



Media Release - Infrastructure Funding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

High Park Zoo Awarded \$2.6M in Project Funding

- **High Park Zoo project has been awarded \$2.6 million in funding by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)**
- **Project includes major infrastructure improvements at the Zoo**
- **Announced by the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Canada's Minister of Infrastructure and Communities; Arif Virani, Member of Parliament for Parkdale–High Park; His Worship John Tory, Mayor of the City of Toronto; and other dignitaries via virtual call**

TORONTO – April 13, 2021 –

Friends of High Park Zoo (FHPZ) is pleased to announce that, in partnership with the City of Toronto, \$2.6 million in Government of Canada and Province of Ontario infrastructure funding has been secured for our \$3.6 million High Park Recreational Trail Improvements project in High Park Zoo.

This project will upgrade the current infrastructure of the Zoo's recreational trail (Deer Pen Road) into a greener, more pedestrian-friendly pathway for the Zoo's up to 700,000 annual visitors. This project will provide much needed infrastructure improvements for the Zoo including:

- Interventions such as bioswales and boardwalks to address drainage issues;
- Improved accessibility for seniors, people with disabilities and families;
- More green space for gardens and trees; and
- New gathering spaces for visitors to better enjoy the Zoo.

Funding for approximately 73% of the project (\$2.6 million) will come from the ICIP – a joint infrastructure program by the Federal and Provincial Governments – with the remaining approximately 27% of funding (nearly \$1 million) coming from the City of Toronto, and FHPZ via its generous donors.

FHPZ, in consultation with the City of Toronto, generated the vision for this project, and invested approximately \$250,000 in design and pre-project costs to move the project to its current shovel-ready stage. This project marks the second phase of a multi-year Master Plan that FHPZ is leading for High Park Zoo

"FHPZ is thrilled with today's announcement and is eager to embark on this much needed infrastructure project to help improve High Park Zoo," states FHPZ. Further, "We



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have strongly believed in this opportunity to improve High Park Zoo and with the infrastructure-related nature of this project, we believed this project was a perfect fit for the ICIP funding program.”

FHPZ wants to acknowledge the vision and passion of its Chair, John Formosa, who passed away on March 10, 2021. John's commitment was in full evidence on the project from concept to funding to procurement. “John led FHPZ, a volunteer-run and created organization, with all its many volunteers and stakeholders, through an eight year journey to not only save the zoo from closing but to ensure its operating funding was restored. His passion and work on this current chapter of enhancing the Zoo is in bold evidence with this major infrastructure project,” says Simone Stock, Vice-Chair, FHPZ on behalf of the board.

“John was a community builder, visionary, leader, champion of collaboration and diversity and all that is good in the world”, says Chris Diceman, Treasurer, FHPZ. “Thank you, John, for showing us the way and giving us the tools. It's up to us now to get the job done.”

FHPZ is currently undertaking Phase 1 of its 10-year Master Plan for High Park Zoo. The Llama and Capybara Building project is well underway and expected to be completed in early summer of 2021.

In 2015 FHPZ engaged award winning local-based design firm DTAH to design a multi-year Master Plan for High Park Zoo that will see over \$20 million of improvements to the nearly 130-year-old community Zoo. Phase 2 made possible by this ICIP program, will pave the way for the next phases of the Master Plan. These will focus on enhancing the animal exhibits and the visitor experience with our animals.

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About High Park Zoo

Established in 1893 for deer, the Zoo's animal paddocks have always been a popular attraction. Today, nearly 130 years later, the Zoo's eleven paddocks are home to a variety of animal species from around the world including bison, llamas, peacocks, reindeer, highland cattle, emus, sheep and capybaras. The Zoo is open every day from 7:00 am to dusk, free to the public and attracts up to 700,000 visitors each year. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Zoo is currently closed to the public.

About Friends of High Park Zoo - highparkzoo.ca

Friends of High Park Zoo (FHPZ) was formed in 2012 to raise the necessary funds to ensure that the Zoo remained open. With the City restoring operating funding in 2014, FHPZ is raising sustainable funding from individuals, corporations and local businesses to enhance and sustain the Zoo. FHPZ is a registered not-for-profit corporation created expressly to generate support for High Park Zoo.