

Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre - Lease with University of Toronto Scarborough

Date: April 1, 2025

To: Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo

From: Chief Transformation Officer

Wards: All

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

A position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Toronto Zoo and the City.

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval in principle from the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo on the terms of a lease arrangement between the City of Toronto, Toronto Zoo and the Governing Council of the University of Toronto for the use of dedicated and shared lab and classroom spaces by University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSc) for the purposes of delivering post secondary education programs at the Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Transformation Officer recommends that:

1. The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo approve in principle the terms and conditions of a lease agreement (the "Lease") with the Governing Council of the University of Toronto (the "Tenant") in respect of the Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre at the property municipally known as 2000 Meadowvale Road (the "Leased Premises"), as set out in Confidential Attachment 1 to this report;
2. Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 1, the the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo authorize the Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto Zoo, on behalf of the Board, to negotiate and execute the Lease among the City of Toronto, Board of

Management of the Toronto Zoo, and the Tenant, consistent with the terms and conditions contained in Confidential Attachment 1 to this report, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;

3. Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 2, then the Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo recommend that Toronto City Council, subject to completion of the applicable land transfer between the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, authorize the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, on behalf of the City, to negotiate and execute the Lease among the City of Toronto, Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo and the Tenant consistent with the terms and conditions in Confidential Attachment 1 and Confidential Attachment 2 to this report, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;

4. The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo authorize the Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto Zoo to negotiate and execute the necessary agreement(s) with the Tenant, on terms and conditions based on Confidential Attachment 2 to this report, including securing a contribution by the Tenant towards improvement and rental costs for the Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;

5. The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo direct that Confidential Attachment 1 and Confidential Attachment 2 remain confidential at this time as it pertains to a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Toronto Zoo and the City, and be made public at the discretion of the City Solicitor following the completion of all transactions contemplated in the report; and

6. City Council direct that Confidential Attachment 1 and Confidential Attachment 2 remain confidential at this time as it pertains to a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Toronto Zoo and the City, and be made public at the discretion of the City Solicitor following the completion of all transactions contemplated in the report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The estimated financial impact of the lease terms as set out in Confidential Attachment 1 are described in Confidential Attachment 2.

With approval of this report the Toronto Zoo will work with the City of Toronto to execute the necessary agreement(s) with UTSc, including securing a contribution towards UTSc's share of improvement costs for the Community Conservation Centre. These funds will be directed to the Toronto Zoo Wildlife Conservancy to be held until such time as they are requested by the Chief Transformation Officer in accordance with the terms of the executed agreement(s). All funds allocated for capital and/or tenant improvement will contribute to the \$17.0 million in funding committed by the Toronto Zoo Wildlife Conservancy towards the Community Conservation Centre project.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 2, 2024, the Board approved the Toronto Zoo's 2025-2034 Capital Plan and Budget which included an increase to the Community Conservation Centre gross project budget to \$79.0 million. The cost is offset in its entirety by leveraging \$2.0 million in additional donated funds through the Toronto Zoo Wildlife Conservancy and \$13.3 million in funding held by the Toronto Foundation on behalf of the Toronto Zoo.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.ZB12.5>

The Toronto Zoo's 2025-2034 Capital Plan and Budget, including the Community Conservation Centre project, was subsequently approved by Toronto City Council at its meeting on February 11, 2025.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MPB27.1>

The contract with PCL Constructors Canada Inc. (PCL) to manage construction of the Community Conservation Centre was subsequently adjusted by the Board at its meeting on February 28, 2025 to align with the project budget approved in the 2025-2034 Capital Plan and Budget.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.ZB14.5>

In October 2023, the Toronto Zoo received a revised Class C Cost Estimate from PCL. This revised estimate reflected the changes in cost resulting from phasing the project and the total project value was increased to \$64.0 million.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.ZB6.6>

In April 2023, the Board approved award of the NRFP for a Construction Manager to PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.ZB3.3>

COMMENTS

The Construction of the Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre is underway and represents a critical element for Zoo revitalization and community engagement, as well as expanding education and training initiatives. The front entrance of the Zoo has not been significantly updated since 1974, is the first and last destination for guests, and has been prioritized in the current Board approved Master Plan. This area will be a community hub with modernized Zoo front entrance elements such as entrance wickets, retail facilities and animal habitats. In addition, the concept includes program elements such as conservation displays, classrooms and wet laboratories which will be shared with UTSc, another significant anchor in the Scarborough community.

The partnership with UTSc on the Community Conservation Centre will mark a milestone in the delivery of integrated conservation-focussed post-secondary academic and experiential learning opportunities at the Toronto Zoo. The Community Conservation Centre academic building will include two dedicated laboratory spaces for exclusive UTSc use, along with two teaching labs and four classrooms to be shared between UTSc, the Toronto Zoo and other third party and community organizations seeking event and meeting spaces. It is a key part of the vision for the Community Conservation Centre in catalyzing and strengthening community connections.

Lease Arrangement

Toronto Zoo staff are working with UTSc, City of Toronto Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) and City Legal on a lease arrangement for UTSc's use of dedicated lab space and shared lab and classroom spaces within the Community Conservation Centre for the purposes of academic programming. Confidential Attachment 1 provides a summary of the proposed terms of the lease arrangement. Zoo staff will continue to work with CREM and Legal to finalize the lease terms and secure approvals from Toronto City Council, as necessary, to execute the required agreements. In the event that the final lease terms vary substantially from those set out in Confidential Attachment 1, Zoo staff will report back to the Board on the updated terms.

It should be noted that a prerequisite to the execution of a lease agreement with UTSc for the Community Conservation Centre is the completion of a land transfer with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). At present, TRCA owns a portion of the land on which the Community Conservation Centre is located. Zoo staff are working with the City and TRCA to finalize the land transfer by Fall 2025.

Next Steps

Zoo staff will work further with UTSc, CREM and City Legal staff to finalize the lease terms for approval by City Council. In the event there are any substantial changes to the lease terms from those provided in Confidential Attachment 1, Zoo staff will report back to the Board prior to execution of the agreement.

Upon approval by City Council, and subject to completion of the land transfer with TRCA, the Zoo staff will work with CREM to finalize and execute the lease agreement by the first quarter of 2026 to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

CONTACT

Jamie Austin
Chief Transformation Officer
jaustin@torontozoo.ca
(416) 392-5914

SIGNATURE

Jamie Austin
Chief Transformation Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Confidential Attachment 1: Draft Term Sheet between City of Toronto, Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo and University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSc) for Occupancy of Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre

Confidential Attachment 2: Financial Model for UTSc Tenant Contribution towards Lease Arrangement at Toronto Zoo Community Conservation Centre