

Letter from AnnaMaria Valastro, Commission Delegation - August 31, 2022

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