

Revised Records Retention Schedule

Date: May 17, 2024
To: Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo
From: Director, Finance, Technology, and Innovation
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report requests approval from the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo for a revised records retention schedule for records in the custody and control of the Board, requests that the Board forward the schedule to City Council for enactment of the necessary by-law, and requests approval to integrate the Board's records retention schedule in the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 219, Records, Corporate (Local Boards).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Finance, Technology, and Innovation recommends that The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo:

1. Approve the revised Toronto Zoo Records Retention Schedule as set out in Attachment 1 to the report (May 31, 2024) from the Director of Finance, Technology, and Innovation and the draft by-law as set out in Attachment 2.
2. Direct that the approved by-law be forwarded to City Council for final approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

The ongoing implementation of the revised records retention schedule has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the Toronto Zoos operating budget.

DECISION HISTORY

A records retention schedule describes records by their function and sets a minimum period of time for which the records must be retained before they become eligible for

destruction. Every record must have an approved retention schedule assigned to it before it can be destroyed or disposed of. Retention and disposition requirements stated in records retention schedules are based upon administrative, legislative, fiscal and historical values of the particular records.

The Toronto Zoo has completed its own comprehensive review with the assistance of an external records management consultant. The records management schedule was revised in consultation with subject matter experts from across the Zoo, staff from the City of Toronto Corporate Information Management Services and City Legal. Extensive amendments to the records retention schedule were imputed after staff conducted an inventory of records contained within the entire Toronto Zoo site. The Classification Scheme and Retention Schedule was developed by the consultant following the current Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 217, Records, Corporate (City), Schedule A, Records Retention Schedule.

Once the common City-Toronto Zoo records were identified as the foundation to the new Toronto Zoo records retention schedule it was necessary to move into a second phase which involved identifying records that are considered unique to the Toronto Zoo. To accomplish this task, representatives from all Toronto Zoo departments attended training sessions for the purposes of completing an inventory of records held in their various work areas. Those unique Toronto Zoo records were then incorporated into the draft records schedule with retentions proposed based on any known legislative reference and the business needs of the department responsible for the subject records.

Records retention schedules are necessary for establishing the duration of retention of records, the location and owner of the master copies of records, and the final disposition of records once they reach the end of their lifecycle - destruction or permanent archival retention. Proper records retention has implications for institutional administration and operations, legal discovery, Freedom of Information, and facilities/systems management.

As a local board of the City of Toronto, certain aspects of the Toronto Zoo's administration and accountability are governed by the City of Toronto Act, S.O. 2006, C.11. This included the development of records retention schedule, as described in sections 200 and 201 of the City of Toronto Act.

Following approval by the Board, the revised retention schedule will then be presented to City Council for approval.

COMMENTS

The Toronto Zoo Records Retention By-law was enacted on July 2, 1992. There has been no update to the by-law since its inception almost 32 years ago. Maintaining an up-to-date records retention schedule is vital to the effective management of Toronto Zoo information, including meeting requirements under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Toronto Zoo has been working with a consultant for a new Electronic Information Management System (EIMS) which has been designed so that any record created in the system must be linked to a corresponding code from the new Toronto Zoo records retention schedule. When a record has met its retention requirements the information is reported to the division of accountability who are authorized to manage the disposition of the subject record.

The revisions to the Board's Records Retention Schedule incorporate recommendations made by the City Corporate Information Management Services and City Legal staff and align with the City of Toronto's revised records retention schedules. Highlights of the changes include alterations to the formatting to be consistent with the City of Toronto's records retention schedule layout, changes to administrative responsibilities for retention to reflect the Toronto Zoo's organizational structure more accurately, and new series and changes to existing series to align with the Toronto Zoo's legal and operational requirements. Some record series were eliminated where they were no longer relevant or where they had been superseded by other series.

The amendments set out in Attachment 1 are necessary to include electronic and digital records as acceptable records formats. Electronic and digital records are now a very acceptable business management practice.

Once approved by City Council, a comprehensive staff training plan will be developed to ensure full and complete understanding of the changes to the retention schedule and orient staff to records retention and destruction practices and processes to ensure staff have the tools and knowledge to ensure compliance with the new schedule. The Toronto Zoo will continue to monitor the City's retention schedule and rollout to ensure consistency and adherence to best practices.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Revised Toronto Zoo Records Retention Schedule
Attachment 2 - Draft City of Toronto By-Law XX-2024