

Councillor Bravo, Chair

Economic and Community Development Committee

City Hall, Toronto

February 20, 2024

Re: EC10.2 - Response to EC6.9 - Incident and Operational Review of Serious Dog Attacks

As a resident, currently involved in the process of reporting a known to be dangerous dog in my community, I support the recommendations in the staff report and the additional resources in the 2024-25 city budget to augment by-law officer staffing.

Prevention and early intervention on this issue is key to prevent the traumas that have elevated this issue on the policy agenda.

I agree there is a critical need for the “proactive communication strategy and public education campaign to support compliance and enforcement” that is recommended in the report. I would add that a component of this needs to improve accessibility to the complaint process for the public.

While learning how to report a dangerous dog online or by 311 is relatively easy, the steps that follow are unclear. In my experience:

- A complainant receives an email confirmation of their complaint and a service request number but does not receive a written copy of their interview report, information on the outcome of the complaint, or advice on next steps that could be taken should the dog’s behaviour continue.
- While confidentiality should be protected I was surprised I was not advised other complaint(s) had been made (and they had).
- I was surprised to learn that Animal Control Officers may interview the dog owner but that this is commonly done by phone and the dog may never be seen in person. I understand the staffing rationale for this

however, when there is a prolonged history of incidents and/or multiple complaints I can't understand how not assessing the dog in person is prudent.

- I learned that the definition of a dangerous act is not defined. Aside from the obvious (skin broken and risk of rabies) a dangerous act should be articulated to the public to include examples such as a dog knocking over a person with a physical disability, exhibiting persistent threatening (such as lunging) behaviour, and signs that the owner is having difficulty controlling their dog.

I am concerned with this statement in the staff report:

“TAS is updating how dangerous dog act investigations are operationally prioritized to reduce focus on minor incidents by increasing the service standard time before which an officer will initiate an investigation. These changes will help ensure resources are available to prioritize investigations of severe dangerous dog incidents.” (page 12 Feb 5 [staff report](#)).

This is very subjective, and I would recommend a clear and transparent triage tool that would direct what constitutes minor, what investigation will take place, how the outcome is reported and what rights the complainant has should new information be collected or reported.

I sincerely thank you for your attention to this issue in our city.

Cathy Crowe

Resident Ward 10