

### Attachment 3: Public Consultation

This document provides an overview of the public consultation process for the review of proposed amendments to Municipal Code, Chapter 349, Animals conducted by Toronto Animal Services (TAS) staff.

#### Reaching the Public

City staff publicized these consultations through:

- emails to licensed pet owners, Councillors and animal rights organizations;
- online listings at a dedicated web page [Proposed Amendments to Municipal Chapter 349 Animals](#), the City of Toronto [Public Consultation](#) page and City of Toronto Twitter accounts; and
- posting of information at City of Toronto community centres, libraries and animal care centres.

#### Types of Engagement and Input

This section provides an overview of the methods used to engage the public and the volume of information received.

**Table 1: Public Engagement as of October 9, 2012**

Method	Details of Engagement	Input Received
<b>Consultations</b>	<b>Six (6) consultations</b> have been held in Etobicoke, East York, North York and downtown Toronto. Participants received an overview of proposed amendments and information about various programs and were invited to comment on these and other topics. Surveys were also distributed.	Staff received input from <b>33 participants</b> , including pet owners, members of known animal rights agencies and the media.
<b>Surveys</b>	<b>Two (2) surveys</b> were distributed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Survey 1</i> collected insight into public awareness and opinion; and</li><li>• <i>Survey 2</i> collected specific feedback on several proposed amendments.</li></ul> Surveys were made available in consultations, as well as at <a href="http://www.toronto.ca/animal_services/animals_bylaw.htm">http://www.toronto.ca/animal_services/animals_bylaw.htm</a> .	<b>860 surveys</b> have been completed thus far, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>579 of Survey 1;</b> and</li><li>• <b>281 of Survey 2.</b></li></ul> 94 % of respondents advised they were pet owners.
<b>Other Submissions</b>	Staff have received written submissions from persons by email, mail and at consultations.	<b>17 submissions</b> have been received, most often one paragraph, but ranging from one sentence to several pages.

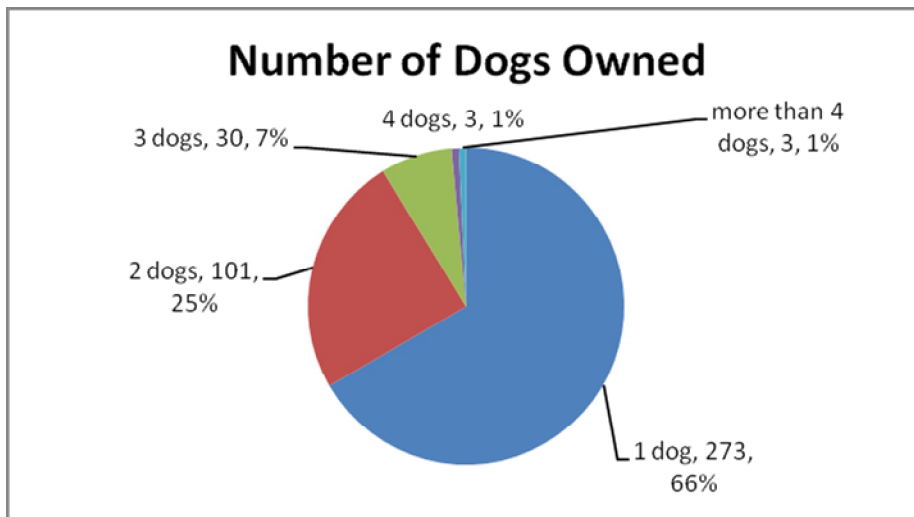
### Consultation Details

As mentioned above, City staff conducted six consultations across the City, consulting with 33 participants.

- East York Civic Centre, Council Chambers, Tuesday September 11, 2012, 9 am – 12 pm
- Etobicoke Civic Centre, Council Chambers, Thursday September 13, 2012, 1 pm – 4 pm
- Etobicoke Civic Centre, Council Chambers, Monday, October 15, 2012, 1 pm to 4 pm
- Metro Hall, Room 310, Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 6 pm to 9 pm
- North York Civic Centre, Council Chambers, Thursday, October 18, 2012, 6 pm to 9 pm
- Scarborough Civic Centre, Council Chambers, Tuesday, October 30, 2012, 6 pm to 9 pm

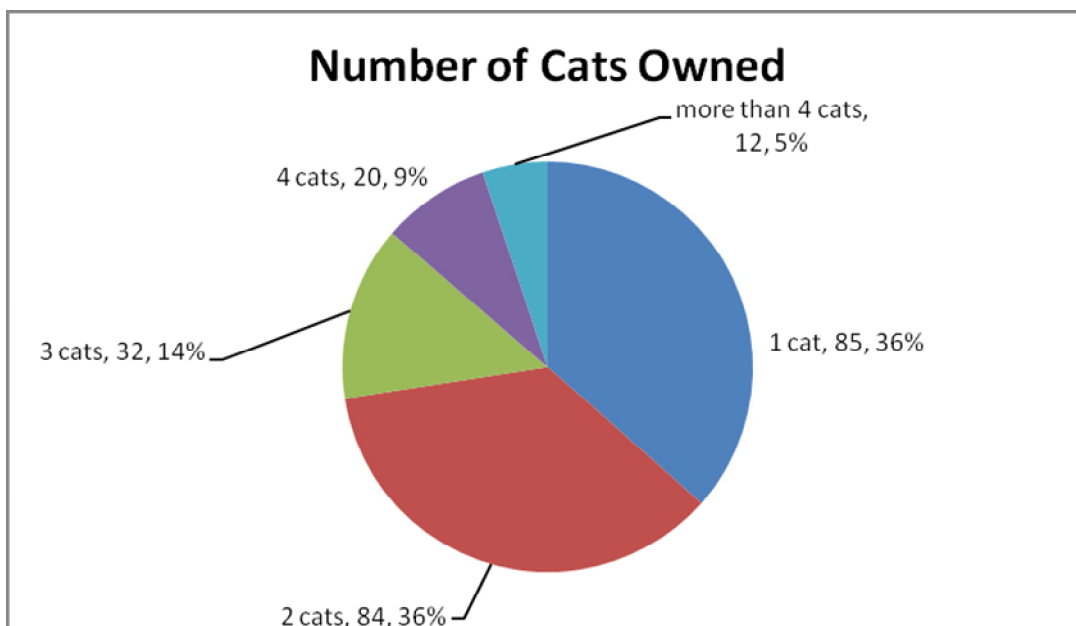
### Figure 1 – Number of Dogs Owned by Respondents

This figure illustrates that 91% of respondents who owned dogs, owned one or two dogs only.



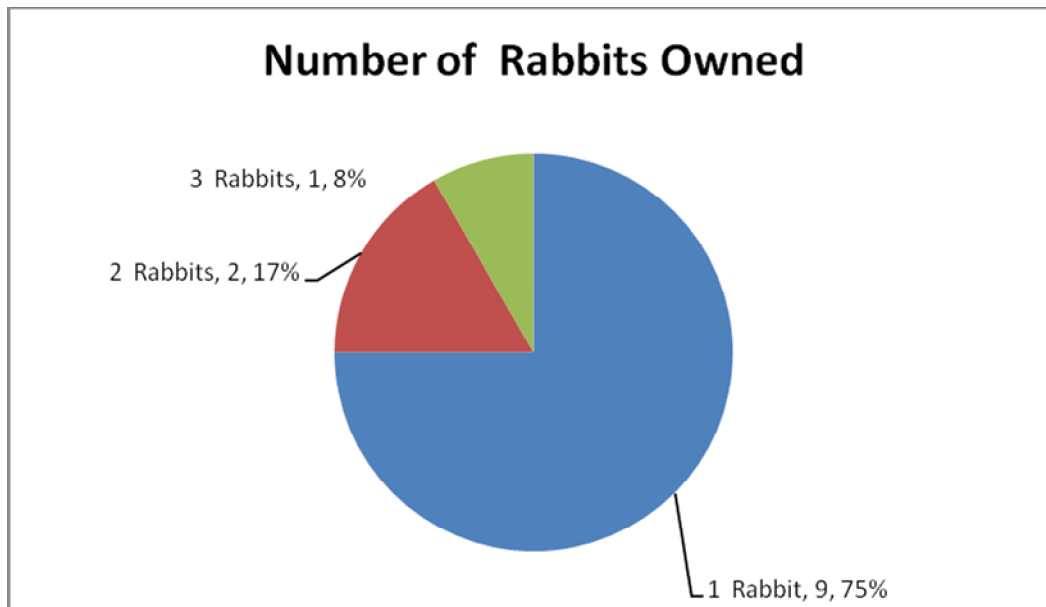
### Figure 2 – Number of Cats Owned by Respondents

28% of cat owners owned three or more cats.

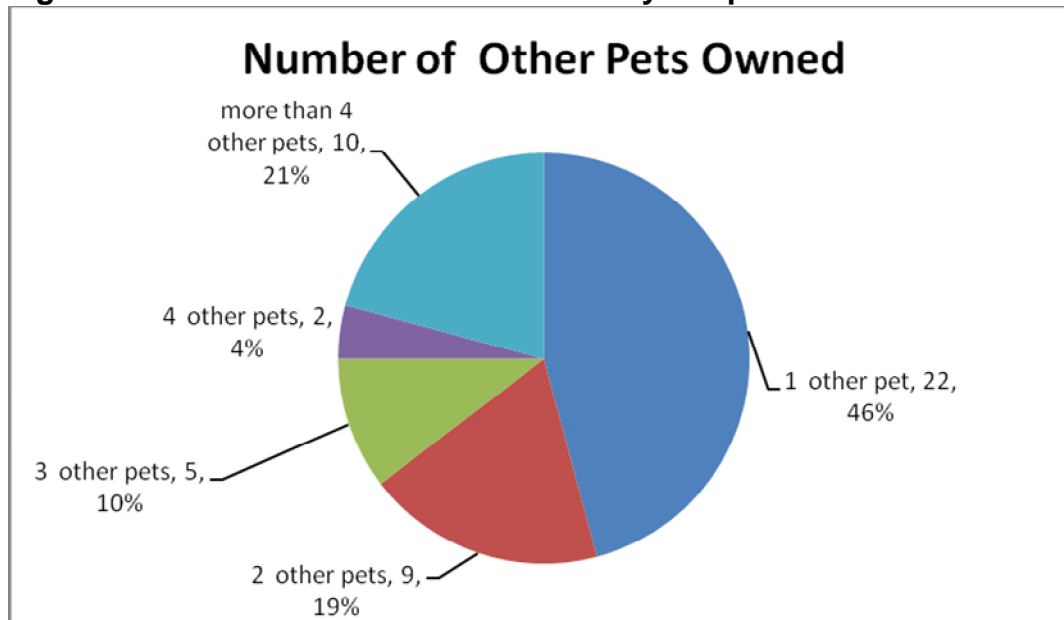


### Figure 3 – Number of Rabbits Owned by Respondents

Only 12 rabbit owners participated in the survey, not providing us with a large subset of rabbit owners from which we could estimate average numbers of rabbits owned; with that said, 75% of rabbit owner respondents owned only one rabbit.



### Figure 4 – Number of Other Pets Owned by Respondents



There were 48 respondents who owned other pets, such as birds (budgies, canaries, finches), crabs, fish (goldfish), guinea pigs, horses, turtles, rats, and reptiles (snakes and geckos). Almost half of these pet owners owned one animal, with 21% owning more than four animals.

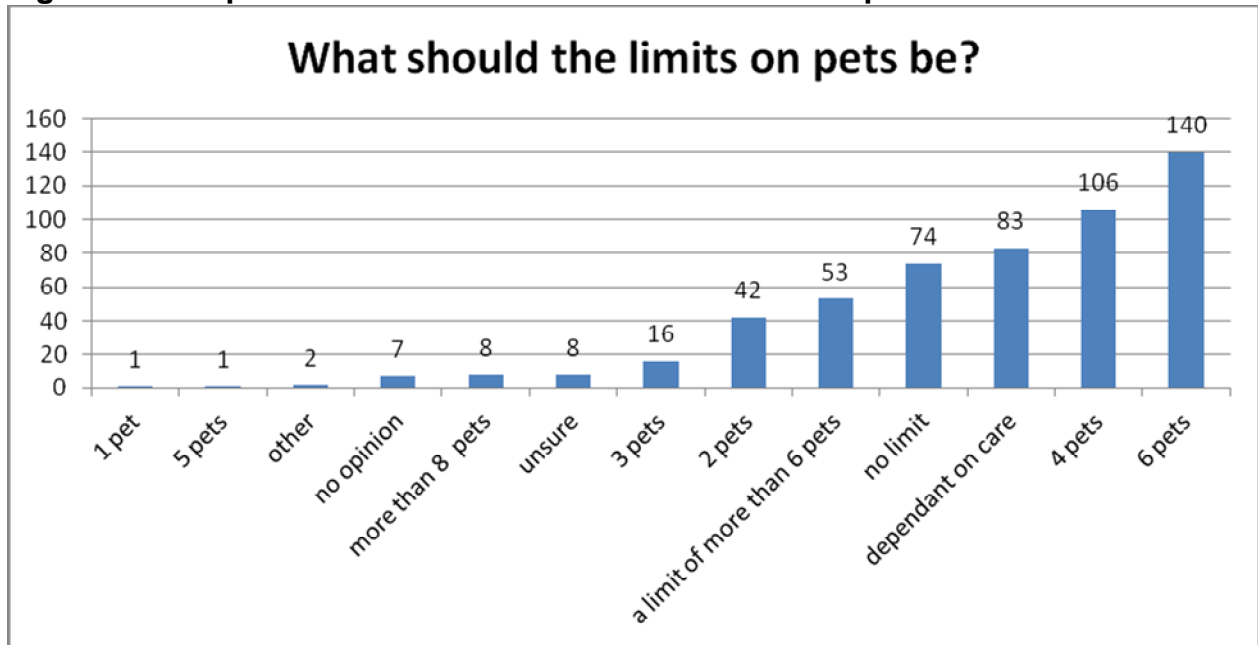
### Number of Ferrets Owned by Respondents

Only two respondents identified themselves as ferret owners, both owning one ferret each.

## Limits on Pet Ownership

Consultation participants presented mixed views on limits on pet ownership. Those who worked with animal rights organizations generally expressed that pet limits were a bad idea and hindered the activities of people who care for stray animals, who often take in more than the existing limit without registering pets. Persons from these organizations generally agreed that the limits on cats should be removed, with mixed opinions on dog limits. Most respondents thought that dogs make more noise than cats and require more care than cats. Individual pet owners tended to worry about the negative effects of having unlimited pets, such as noise and unsanitary conditions, as well as the possibility that some people may adopt more pets than they could adequately care for.

**Figure 5 – Respondent Views on Limits on Pet Ownership**



Those who thought there should be no limit or increased or flexible limits, suggested a number of areas for consideration:

- **Fosters and rescues:** Those who foster or rescue animals should be given exceptions to pet limits.
- **Home size:** Pet limits should be related to the size of the owner's home; however, this may pose a problem if the owner moves.
- **Pet care:** The quality of pet care should be used to gauge the appropriate pet limits, rather than an arbitrary number, although it was acknowledged that it would be impossible for City staff to evaluate this in every home.

## Toronto Animal Services Spay and Neuter

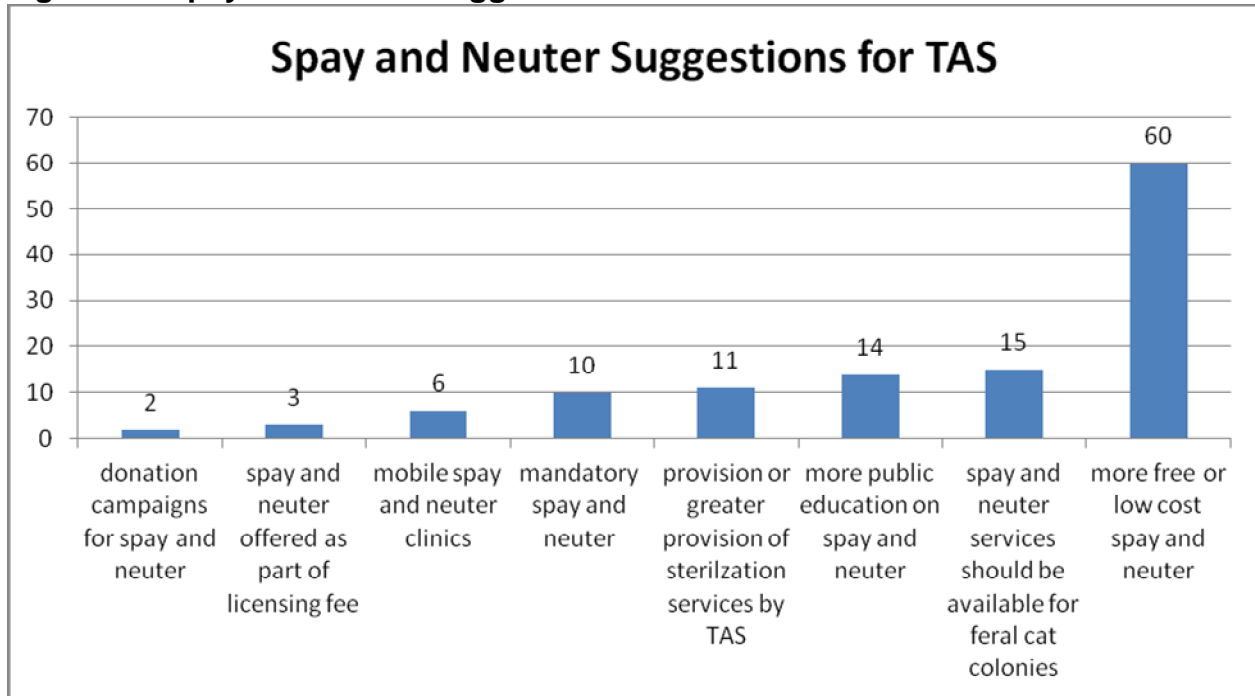
Although no direct questions were asked about Toronto Animal Services spay and neuter services, staff received many suggestions with regards to programs, funding and public involvement.

During consultation, most participants who were involved with feral cat programs suggested that sterilization should be mandatory and that it should be provided at low or no cost by TAS. For survey respondents, the largest priority was that TAS should provide low or no cost spay and neuter services,

followed by the suggestions these services must be available for feral cat populations and that the public should be better educated on their importance. Some respondents also supported:

- mandatory spay and neuter for all pets, including cats and dogs;
- mobile spay and neuter clinics, similar to the micro-chipping Chip Truck which people expressed was a good idea;
- spay and neuter provided at no charge as part of pet licensing; and
- donation programs in which people could contribute to spay and neuter programs directly.

**Figure 6 – Spay and Neuter Suggestions for Toronto Animal Services**



### **Feral Cats**

The most common responses on feral cats were concerns about the cats' well-being and care. A few suggestions were received to re-label "feral cats" as "community cats" to "reduce fear" around the animals and to help people think of these cats as part of their community. Persons who had concerns about cats expressed that feral were a nuisance and created a public health problem, defecating in people's yards, overrunning areas and creating unsanitary areas where they lived. A few people suggested that all cats in Toronto be required to be spayed and neutered to eliminate this issue.

For those who were familiar with the feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return program, the great majority of respondents and consultation attendees strongly supported it. They thought it was a humane way to address the feral cat population and their suggestions centred on expanding the program, including hiring more staff and volunteers, "trappers" to trap and return cats, and to more widely publicize the program. It is important to note that many respondents were unaware that this program existed.

### **Hoarding**

Both survey respondents and consultation attendees expressed hoarding as a public health concern, with many worried that hoarding would increase if the pet limit was lifted. Persons gave examples of unsanitary living conditions experienced by hoarders and the difficulty of rectifying the situation when a neighbour was hoarding. There was confusion over the actions that TAS is legally able to

take in addressing a hoarding situation, with general input advising that TAS should be able to resolve hoarding issues more expediently.

TAS staff explained that research indicated that hoarding was not related to pet limits, and usually was an indication of mental illness by the owner. Several consultation participants agreed, and others advised that this seemed to make sense. Consultation participants were also unaware of the City and Toronto Police Service programs aimed at vulnerable persons, addressing their health and welfare as well as those of their pets.

### **Cat Retention Times**

In the consultations, staff explained to attendees that TAS was interested in reducing the time in which cats are retained in shelters before other actions can be taken, such as medical treatment and adoption. One big motivation for staff was that, the longer they retained animals, the more likely they would be exposed to and contract upper respiratory infections, which are difficult and costly to treat. Staff explained that the reduction would be from five days to three days, the provincial standard.

This idea received strong support from several participants, including veterinarians and a Humane Society representative, expressing that this would be the best option for an animal's welfare. Some participants expressed concerns that this shortened time could make it more difficult for people to find lost pets and were concerned this would lead to more euthanasia of animals brought in. Staff explained that TAS was partnering with external pet finding websites to make finding lost pets easier, that older animals who were clearly pets would be retained as long as possible and that their intention was not to increase euthanasia rates.

### **Tethering Pets in Public Places**

Input indicated that public dog tethering is not a huge public concern. Almost all consultation participants were unaware that Chapter 349 prohibited tethering dogs in public, and didn't see it as a pressing safety or other type of issue. Participants acknowledged that some people do leave their dogs alone for unreasonably long periods or in poor weather conditions, but that this was not a common occurrence.

Surveys revealed that only 12% of survey respondents were aware that public dog tethering is currently prohibited, with one third of dog owners reporting that they publicly tether their dogs. Of the 407 respondents who owned dogs, 151 (37%) advised that they tether their dogs outside of restaurants, store or other establishments. As well, 72% of all respondents, including those who did not own dogs, did not think the City should ban the tethering of dogs in public places.

Those who thought public tethering was a bad idea cited examples of frightened animals biting people or behaving aggressively, remaining outside in the rain for extended periods while owners spend time at a bar or restaurant, or being stolen.

### **Tethering Pets in Private Places**

City staff asked for feedback on at-home dog tethering, and whether dogs which are tethered at home should be attached to a type of pulley system, running line or other system to permit more movement. Concerns expressed include:

- **Complexity:** Some respondents thought these systems seemed very complicated and difficult to use and install.
- **Cost:** Respondents were worried about the cost of this system.

- **Danger:** These systems may tangle, injure and harm dogs if they malfunction. One person provided an example in which her neighbour's dog was hanged by a tethering system.
- **Suitability of property:** Respondents advised that some properties are too small for these systems and if implemented, this regulation should differentiate between different types of dwellings.
- **Tethering at home:** Some respondents advised that tethering at home was cruel and that homeowners should focus on having effective fencing rather than one of the above systems.

### **Billing and Fees Related Suggestions**

56% said that they supported a fee increase if it was necessary to ensure TAS programs and services could continue, though thought this should be a last resort and that if fees went up, money should directly fund TAS services.

As per administrative changes, the public were happy that TAS was considering moving to one bill for multiple pet owners, and an online billing option. A number of other billing-related suggestions were received, listed below:

- **Bill consolidation:** A suggestion was received to add pet licences to another City bill, such as the water bill.
- **Lifetime billing:** Billing should be for the lifetime of the animal.
- **Increases:** If necessary to maintain its current services, most respondents said that TAS should increase its fees.
- **Online options:** Online billing options should include an option to cancel a licence and order new tags.
- **Tags:** Large and small tags should be offered.

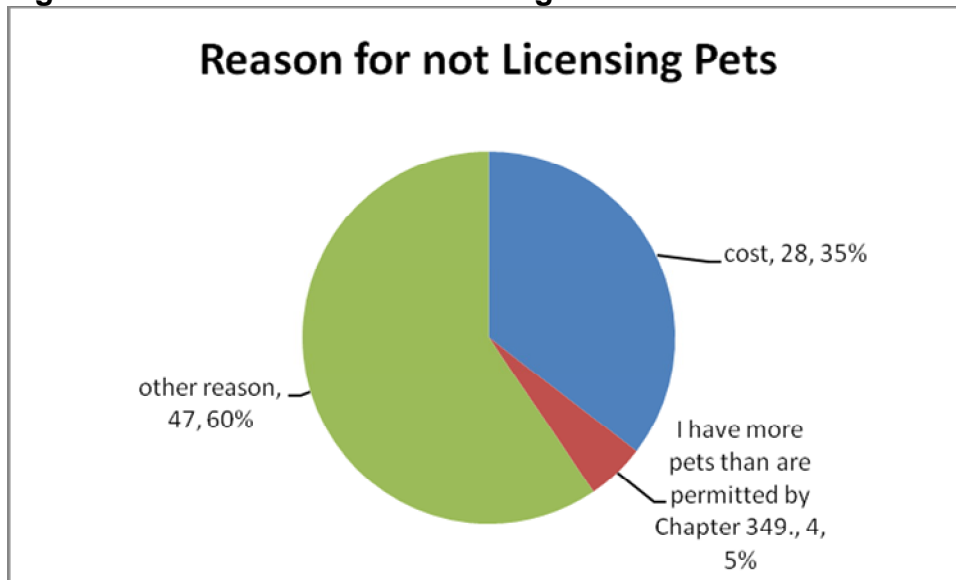
### **Pet Licensing**

85% of respondents reported that their pets were licensed, though only 49% of respondents were aware that pet licensing fees directly fund TAS programs and services. Those that licensed their pets advised that they did so because:

- they were required to do so by by-law and would prefer not be fined
- licensing is a good idea in case your pets become lost
- they believed the money benefitted animals and Toronto Animals Services
- their dog walker required them to have a license in order to work for them
- they believe that their home insurance requires them to license their pet
- they believe that Emergency Services will know they have a pet in the case of an emergency

Of the 79 people who reported not licensing their pets, cost was identified by almost one-third of respondents.

**Figure 7 – Reason for Not Licensing Pets**



Those that did not license their pets advised that they did not do so because:

- they do not believe licensing fees have a benefit to them, their pets, or animals in general and that the benefit is to staff
- they have indoor pets and don't see a need to license them
- they are fostering animals and don't believe pets should be licensed until they find their permanent home
- they believe it is too expensive
- they have more animals than is permitted by by-law and are afraid of being fined
- they forgot to
- they are not clear where to license them
- they prefer to donate money to TAS instead of licensing
- they believe it is a tax which they don't think they should pay

### **Public Interaction with Toronto Animal Services**

40% of respondents advised they have contacted TAS for some reason, with respondents most often using TAS services for pet licensing and adoption. Only about half of respondents were aware that pet licensing fees were used to fund Toronto Animal Services programs and services.

### **Respondents' Concerns about Animals**

Respondents expressed a number of concerns about neighbours' animals and animals in the community. A list of concerns is described here in alphabetical order, with animal neglect and abuse being a frequently mentioned reason for contacting TAS:

- abandoned animals
- adoption
- dog abuse and neglect
- dog attacks and dogs running at large
- feral cat communities
- hoarding
- illegal dog day cares



- lost pets
- ownership of prohibited animals (e.g., a python)
- people not picking up their dogs' feces
- pet farming (e.g., raising dogs for food)
- protest legislation, such as the new Dog Owner's Liability Act
- sick, injured and/or dead animal (including wildlife such as raccoons)
- trapped wildlife (e.g., a squirrel caught in drain pipe and a bird in an apartment)

### Dog Abuse and Neglect

One frequently mentioned area was dog abuse and neglect. Some respondents were concerned about dogs being mistreated, such as:

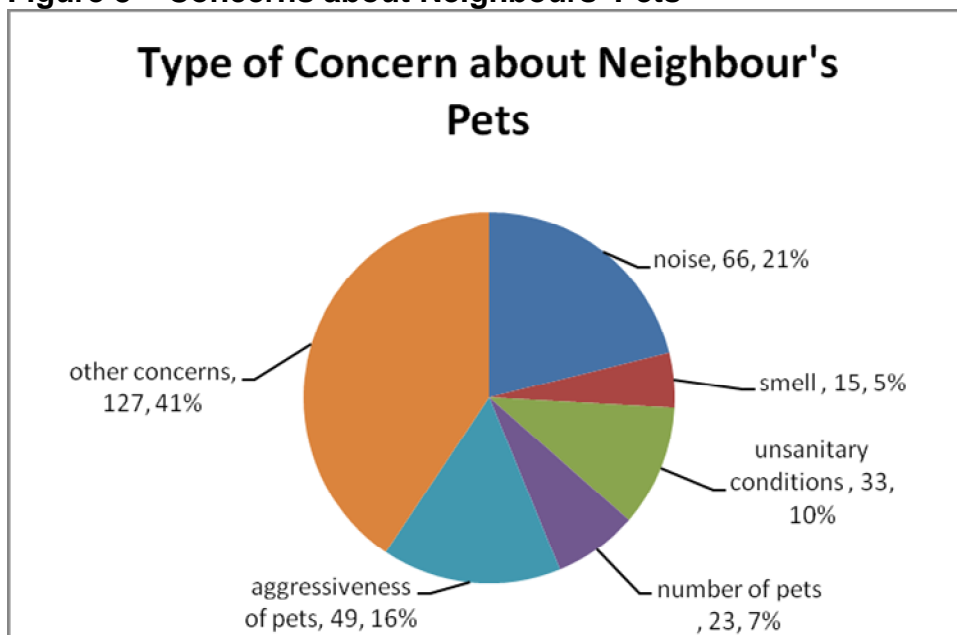
- being beaten
- not fed enough
- not receiving enough exercise
- left outside in poor weather
- in locked cars for long periods
- forced to act aggressively as guard dogs

The public was unclear about the ability of TAS to intervene when was an animal is being mistreated and were surprised that TAS could not legally enter someone's property without permission to remove animals.

### Wildlife

Some respondents expressed concern that TAS did not provide care for wildlife and that the wildlife care centre in Toronto was relocating to a less expensive location outside of the City. Respondents were worried that Toronto would become even more underserved for wildlife animal care.

**Figure 8 – Concerns about Neighbours' Pets**



## **Other Suggestions for Toronto Animals Services**

When asked if they had other suggestions for TAS, the public shared a variety of ideas, summarized alphabetically here:

- Banning breed-specific legislation, such as for pit bulls
- Banning extendible leashes
- Better enforcement of pet licensing
- Better screening for potential pet adopters
- Better volunteer management
- Creation of no-kill shelters
- Greater collaboration between TAS and other authorities, such as the OSPCA, or greater powers for TAS to address animal cruelty
- Greater examination of legislation and programs in Calgary, Florida, California, Italy and other places with progressive policies
- Hiring feral cat trappers and expansion of feral cat programs
- Low cost veterinary services, such as spay and neuter, especially for seniors or low income persons
- Mandatory spay and neuter for all licensed animals
- More community education about TAS programs, services and caring for and interacting with pets, as well more awareness of puppy mills
- More legislation for pet care
- More micro-chipping events
- More programs to create more pet friendly cities, such as provision of water bowls and bags for dog waste
- Pet insurance
- Pet training classes
- The acceptance of I.O.U.'s if people are unable to pay for services
- Tougher penalties for those who abuse animals
- Wild animal care