

March 6, 2018



To: Mayor Helps and Council, City of Victoria

Re: Stand Renewal and Location of Horse Drawn Carriages

**Issue:**

As per Schedule C of the City of Victoria Vehicles for Hire Bylaw, the lease for the sightseeing stands (i.e. operating location) for Tally-Ho Carriage Tours and Victoria Carriage Tours expired as at December 31, 2017. The last lease was renewed effective January 1, 2014, for a 3 year term.

**Request:**

We are seeking a **ten-year renewal** term of our **existing location**. We feel this request is reasonable and highly beneficial to the city for the following reasons:

**10-Year Term**

The current short-term nature of our stand renewal hinders our ability to properly plan for long-term horse care and business operations. Extending our renewal period to ten years will enable us to thoughtfully and properly plan for business demand, infrastructure enhancements, and maximize our ability to operate safely.

**1. Horse-drawn carriage businesses are iconic, well-loved symbols of Victoria:**

- Tally-Ho Carriage Tours is celebrating our 115<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in 2018! We are a highly-recognized and sought-after attraction associated closely with the image of Victoria. As such, we are a key contributor to our local tourism economy.
  - We have plans to implement a memorial scholarship fund and elementary school program this year. These are long-term community commitments that require assurance of ongoing operations.
- We have documented a huge amount of support from residents, local businesses, and world travellers, who love our horses and service, and rave about their experience(s).
- We have long-term contracts with tourism partners.

**2. Welfare of the horses is a top priority:**

- Horses need to be managed as long-term team members. Every horse is a minimum 20-year commitment, with many much longer. In their retirement, many of the horses remain with us and we must have a financial plan for their long-term care.
  - The industry has close to 60 draft horses in various stages of life (in-training, working, retired, etc.) and invests over \$1 million annually in basic care (feed, veterinary, foot care, housing, etc.).
- We have a documented horse training program, developed in consultation with a leading expert in natural horsemanship, designed to ensure the horses are calm and confident in their work. The training process can take up to two years and is a significant investment of time and money.
- The infrastructure required to house and care for the horses is massive. It must be up-kept to high standards, with additional capital investments being financed through banks/loans which prefer low-risk, long-term stability in operating environments.

- Consistency in our staff and their communications with our equine partners is a key element in developing the horses' mental fitness and trust, which is a key contributor to our excellent safety record (0.0001% accident rate over the last 20 years). A longer-term lease assists us to attract and keep longer-term staff.

**3. Recognizes that Victoria's carriage businesses are well run, industry leaders:**

- We work cooperatively with the City to ensure our regulations provide appropriate oversight and care for the horses and we abide by our bylaw. In recent letters to citizens who have expressed their support for the horse-drawn carriage industry, the City of Victoria has acknowledged "We have not witnessed any behaviors that could lead to revoking a business license, for either of the tour operators in Victoria, in the past five years".
- The BC SPCA has not validated any horse-welfare complaints. In a recent letter to the city from the industry's acclaimed farrier, he states "I have worked on backyard horses, ranch horses and show horses in multi-million dollar barns and I have met very few horses that are as well kept and as happy as the horses that work on the streets of Victoria!".
- Donna Friedlander, President, Tally-Ho Carriage Tours, is on the board of the Carriage Operators of North America (CONA). CONA meets annually to discuss and establish best practices in the industry. We are proud to be recognized as a leader in our field.

**4. Aligns with City support for the carriage industry in other cities:**

- In our recent visits to carriage companies in South Carolina and Texas, and through ongoing discussions with operators throughout North America, we have learned that the industry norm is to have dedicated operating space under long-term lease, including barns to house equipment and provide the horses shelter when in the downtown area.
- Stanley Park Carriage Tours has recently signed a 25-year lease with the City of Vancouver, providing this company the necessary security for them to invest in betterments to their space. This not only improves conditions for the horses and staff, but improves the image of the City.

**Existing Location**

**1. The City has invested significant infrastructure and resources in our current location:**

- Our current location (corners of Belleville and Menzies Streets) has been specifically designed for our purposes, including:
  - Access to city water to ensure we are able to frequently offer clean, fresh water to the horses; and clean the streets to reduce horse smells. (Note that one side of the street has had ongoing issues with access to the water for almost two years.)
  - Hitching rails so we can tie our horses up when at rest, and enable our carriage drivers to take breaks/rests.
  - Public benches specifically designed to enable us to store (hide) our necessary but not esthetically pleasing equipment such as manure buckets, cleaning supplies, food, etc.

**2. Community Support:**

- The James Bay Neighborhood Association supports the current operating location, noting we are appropriately positioned so that we are not directly in front of housing or hotels, yet have access to the with necessary amenities (water, drainage, etc.).

**3. Customer Service Standards:**

- While the operating location for Tally-Ho Carriage Tours has moved over the last 115 years (at one time it was in front of the Empress Hotel; and then in front of the Legislative Buildings), the industry has been in the current operating location since the 1970s.

- Our guests and our tourism partners know where we are, and how to find us. We have significant customer loyalty from locals and repeat travellers. A change in location could cost up to \$100,000 in remarketing and may result in a need for us to break established contracts.
- Our tour routes are established based on our current location. Unlike buses or other tour operators, we are restricted in our routes to ensure we remain in low-traffic areas of the city. A change in location would require us to re-route every tour, creating a challenge to ensure we continue to offer visually pleasing, historical tours within set boundaries and timelines.

#### 4. **Impact on Horses**

- Horses crave consistency as it helps alleviate their natural fears of the world around them: consistency is a key element of their safety and well-being.
  - Our herds have been trained to know that our existing location is their rest place – they know they are safe there, and will relax between tours. These moments of relaxation help keep them grounded and thinking clearly throughout their day.
  - The horses leave from our current location, cover consistent tour routes, and return to their 'home base'. Every piece of their day is as familiar to them as we can make it. No surprises make for great days!
- A change in operating location would require every working horse to be retrained: not only is this an unnecessary stress on our animals, but it would require a significant time and financial investments from us; and would require us to cease operations for an undeterminable amount of time while we completed the retraining process to the point where we could operate safely again.

#### 5. **Safety**

- With the ever-increasing harassment our young, predominantly female, staff endure on a daily basis, our location offers protection in the following ways:
  - Legislative and inner harbour cameras are positioned to monitor our operations: if something untoward happens, it will be caught on camera.
  - Legislature security guards patrol the area regularly, which adds a level of oversight that may be enough to thwart any potential threats to the staff or horses.

The biggest risk to my horses' welfare is changes to our governing bylaw by the City. Please find attached additional information on Tally-Ho, and the Victoria horse-drawn carriage industry. I would be pleased to host any member of Council at my farm to see our operation first hand, and am available to discuss any aspect of my operation, or this specific request, at your convenience.

Yours truly,

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## Tally-Ho Facts

### History

- The first carriage tour rolled out of the Tally-Ho stables, which was more recently known as the Tally-Ho Sports Bar, 115 years ago. It is Victoria's original transportation company, operating stage coaches pulled by 6 horses and overflowing with locals and travelers. The stages could also be hired for special events such as "shooting parties" in Beacon Hill Park.
- With the onset of the automobile the practical need for stages decreased. Since the 1940s, under the ownership of a few well-known locals including Art Knapp, Anton Henderson, Gordon Argyle, John Olsen and Bruce Wright, the Tally-Ho double horse-drawn wagons became synonymous with Victoria. Many locals still tell tales of sneaking a ride on the back steps as the horses meandered through the city streets.
- Today, Tally-Ho offers private, personalized, single horse-drawn carriage tours, carrying on its long-standing tradition of horse-based tourism.
- Tally-Ho suffered a massive loss in August 2015 when its long-time and much-loved leader, Larry Friedlander, died suddenly while training a new horse in James Bay.
- Larry started his career at Tally-Ho at 15 years old, eventually becoming a partner in 1990, and then owning it outright in 2009. He dedicated his life to the horses and business. Since his death, his wife of 23 years, Donna, the couple's two daughters and the rest of the Tally-Ho team have become the poster children for the term resilience, and despite their deep and complicated grief, are working hard in Larry's memory to ensure Tally-Ho remains an industry-leader.
- The Friedlander family and Manager, Kate Clark, live on Hidden Acres Farm where they share their lives with the Tally-Ho horses. It's a 24/7 job, where life revolves around Tally-Ho.

### Industry Leader

- Tally-Ho is a progressive company that continually implements advancements in the carriage industry, and is leading the world in adhering to high standards of ethics and care.
- The company has developed operating protocols, in consultation with leading experts in horse care, that always consider safety and the well-being of the horses as the highest priority.
- Over the last two years, every aspect of operations has been reviewed, including these key accomplishments:
  - Documented horse training program created in consultation with a leading expert in natural horsemanship that ensures the horses have all the skills and knowledge necessary to work downtown with ease, confidence, and enjoyment.
  - Documented staff training program with a focus on horse care and safety, and includes development opportunities with world-renowned trainers.
  - Customized feed and shoeing programs developed with local experts that ensure the horses' diets are optimized and body's are kept free from strain (just like elite athletes).
  - Custom-fit, ergonomically designed saddles to maximize the horses' comfort while in harness.
  - Constant refurbishment of the carriage fleet, including safety improvements such as new lighting.
  - Refreshed look (rebranding, new uniforms, updated web presence, etc.) that is a nod to our historical service operating in the modern world, and aligns with the beautiful look and feel of Victoria.
  - New horse trailer to provide additional comfort and space while hauling horses from farm to town.
  - 63-page operations manual outlining policies, procedures and core values (dedication to horses; enthusiasm for people; safety and excellence).

## Victoria Carriage Industry Facts

1. **Women-owned and operated Victoria-based businesses.**
2. **Iconic symbols of the city for visitors:**
  - Victoria's carriage horses are admired around the world. Their images are featured in the majority of postcard racks, tourist shops, commemorative books, etc.,
  - Victoria's carriage businesses are significant contributors to Victoria's \$1.9 billion tourism economy.
3. **Part of the community's social fabric.** The historical significance of the relationship between humans and horses is honored through horse-based tourism. In addition to our work downtown, we contribute to our communities by appearing at local fairs, schools and special events so children can experience the magic of the horse (which research shows significantly benefits social and long-term life skills).
4. **Large employer and educator:**
  - Employs over 70 people, many of whom are young women and university students.
  - Educates our staff and the community, drawing on a massive breadth and depth of horse knowledge and communication across the industry.
  - The industry experience we provide to our staff is proven to boost self-confidence and key employment skills such as communications, organization and social awareness; and has helped multiple staff pursue further educational opportunities in related fields such as veterinary medicine.
5. **Outstanding safety record:** In the last 20 years, involving over 1.3 million horse hours on the streets, there have only been a handful of incidents (0.0001%): none have resulted in major injury to person or horse.
6. **Well-treated horses:** Horses live on acreages on the Saanich Peninsula with their owners, where they are treated like family members. [See this video](#) for a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the Tally-Ho horses' home.
7. **Meaningful partnerships with horses:** Horses and humans are better together than they could ever be apart. With the right approach our horses can become calmer, braver, smarter and more athletic on a daily basis, which makes them more comfortable in all of their surroundings. Countless hours go into developing deep and meaningful partnerships with these horses before they ever see downtown.
8. **Horses doing the work they were bred to do:**
  - Draft horses are bred to pull: they can easily pull a wheeled vehicle that is six times their own weight. Our carriage horses are only expending about 20% of their capacity.
  - As herd animals, horses inherently seek interaction and socialization: they receive this in spades from their buddies on the farm, work partners (us) and all our guests.
  - They love their daily grooming, easily load into the trailer for the drive to town, stand calm to be harnessed and hooked to the carriage, and display relaxed body language when working. [See this video](#) of "Kashe" being called for work in the morning, [and this video](#) of "Sarge" enthusiastically 'chomping at the bit' so he can get to work.
9. **Long lives and comfortable retirement.**
  - Carriage horses' regular, low impact work contributes to life spans of up to 10 years longer than the heavy horse average:
  - Victoria veterinary records show there has NEVER been any cases of respiratory disease (we have excellent air quality in Victoria) or joint/musculoskeletal issues (walking on pavement helps strengthen tendons and bones).
  - Victoria's retired horses live out their lives with their herd and with the family of owners and employees who love them.