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**For Immediate release**

## **Zoo to seek Public/Private Partnership for the Giant Panda Conservation, Scientific Research and Education Program**

**November 25, 2010.** In the Zoo Board of Management meeting today, the Board endorsed the strategy to undertake an RFP to identify one or more partners to design, build and finance the Giant Panda Conservation, Scientific Research and Education Program. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued in early 2011.

"To partner with the Zoo on a long-term conservation program that supports a flagship species for conservation efforts worldwide, and educates millions of families and children in our community and abroad, is a goal that we believe fits with a number of corporations" commented Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair of the Zoo's Fundraising & Sponsorship Committee. "We have always anticipated that future financing to move this project forward would be done to minimize the costs to both the Zoo and City of Toronto tax-payers." The Board also approved the staff recommendation to delete \$2 million for the giant panda exhibit design from the Zoo's approved 2011-2020 Capital Works Program.

Negotiations between the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens (CAZG) and the consortium of Toronto Zoo, Calgary Zoo and Granby Zoo are positive and progressive which should lead in due course to a final agreement between all parties. "It is premature to comment on specific financial details while negotiations are underway but as the program continues to evolve with new insights and information, I can say that estimates have been reduced significantly from earlier estimations" said Dr. Ming-Tat Cheung, Board Member and Chair of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force. A giant panda conservation program is contained within the larger re-development of the 30-acre Eurasia area that includes red panda, Amur tiger, snow leopard, yak and Przewalski's horses.

Zoo Board Chair, Councillor Raymond Cho thanked Board members, members of the Giant Panda Acquisition Task Force and staff for their support, expertise and professionalism in bringing this international conservation initiative to Canada.

The Toronto Zoo is one of the leading zoos in wildlife conservation in North America. In 2009, the Zoo achieved its third highest attendance ever with 1,459,580 visitors. The most recent exhibit opening is the award-winning Tundra Trek in the summer 2009. It features the return of mature polar bears, Inuksuk, Aurora and Nakita, orphaned cubs that were first recovered and raised by the Toronto Zoo.

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Zoo Hours – 9:30am to 4:30pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. **Admission fees including HST are:** General 13-64: \$23, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12: \$13 and Seniors 65+: \$17. Parking is \$10. Event schedules and admission prices are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>). For general information, call (416) 392-5929 or visit

**[torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com)**