

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The views of stakeholders and residents on the question of the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet shops, were sought through on-line channels and in-person discussions. In total, 5341 unique comments sheets were received, of which 4368 were submitted by respondents who identified themselves as residents of Ottawa, whereas 973 respondents identified as residing outside of Ottawa.

Every municipality is unique, with distinct by-laws, animal care and control services, and business settings. Consequently, non-resident comment sheets, many of which emanated from the other Canadian provinces and the United States, were not included in the findings summarized below.

Where a percentage of respondents is identified, that percentage refers to those who submitted their opinions and identified as residents of Ottawa. Comments sheets, which identified options described in the Discussion Paper prepared by staff, were available on the City's website to respondents in order to obtain specifics of their agreement, disagreement or non-opinion, as well as the rationale for their views, and/or additional written comments. Factors other than absolute numbers on any particular issue were however, also considered in finalizing the staff recommendations.

Option 1: Restrict the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet shops

Restrict the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet shops, except through approved non-commercial sources

93.2% agree 6.3% disagree 0.5% no opinion

Overall, a significant majority of respondents support restricting the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet shops, except through approved non-commercial sources. Concerns about puppymills, impulse purchases and the desire to encourage adoption were raised by proponents of the restriction as the primary rationale. Those opposed expressed concern that such a restriction would reduce consumer choice, negatively impact regulated local businesses and fail to address the issue of puppymills.

Approved source: Municipal animal shelters

94.4% agree 3.8% disagree 0.5% no opinion

Approved source: Humane societies (SPCA)

95.2% agree 3.3% disagree 1.5% no opinion

Approved source: Registered rescue organizations

94.8% agree 3.5% disagree 1.6% no opinion

A significant majority of respondents support municipal animal shelters, humane societies and registered rescue organizations as approved sources for pet shops, more than respondents who agree with imposing any restrictions at all. While this discrepancy may suggest that not all respondents reviewed the discussion paper in detail, it nevertheless indicates that respondents support these organizations as a source of companion animals for pet shops.

Approved source: People who have surrendered their pet to a pet shop at no charge

56.4% agree 34.1% disagree 9.4% no opinion

A majority of respondents agree that people should be able to surrender their pet to a pet shop at no charge. Those opposed expressed concern that approving this source may unintentionally allow operators of puppy/kitten mills and “back yard” breeding operations to provide cats and dogs to pet shops.

Option 2: Retain existing regulation and increase inspections

Retain the existing regulation and increase the monitoring of pet stores to include mandatory routine inspections to ensure compliance

20.2% agree 73.7% disagree 6.1% no opinion

A majority of respondents disagree with retaining existing regulation and increasing inspections. The need to address puppy mills and encourage adoptions were cited as the primary reasons for disagreeing with this proposed option. Those who agreed were satisfied with the existing regulation, provided pet shops are inspected regularly, thus supporting the concept of inspections.