



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
Transit Division

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	May 30, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Allowing Larger-Sized Dogs on the Hamilton Street Railway (PW15066a) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Murray Hill Manager, Transit Operations (905) 546-2424, Extension 1857
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	David Dixon Director of Transit Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That larger-sized, non-working dogs not be approved for travel on Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) transit vehicles;
- (b) That all small dogs/animals be permitted on HSR transit vehicles provided the following conditions are met:
  - (i) They are in a secure crate/carrier with the exception of a service or working dog;
  - (ii) Do not jeopardize the safety of other passengers or HSR employees;
  - (iii) Do not occupy a passenger seat;
  - (iv) Do not utilize transit services during the weekday peak hours of 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., or 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.;
  - (v) Exotic pets are not permitted travel.
- (c) That this item be removed from the Public Works Committee Outstanding Business List.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the July 9, 2015 Public Works Committee meeting, a resident put forth a motion requesting a change in the current policy restricting larger-sized dogs travel on HSR buses. The Committee directed staff to review the request and to prepare a report.

At the September 21, 2015 Public Works Committee meeting, HSR staff initially supported the allowing of travel of larger-sized dogs on HSR buses. This motion was not favourable as numerous HSR transit users voiced their concern through the media,

concerned about public safety when travelling on a bus with a large dog travelling on it. Additional concerns related to the affect a large dog would have on a working-specialty dog during travel, public health issues associated with customers having allergies to pet dandruff, space issues of a large dog taking up space required by customers utilizing mobility devices and/or parents with strollers, increase for the potential of conflict for the operator should an operator refuse a customer with a larger-sized dog travel, and a dog relieving itself on the bus were a number of complaints received concerning this request.

The Committee directed staff to review the proposal, referencing other transit properties of equal size as the HSR, and their policies related to the larger-sized dog issue. The Committee also directed staff to consult with the Union Executive of ATU Local 107 to obtain their position on this request.

As a result of a significant amount of opposition, both public and employee originated, staff recommend denying the approval of travel for larger-sized dogs on HSR buses.

***Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 3***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Larger-sized dogs, not considered “working” dogs, have been restricted from travelling on HSR buses for a number of years. Due to a resident requesting a change to the policy that would permit the travel of all dogs on public transit vehicles, staff have re-examined this issue.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

There would be a minor change to the existing policy requiring all small dogs including lap dogs and small animals travelling on the transit system, be allowed travel only if transported in carry-on crates/carriers.

This policy change does not apply to “certified” specialty dogs from continuing to accompany any passenger with a disability, provided that the specialty dog remains under the control of the passenger at all times while on the transit vehicle.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Policies were reviewed related to pets travelling on public transit vehicles in Windsor, Gatineau, Winnipeg, Montreal, BC, London, Brantford, GO, Sudbury, St Catharine’s, Guelph, Niagara Falls and Cornwall where only small pets are permitted to travel on transit vehicles provided they are in approved crates/carriers. See Appendix A attached.

Consultation with ATU Local 107 Union Executive resulted in their disapproval of the proposal for a variety of reasons. The primary reason focused on Joint Health & Safety issues associated with the operator's personal safety, and becoming involved in heated disputes with a customer travelling with a large dog being denied transit. Other concerns ranged from the safety of customers, concerns of multiple dogs travelling on a bus simultaneously, the safety of customers travelling with a working, specialty dog, and dogs relieving themselves on the bus.

Comments were reviewed with owners of "specialty" dogs, identifying concerns of large dogs distracting a working dog, or even attacking one.

Social media outlets were reviewed for customer comments related to this issue. A high volume of customers voiced concerns ranging from allergies to dogs, to poorly trained dogs acting up on buses, larger-sized dogs taking up space required of mobility users, individuals allowing dogs to occupy seats, etc.

### **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

After reviewing policies from other transit agencies with respect to this issue and as a result of a significant amount of opposition, both public and employee originated, staff recommend denying the approval of travel for larger-sized dogs on HSR buses.

Confining all small animals to a crate or carrier, will reduce the risk of liability to the City as it will ensure the animal does not become loose and cause a potentially dangerous situation on board a bus. It will also eliminate any possible lawsuits the City may incur as a result of a "lap dog" not being crated.

### **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Committee could decide to maintain the existing policy identifying small lap dogs can be carried on the bus, and other small pets are to be transported in an animal carrier.

Another option would be for the Committee to approve a six-month trial related to the permitting of larger-sized dogs travel on transit vehicles.

### **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **Strategic Priority #1**

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

*WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

#### **Strategic Objective**

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

**Strategic Priority #2**

Valued & Sustainable Services

*WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.*

**Strategic Objective**

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

**Strategic Priority #3**

Leadership & Governance

*WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.*

**Strategic Objective**

3.4 Enhance opportunities for operational efficiencies.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix A – Transit Property Summary