest Experience
Subject: **REGIONAL TRANSIT TO THE TORONTO ZOO**
Date: 2021-03-23

SUMMARY:

This report will update the Board of Management on the on-going efforts to have direct public transit to the Toronto Zoo via the local transit commissions.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Director of Guest Experience recommends that this report be received for information.

BACKGROUND:

At the Board of Management meeting on April 11, 2019, the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo requested the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Zoo to correspond with the Toronto Transit Commission, the Durham Region Transit and the York Region Transit for the purposes of discussing direct public transit to the Toronto Zoo, and to report back to the Board of Management.

- a) requesting that the Toronto Zoo together with the Toronto Transit Commission begin discussions with Durham Region Transit and York Region Transit for direct public bus service to the Toronto Zoo; and
- b) including the opportunity for bus service during the weekends for the months of May through to September.

The Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Zoo set up an internal Zoo Transit Task Force Committee to work with the local transit authorities to enhance public transport to the Zoo.

Meetings were held with the three regional transit authorities and all three shared an interest in servicing the Zoo and the opportunity of adding a stop at the Rouge National Urban Park Welcome Centre.

Data continues to be evaluated to assessed for potential route locations and build business cases within the respective authorities to create the correct level of service.

In addition, meetings took place with representatives from Metrolinx to discuss enhanced transportation services to GO Stations near the Zoo and to increase GO options for easier Zoo access from areas around the GTA.

At this time, the Zoo is optimistic that continued conversations and connections with the regional transit authorities will lead to increased public transit opportunities for Zoo guests.

COMMENTS:

Durham Region Transit has received budgetary approval to proceed with a Zoo Bus Route tentatively starting June 26. The service will be scheduled to operate on weekends and Holidays until Labour Day.

The route is planned to run along Baseline/Baily and make stops at the Oshawa Town Centre and Pickering Town Centre as well as Durham GO Train stations before stopping at the Rouge Park entrance and the Toronto Zoo transit loop.

Exact timing of the daily runs is being discussed and could expand to include Friday nights and extend into Saturday evening depending on the Zoo schedule.

The service could expand past Labour Day through September depending on ridership demand.

Specific grand opening and launch plans for the specialized route are currently being discussed.

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