

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: February 25, 2013

SUBJECT: ACCOMMODATING STROLLERS

INFORMATION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission receive this report outlining the staff position that strollers continue to be accommodated on all TTC vehicles, as is the case today, with no change to set policy.

FUNDING

There are no funding impacts resulting from this report.

BACKGROUND

At the January TTC Board meeting staff were requested to report back on potential solutions regarding the accommodation of strollers and issues they may cause.

DISCUSSION

A number of reports and transit agencies were consulted regarding their policies with respect to strollers and luggage. The most comprehensive report is "Strollers, Carts and Other Large Items on Buses and Trains" conducted by the Transit Cooperative Research Program sponsored by the US Federal Transit Administration.

In summary, none of the agencies or reports consulted presented a singular best practice approach to the challenges of carrying people and the items they wish to transport. Specifically they presented no evidence of a singular best practice approach to managing the issue of strollers on transit vehicles.

The fundamental issue raised regarding strollers (or any item) focuses on vehicle capacity and the ability to carry the largest number of customers possible in the greatest comfort available.

The TTC already has policies regarding carrying large items and there is no current pressing need to change these policies. These policies attempt to strike a balance between the needs of customers to transport items by public transit and the capacity and safety impacts these items may have.

Although some congestion issues do arise on some routes during particular times due to strollers, the impact of their use does not appear to have an effect that is any greater than that of other items that customers carry. Since, in practice, it would be impossible, if not counterproductive, to more closely regulate and restrict items that our customers already carry, the same logic must hold true for strollers.

Indeed, given that strollers are occupied by children (ie people) who have either paid a fare (over the age of two) or are exempt from paying a fare under TTC fare policy (under the age of two) it would seem that the case for carrying strollers, and their occupants, unfettered is even stronger than for general items such as luggage or backpacks.

Furthermore, quite separate from the capacity and congestion debate, there is a strong societal imperative in not further restricting access to public transit to customers accompanied by young children. Quite simply, public transit must widen its reach to the broadest range of society to ensure that it fulfils its fundamental purpose – to move people. Staff, as well, reject any notion of charging a premium for using strollers – or any other item not restricted by current policy.

Additionally, the new vehicles being introduced to the TTC, including articulated buses and new streetcars, will all provide increased, and improved, space for customers using strollers. Improvements such as more dedicated multi-purpose areas and flip-down seats (as opposed to flip-up) will all help to improve capacity for customers using strollers and thus other customers as well.

In short, the debate comes down to helping our customers understand that everyone bears a responsibility to act in a manner that considers the advantages and restrictions of public transit and of the differing needs of each customer. The TTC, through its multiple communications channels, will continue to help influence customers to ensure an understanding of this principle.

More specifically, TTC Operators will continue to exercise discretion to the number of strollers that can be safely accommodated at any one time. In addition, all riders will be encouraged to show consideration for each other to enable the maximum number of passengers to be carried in comfort and safety.

February 12, 2013

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