

Supplementary Report to 2026.EC29.8 – Summary of Dangerous Dog Public Education and Enforcement Actions

Date: June 23, 2026

To: City Council

From: Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its meeting on June 9, 2026, the Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [2026.EC29.8](#) with amendments. Through the report, the Committee received the [Dangerous Dog Review Tribunal \(DDRT\) Chair's 2025 Annual Report](#), and also requested that Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) report directly to the June 2026 meeting of City Council on the steps that the division has taken since 2023 to educate the public on responsible dog ownership and to enforce dangerous dog orders. This supplementary report responds to that request.

MLS initiated an operational review of the dangerous dog framework in 2023 and has since undertaken significant enforcement action and program improvements, as well as invested in annual public education campaigns. From 2023 to 2025, there was a 34% reduction in Dangerous Dog Orders issued and a 40% reduction in written warnings. This is especially notable as service requests for dangerous dog acts during this time increased by 26%, in part due to increased public awareness of reporting.

The increase in service requests indicates effective public education about responsible dog ownership, and the decrease in Dangerous Dog Orders and written warnings issued indicates effective proactive enforcement and improved bylaw compliance. While positive data trends are encouraging, MLS is committed to continuous improvement and monitoring of the program to support public awareness and protect the health and safety of residents

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the recommendation contained in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 9, 2026, the Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [2026.EC29.8 - Dangerous Dog Review Tribunal 2025 Annual Report](#) and requested that Municipal Licensing and Standards report directly to the June 2026 meeting of City Council on the steps that the division has taken since 2023 to educate the public on responsible dog ownership and to enforce dangerous dog orders.

At its meeting on April 23 and 24, 2025, City Council adopted [2025.EC19.5 – Addressing Dangerous Dogs – Response to 2024.EC16.3](#), where it approved bylaw amendments to clarify that unit doors in condominiums or apartment buildings are locations where the Executive Director of MLS can require a dangerous dog warning sign be posted.

At its meeting on November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council adopted [2024.EC16.3 - Update on Actions to Address Dangerous Dogs](#). The report summarized actions taken by MLS to address dangerous dogs in Toronto, and recommended bylaw amendments to add standard requirements for dangerous dog photos.

At its meeting on March 20, 2024, City Council adopted [2024.EC10.2 - Response to EC6.9 – Incident and Operational Review of Serious Dog Attacks](#), where it approved program improvements, including the public registry of dangerous dogs, standard dangerous dog warning sign, and access to discounted dog trainings for those owners of dangerous dogs who cannot afford training.

At its meeting on September 21, 2023, the Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [2023.EC6.9 - Incident and Operational Review of Serious Dog Attacks](#), requesting staff to review procedures and processes for the compliance and enforcement of Dangerous Dog Orders and to report back in the first quarter of 2024.

COMMENTS

Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) investigates all reports of dogs committing dangerous acts (a bite, attack, menacing behaviour, or combination). If it is determined that a dangerous act has occurred, MLS may issue either a Dangerous Dog Order when the act is deemed severe or is the second act on record with the City, or a written warning in cases where the act is not found to be severe and is the first on record.

A Dangerous Dog Order includes the following requirements:

- The dog must be muzzled except when on the owner’s premises.
- A warning sign must be posted on the owner’s premises.
- The dog is prohibited from using the City’s dogs off-leash areas.
- The owner must obtain a dangerous dog tag.
- The dog must be microchipped.
- The City keeps a photo of the dog on file.
- Dog owner must ensure the dog receives socialization or obedience training within 90 days of issuance of the order.

The Dangerous Dog Review Tribunal (DDRT) provides an independent review of appeals of Dangerous Dog Orders issued by MLS. Further information about the DDRT and Dangerous Dog Orders can be found as part of [2026.EC29.8](#) and on City webpages.

The DDRT 2025 Annual Chair’s Report shows that since 2023 there has been a continued decline in Dangerous Dog Order appeal hearings year over year. In 2023, the DDRT conducted 35 hearings, in 2024 there were 18 hearings, and in 2025 8 were heard. The Chair notes that this decrease may reflect more effective education of dog owners regarding responsible management, increased compliance with Dangerous Dog Orders, and improved public awareness of the governing by-law framework. This analysis is supported by positive trends in MLS enforcement data and aligns with the significant enforcement and public education work staff have undertaken in recent years.

In 2023, MLS initiated an operational review of the dangerous dog framework and has since undertaken significant enforcement action and program improvements, as well as invested in annual public education campaigns to emphasize the importance of keeping dogs leashed to support public safety. From 2023 to 2025 there was a 34% reduction in Dangerous Dog Orders issued by MLS and a 40% reduction in written warnings. This is especially notable as service requests for dangerous dog acts during this time have increased by 26%, in part due to increased public awareness of reporting. See Table 1 below.

MLS will continue to monitor enforcement data and is committed to continuous improvement of the dangerous dogs program to support public awareness and protect the health and safety of residents.

Table 1: 2023 to 2025 Dangerous Dog Program Enforcement Data

	2023	2024	2025
Dangerous Dog Orders issued	131	101	87
Written warnings issued	430	488	260
Dangerous act service requests	3045	3583	3842

Enforcement Actions and Supporting Programs

Since 2023, MLS has taken significant steps to address dangerous dogs and support enforcement of Dangerous Dog Orders, including:

- Development of a **new standardized dangerous dog warning sign**, required to be posted on the property of owners of dogs under a Dangerous Dog Order. Signs were distributed through visits to all owners. See image in Attachment 1.
- Proactive, annual **compliance inspections** for all owners of dogs with a Dangerous Dog Order, and inspections every six months where the dog was involved in a severe or very severe dangerous act.
- Launch of the [Dangerous Dog Orders Map](#), a public registry that shows the location of owners of dogs under active Dangerous Dog Orders, as well as information about the dog, dangerous act, and bite severity. See image in Attachment 2.
 - To support public awareness and protect the health and safety of residents, the map includes full postal codes for all severe and very severe dangerous acts, and the forward sortation area (first three digits of the postal code) for other dangerous act types.
- Regular, **proactive patrols of City parks** to address dogs off leash, targeting more frequent patrols at the parks with the highest number of complaints.
- **Proactive patrols on school properties** to address dogs off leash, in collaboration with school board security. MLS staff worked with the Customer Experience Division to develop a new intake pathway through 311 for these complaints.
- Undertaking **community-based dogs off leash pop up events** with officers patrolling and engaging dog owners in communities with high volumes of complaints.
- **Teaching children about dog safety** through educational school visits.
- Establishment of a **community safety listserv**, with communications to registrants, including daycares and schools when there is a dangerous dog at large in the surrounding area.
- **Hiring more Animal Control Officers (ACOs)** to investigate the increasing number of service requests related to dangerous dogs.
 - A team of 17 ACOs currently investigate dangerous dog service requests, among other service request types.
- Creating a program where owners of dogs issued a Dangerous Dog Order can **access training for their dog** if they do not have the financial means to afford this requirement of the order.

Public Education Campaigns

Since 2018, the City has undertaken annual public education campaigns focused on responsible dog ownership. Beginning in 2024, this work evolved into a sustained, integrated, multi-channel *Leash Your Dog* campaign designed to drive behaviour change. The campaign prioritizes accessibility and inclusion, incorporating print and multi-lingual materials in eight languages to reach diverse communities. These education initiatives have played a key role in increasing public awareness of leash requirements and reinforcing the importance of leashing to protect people, pets and wildlife. They have also promoted safer dog-handling practices to reduce dangerous dog incidents.

The updated *Leash Your Dog* campaigns underscores that all dogs must be leashed in public places, except in designated off leash areas. Messaging emphasizes the importance of compliance and highlights that the majority of dangerous acts are preventable when dogs are properly leashed and under owner control. Campaign delivery spans a comprehensive mix of channels, including transit shelters, subways, buses, digital and social media, television, radio, paid media, influencer partnerships, and on-the-ground community outreach.

The 2025 campaign was delivered with a significantly higher budget than in 2024, which contributed to a substantial increase in overall reach, generating approximately 70.2 million impressions compared to 5.1 million in the previous year. Notably, cost efficiency improved over the reporting period, as costs per result were lower than in the previous year. These results indicate that the campaign is performing effectively. There is significant value in reinforcing the same message year over year, to drive behaviour change and have the message ingrained in public discourse.

In 2025, the campaign achieved strong performance and high engagement across all channels, generating approximately 12,000 webpage views. Digital and geo-targeted advertising consistently exceeded industry benchmarks, with multilingual placements performing particularly well. A sponsored editorial on the Toronto Star [Think leashing your dog is a pain? Think again](#) delivered notable reach and engagement. In addition, partnerships with dog-owning social media influencers and extensive community outreach, education initiatives and branded materials helped amplify campaign messages and connect directly with local audiences.

See Attachment 3 for images from the *Leash Your Dog* campaign.

Next Steps

The 2026 *Leash Your Dog* public education campaign launched on June 15 and will run through fall, continuing the integrated, multi-channel and multilingual approach across paid, owned, and earned platforms. The campaign is further supported by targeted social media efforts and community outreach initiatives designed to sustain engagement and encourage dog owners to promote responsible leashing behaviours within their communities.

MLS continues to investigate all reported dangerous acts by dogs, as well as to enforce compliance with Dangerous Dog Orders. MLS will continue to monitor and evaluate the dangerous dog program and make improvements as needed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Sean McGowan
Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Image of the dangerous dog warning sign
Attachment 2: Image from the Dangerous Dog Orders map
Attachment 3: Images from the 2025 *Leash Your Dog* education campaign

Attachment 1: Image of the dangerous dog warning sign



Attachment 2: Image from the Dangerous Dog Orders map

Search by your address

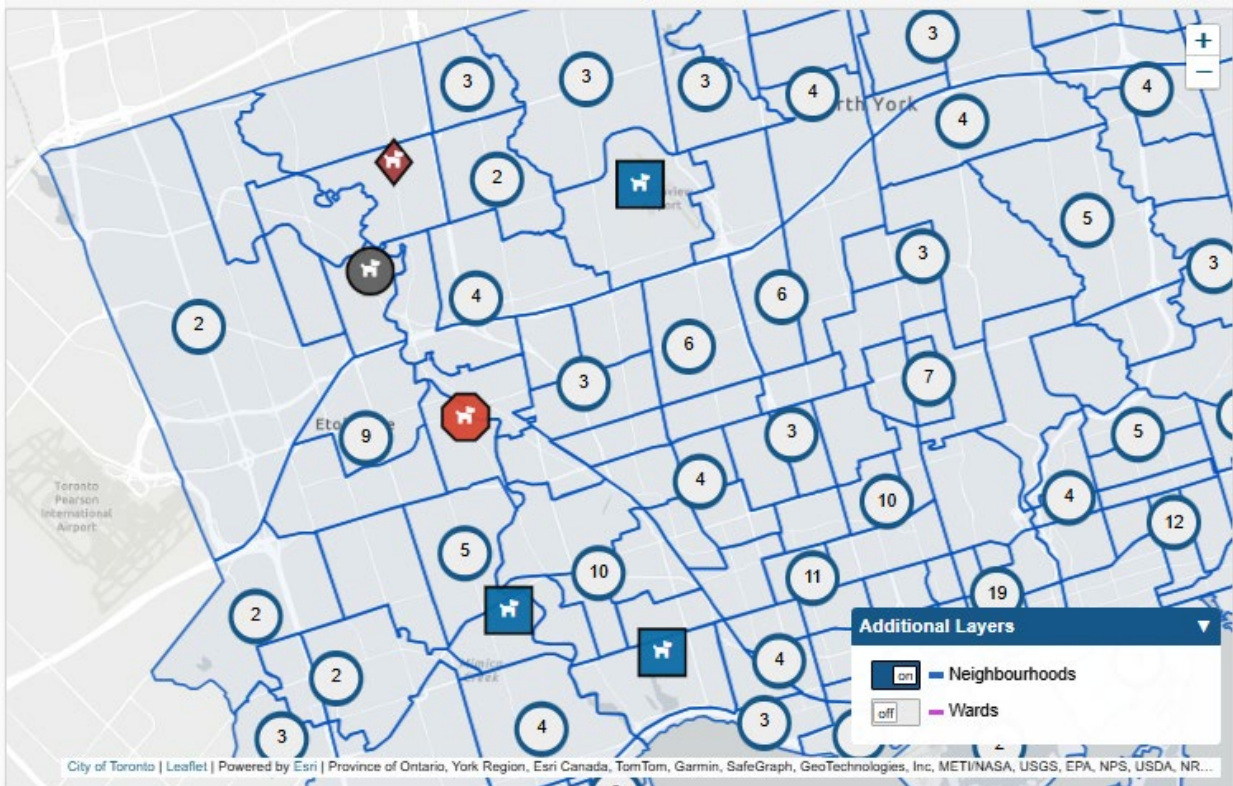
Filter Results

Checking filter options will narrow the list of results below.

Breed Group Select Breed Group	Bite Severity Select Bite Severity	Year of Incident Select Year of Incident
FSA Code Only 3 digits are available Select FSA Code	Full Postal Code Only available for severe or very severe bites Select Full Postal Code	Ward Select Ward
Neighbourhood Select Neighbourhood		

Legend: ● Not a bite ■ Non severe ● Severe ◆ Very severe

Show Map



ALL DOGS MUST BE LEASHED IN PUBLIC. NO EXCUSES.

~~My dog is friendly.~~ No.

~~My dog listens to me.~~ Nope.

~~My dog doesn't like leashes.~~ Too bad!



toronto.ca/LeashYourDog

