

James Bay

Community Health Issue: Ban Horse-Drawn Carriages

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## Ban Horse-Drawn Carriages

The community of James Bay is home to many of Victoria's tourist attractions, including the horse-drawn carriage businesses. Victoria sees upwards of three million tourists a year, utilizing many of the popular attractions and increasing traffic in the downtown and James Bay areas (Thornton, 2011). The issues facing Victoria with the continuation of horse-drawn carriage attractions include: public health and safety, animal welfare, and poor image portrayal of the city.

### **Public Health and Safety**

The community of James Bay has a population of approximately 11,000 and has the largest population of over 65 in Victoria (City of Victoria, 2009: James Bay Neighbourhood Association, 2016). The senior population utilize the roadways in this area and are at greater risk when forced to navigate the narrow streets alongside horse-drawn carriages. The horses ride along busy routes shared by city buses, tour buses, motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Horse-drawn carriages pose a safety risk to the public when riding alongside motor vehicles while also putting the horse at risk (The Humane Society of The United States, 2016). The horses have been known to startle and run into traffic causing accidents with at least one documented case annually, which does not take into account unreported cases over the last decade (Victoria Animal News, 2015). Not only are the horses a safety risk to the motorists and pedestrians sharing the roadways, they also pose a health risk with the amount of pollution they produce in the city. According to *A Horse Keeper's Guide to Manure Management* (n.d) a 1000lbs horse produces approximate 30lbs of manure and 20lbs of urine per day. There is no available epidemiological data on the incidences of injury from the carriage rides; however, the reported cases in the media provide evidence for change. Many major cities across the world such as

Toronto, London and Paris have banned horse-drawn carriages because of the issues mentioned and many other cities are currently working to follow suit.

### **Animal Welfare**

Animal welfare is a major issue facing these horses as they work ‘nose to tailpipe’ each day on the busy streets of Victoria. These horses are bred to work and need the mental and physical stimulation to fulfill their needs; however, their working conditions are questionable. Tally-Ho Carriage Tours state on their website that they currently work 13 horses year-round, with two shifts per day in the busy tourist season. They outline that the animals are treated ethically and are well maintained, however there is no mention of the horse’s health as it pertains to working directly alongside motor vehicles.

### **Victoria’s Image**

Allowing horse-drawn carriages in beautiful Victoria stains our image as a progressive city. Tourists come to Victoria to experience our wonderful hospitality, views and downtown core; however, horse-drawn carriages are not a part of this ‘image’ and do not belong on our busy streets. The major issue with horse-drawn carriages is the potential to endanger people’s lives and the lives of the horses. If no actions are taken on the issue our community may face more accidents/injuries for not banning the carriage rides, which will further damage our image.

## References

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