

Proposed Licensing Regulations for Animal-Related Businesses

Date: June 24, 2025

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 545, Licensing, requires a variety of businesses to obtain a licence from the City and comply with its regulations for the purpose of public health and safety, consumer protection, and nuisance control.

Pet shops are currently the only type of business licensed by the City that keep animals on-site, leaving other pet-related businesses, such as kennels or grooming salons, unregulated. This report recommends amendments to Chapter 545, Licensing, Chapter 349, Animals, and Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, to modernize regulations for businesses that house or care for animals for business activities. The proposed changes aim to enhance animal welfare and facility standards, reduce nuisance concerns, improve consumer protection, and establish appropriate oversight at the municipal level.

This report responds to two directives from City Council to (1) review possible amendments to introduce a new pet establishment business licence class to regulate all businesses for the sale of, grooming, training, daycare or the overnight boarding of animals, as well as review zoning by-law regulations for kennels and pet services in relation to the proposed licence ([2022.EC31.5](#)), and (2) develop a plan to license kennels in Toronto ([2021.GL27.30](#)). This report also supports the City of Toronto Business Licence and Permit Applications Action Plan: Chapter 545, Licensing (2025 to 2029), which is the Division's roadmap for making the business licensing experience easier for business owners and trade practitioners.

To improve and modernize regulations for animal-related businesses, this report recommends updating licence definitions and requirements to improve clarity for operators, reduce regulatory gaps, and reflect community input and the current state of pet-related services in Toronto, including:

- Introducing a new pet establishment business licence category that captures the full range of services provided by pet-related businesses, including boarding, breeding, training, grooming, daycare, and the sale or adoption of animals. This involves updating licensing definitions and requirements, as well as implementing

an activity-based licensing framework to cover the variety of services that can be offered by a single establishment.

- Expanding the amusement establishment licence category to include businesses where animals are used for display, education, or entertainment.
- Updating definitions in Chapter 349 to align with the new licensing framework and establish consistency across by-laws.

The recommendations in this report aim to establish regulations for businesses that care for live animals, set consistent standards for inspections, animal care and facilities, allow the City to maintain animal welfare and protect consumers, and update the licensing framework to better reflect current business practices.

In addition to the proposed licensing framework for pet establishments, City Planning (CP) is reviewing the zoning requirements related to kennels and pet services to ensure that the proposed licensing amendments align with City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. This collaborative approach is essential given the complementary roles of Chapter 545 and the Zoning By-law, and the interconnectedness of licensing and zoning. CP has developed a complementary report with preliminary recommendations related to pet establishments, for consideration by Planning and Housing Committee, and aims to bring a final report in early 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommends that:

1. City Council amend Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licensing, in accordance with the draft article attached as Attachment 1, as follows:

Updates to 545-246 Definitions

a. Add new definitions as follows:

1. PET ESTABLISHMENT – A building, part of a building, vehicle, or other place in which animals are kept for business activities. Such business activities include, but are not limited to, breeding, boarding, training, grooming, and similar activities, or any combination of these activities.
2. PET DAYCARE – A pet establishment used for boarding of dogs, cats or other animals between the hours of 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. only.
3. KENNEL – A pet establishment used for boarding, breeding or training of dogs, cats or other animals, including between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.
4. PET GROOMING SALON – A pet establishment used for grooming of dogs, cats or other animals.

5. ANIMAL CENTRE – As defined in Chapter 349, Animals.

6. ANIMAL – As defined in Chapter 349, Animals.

b. Amend definitions as follows:

1. PET SHOP – A pet establishment where animals for use as pets are sold or kept for sale.

2. VETERINARIAN - A person registered and entitled to practise veterinary medicine under the Veterinarians Act, as amended.

Updates to Article XX – Category-Wide Requirements

c. Amend title of Article XX “Pet Shops” to “Pet Establishments”.

d. Amend 545-247 to be titled “Separate licence required for each pet establishment” and to read:

A separate licence shall be taken out for each pet establishment.

e. Add section titled “Endorsements” and to read:

A. Every owner or operator of a pet establishment shall obtain a licence and, at the time of application for a licence and at each application for renewal, obtain a separate endorsement of their licence for every business activity conducted, provided or offered at the premises as follows:

(1) Any person who owns or operates a pet establishment which offers or provides animals for sale or adoption shall obtain a licence and a Sale/Adoption of Animals endorsement.

(2) Any person who owns or operates a pet establishment which offers or provides animal breeding shall obtain a licence and an Animal Breeding endorsement.

(3) Any person who owns or operates a pet establishment which offers or provides animal daycare, boarding, or training shall obtain a licence and an Animal Daycare/Boarding/Training endorsement.

(4) Any person who owns or operates a pet establishment which offers or provides pet grooming shall obtain a licence and a Pet Grooming endorsement.

(5) Any person who owns or operates a pet establishment which offers or provides overnight keeping of animals shall obtain a licence and an Overnight Animal Keeping endorsement.

- B. Every owner or operator shall notify the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division in writing of any change to the operations of the pet establishment which may result in a change in the business activities conducted, provided or offered, at least 30 days prior to the implementation of such change.
- f. Add section titled “Exceptions” to read “Article XX does not apply to:
- A. The premises of an Animal Centre.
 - B. The premises of an affiliate to branch of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA).
 - C. The premises of an accredited veterinary hospital under the care of a veterinarian licensed by the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO).
 - D. The Toronto Zoo.
 - E. Ross Lord Stables.
 - F. Sunnybrook Stables.
 - G. Riverdale Farm.
 - H. High Park Zoo.
 - I. Black Creek Pioneer Village.
 - J. Exhibition Place.
 - K. Toronto Island Farm.
 - L. Woodbine Racetrack.
 - M. Ripley’s Aquarium of Canada.
 - N. Studio sets and locations within the City on which professionally produced films are being made by film professionals and film production companies, for the duration of filming only.
 - O. Premises registered as research facilities pursuant to the *Animals for Research Act*.
 - P. Premises of slaughterhouses licensed pursuant to the *Meat Inspection Act*.
 - Q. Premises where Toronto Police Service animals are kept.
 - R. Toronto Wildlife Centre.

S. Royal Ontario Museum.

T. Businesses or attractions that have been expressly exempted by the City in writing.”

g. Add section titled “Application requirements” to read:

Every pet establishment operator shall provide the name and address of the licensed veterinarian(s) who will provide services to the pet establishment, ensuring that each species receives appropriate veterinary services from a qualified professional.

h. Delete sections 545-248, 545-249, 545-250, 545-251, 545-252, 545-253, 545-254, 545-255, 545-256, 545-257, 545-259, 545-260.1 and 545-260.2, that relate to animal care, facility standards and operations, which are to be reorganized and re-added under new sections.

i. Delete section 545-260, that relates to the sale of poultry.

j. Amend section 545-258 to read:

The Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, and any other person authorized by the Executive Director or their designate may inspect any pet establishment or place where animals are kept for business activities at any time.

k. Add section titled “Animal care requirements” to read:

A. Animals are fed as needed in accordance with the particular food requirements of each type or species of animal kept.

B. Water is provided daily to every animal in sufficient quantity to maintain at all times a potable supply available to such animal.

C. Food and water receptacles be mounted or situated that they cannot be easily overturned or contaminated.

D. Primary enclosures in which animals are housed on the premises are located in such a way as to provide maximum comfort to satisfy the known and established needs for the particular species housed and are provided with safeguards to prevent extreme environmental changes and to prevent undue direct physical contact with such animals by the general public.

E. Primary enclosures permit the animal to:

(1) be confined;

- (2) remain clean and/or dry;
- (3) turn, stand up, sit down, lie down with limbs outstretched, have sufficient perch space to permit full wing extension in every direction;
- (4) move or walk around; and
- (5) hide, where appropriate.

F. Primary enclosures are:

- (1) structurally sound;
- (2) free of sharp edges and other hazards;
- (3) contain impervious surfaces which do not retain odours;
- (4) have floors which do not allow the feet or toes of an animal to pass through any opening; and
- (5) have a portion be a solid surface large enough for the animal to sit and/or lay on.

G. Bedding, if any, inside a primary enclosure is made of non-toxic and non-irritating materials, able to absorb feces and urine, and permits the animal to nest, lay eggs or burrow.

H. Incompatible animals are not housed or confined in the same primary enclosure.

I. Animals are not kept in crowded quarters or cages.

J. No more than 20 budgerigars or canaries or 25 finches, nor any combination of more than 25 such birds, are contained in a single cage with dimensions smaller than 68.6 centimetres by 40.6 centimetres by 78.7 centimetres.

K. No more than 15 budgerigars or canaries or 20 finches nor any combination of more than 20 such birds are contained in a single cage with dimensions smaller than 61 centimetres by 35.6 centimetres by 40.6 centimetres.

L. Primary enclosures which house cats include a litter box.

M. Outdoor enclosures which house dogs comply with section 349-7 as listed in Chapter 349, Animals.

- N. All persons responsible for the care, feeding or cleaning of animals are adequately trained and supervised in the handling and care of all animals.
 - O. There are a sufficient number of employees competent in the care of animals to properly care for every animal.
 - P. Animals are handled so as not to cause the animal physical injury, harm or discomfort.
 - Q. Predator and prey species are housed with separation sufficient to prevent the respective species from seeing, hearing and/or smelling the other.
 - R. Social species are housed in groups or pairs, according to their social and behavioural needs.
- I. Add section titled "Facility requirements" to read:
- A. Every pet establishment operator shall ensure that:
 - (1) During the period in which a licence issued under this chapter is in force, there shall be exhibited over the street door or in the lower front window of the pet establishment in respect of which such licence is issued, or in some other conspicuous place satisfactory to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division a sign having in plain letters not less than 15 centimetres in height in the English language the words "Licensed Pet Establishment," and such licence shall be kept continuously exposed in a conspicuous place in the interior of the premises.
 - (2) Any establishment is ventilated by mechanical means, such as by windows, vents, fans or air conditioners, to remove odours and prevent condensation.
 - (3) The ambient temperature in an establishment:
 - (a) is regulated by a heating or cooling system to protect the animals from extreme temperatures; and
 - (b) is monitored by means of a thermometer.
 - (4) The lighting in an establishment:
 - (a) is sufficient to permit observation of all animals, inspection and cleaning;

- (b) is sufficient to allow for the proper stimulation and normal behaviour of the animal; and
 - (c) does not pose a health hazard to the animal.
- (5) Any establishment, including all primary enclosures is to be cleaned each day to ensure that:
 - (a) all pests, rodents, insects, pathogens and parasites are removed or killed;
 - (b) food and water receptacles (including sipper tubes) are free of any dirt, debris and algae; and
 - (c) all excess water, food and waste materials are disposed of.
- (6) No animal remains inside a primary enclosure while the primary enclosure is being cleaned.
- (7) Where the quarters used for the housing of any animal form part of or are physically attached to a building used for human habitation or to which the public have access, such quarters shall have a concrete or other impermeable floor with a drain opening constructed as a plumbing fixture, and such floor shall be thoroughly cleaned and washed with water at least once each day, or more often than once if necessary to keep the said floor clean.
- (8) Animal waste is disposed of regularly in a hygienic manner to maintain cleanliness and prevent odors, with increased frequency as needed.
- (9) An attendant responsible for the care and control of the animals shall be on the premises of the pet establishment at all times during hours of operation, unless consent has been obtained from each pet owner.

B. Every pet establishment operator shall:

- (1) Take all reasonable and humane steps to prevent nuisance caused by barking or undue noise, and comply with Chapter 591, Noise, at all times.
- (2) Make every reasonable effort to obtain the name, address and description of anyone offering to them any animal which they have cause or reason to suspect has been stolen or otherwise unlawfully obtained, and they shall report the facts promptly to the nearest police station.

m. Add section titled "Record keeping requirements" to read:

A. Every pet establishment operator shall keep a record for each animal acquired or kept, for the duration of the pet establishment's custody of the animal and for a 12-month period after the date of sale, departure or death of the animal. Each entry should include:

- (1) the date of acquisition, arrival, or birth;
- (2) the date of sale, departure, or death;
- (3) the name, breed, date of birth, behaviour, physical description, health and reproductive status, vaccination information, licence and microchip number (if applicable);
- (4) the name, address, and phone number of the person or organization from whom it was acquired, or pet owner; and
- (5) the name, address, and phone number of the person or organization who acquires the animal, or pet owner.

B. Every pet establishment operator shall keep a record of any animal-related injuries for each animal acquired or kept, for the duration of the pet establishment's custody of the animal and for a 12-month period after the date of sale, departure or death of the animal. Each entry should include:

- (1) the date and time of the injury;
- (2) a detailed description of the injury;
- (3) the location of the injury;
- (4) the animals and/or humans involved; and
- (5) any actions taken following the injury.

n. Add section titled "Insurance requirements" to read:

Every pet establishment operator shall, in respect of each pet establishment for which they hold a licence, require a Commercial General liability with notice to the effect that the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division will be given at least 10 days' notice in writing of any cancellation, expiration or variation in the amount of the policy, and insuring, in the amount of \$2,000,000 comprehensive against loss or damage resulting from bodily injury to or the death of one or more persons, or from loss or damage to property resulting from an occurrence. A certified copy or certificate of such policy shall be deposited with the Municipal Licensing

and Standards Division. Such policy of insurance shall endorse the City as an additional insured.

Updates to Article XX – Sale or Adoption of Animals

- o. Add section titled “Requirements for pet shops or businesses keeping animals for sale or adoption” to read:

- A. Every operator of a pet shop or business keeping animals for sale or adoption (including breeding kennels) shall ensure that:

- (1) Animals are not sold or given away to anyone under the age of 18.
 - (2) Animals are not displayed in windows.
 - (3) Mammals are not sold or given away before they have reached the normal weaning age, based on known requirements of each particular species.
 - (4) Animals are groomed, including the trimming of hair, beaks and nails.
 - (5) Animals have up-to-date vaccinations and parasite treatments, unless exempted in writing by a licensed veterinarian.
 - (6) Deceased animals are contained and disposed of without delay.
 - (7) A daily record of animal observations must be maintained, documenting behavior and any signs of illness, distress, or injury, including changes in eating, drinking, urination, and defecation.
 - (8) Animals indicating signs of illness or injury are examined and appropriately treated within 24 hours of the onset of illness or injury by a veterinarian or other qualified person experienced in the care and treatment of the species concerned, unless a lesser or greater deadline is determined by a representative of the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, and that such animal is kept in a quarantine area, away from the public and other animals until such illness or injury has been cured.
 - (9) Dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs are only obtained from the following sources, except when breeding kennels are

obtaining purebred animals, in accordance with the standards set out in the *Animal Pedigree Act*:

- (a) animal centres;
- (b) registered humane societies;
- (c) registered animal rescue groups; or
- (d) from people who have surrendered their pets at no charge.

(10) A detailed record of all veterinary care is maintained, including dates of care, diagnoses, prescribed medications, treatments administered, and the information of the veterinarian including name and contact information.

B. Whenever an operator of a pet shop or business keeping animals for sale or adoption sells or otherwise homes a dog, cat, rabbit, or guinea pig, they shall give to the purchaser a receipt showing the name and address of the vendor and purchaser, the date of sale, the sale price, and breed or cross-breed, sex, age and description, including colour and markings, of the animal, and an up-to-date certificate of health from a veterinarian, and shall post in a conspicuous place, a notice provided by the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division advising customers of the required content of the receipt.

Updates to Article XX – Breeding Kennels

p. Add section titled “Requirements for breeding kennels” to read:

A. Every operator of a breeding kennel shall ensure that:

(1) Proof of active membership is maintained with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) or another appropriate professional kennel or breeding organization, as approved by the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division.

(2) Adequate human supervision and assistance is available during the whelping period and the following birth of offspring.

(3) A designated whelping area is provided that:

(a) is of adequate size to accommodate the dam and litter;

(b) is clean, dry, and with absorbent bedding;

- (c) allows the dam to have access to food, water, and rest;
- (d) has the water source positioned to prevent offspring from falling into it;
- (e) prevents offspring from escaping or harming themselves; and
- (f) includes a safe source of supplemental heat until the offspring can thermoregulate.

(4) Ethical breeding practices are followed, including that:

- (a) no breeding occurs between parent and offspring, or between siblings;
- (b) all animals are evaluated by a licensed veterinarian and confirmed to be physically and behaviorally sound before breeding;
- (c) animals that test positive for inherited diseases, have genetic abnormalities, pose a risk to public safety, exhibit signs of psychological distress related to breeding, or have traits negatively affecting their quality of life, are not bred;
- (d) animals experiencing illness or injury that causes pain during breeding are not bred until conditions are resolved; and
- (e) the age at which breeding begins, frequency of breeding, total number of breedings, and the breeding retirement age of each animal are confirmed by a licensed veterinarian.

B. Every operator of a breeding kennel shall keep a breeding record for each cat and dog acquired or kept, for the duration of the breeding kennel's custody of the animal and for a 12-month period after the date of sale, departure, or death of the animal. Each entry should include

- (1) For sires: dates bred, dams bred to, outcome of breedings (successful or failed), and results of any genetic testing.
- (2) For dams: heat cycle dates, dates bred, sires bred to, outcome of breedings (successful or failed), whelping dates, litter sizes (live and stillborn), birthing complications, and results of any genetic testing.

(3) For offspring: weight measured regularly until weaned.

Updates to Article XX – Pet Daycares, Boarding and Training Kennels

- q. Add section titled “Requirements for pet daycares, boarding and training kennels” to read “Every operator of a pet daycare, boarding or training kennel shall ensure that:
 - A. Prior to accepting dogs or cats for daycare, boarding, training, or similar activity, the animal has up-to-date vaccinations and parasite treatments, unless exempted in writing by a licensed veterinarian.
 - B. Each animal is inspected upon intake for signs of any contagious or infectious disease.
 - C. The owner of any animal exhibiting signs of illness or injury is contacted promptly; if the owner cannot be reached or cannot arrange immediate care with their preferred veterinarian, the operator must ensure veterinary care is provided.
 - D. No more than one animal is kept in a single primary enclosure without prior consent from the owners of all the animals who would share the enclosure.
 - E. Dogs less than four (4) months of age are separated from dogs older than four (4) months that are not owned by the same person unless the owner of the dog less than (4) months of age has provided written authorization.
 - F. Dogs are provided an area to exercise freely, and which prevent any dogs from exiting the property; if no dedicated exercise area is available, dogs must be regularly walked on a leash.”

Updates to Article XX – Pet Grooming Salons

- r. Add section titled “Requirements for pet grooming salons” to read:
 - A. Every operator of a pet grooming salon shall ensure that:
 - (1) Prior to accepting dogs or cats for grooming services, the animal has up-to-date vaccinations and parasite treatments, unless exempted in writing by a licensed veterinarian.
 - (2) Each animal is inspected upon intake for signs of any contagious or infectious disease.
 - (3) The owner of any animal exhibiting signs of illness or injury is contacted promptly; if the owner cannot be reached or

cannot arrange immediate care with their preferred veterinarian, the operator must ensure veterinary care is provided.

(4) Bathing tubs are equipped with a non-slip bottom surface.

(5) No more than one animal is kept in a single primary enclosure without prior consent from the owners of all the animals who would share the enclosure.

(6) Staff use handling methods that apply the least amount of restraint necessary to minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering, while ensuring the safety of both animals and humans.

(7) Grooming tools, equipment, and surfaces are maintained in good working order and cleaned and sanitized regularly.

B. Mobile grooming salons operating in areas other than on private property, in addition to complying with every other part of this Article, must also comply at all times with Chapter 743, Use of Streets and Sidewalks, Chapter 517, Idling of Vehicles and Boats, and all parking regulations.

Updates to Article XX – Overnight Keeping of Animals

s. Add section titled “Requirements for the overnight keeping of animals” to read “Every operator of a pet establishment keeping animals on-site between hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. must:

A. Make available upon request a Level 1 noise control plan to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division.

B. Notify owners of all animals if animals will be kept on-site overnight without staff present during that time.”

Updates to 545-1 Definitions

t. Add new definitions as follows:

1. ANIMAL ATTRACTION – A building, part of a building, vehicle or other place where animals are used for public display, education, entertainment, or interactive experiences.

u. Amend definition as follows to include the addition of animal attractions:

1. AMUSEMENT ACTIVITY – Activities including but not limited to the following: bowling, video arcades and arcade games, archery, axe

throwing, carnivals, internet cafes, miniature golf, golf driving ranges, go-kart courses, roller-skating rinks, billiards or pool, trampolines, rebound tumbling, animal attractions and other like activities.

Updates to Article LII – Amusement Establishments

- v. Amend section 545-564 to read “To apply for an amusement establishment licence or its renewal, or at any time during the term of the licence at the request of the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, the applicant or licensee shall submit to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division:

- A. If the establishment serves alcohol, a copy of a valid liquor licence.
- B. The following documents issued by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority or its successor agency, if applicable to the business:
 - (1) A valid and current licence to carry on business in Ontario;
and
 - (2) A valid and current permit for each amusement device
operating in the establishment.
- C. If the establishment has animals on the premises.
- D. A level 1 noise control plan and/or a patron management plan, if requested by the Executive Director.
- E. A level 2 noise control plan, if requested by the Executive Director, for approval.
- F. Any other information or documents required by the Executive Director.”

- w. Amend section 545-566 to read:

Every operator shall, in respect of each amusement establishment for which they hold a licence, require a Commercial General liability with notice to the effect that the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division will be given at least 10 days' notice in writing of any cancellation, expiration or variation in the amount of the policy, and insuring, in the amount of \$2,000,000 comprehensive against loss or damage resulting from bodily injury to or the death of one or more persons, or from loss or damage to property resulting from an occurrence. A certified copy or certificate of such policy shall be deposited with the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division. Such policy of insurance shall endorse the City as an additional insured.

- x. Add provision to section 545-567 to read:

Animal attractions keeping animals between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. must make available upon request a level 1 noise control plan.

y. Add section titled "Inspection of premises" to read:

The Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, and any other person authorized by the Executive Director or their designate may inspect any amusement establishment at any time.

z. Add section titled "Animal attraction requirements" to read:

A. Every operator of an animal attraction shall ensure that:

- (1) They comply with all requirements in section [] Animal care requirements, section [] Facility requirements, and section [] Record keeping requirements
- (2) Animals are not displayed in windows.
- (3) Animals are provided with regular rest periods away from public interaction.
- (4) Animals receive appropriate enrichment to support their psychological well-being.
- (5) All public interactions with animals are supervised by trained staff to prevent harm to both the animals and visitors.
- (6) Clear guidelines for visitor safety are established, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Restricting physical contact with dangerous or sensitive species;
 - (b) Using barriers or protective equipment where necessary, and
 - (c) Prohibiting unsupervised feeding of animals by the public.
- (7) Animals are groomed, including the trimming of hair, beaks and nails.
- (8) Animals have up-to-date vaccinations and parasite treatments, unless exempted in writing by a licensed veterinarian.
- (9) Deceased animals are contained and disposed of without delay.

(10) A daily record of animal observations is maintained, documenting behavior and any signs of illness, distress, or injury, including changes in eating, drinking, urination, and defecation.

(11) Animals indicating signs of illness or injury are examined and appropriately treated within 24 hours of the onset of illness or injury by a veterinarian or other qualified person experienced in the care and treatment of the species concerned, and that such animal is kept in a quarantine area, away from the public and other animals until such illness or injury has been cured.

B. Every operator of an animal attraction shall provide the name and address of the licensed veterinarian(s) who will provide services to the animal attraction, ensuring that each species receives appropriate veterinary services from a qualified professional.

C. Premises from section [], Exceptions, are not considered animal attractions.

2. City Council amend Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals as follows:

a. Amend definition to remove the exclusion of fish:

1. ANIMAL – All species of fauna excluding humans and aquatic invertebrates.

3. City Council amend Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C – Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards by amending fee description names in the table below:

Ref. No.	Service	Fee Description	Category	Fee Basis	2025 Fee	Annual Adj.
207	Licence & Permit Issuance	Application fee: Pet Establishment licence	Full Cost Recovery	Per application	\$758.01	Yes
208	Licence & Permit Issuance	Renewal fee: Pet Establishment licence	Full Cost Recovery	Per application	\$370.08	Yes

4. City Council direct that the by-law amendments to Chapter 545, Licensing and Chapter 441, Fees and Charges come into effect on February 1, 2027.

5. City Council direct that the by-law amendments to Chapter 349, Animals, come into effect on September 1, 2025.

6. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bills to give effect to City Council's decision and authorize the City Solicitor to make any necessary clarifications, refinements, minor modifications, technical amendments, or by-law amendments as may be identified by the City Solicitor and the Executive Director, Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed by-law amendments contained in this report directly respond to City Council directives by creating an updated framework for licensing pet establishments and amusement establishments beginning in 2027.

The implementation of this new framework will require additional staffing, training and technology support across multiple MLS service lines. To administer and enforce the projected 400 new licenced pet establishments, MLS would require three (3) new temporary resources, to be added in Q4 2026 and converted to permanent positions through the 2027 Municipal Licensing and Standards Operating Budget request. Additional costs will be fully offset by an estimated annual revenue increase of \$293,505.75 from new pet establishment licensees. As the pet establishment licensing framework is implemented, staff will monitor the volume of licence applications and renewals, assess demand over time and request additional resources through the 2027 and/or 2028 annual budget process, as required.

This report recommends extending the current pet shop licensing fees to pet establishments, and that amusement establishment fees remain the same. MLS reviewed application and renewal fees to ensure they reflect the recommended activity-based licensing approach, and continue on a cost recovery model, in alignment with the City's User Fee Policy.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

EQUITY IMPACT

The City is home to many equity-deserving groups including Indigenous Peoples, Black Communities, women, newcomers, racialized communities, persons with disabilities, 2S LGBTQ+ communities, youth, persons with low income and undocumented Torontonians. Such groups often face distinct barriers that prevent them from participating in business ownership and operations and from accessing the same opportunities made available to others.

The proposed amendments to licensing regulations for pet establishments are not expected to have a significant overall equity impact; however, there are some concerns

regarding small and low-income business owners who may face greater challenges related to licensing fees. A 2022-2023 Statistics Canada [analysis](#) highlights that small business owners (with 1-19 employees) are more likely to encounter cost-related obstacles than their larger counterparts (100+ employees). Additionally, a 2020 Statistics Canada [analysis](#) on the ownership characteristics of small businesses found that 9.8-9.9% of businesses with 1-19 employees are minority-owned, and 12.9-16.5% are fully women-owned. These groups could be disproportionately impacted by the costs and barriers associated with a new licensing framework.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted item [2021.GL27.30](#) Kennels - Let Every Dog have its Day - Even at a Kennel, which requested staff to report back with a plan to license kennels in Toronto.

On July 19, 2022, City Council adopted item [2022.EC31.5](#) Updates to Chapter 349, Animals, which requested staff to report back on the introduction a new pet establishment business licence class and review of related zoning by-law regulations.

On July 24, 2024, City Council adopted item [2024.EC14.14](#) Making Business Licence and Permit Applications Easier to report back with a Business Licence and Permit Applications Action Plan and to consider simplifying the licence application requirements and review well known licence application portals.

COMMENTS

Purpose of Report

This report proposes amendments to Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 545, Licensing, to introduce a new business licence class for pet establishments and add regulations for animal attractions, expanding upon the existing licensing framework for pet shops. The goal of this framework is to establish consistent animal care, inspection, facility and record keeping standards for businesses that keep animals on-site. These changes follow direction from City Council to licence kennels ([2021.GL27.30](#)) and the amendments to Chapter 349, Animals in 2022 ([2022.EC31.5](#)).

Updating licensing regulations would allow the City to have a greater level of oversight of pet establishments and animal attractions to support proper animal care and help prevent these businesses from creating undue nuisances for neighbouring properties. An updated framework would also enhance consumer protection for current and prospective pet owners given that the licensed facility would be required to maintain a set of operating standards and may be inspected by the City. Additionally, the framework will modernize business licensing requirements and processes to better meet and adapt to evolving and emerging businesses.

This review has been conducted in coordination with City Planning (CP). There are certain requirements for kennels and pet services that dictate in which areas of the city these businesses may be located under City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. CP staff are reviewing these regulations with the intent of aligning them with the proposed licensing requirements for pet establishments.

Background

It is estimated that approximately 400 pet establishments are currently operating in Toronto, with growth in this industry partly driven by increased pet ownership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pet establishments generally refer to any business that keeps live animals on their premises for the purpose of conducting business, such as kennels, pet daycares, and pet grooming salons, but excludes veterinary practices, animal rescues and animal shelters. While it is unknown exactly how many pets reside in Toronto, according to a 2021 [report](#) by Morgan Stanley, the pet industry in the United States is expected to nearly triple in value from 2019 to 2030, a trend which may also be seen in Canada.

With many pet owners who may have been working from home returning to the office, an increased demand for boarding, grooming and other pet-related services is likely. The growth in pet ownership and the expansion of pet-related businesses may also be contributing to an increase in noise and nuisance. From 2021 to 2024, complaints from residents regarding noise and animal welfare were among the most frequently reported and linked to estimated animal-related establishment business addresses (see Table 1 below).

City Council direction to MLS to review the feasibility of a licensing regime for kennels, as per [2021.GL27.30](#), arose following a series of concerns from local residents about a few dog kennels in the city, citing both animal welfare concerns as well as nuisance and noise concerns. Through managing these complaints and communication with the local Councillor and residents, a gap in oversight was identified as officers had limited capability to enter and inspect the facility and enforcement was limited to noise and zoning related complaints.

Staff used the following principles when establishing the recommended approach to licensing:

- Prioritizing the physical and mental well-being of animals through proper care, handling, and maintaining clean, safe, and comfortable environments.
- Minimizing nuisances and disturbances that negatively affect the surrounding community.
- Ensuring consumers have clear and accessible information about the health, care, and origin of animals to make informed choices.
- Modernizing by-laws to create a more efficient and user-friendly system, with a focus on activity-based licensing and alignment with zoning regulations.

Provincial Oversight

Animal welfare enforcement is primarily conducted by inspectors under the authority of the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act* (“PAWS Act”), however, introducing animal Licensing for Animal-Related Businesses

care and facility standards at the municipal level would give the City the ability to proactively inspect these establishments and verify that they meet licensing requirements and maintain safe and clean facilities. Introducing standards would help mitigate nuisance and consumer protection concerns that arise from these businesses and also give the City the authority to take enforcement action against businesses for operating without a licence. Significant animal welfare concerns discovered at these facilities would continue to be referred to provincial authorities for enforcement under the PAWS Act.

Pet Shops

Currently, under Chapter 545, the only pet-related establishment that requires a business licence is a pet shop, which is a business for the sale of animals. Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) is responsible for issuing the pet shop business licence and enforcing the regulations under Chapter 545. To obtain a pet shop licence, applicants must pay an application fee of \$758.01 (renewal fee of \$370.08), and provide several key documents including valid identification, a criminal record check, the business location, a provincial business name registration or signed franchise agreement, an operating questionnaire and other supporting documents. In addition, all pet shops must undergo a clearance inspection by MLS and may have additional inspections, as needed. Having inspection requirements in Chapter 545 provides the authority for officers to enter and inspect businesses and conduct enforcement where standards related to the wellbeing of live animals and the facility are not met. Examples of such standards include keeping facilities and enclosures clean and well-ventilated, providing food and water to all animals, ensuring animals obtain prompt veterinary care, and only obtaining cats and dogs from permitted sources such as shelters or rescues. Pet shops must also comply with animal noise regulations in Chapter 591, Noise, which prohibits persistent noise, such as barking, calling or whining. There are 25 pet shops currently licensed in Toronto.

Animal Attractions and Amusement Establishments

Concerns about the lack of oversight for animal attractions (i.e. animals for public display, education, entertainment, or interactive experiences) were raised during consultations on pet establishments. These concerns were primarily focused on the welfare of animals on display. Currently, these types of businesses are not licensed, which limits the City's ability to conduct inspections and oversee operations. This creates inconsistencies, especially as licensing is being proposed for other animal-related businesses. To address this, staff recommend amending the amusement establishment licence category under Chapter 545 to include animal attractions. An amusement establishment is a business that offers or permits any type of amusement activity for patrons, including providing space for amusement activities, but does not include fitness facilities, recreation centres or community centres. This category currently covers activities such as bowling, arcades, golfing, trampolines and more. This proposal is aligned with stakeholder feedback and the City's goals to improve standards for animal care, facility conditions, and public safety, while also allowing for proactive enforcement.

Zoning

Although pet establishments are not currently licensed under Chapter 545, they are restricted in their permitted location via the City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. Under this by-law, "Kennels" are defined as "premises used for boarding, training or breeding of dogs, cats or other animals" and are only permitted in the Employment Industrial (E) zone. The definition does not distinguish between daytime or overnight boarding or specify the duration of care. "Pet services" are defined as "premises used to provide for the grooming of domestic animals" and are permitted in the E, Commercial Local (CL), Commercial Residential (CR), Commercial Residential Employment (CRE), and Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) zones. Pet shops are zoned as a "Retail store" and are permitted in the E, RAC, CL, CR, CRE, Residential (R), Residential Apartment (RA), Employment Light Industrial (EL), Employment Industrial Office (EO), Institutional General (I), Institutional Hospital (IH), Institutional Education (IE), and Open Space Recreation (OR) zones. Uses are subject to conditions of approval in select zone categories. Allowing pet services in a wider range of zones than kennels is common among other Canadian municipalities.

Animals By-law

Under Chapter 349, Animals, pet establishments would be subject to general animal-related regulations. These include prohibitions on the keeping of certain species, limits on the number of animals allowed in dwelling units (i.e. four dogs, six cats, four rabbits/guinea pigs), and standards related to animal care, outdoor enclosures, tethers, unsanitary conditions, leashing and walking dogs, among other regulations. These regulations apply to any person keeping an animal in the boundaries of the City, regardless of ownership.

Research and Consultation

To inform the recommendations in this report, MLS analyzed relevant complaint data, assessed regulations in other jurisdictions, and consulted with the public and industry stakeholders.

Animal-Related Establishment Complaint Data

Data on the number of complaints by sub type that occurred at an identified animal-related establishment address are presented in Table 1. These addresses were gathered through an internet search and an internal business location database and may not fully capture all animal-related establishments in Toronto. Some key terms from the internet search include "pet shop", "kennel", "boarding", "breeding", "grooming", "training", "doggy daycare", "animal interaction", and focused on identifying relevant businesses listed as operating in Toronto. For each business identified, the name, address, zone, ward and types of services provided were recorded.

Table 1: Total number of animal-related service requests matched to identified animal-related establishment addresses

Complaint Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Total
Noise/nuisance	19	36	26	16	11	108
Animal welfare	21	22	11	30	10	94

Bite, attack or menace	15	15	22	29	3	84
Zoning	31	5	5	9	7	57
No licence (animal or business)	3	4	4	6	3	20
Pitbull or prohibited animal	1	-	1	4	2	8
No leash or muzzle	-	-	2	4	-	6
Total	90	82	71	98	36	377

**2025 data includes service requests submitted through June 1, 2025*

Jurisdictional Research

As part of this report, staff completed a scan and survey of similar jurisdictions (e.g. Ottawa, Brampton, Vaughan, Waterloo) to compare licensing requirements. See Attachment 2 for details. Key highlights include:

- Out of 14 jurisdictions:
 - 13 license pet shops.
 - 14 license boarding kennels.
 - 14 license breeding kennels.
 - 5 license training kennels.
 - 3 license pet daycares (not all jurisdictions license daycares separately and daycares may qualify to be covered under the definition of boarding).
 - 3 license pet grooming salons.
 - 6 license similar businesses to animal attractions.
- Other jurisdictions enforce several regulations for pet-related businesses. While the scope and depth of these regulations vary, most set at least basic standards for animal welfare, facility conditions, record keeping, and inspections, with some providing more comprehensive oversight.
- Most jurisdictions license between 0-50 establishments.
- Most jurisdictions rely on complaint-based enforcement, however some also conduct routine inspections or annual licence verifications. Complaint volumes are generally low, with most jurisdictions reporting fewer than 10 complaints annually.
- Several jurisdictions identified opportunities to improve their licensing frameworks, including expanding the scope to cover more types of services and improving enforcement staff training, inspections, and animal care standards.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement was conducted between January and April of 2025. Staff from MLS and CP facilitated consultations and conducted a public survey. Overall, engagement included one public survey, three virtual public consultations, two virtual stakeholder consultations, and three individual stakeholder meetings with Animal Welfare Services (AWS), the College of Veterinarians of Ontario and Ontario Dog Groomers Association (OGDA). These sessions explored licensing and zoning requirements, experiences with pet establishments, and industry best practices. The public was informed about the survey and consultations through social media posts, website updates, and communications from councillors, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and Residents' Associations (RAs).

The public survey was conducted to gather input from a wide range of individuals, including pet owners, pet establishment operators, nearby businesses and residents, animal welfare advocates, and other interested community members. The survey ran from January 21 to February 28, 2025, and received 292 complete responses.

Three public consultations were held to gather additional community input on residents' and business owners' experiences with pet establishments and their views on potential by-law amendments. One of these sessions specifically focused on the grooming industry. These consultations had a total of 73 attendees.

Two stakeholder consultations were held to provide an opportunity for in-depth discussions on the current state of the industry, best practices for animal care, and potential by-law amendments. These consultations had a total of 38 attendees. Additional feedback was collected through email submissions and individual meetings.

Key insights from stakeholders and the public included:

- Support for licensing kennels and grooming salons to improve animal welfare and establish consistent care standards.
 - Among survey respondents, most support the introduction of a business licence for pet establishment (57-77%) and most reported that they would be more likely to support or visit a pet establishment if it was licensed (67%).
 - Among potential pet establishment licence holders, support for licensing ranged from 30-67%, depending on the type of facility.
- Pet establishments are frequently visited, with 48% of survey respondents reporting 7 or more visits per year.
- 18-28% of survey respondents reported experiencing issues with animal welfare, nuisance, and consumer protection, depending on the facility.
- Concerns about over-regulation and whether licensing alone can address industry issues such as animal welfare, consumer transparency, and staff performance.
- Concerns that licensing costs may be passed on to consumers.
- Concerns about home-based operations facing unfair competition if brick-and-mortar businesses have fewer zoning barriers and can obtain a licence more easily.
- Experiences of improper care, including inadequate hygiene, animal abuse, and lack of training, and the need for stronger oversight at pet establishments.

Additional details can be found in Attachment 3.

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 545, Licensing and Chapter 349, Animals

1. Introduction of the Pet Establishment Licence

A. Category-Wide Requirements

The proposed pet establishment licence introduces amendments to licensing requirements that would apply to all pet-related business activities, including pet shops,

breeding, boarding and training kennels, pet daycares, and pet grooming salons. These category-wide requirements address operational and animal welfare concerns that are not specific to one activity but are important for the responsible operations of any business keeping animals for business activities. These recommended changes include:

- Application requirements, including zoning clearance and documentation. A new requirement will be to provide contact information for veterinarian(s) providing services to the business.
- Animal care requirements, including proper feeding and watering, housing and enclosures, animal crowding, and safe animal handling.
- Facility requirements, including proper ventilation, temperature, lighting, and cleanliness.
- Record keeping requirements, including details for each animal acquired or kept (e.g. dates, animal descriptions) and any incidents or injuries involving animals.
- Requiring proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance.

The amendments will also reflect exceptions similar to those listed under Chapter 349, excluding certain organizations from the regulatory regime that are City-owned and operated, already regulated by other authorities, hold other permits or approvals, or where animal welfare oversight is not applicable (such as the Toronto Zoo) and organizations outside the scope of business licensing and municipal authority (such as veterinary practices, animal rescues and shelters). Additionally, some existing pet shop regulations have been removed, consolidated or amended for clarity.

The proposed category-wide updates are consistent with stakeholder feedback with regards to improved animal welfare and facility standards, and consumer protection. The updates are also consistent with feedback that emphasized the need for flexible licensing that accommodates the variety of businesses, clear and consistent communication from the City, and targeted enforcement to address non-compliant businesses.

Activity-Based Licensing (ABL)

Activity-based licensing (ABL) is a framework based on the type of business activities in which licensees with different business activities are subject to specific requirements, but also are subject to an overarching set of category-wide requirements. Higher impact businesses, such as pet daycares and overnight boarding kennels that keep animals for extended periods, may be subject to increased oversight and enforcement. This could include more frequent inspections and closer monitoring in response to complaints, which reflects their greater potential to raise animal welfare and nuisance concerns. A similar activity-based licensing framework was applied to bars, restaurants and entertainment venues as part of the Night Economy Review by City Council in December 2023 ([2023.EC8.13](#)), and is proposed to be applied to the pet establishment category.

As part of this proposal, MLS recommends defining five distinct business activities within the pet establishment category. Each activity has unique operational considerations and concerns:

- Sale or Adoption of Animals
- Breeding Kennels
- Pet Daycares, Boarding and Training Kennels
- Pet Grooming Salons
- Overnight Keeping of Animals

Businesses may be captured in more than one of these categories and would be required to comply with all requirements for each, however, no additional licensing fee would be charged for multiple business activities. This approach is intended to strengthen MLS' inspection and enforcement efforts and clearly define business activities.

Alignment with Proposed Zoning Changes

To support a coordinated response to enforcement issues and to respond to directives from City Council, staff from CP are reviewing related rules in City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013. Proposals include maintaining existing definitions for kennels and pet services, expanding permissions for the boarding, training, and breeding of animals in commercial zones, expanding regulations regarding pet services as a home occupation in detached houses and ancillary buildings, and investigating potential conditions to alleviate potential nuisance concerns. The zoning review aligns with MLS' goals of modernizing regulations.

B. Pet Shops and the Sale or Adoption of Animals

Proposed changes to the current pet shop licensing regulations aligns more closely with the proposed requirements for other pet establishments. Many existing requirements for pet shops will remain in place, with new measures introduced to improve animal care standards including clear guidelines on the age at which animals can be sold, display windows, grooming, vaccination status, health monitoring, quarantine protocols, approved animal sources, veterinary and health records, and sales receipts. These businesses will also be required to comply with the category-wide requirements that apply to all pet establishments.

These updated requirements will also be extended to businesses that sell or offer animals for adoption that are not considered pet shops, such as breeding kennels, recognizing that they have similar operations to traditional pet retailers and should be held to similar standards.

Under the current regulations, pet shops are only permitted to source cats and dogs from animal shelters, humane societies, rescue groups or from people who have surrendered their pet at no charge. Staff recommend extending the sourcing requirements to include rabbits and guinea pigs, as these species are commonly surrendered to shelters. By limiting the sourcing of these animals to animal centres, humane societies, rescue groups and owner surrenders, the City aims to reduce the number of animals ending up in shelters and to encourage people to make more responsible choices around pet ownership. Breeding kennels that breed purebred animals will not be subject to sourcing requirements since their operations are focused

on maintaining established breed standards and pedigrees, however, they will still be expected to meet all other applicable requirements.

Although limited feedback was received from pet shop owners during engagement, these businesses are already subject to licensing, and the majority of proposed changes align with existing standards.

C. Kennels and Pet Daycares

Kennel and pet daycare operators play an important role in providing care, shelter, training and socialization for animals. These businesses can be categorized as breeding, boarding, and training kennels, as well as pet daycares. Breeding kennels house animals for the purpose of breeding, raising and selling. Boarding kennels offer temporary care for animals, typically including overnight or extended stays. Training kennels specialize in behavioural or obedience training, which may include extended stays or daytime sessions. Pet daycares provide daytime care only, without overnight stays.

Kennels and daycares may house multiple animals in confined or open spaces, which can lead to excessive noise, particularly from barking. These activities raise potential animal welfare concerns due to overcrowding, inadequate care or living conditions. Additionally, the high number of animals in these establishments increase the likelihood of safety issues, such as aggressive behavior, and can contribute to odour issues if waste and cleaning schedules are not properly managed. Breeding kennels can present other concerns, including irresponsible breeding practices and a lack of transparency about the health and genetic background of the animals. Regulating these establishments through a licensing regime can address these concerns, improve overall standards, and maintain the safety and well-being of both animals and the surrounding community.

Although the PAWS Act provides important animal welfare standards at the provincial level, the City's role is distinct yet complementary. Licensing at the municipal level focuses on local business operations and community impacts such as ensuring facilities are set up properly, responding to complaints, and conducting inspections. In many cases, City staff are better equipped to address local issues quickly, especially when provincial resources are limited. By introducing a licensing framework, the City can strengthen compliance and enforcement and help raise the standard of care across all pet establishments.

Data from the public survey supports the recommendation to license kennels and pet daycares. The majority of respondents (60-77%) support licensing kennels and pet daycares, with 20-37% having experienced or witnessed at least one incident related to animal welfare, consumer protection, or nuisance.

Overnight Keeping of Animals

Including additional requirements for overnight boarding is important due to the unique challenges associated with this type of care. Compared to daytime boarding, overnight boarding presents additional concerns, such as a higher likelihood of noise complaints

and the potential for animals to be injured, if staff are unable to intervene if they are not present overnight. According to the public survey, only 32% of the businesses that keep animals overnight regularly have staff present overnight.

Businesses that keep animals overnight would be required to inform customers whether staff will be present overnight, to allow owners to make informed decisions about the care of their animals. They would also be required to make available upon a request a Level 1 noise control plan (NCP) outlining potential sources of noise, mitigation and monitoring strategies, staff training on noise response, and plans for engaging with the community if issues arise. These proactive measures could help prevent noise complaints and have a plan in place should complaints occur. Stakeholders supported this approach and did not voice concern about including these establishments in the licensing framework.

Proposed Amendments

Based on stakeholder feedback and the City's goals related to animal welfare, nuisance reduction, and consumer protection, staff recommend that the new pet establishment licensing category include breeding, boarding, and training kennels, as well as pet daycare businesses operating in the City of Toronto. Breeding kennels and businesses keeping animals overnight would be subject to unique activity-based licensing requirements, separate from those recommended for boarding, training, and daycare facilities. While licensing cannot fully eliminate poor kennel practices on its own, it can help prevent them through proactive inspections, clear expectations, and enforceable requirements. Through licensing, the City can establish specific practices around boarding, breeding, training, and overnight care.

Key requirements for breeding kennels include proof of membership with a breeding organization, safe whelping areas for the dam and offspring, ethical breeding practices such as not breeding sibling or animals with known genetic disorders or illnesses, and maintaining breeding records. Key requirements for boarding, training and daycare include vaccination status, excluding ill animals, veterinary care, separating dogs under four months of age for health, vaccination and socialization reasons, and ensuring all animals have space to exercise or are leash walked regularly. Businesses that provide overnight care must submit noise control plans to proactively manage noise and inform owners if staff will not be on-site overnight. Kennels and daycares will also be required to comply with the category-wide requirements that apply to all pet establishments. Businesses who remain in non-compliance with animal welfare requirements may be referred to AWS who enforce the PAWS Act.

D. Pet Grooming Salons

Grooming salons provide hands-on care to animals, including the use of sharp tools, chemicals, and methods of restraint. This presents challenges to both the groomer and the animal and raises concerns about consumer protection, whether the service is offered from a storefront, vehicle, or private home. In addition, grooming salons may work with animals that cause disturbances, such as excessive noise or odours, particularly in residential or densely populated areas. Licensing grooming salons would establish consistent standards for animal care, cleanliness, and other business

operations, and would introduce proactive inspections and enforcement. Currently, MLS relies on complaint-based enforcement to regulate unlicensed pet establishments under the existing animals, noise and zoning by-laws. Moving to a licensing regime would establish clear expectations and strengthen enforcement through proactive oversight. These measures would help address concerns raised by residents and pet owners, who expressed issues related to cleanliness, neglect, and nuisance behaviours in some grooming salons.

Data from the public survey supports this recommendation. Most respondents (57%) support licensing grooming salons, with 21-37% having experienced or witnessed at least one incident related to animal welfare, consumer protection, or nuisance. Although support was lower among grooming salon owners (30% in support, 16% neutral, and 54% opposed), regulation would support the greater public interest and opportunity to improve standards.

Stakeholders also voiced strong support for licensing home-based grooming salons if the City licenses brick-and mortar businesses and emphasized that zoning regulations should be updated to recognize and support these businesses. However, some home groomers voiced opposition to the overall licensing framework for all grooming salons.

Mobile Grooming Salons

Mobile grooming salons provide grooming services in vehicles and often operate in residential areas. While these businesses are relatively fewer in number, they face the same challenges as brick-and-mortar salons, and therefore are recommended to be included in the licensing framework. Including mobile grooming salons maintains a consistent standard of care across the industry and would help address concerns related to animal welfare, consumer protection, and nuisance. Mobile operations would also be required to comply with Chapter 743, Use of Streets and Sidewalks, Chapter 517, Idling of Vehicles and Boats, and all applicable parking regulations. Among the stakeholders who supported licensing brick-and-mortar grooming salons, there was also support for extending the framework to mobile grooming salons.

Proposed Amendments

Based on stakeholder feedback and the City's goals related to animal welfare, nuisance reduction, and consumer protection, staff recommend that the new pet establishment licensing category include all grooming salons operating in the City of Toronto, including brick-and-mortar, mobile, and home-based grooming salons. This includes requirements around vaccination status, excluding ill animals, veterinary care, animal handling for animal and employee safety, and using clean and safe grooming equipment to prevent disease and injury. Mobile grooming salons must also comply with existing regulations around parking, idling and the use of streets and sidewalks. Grooming salons will also be required to comply with the category-wide requirements that apply to all pet establishments. This comprehensive approach captures the full spectrum of grooming services under the licensing framework, supports fair and consistent regulation across different business types, aligns with the City's goals related to animal welfare, consumer protection, and nuisance mitigation, and directly responds to concerns raised through public engagement and stakeholder consultations.

E. Home-based Businesses

The regulation of home-based pet establishments is more complex than brick-and-mortar establishments. Under Toronto's Zoning By-law 569-2013, home occupations are not permitted to have clients attend the home (with some exceptions for personal services). As a result, licensing home-based businesses is only feasible if the zoning by-law is amended, or if individual operators obtain approval through the Committee of Adjustment (CoA). Regardless of zoning approval, home-based businesses would still be subject to existing limits on the number of animals permitted in a dwelling unit, as outlined in Chapter 349. Zoning regulations would continue to determine where these businesses can operate.

Home-based businesses would be captured as part of the proposed licensing regime, where properties are zoned to provide this service. While enforcement may be more difficult in residential settings and licensees could be limited due to zoning constraints, including these businesses in the framework is important for fairness and consistency. Should zoning be updated to allow for more home-based businesses, staff expect a higher number of licensees, as stakeholders have indicated this type of business is widespread in Toronto.

2. Amendments to the Amusement Establishment Category

Animal attractions, such as zoos, aquariums, petting farms, and animal shows, involve the use of animals for public display, education, or entertainment. Operators of these businesses are responsible for both the well-being of the animals and the safety of the public interacting with them. Businesses licensed as animal attractions would still be required to follow requirements as outlined under Chapter 349, Animals, including not keeping prohibited animals. The same exempted businesses as listed under pet establishments would apply to animal attractions, excluding operations that are City-owned, regulated or approved under other authorities, or outside the scope of business licensing.

During consultations, stakeholders expressed concerns about the lack of oversight for animals kept on public display. Including animal attractions in the licensing framework would promote consistent standards across all animal-related businesses. While only a few currently operate in Toronto, this would allow any future operations to be regulated from the beginning and prevent issues before they arise.

Travelling vs. Brick-and-Mortar Attractions

In addition to brick-and-mortar animal attractions, staff considered travelling shows that involve animals. Although these temporary or mobile events operate for a limited time in various locations, they present the same concerns related to animal welfare, public safety, and consumer protection as brick-and-mortar businesses. Including these operations in the licensing framework holds them to the same standards as other animal attractions. This approach guarantees that all animal-related businesses, whether mobile or stationary, are subject to the same regulations, ensuring the well-being of animals and the safety of the public.

Proposed Amendments

Based on stakeholder feedback and the City's goals related to animal welfare, nuisance reduction, and consumer protection, staff recommend that the amusement establishment licensing category include all animal attraction businesses operating in the City of Toronto and be held to similar standards as the proposed pet establishment licence. Through licensing, the City can establish requirements around animal care, facilities and operations, record keeping, and specific practices around animal attractions. This includes redefining amusement establishments to include animal attractions, and introducing requirements around display windows, rest periods, enrichment and psychological wellbeing, grooming, supervised public interactions and visitor guidelines, vaccination status, health records and monitoring, veterinary care, and noise control plans to proactively manage noise. Animal attractions will also be required to comply with the category-wide requirements that apply to all pet establishments. This decision aligns with the City's goals related to animal welfare, consumer protection, and nuisance mitigation, and directly responds to concerns raised through public engagement and stakeholder consultations.

3. Amendments to Chapter 349 Definition

Staff recommend amending the definition of "Animal" in Chapter 349 to include fish, which are currently excluded. Given that pet shops often house and sell fish, it is critical that they are included to maintain proper animal care standards. This amendment would also extend care requirements to those who own or keep fish outside of pet shops. This updated definition will also be included under Chapter 545 for consistency.

4. Licensing Fees

Staff recommend maintaining the current pet shop licensing fees of \$758.01 for new applications and \$370.08 for renewals and apply them to the pet establishment category.

The implementation of the new framework is estimated to result in an additional 400 licence applications. As such, MLS is requesting three (3) temporary staff resources needed to administer and enforce the pet establishment licence category, to be added in Q4 2026 through the 2026 budget, and converted to permanent through the 2027 budget. Additional costs will be fully offset by licensing fees with an estimate revenue of \$293,505.75, and continue of a cost recovery model, as per the City's User Fee Policy. Staff will monitor and assess demands overtime. All fees will be subject to an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment in 2028 and subsequent years.

Given the limited number of businesses expected to be licensed as animal attractions under the amusement establishment licence category, staff do not recommend any changes to the current fees for amusement establishments.

Enforcement and Problematic Establishments

Enforcement Under the New Framework

The inclusion of new business types under the licensing framework and transition to an activity-based licensing framework will allow for targeted enforcement that aligns with the potential community impacts presented by certain activities. Certain higher-risk activities such as overnight boarding or animal breeding, will be prioritized for inspections and oversight due to the increased potential for nuisance impacts and complexity of care involved. To mitigate potential risks, these activities will be subject to additional requirements, such as providing a noise control plan or adhering to specific breeding practices, and may undergo more frequent inspections.

Enforcement will follow a progressive approach, with officers initially focusing on education, issuing warnings and helping businesses understand and comply with new requirements. In the first year of licensing, enforcement efforts will focus on inspecting businesses that apply for a licence, while proactively identifying unlicensed businesses to inform them of the new requirements and encourage compliance. MLS will focus on educating operators about the changes throughout 2026 and 2027 and anticipate that all businesses will have obtained or renewed the proper licence by February 1, 2028. If licensed businesses remain non-compliant, they may face charges and fines or be referred to the Toronto Licensing Tribunal (TLT), which has the authority to impose conditions, suspend, or revoke business licences. Officers will continue to operate under a priority response model, which focuses enforcement efforts based on the severity and persistence of issues, giving priority for service requests that pose greater risks to animal and public safety, or community impact.

Under this new framework, MLS will proactively inspect pet establishments and animal attractions to confirm that they have obtained the correct licence type and are operating in compliance with by-law requirements. This includes reviewing noise control plans and conducting any animal-related noise enforcement. Staff will also conduct follow-up inspections, with a targeted frequency of every 2 years, and on a complaint basis. MLS will enforce zoning compliance on public and private properties, such as unpermitted home-based businesses, as well as compliance with regulations for both licensed businesses and unlicensed businesses that should obtain a licence.

In alignment with these changes, the framework will also introduce additional types of offences for pet establishments, each with new set fines. Staff will also review and update existing set fines associated with pet shop offences, to maintain fair and effective enforcement.

Addressing Problematic Establishments

The goal of enforcement is to enhance public awareness of and obtain compliance with City by-laws, including business licensing and zoning regulations. MLS conducts regular inspections of licensed establishments. While officers adopt an education-first approach when responding to cases involving animal welfare, they do not have the authority to remove animals and will refer severe cases to AWS. Any other concerns outside the scope of the inspection may be referred to the appropriate City division or agencies for follow-up.

The City does not have the authority through its by-laws to compel a business to close or cease operations. However, s.86(2) of the *City of Toronto Act* ("COTA") enables the City to temporarily suspend a business licence for up to 14 days without a hearing if it believes that the continuation of that business poses an immediate danger to the health or safety of any person or to any property.

Courts are also empowered by the COTA to issue an order to close the business if the owner is "convicted of knowingly carrying on or engaging in a business...without a licence required by a by-law". Decisions by the City to temporarily suspend a business under s.86(2) are considered very seriously and are weighed against other considerations and consequences. As a result, this power has rarely been exercised.

Implementation and Next Steps

Staff recommend proposed amendments to Municipal Code Chapters 545, Licensing, and 441, Fees and Charges, come into effect on February 1, 2027, while amendments to Chapter 349, Animals, come into effect on September 1, 2025. City Planning (CP) is proposing that complementary changes to City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 also be enacted on February 1, 2027. This timeline will provide MLS with the opportunity to educate and inform business owners and residents about the upcoming licensing framework.

Implementation

During implementation, current pet shop licence holders will be notified about City Council's adoption of the new licensing framework in 2026. In 2026, staff will also develop self-assessment tools that will help licensed businesses learn what new or updated requirements (depending on the activities of the business) may apply. MLS will update or develop fillable templates to assist businesses in submitting noise control plans, operational questionnaires and veterinary information.

MLS will engage with Strategic Public & Employee Communications division to develop and execute a comprehensive communications plan to raise awareness and support compliance with the pet establishment and animal attraction licensing requirements. The communications will aim to inform business owners, the public, and partners about upcoming changes to licence categories and new requirements.

MLS will dedicate staff resources to support implementation efforts. This will be critical as there is significant work required to update the Business Licence & Permit online application and renewal portal to accommodate new licence categories and document requirements, allowing applicants to seamlessly apply and renew online. Updates will also be required to MLS's back-end systems to support the new licensing administration and enforcement requirements. This work will include reviewing and amending the licence application process so that MLS captures the information needed to determine the type of licence to issue. It will also involve coordination across divisions to align the process with zoning compliance checks. Business licence and enforcement staff training will also occur in 2026, as well as updates to internal guidance documents. MLS

will engage with 311 staff to see that complaints and investigation requests can be submitted in alignment with the new licensing regulations.

Next Steps

MLS aims to continuously adapt to current and emerging business models while mitigating community nuisance, animal welfare and public safety issues. Staff intend for this report to be another step towards modernizing all City of Toronto licensing regulations, in alignment with the Business Licence and Permit Applications Action Plan: Chapter 545, Licensing (2025 to 2029). MLS will continue to work with partners and relevant industry stakeholders to find opportunities to update relevant by-laws to provide clarity, enhance efficiency, and reduce administrative burden, where possible. CP aims to bring a final planning report to Planning and Housing Committee and City Council in early 2026 to make final recommendations about potential zoning changes related to pet establishments.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE



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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Pet Establishments Draft Article
Attachment 2: Jurisdictional Research
Attachment 3: Public and Stakeholder Engagement Summary