

To All Members of the Accessible Public Transit Service Advisory Committee

**Re: Policy Re: Pets on Transit**

### **Recommendation**

That members of the Accessible Public Transit Service Advisory Committee provide feedback with respect to the potential impacts of allowing pets on public transit services which will be included in a future Commission report.

### **Background**

At the August 31, 2022 meeting, the Commission directed administration to report back on the issues and implications of allowing pets on public transit in response to a delegation (see Enclosure I).

The current policy with respect to pets and service animals is set out below noting it is considered to be in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act legislation.

#### ***London Transit Commission Service Animal Policy***

*Pets are not permitted on-board LTC buses.*

*Service animals are permitted on buses if working in aid of the person making the trip.*

*Service animals on buses must remain in the care and control of the owner at all times. The owner must be prepared to demonstrate to the Operator how this requirement will be achieved. (i.e. leash, cage, etc.)*

*This applies as follows:*

- i. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or*
- ii. the customer provides documentation from a health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.*

The underlined section of the policy above was added in 2019 in response to concerns experienced with support animals onboard buses who were roaming freely and causing safety concerns for both riders and bus operators.

The review undertaken by administration will include an industry scan of best practices, as well as the identification of any issues that have arisen in transit systems that do allow pets and what mitigation measures they have implemented to limit same. In addition, feedback from transit riders and past issues experienced at LTC with respect to the current Service Animal Policy will be reviewed.

Another key input with respect to any potential changes to this policy is the Accessible Public Transit Service Advisory Committee. Committee members will be asked to discuss any concerns they may have with respect to broadening the current policy to consider allowing pets on board transit. It should be noted that any changes to this policy going forward would apply on both the conventional and specialized services as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Subsequent to gathering and reviewing all relevant information, administration will provide a report with recommendations to the Commission.

### **Enclosure**

I – Letter from AnnaMaria Valastro – Commission Delegation, August 31, 2022

Recommended by:

Kelly S. Paleczny  
General Manager

**Sent:** Friday, August 19, 2022 10:53 AM  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: request for delegation status

Hello

I would like to propose to the Board of the London Transit Commission a policy change to approve pets on the public transit system because I believe not permitting pets on a public transit system places low income individuals at a disadvantage. Public transit is the most affordable form of transportation and denying low income individuals the opportunity to use public transit to transport pets places an undue expense on them, one that they may or may not be able to afford.

The City of Toronto policy regarding pets on public transit is restricted based on occupancy load. No pets are permitted on public transit between the hours of 6am to 10am and again between 3pm and 7pm. Outside of these hours, restriction is at the discretion of the driver, again based on how crowded the bus is.

The Toronto Transit Commission does not record complaints about pets on the public transit system because it receives so few.

Typically arguments against pets on public transit system are: allergies; aggressive dogs, urinating or defecating, being afraid of dogs.

I personally am very allergic to dogs but only if I touch them. I have no reaction to dogs by just being in their presence and certainly not with any brief encounters.

Again, the driver has discretion over any dog that might be aggressive due to anxiety it may experience by being on a bus with strangers. The driver would ask the owner to disembark. It would be handled no differently than an aggressive person on a bus except it would be easier to deal with as the owner would escort the dog off the bus.

If a dog was to urinate or defecate on a bus, it would be handled no differently that if a person was to vomit on a bus or food was spilled on a bus and so on.

If a person was afraid of dogs then: they can either move away from the dog or ask the owner to move away or complain to the driver. The driver has the discretion to ask the owner to disembark and take the next bus.

Low income individuals and their pets should have the same access to public transit as any other person to transport their pets to veterinarian appointments, dog parks and be with their pets as they move around the city.

Sincerely,  
AnnaMaria Valastro