

Report on Cat Bylaw Options and Implications

Presented to Strathcona County Council

by

RCMP and Enforcement Services

October 2020

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Current Status of Cat Control and Enforcement..... | 3 |
| Incoming Reports | 3 |
| About Abandonment of Cats | 4 |
| Potential Enforcement Penalties for Abandonment | 6 |
| Brief History of Cat Bylaw Considerations by Council (1986 – 2019) | 8 |
| Cat Bylaw Chronology | 8 |
| Discussion of General Cat-related Issues and Concerns | 14 |
| Environmental Scan | 16 |
| Summary of the Online Review | 16 |
| Summary of the Detailed Survey | 18 |
| Summarized Responses | 19 |
| Requirements for a Successful Cat Bylaw | 34 |
| Practical Features of a Cat Bylaw | 34 |
| Options for a Cat Bylaw Management Program | 39 |
| Option 1 | 39 |
| Option 1, Cost Table..... | 40 |
| Option 2 | 42 |
| Option 2, Cost Table..... | 44 |
| Option 3 | 45 |
| Discussion of Outcomes/Risks with each Option | 46 |
| Appendices..... | 48 |
| Appendix A: Alberta Animal Protection Act..... | 48 |
| Appendix B: Cat Bylaw, additional historical documentation | 50 |
| Appendix C: Questions included on Detailed Survey..... | 51 |
| Appendix D: Cat Control, Website Text | 53 |
| Appendix E: Organizations | 54 |
| Appendix F: Informational Links | 55 |

Introduction

This *Report on Cat Bylaw Options and Implications* (the Report) is presented in response to a Strathcona County Council motion that was passed in late 2019. The motion stated:

THAT Administration provide a report, by the end of Q3 2020, on the implications of a cat bylaw that covers the urban service area of Sherwood Park, and includes:

- *penalties for individuals found dumping cats in the rural areas;*
- *information on the experiences of other municipalities in implementing such bylaws; and*
- *the costs associated with bringing forward a cat bylaw in Strathcona County.*

The Report was prepared by RCMP and Enforcement Services with inputs and assistance from multiple departments and resources within the County administration.

The Report:

- addresses all of the elements included in Council's motion to request a report;
- provides Council with relevant history and research;
- discusses general cat-related concerns or issues specific to Sherwood Park; and
- presents several options for consideration, going forward.

Current Status of Cat Control and Enforcement

Strathcona County does not currently have a Cat Bylaw for Sherwood Park nor any municipal policies or rules to address cat control or cat-related issues such as licencing.

As noted in Appendix A, the *Alberta Animal Protection Act* is the most relevant piece of provincial legislation.

In cases of animal abuse (including cats), the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) takes the investigative lead, along with the police force of jurisdiction.

In Strathcona County, RCMP and Enforcement Services works with the SPCA as needed, in cases of animal abuse.

Incoming Reports

For incoming citizen reports about stray, nuisance or abandoned cats, there are no formal processes in place to guide our Community Peace Officers (CPOs).

- In such cases, a cat is typically reported to RCMP and Enforcement Services. This includes reports of a cat running loose (stray), cat defecation on private property, or being a nuisance, e.g., whether reported as a stray, abandoned or feral cat.
- In most or all of these scenarios, RCMP and Enforcement Services is not able to assist.
- County residents have few options to deal with these cats. For instance, there is no County-run shelter, facility or holding area where such cats can be delivered by a citizen, or by a CPO.
*Refer to Appendix B for a listing of some Edmonton-area organizations that may sometimes accept cats from Strathcona County residents.

About Abandonment of Cats

An important issue, as reflected in County Council's motion of late 2019, is the abandonment or dumping of cats in rural areas.

Abandonment of individual or multiple cats in the County's rural areas has been a periodic issue for decades. In most cases, a person will abandon a single cat, but rural residents have also occasionally reported multiple cats or entire litters left in a rural area, on private property, or even on the side of a rural road.

Sadly, some cat owners choose to abandon individual cats (or litters) when they simply no longer want to care for the animals. Although some instances clearly reflect a level of owner negligence, there are also many other possible or contributing factors, per case, which can lead to the actual abandonment.

Here are some of the relevant factors that can be involved:

1. Lack of cat-approved shelter(s) in the County

Perhaps the most common instigator for owners leaving their cats or other pets in rural areas is a lack of available or appropriate animal housing or animal care options.

In general, there are limited options available to people in Strathcona County that want to give up their cat(s), or an unwanted litter. Few animal shelters or agencies are able or willing to accept cats, especially litters.

Further, many owners cannot afford the cost of euthanasia (whether for a single cat or multiple cats/kittens), which is usually the only option left if a shelter cannot be found, has no space available, or simply does not accept single cats or litters. In such cases, an owner may then take steps to abandon the cat(s), perhaps with a mistaken belief that the cat(s) will be able to survive instinctively and independently in the wild.

2. Limited income and/or high costs of cat food, shelter and veterinary services

Whether an owner has just one cat or is faced with owning a new litter, there are many financial factors that may come into play. Some owners may face significant financial strains that impact their ability to look after a cat and/or kittens. Cat food, cat litter and routine veterinary services may be too costly or stressful for owners that have limited income or may be facing financial uncertainty, e.g., job loss, juggling of basic living costs, or otherwise.

3. Some owners may already perceive their cat as an "outdoor" cat

Some owners are habituated into thinking of their cat (or all cats) as independent, because they have allowed their cat to not only live indoors but also roam outdoors, often or widely. In this sense, some owners believe their cat(s) can easily provide for themselves if abandoned in a rural, outdoor setting.

Unfortunately, this isn't typically the case. In fact, most domestic/household cats that are allowed outdoors tend to venture less than a block (or several hundred metres) away from their home, preferring to stay close to familiar territory. While some or many cats may seem (to their owners) that they are good rodent catchers, the fact is that most are not able to consistently catch prey for food. Most still rely primarily on their human owners for daily sustenance, e.g., food, water and general care.

Even if a cat has been allowed to roam outdoors, this does not mean that the same cat will be able to survive when their “safety net” (owner role) is removed.

4. Mistaken belief that “someone else will take them in”

Some cat owners may face personal or financial difficulties, such as foreclosure on a home or other difficult circumstances where the cat (or a litter) becomes a problematic issue. For instance, after a foreclosure, the owner may simply choose to abandon the cat in place, thinking nearby residents will take care of the cat or act as the new owner.

In other cases, where the cat(s) is abandoned in a more rural area, the original owner may believe that nearby or rural residents often “leave their doors open” to roaming cats and would likely find and take care of any cat or litter. However, this is most often not the case.

In reality, abandoned cats are much more likely to be left alone (even if noticed or found by nearby property owners) and will simply end up fending for themselves. Although many (or even most) abandoned cats (including kittens) will not survive for too long, others do survive. This has contributed to overpopulation in rural areas; feral and wild roaming cats are an increasing concern in rural parts of the County.

5. Unwanted cat litters contribute to overpopulation and abandonment

Partly because of a general lack of public education about the real need to spay or neuter domestic cats, there are too many unwanted cat litters in the County. (In general, this is also true throughout Alberta and across Canada.)

Local animal and cat shelters and rescue groups are often inundated with cats and cat litters. Many will not accept cats at all, and most have very limited space/capacity, meaning it’s often impossible for a shelter to accept a litter.

On a related note, the trigger for some cases of abandonment involving cat litters is that the owner may feel guilty or embarrassed about the litter because they did not have their cat spayed or neutered previously, while also allowing it to roam outdoors. In such cases, they may be too embarrassed (or feel stigmatized in some way) to even attempt giving the litter to a shelter, so they choose abandonment.

6. Some cats have behavioural issues, making adoption impossible

If an owner is looking to give up ownership of a cat to a local shelter or agency, the cat may not be accepted if it has one or more serious behavioural issues, such as biting, aggressive or vicious behaviour, not using a litter box consistently, destructiveness, excessive meowing, or not getting along/behaving socially with other cats.

In such cases, euthanasia may be the only viable option. For some owners, the costs of euthanasia may be too expensive, so the owner may decide to release or abandon a cat into a rural County area, hoping or thinking that the cat will survive and thrive.

Potential Enforcement Penalties for Abandonment

There are provisions under the *Alberta Animal Protection Act* of Alberta which could be used to address individuals who are caught abandoning or dumping cats in a rural area of the County.

The most relevant clauses include:

Animal Care Duties

2.1 A person who owns or is in charge of an animal

- a) must ensure that the animal has adequate food and water, (b) must provide the animal with adequate care when the animal is wounded or ill,*
- b) must provide the animal with reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold, and*
- c) must provide the animal with adequate shelter, ventilation and space.*

Abandoned animal

4.1 (1) In this section, “abandoned animal” includes an animal that

- a) is left for more than 24 hours without adequate food or water or shelter,*
- b) is left for 5 days or more after the expected retrieval time from a registered veterinarian or from a person who for money consideration or its equivalent stables, boards or cares for the animal, or*
- c) is found on premises with respect to which the tenancy agreement has been terminated.*

(2) A peace officer may take an abandoned animal into custody whether or not it is in distress.

(3) A peace officer who takes an animal into custody pursuant to subsection (2) shall deliver the animal to a humane society or caretaker.

Offence

12(1) A person who contravenes this Act or the regulations is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not more than \$20 000.

(2) If the owner of an animal is found guilty of an offence under section 2, the Court may make an order restraining the owner from continuing to have custody of an animal for a period of time specified by the Court.

(3) The Court may make an order under subsection (2) on any terms and conditions it considers appropriate.

Despite these regulatory provisions, the actual enforcement of abandonment-related regulations can be extremely complicated.

Unless a cat has a proper tag, functional microchip or clear tattoo that identifies the owner or community (e.g., Strathcona County, Edmonton, or other nearby communities), the owner of the cat cannot be identified.

- Even if the cat is identified, proving the cat was abandoned purposely (vs. simply being lost or stray) is very challenging.

There are several important means to deter abandonment of cats, within the scope of a potential cat bylaw:

- **cat licencing/registration** – this would help to ensure owners can be readily identified

- **penalties/fines** – for allowing stray or roaming cats, and/or off-leash cats

To help ensure compliance with licencing/registration rules and processes, there are a number of practical incentives and deterrents that could be used.

The Table below offers just a few examples.

| Reducing Abandonment of Cats – possible incentives and deterrents within a cat bylaw/cat management program | |
|--|--|
| Incentives | Deterrents |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free licences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sizeable/strategic fines and penalties |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat food vouchers, e.g., in partnership with local pet stores | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative fees/fines charged to owner, after County seizure of abandoned or stray cat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinary care/services vouchers, in partnership with local veterinarians | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic licencing restrictions or prohibitions |

Brief History of Cat Bylaw Considerations by Council (1986 – 2019)

Since 1986, Council has occasionally considered establishing a cat bylaw.

- More recently, some of the most relevant motions and considerations have occurred between 2016 and 2019.

Over time, RCMP and Enforcement Services has generally tracked and researched relevant issues, as related to the establishment or enforcement of a cat bylaw.

- At times, such tracking, research and/or reporting has been carried out at the request of Council or County administration.

More broadly, the general intent of RCMP and Enforcement Services has been to monitor cat-related issues, citizen concerns and societal trends, within the overall context of animal control and bylaw enforcement and compliance.

The following **Cat Bylaw Chronology** offers a review of relevant actions and developments, as related to consideration of a cat bylaw, aspects of cat control, and associated matters.

Cat Bylaw Chronology

| Cat Bylaw Chronology | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1986 (December) | Cat Control motion | <p>A Motion regarding a proposal for cat control in Sherwood Park, in response to citizen concerns identified via Councillors, the news media and Bylaw Services. Councillor Schindeler moved Motion 1110/86 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the need for cat control in Sherwood Park as per the Guidelines listed in the report dated December 2, 1986. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate a related Public Information Program. ○ Defer enactment of a Cat Control and Licensing Bylaw, pending evaluation results. ○ Review evaluation results within one year of implementation <p><i>Motion did not materialize into a Bylaw.</i></p> |
| 1993 (August) | Historical letter | A written legal opinion was provided on a proposed cat bylaw, e.g., range of provisions and obligation to enforce, etc. |
| 1993 (September) | Cat Bylaw proposed | Proposed Cat Bylaw 93/1993 was not supported by Council after presentation from Strathcona County Enforcement Services. |
| 1994 (June) | Cat Control Bylaw proposed | <p>Proposed Cat Control Bylaw 17-94 was given First Reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four councillors were in favour of the Bylaw while four were opposed. |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second reading was planned for July 5, 1994, for proposed Cat Bylaw 17-94 plus amendments 761/94 and 762/94. <i>The motions were defeated.</i> |
| 2007 (November) | Topic of Cat Licencing raised | On November 6, 2007, Councillor Osinchuk advised Council that she would be requesting that the County look into licencing of cats; and that other municipalities with cat bylaws be surveyed. |
| 2008 (June) | Topic of cat control raised | On June 10, Councillor Osinchuk raised the topic of cat control and a possible bylaw. |
| 2008 (June) | Informal survey, cat bylaw and related | <p>RCMP and Enforcement Services surveyed cat bylaw enforcement personnel in Edmonton, Leduc and Red Deer, plus a representative of the Edmonton Humane Society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses were gathered on topics such as licencing, bylaw details, costs for enforcement personnel, vehicle costs, administration and facilities, cat traps, and more. Enforcement Services wrote a Cat Bylaw memo dated June 26, 2008, including brief, informal cost summary. <i>*Refer to Appendix B to view this memo.</i> |
| 2008 (July) | | <p>On July 4, Legal Services provided a two-page memo (in response to a Councillor Osinchuk inquiry) with some information regarding regulation of cats, e.g., staffing, vehicles/equipment, impoundment, euthanasia, and licencing. <i>*Refer to Appendix B to view this memo.</i></p> |
| 2009 (February) | Council Workshop | <p>On February 26, a Council Workshop was held to consider whether or not the County should create a bylaw to govern cats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop materials included a listing of Alberta municipalities with cat bylaws, some select sample bylaws (e.g., Edmonton), and a cat bylaw summary for Bowden, Brooks, Strathmore, Red Deer and Crossfield. |
| | Workshop document | <p>On February 26, Legal Services provided a two-page document, Regulation of Cats, as part of the workshop materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page two of the document offered some commentary on costs of implementing a bylaw. <i>*Refer to Appendix B to view this document.</i> <p>The document also noted some history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 6, 2007, Councillor Osinchuk advised she would be requesting that the County look in licencing of |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| | | <p>cats; and that other municipalities with cat bylaws be surveyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On July 4, 2008, Legal Services provided a memo (<i>*Refer to Appendix B</i>) with some information regarding regulation of cats. |
| 2009 (November) | Various motions related to cat bylaw | <p>On November 10, Councillor Linda Osinchuk put forth motions pertaining to a cat bylaw, which were <i>carried</i> unanimously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAT Council receives the report on Cat Complaint for information. 681/2009 THAT administration is directed to extend the program of documenting cat complaints to April 2010. 682/2009 THAT administration be directed to research costs associated with the implementation of a Cat Registry in the Urban Service Area and report back to Council in April 2010. 883/2010 <p><i>Motions did not materialize into a Bylaw.</i></p> |
| 2009-10 | Review of incoming calls for service, cat-related | <p>RCMP and Enforcement Services reviewed their calls for service, to help determine whether or not a cat bylaw should be created.</p> <p>In the 2009/10 fiscal year, RCMP and Enforcement Services tallied 68 calls from the public, related to cats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven were to report a lost cat, six were to report an injured or dead cat, and 55 were general complaints. |
| 2010 (April) | Estimated costs, cat bylaw | <p>Enforcement Services estimated some of the relevant costs that would or might be associated with implementing a cat bylaw.</p> <p><i>*Refer to Appendix B to view this two-page document of estimated costs.</i></p> |
| 2010 (May) | Report to Council on May 18, on cat complaint statistics | An update to Council was provided, reporting on <i>Cat Complaints Statistics</i> for fiscal year 2009/10. |
| | Motion to receive report on cat complaints, carried | <p>Councillor Linda Osinchuk put forth motion 265/2010 pertaining to a cat bylaw, which was <i>carried</i> unanimously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAT Council receive the report on Cat Complaints for information. |
| | Motion to refer Cat Control back to administration, defeated | <p>Councillor V. Budzinski put forth motion 266/2010 – Cat Control, which was <i>defeated</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAT the matter of cat control be referred back to administration to get a broader public perspective. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 2010 (May) | Media coverage | <p><i>Cat complaints few in numbers (council decides against looking at a cat bylaw; rural and urban councillors see the issue of stray cats differently)</i>, Sherwood Park News, May 21, 2010</p> <p>Also “<i>Cats stat fever</i>” near the same time (a shorter article, on some statistics)</p> |
| 2011 | Media coverage | <i>Abandoning animals in county inexcusable</i> , Sherwood Park News, January 25, 2011 (OPINION piece) |
| 2011 (January) | Cat Licence questionnaire developed, 12 questions | This internal document/template was used for a small survey, with results later submitted under the file name: <i>Cat Licence Review Doc</i> |
| 2011 (February) | Report to Council on Cat Control | <p>Report to Council, <i>Information on Cat Control</i></p> <p>Enclosures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat Complaints Statistics (from 2009/10) • <i>Cat Licence Review Doc</i> (included info on fees/licences for Calgary, Edmonton, Leduc, Red Deer, St. Albert, Grande Prairie and Saskatoon; also included some cost estimates for administration, etc.) <p><i>*Refer to Appendix B to see the Cat Licence Review Doc</i></p> |
| 2012 (September) | Discussion at Council about a limit on the number of cats per dwelling | <p>Councillor Carr asked why there are no regulations pertaining to the number of cats per dwelling similar to limit of dogs per dwelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discussion did not result in a motion or report.</i> |
| 2014 | Cat-related, partial e-mail history | Some citizen and/or Councillor e-mails (archived) discuss cat bylaw and citizen request for Cat Licensing. |
| 2015 | Relevant e-mail history (partial) | <p>In 2015, as part of a response to a citizen concern (emails in 2015 and 2014) about stray/abandoned cats and the County not having a shelter or cat bylaw, the 2009-10 history was noted to the citizen, along with this comment:</p> <p><i>To date the complaints have continued to remain low. Council made the decision (in 2010) that a cat bylaw was not required, due to the low number of complaints and the high cost to enforce a bylaw.</i></p> |
| 2015 | Citizen e-mail | Complaint about nuisance cats |
| 2016 | County survey | RCMP and Enforcement Services conducted a review of incoming calls for service, to help determine whether or not a cat bylaw should be created. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 2016 | Citizen e-mail complaint | Concern with wandering neighbourhood cats, as partly described in a CBC news article which quoted a County resident with similar concerns. |
| 2016 (September) | Council Key Messages document | The <i>Council Key Messages</i> document was prepared for Council, partly in light of some local media coverage at the time, about cats/cat bylaw. <i>*Refer to Appendix B to view this document.</i> |
| | County position, Sept. 2016 | As stated in the Council Key Messages document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most recent Council decision (2010) was to not establish a cat bylaw, due to the low number of complaints and the high cost to enforce a bylaw, e.g., building/operating facilities, staff costs and veterinary care. |
| 2018 (April) | Cat Bylaw motion defeated | Mayor R. Frank put forth motion 2018/ 126 - Cat Bylaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAT Administration provide a report, by the end of Q3 2018, on the implications of a possible cat bylaw, the report to include information on the experiences of other municipalities in implementing such bylaws. <i>The motion was defeated, 5-4.</i> <p>In general, the rationale for those voting against the bylaw was that cat bylaws rarely work and are not enforceable.</p> |
| 2019 (August) | Cat Bylaw Briefing | A three-page cat bylaw briefing note outlined some select history, from 2010 to 2018. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page two includes a few points about key considerations, including administration costs. <p><i>*Refer to Appendix B to view the briefing.</i></p> <p>In line with the last paragraph of this briefing note, an internal e-mail similarly states:</p> <p><i>"... should the motion be supported, Enforcement Services would hire a consultant to provide Council with a detailed report on all available options and their financial implications, which can be used as a foundation to further discussion."</i></p> |
| 2019 (September) | Media coverage | <i>Cat bylaw is long overdue</i> , Sherwood Park News, September 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One line in this article suggests complaints to County Councillors about roaming cats are common. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | Media coverage | <p><i>Council to give another go at cat bylaw proposal</i>, Sherwood Park News, September 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One line in this article suggests complaints to County Councillors about wandering cats are common. • Among many other issues, the article also flags topics such as bylaws in place in nearby municipalities, licencing, wandering cats, and cat owners not properly controlling their cats. |
| 2019 (Q-4) | Motion to request a cat bylaw report | <p>The motion stated: THAT Administration provide a report, by the end of Q3 2020, on the implications of a cat bylaw that covers the urban service area of Sherwood Park, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • penalties for individuals found dumping cats in the rural areas; • information on the experiences of other municipalities in implementing such bylaws; and • the costs associated with bringing forward a cat bylaw in Strathcona County. |
| 2019 (Q-4) | Environmental Scan | <p>In partial response to the Q-4 2019 motion, an environmental scan was undertaken by RCMP and Enforcement Services. This scan involved a range of research, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completion of an initial online review of 13 Alberta municipalities to determine if they have a cat bylaw, and the main features of the bylaw • completion of a detailed survey of 20 Alberta municipalities to identify best practices; over 25 specific questions related to cat bylaw enforcement and management, cat shelters/facilities and cat licencing |
| 2020 (March/April) | Report to Council | <p>In response to the Q-4 2019 motion, a Report on Cat Bylaw Options and Implications was completed by RCMP and Enforcement Services, and submitted to Council.</p> |
| 2020 (March/April) | Cat Bylaw Status in mid-2020; information posted about Cat Control on County website | <p>As of March/April 2020, Strathcona County does not have a Cat Bylaw. The County website informs County residents that no bylaw exists and offers tips to property owners on a Cat Control web page. The page offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a list of suggested actions that property owners can take to humanely deter unwanted cats from their yards and flower beds • advice to call the Alberta SPCA if a person suspects a cat has been abused or is in distress, e.g., stray or abandoned |

Discussion of General Cat-related Issues and Concerns

In addition to the cat bylaw history summarized in the **Cat Bylaw Chronology**, there are a number of other cat-related issues or concerns that exist within the County.

Some of these topics can generally be considered as “societal concerns”, while others (at times) have been more specifically raised by individual citizens or citizen groups.

The list of topic headings discussed below may not reflect all known issues or concerns, but serve to identify some of the topics that are commonly mentioned or flagged to RCMP and Enforcement Services.

Such topics may be raised in many different ways, such as:

1. in-person comments made to Councillors or otherwise communicated to them by e-mail or other means
2. e-mailed comments to County administration/departments
3. social media comments
4. in-person comments made by citizens to CPOs and RCMP Members
5. comments submitted via County Connect

Note, in line with privacy legislation, RCMP and Enforcement Services does NOT have a plan or formal process to capture all such comments. The only method which involves formal tracking is County Connect; all incoming comments to County Connect are recorded for accuracy and to ensure customer service and a timely response.

Abandonment of Cats on Rural Properties

Too often, people have been abandoning cats on rural properties in the County. Typically, an abandoned cat (or stray cat) will be first found by a local County resident (rural property owner).

When a rural resident finds and/or cares for an abandoned/stray cat (at least short-term), there is no County-operated facility where they can later deliver the cat for shelter.

Stray cats are also difficult to catch. As a result, their health and survival usually depends on their own instincts and ability to adapt to nature and the outdoors. Challenges include finding/hunting food, avoiding injury, natural predators, potentially negative encounters with humans, and inclement weather. The longer a cat remains away from its original home and at large in the outdoors, the more likely the cat will remain feral.

If a cat is recovered and taken to a shelter (e.g., Edmonton Humane Society) by a County citizen, it will be examined for illness, tags, tattoos and/or a microchip. Unfortunately, most stray or abandoned cats within the County do not have one of these practical means of identification, which makes it that much harder to reunify the cat with its owner.

Also refer to the earlier sections *About Abandonment of Cats* and *Potential Enforcement Measures to Reduce Abandonment*.

Feral Cat Population

Based on citizen inputs and the anecdotal knowledge of CPOs, the County has a significant feral cat population, although precise data is not available.

It is reasonable to anticipate that the County's feral cat population will continue to increase. The more cats that are abandoned, the more this population will grow.

Another risk is that feral cat litters are likely to become more common over time, possibly adding further to the population. Many County citizens already consider that feral cats are a nuisance in different ways, such as:

- noise, howling
- defecation in residential flower beds, gardens and property (rural and urban)
- killing of bird species at higher risk due to ground nests or ground feeding
 - *a high number of bird killings can affect sensitive populations of some bird species and impact ecosystems; see Appendix D for more information*
 - *in particular, some County residents have expressed concerns about cats killing songbirds or favoured species*

Cats off-leash

Housecats that are generally allowed to be off-leash or let outside regularly can also be a nuisance to property owners and neighbours in urban and rural areas of the County. For example:

- cats are often an unwanted presence, in general, on a non-cat owner's property
- People may be allergic to cats, thus the presence of a cat nearby may be of concern, including some risk of a nuisance cat entering a private household where a person is allergic
- defecation in residential flower beds, gardens and property (rural and urban)
- noise, howling
- killing of bird species at higher risk due to ground nests or ground feeding
 - *a high number of bird killings can affect sensitive populations of some bird species and impact ecosystems; see Appendix D for more information*
 - *in particular, some County residents have expressed concerns about cats killing songbirds or favoured species*

Humane Treatment of Cats

County residents are looking for information about humane treatment of cats, including shelter options for adoptable, stray or abandoned cats.

Refer to Appendix E for a listing of local organizations that offer practical information and services, and to Appendix F for a listing of topical articles.

Protection of Bird Populations from Cats

As discussed above, and in one of the articles listed in Appendix F, the issue of housecats and feral cats killing bird species (including songbirds) is backed up by research. As noted in Appendix F, millions of birds are killed by cats each year in Canada, which can have a negative effect not only on bird populations but also on ecosystems in general.

Environmental Scan

As part of the response to Council's motion to have County administration provide a report on the implications of a cat bylaw, RCMP and Enforcement Services carried out an environmental scan, using several tools and approaches. The environmental scan included:

- examination of the history of cat bylaw discussions/motions by Council since 1986 (see **Cat Bylaw Chronology**)
- meeting with or questioning various administrative personnel on their relevant knowledge or insights about past discussions and/or motions relating to establishment of a cat bylaw
- review of as much relevant internal documentation as possible, e.g., RCMP and Enforcement Services e-mail history relating to cat bylaws, plus a hard copy binder with written records and partial history (see **Cat Bylaw Chronology**)
- completion of an initial *online review* of 13 Alberta municipalities to determine if they have a cat bylaw, and the main features of the bylaw, e.g., licensing and cost, off-leash rules and fines, use of traps, process for trapping, shelter/holding period, disposal/euthanasia
- completion of a *detailed survey* of 20 Alberta municipalities to identify *best practices*; over 25 specific questions related to cat bylaw enforcement and management, cat shelters/facilities and cat licencing

Summary of the Online Review

This review determined that of 13 selected Alberta municipalities, seven had an existing cat bylaw, five did not, and one had a bylaw that applied only to urban areas.

This review primarily addressed seven specific topics associated with the bylaw, but also gathered additional information on some key topics.

- cat licence required or not
- licence duration
- cost of licence/renewal
- cats allowed off-leash or not
- fine for off-leash
- limit for number of cats that can be owned/licenced
- fine for violating the limit
- equipment required
- other general information gathered included: use of traps, and processes for trapping, shelter/holding period, euthanasia/disposal

Edmonton

- Cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. Cost is \$21 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$76 for an intact (unspayed/unneutered) cat.
- A cat cannot enter the property of others unless authorized by that owner.
- Off-leash fine is \$100.00.
- Owners are limited to 6 licenced cats; there is a fine of \$100 for violating the limit.
- Humane trap available for 3 days with \$75.00 deposit. Bylaw Officers do not pickup cats. Traps are not available from November 1 to April 1.

Calgary

- Cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. Cost is \$40 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$65 for an intact cat.
- Running at large (off-leash) is an offence; off-leash fine is \$50 to \$100.
- Humane traps are available. The complainant can deliver a trapped cat to the City's Animal Services Centre.
- Bylaw Officers may capture stray/abandoned cats. The Director (of Bylaw Enforcement) can authorize sale (adoption) of a cat or euthanasia.

Leduc

- Cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. Cost is \$50 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$100 for an intact cat.
- Must be leashed if on any property other than the owner's. The leash must be no more than 2 metres long. Off-leash fine is \$100.
- Stray/abandoned cats may be dealt with in line with the *Alberta Animal Protection Act*.

Fort Saskatchewan

- Cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. Cost is \$30 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$40 for an intact cat.
- Cats cannot be at large. Off-leash fine is \$150 to \$300.
- Owners are limited to 3 licenced cats; there is a fine of \$100 for violating the limit, increasing to \$200 for subsequent violations.
- Stray/abandoned cats are kept for 48 hours or longer depending on space at Edmonton Humane Society where they will be taken for adoption or to be euthanized.

Red Deer

- No licence is required.
- An owner cannot allow or permit a cat to run at large.
- Off-leash fine is \$30.
- Traps are available through a contractor; a \$20 deposit is required. Traps are not available if the outdoor temperature is below 0 °C. The complainant traps the cat and brings it to the contractor. A trap cannot be set at night. Cats are kept at the contractor facility for 72 hours before being sold or euthanized.

City of Grande Prairie

- The provisions of the Cat Bylaw only apply to cats within the City of Grande Prairie.
- Urban cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. (No licence is required for cats in rural areas.)
- Licence cost is \$18 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$33 for an intact cat.
- Urban cats cannot be off-leash at large.
- Off-leash fine is \$100.
- Humane cat traps are available from Bylaw Officers. Traps must be checked every hour by the complainant.
- After five days, a cat can be sold (adoption) or euthanized.
- After five days, a cat can offered for adoption or passed to a Volunteer Organization for placement/adoption, or euthanized.

Wood Buffalo

- Cats are licensed for one year. Licenses are renewable. Cost is \$15 for a spayed/neutered cat and \$50 for an intact cat.
- Cats cannot be off-leash. Off-leash fine is \$50.
- Owners are limited to 4 licenced cats; permission for more than 4 can be requested.
- Bylaw Officers may capture stray/abandoned cats. After 72 hours, the cat may be surrendered to the SPCA.

The **following municipalities** do not have a cat bylaw:

- St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Parkland County, Lethbridge, City of Wetaskiwin, County of Wetaskiwin

Summary of the Detailed Survey

A detailed survey was sent to the relevant bylaw enforcement departments of 20 Alberta municipalities.

In total, 18 Alberta municipalities responded to the survey, in whole or in part, as applicable.

- The range of respondents included large municipalities (e.g., Edmonton, Calgary), several cities or counties with a population similar to Strathcona County (e.g., Red Deer), plus other nearby municipalities (e.g., Fort Saskatchewan, Spruce Grove).
- The survey asked 25+ specific questions related to cat bylaw enforcement and management, cat shelters/facilities and cat licencing.

Survey Questions

The survey asked respondents to answer numerous questions relating to key aspects of their cat bylaw management program, e.g., licencing, traps, disposal/adoption/euthanasia, cat housing, enforcement, costs, number of personnel involved (Bylaw Officers, others), and more.

- Explanatory comments or insights were encouraged, including responses on how well the program works and what improvements or changes could be made.
- Most respondents were directly involved in cat bylaw management, e.g., Bylaw Officers.

Summarized Responses

The following pages include a summary of the survey responses from bylaw enforcement personnel working in 18 different Alberta municipalities, plus one response from a contracted animal shelter.

| Parkland County Animal Shelter |
|---|
| <p>Parkland County itself does not have a cat bylaw.</p> <p>This shelter provides services under contract to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Of Stony Plain • City of Spruce Grove <p>Spruce Grove and Stony Plain both have limited cat bylaws. Bylaw Officers and residents can bring cats to their shelter.</p> |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average number of days kept in shelter: 10 • Maximum capacity of facility: 12 • Cats with no ID (tattoo/microchip) are held for 72 hours before being placed for adoption. • If cat has ID, it is held for 10 days before being placed for adoption. • Adoption by citizens is facilitated through the shelter's in-house program. • If unclaimed, a cat is taken to the local humane society or local vet for adoption. • This shelter also partners with other local rescue organizations: SAFETEAM Rescue; Infinite Woofs Animal Rescue. • About 10% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 10% are adopted through available options. • About 60-70% are euthanized. |
| Facilities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter keepers feed and clean the cats, and maintain facility. • Shelter uses environmentally friendly litter that is septic-safe (flushable). Used litter is disposed in the garbage. |

| |
|--|
| City of Spruce Grove |
| Urban population: 35,700 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Bylaw Officers on staff, plus 1 Inspector and 1 Compliance Officer • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 20 |
| Summary of responses/comments |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two humane cat traps; available for one-week rental. • Must be checked daily. Cannot be used in temperatures below a certain degree centigrade. Cannot be used on public property. Can only be used in May through September. • Traps require minimal maintenance; are cleaned and inspected upon return. • The complainant must take the cat to the Parkland County Animal Shelter or a veterinary clinic. • The City does not have a euthanasia program; however if an animal is critically injured it is then euthanized after a vet assessment. Costs are \$80 - \$120.00. • Sometimes use an emergency veterinary location in Edmonton, which is open 24 hours. <p>NOTE: Costs of operating Parkland County Animal Shelter is split proportionally between Spruce Grove, Parkland County, Stony Plain and other outlying communities. The costs are divided by a percentage factor related to the number of total animals sheltered for each community. <i>Example:</i> For 10 cats, broken down to 3 Spruce Grove, 6 Parkland County and 1 Stony Plain, the costs would be 30%, 60%, 10% of the total cost for operating the facility. That is the base cost. Then there are additional costs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Shelter Fee per animal, \$22.50 • Alternative transport costs to veterinarian if no Bylaw Officer is available. • Euthanasia, \$80.00. |
| Comments |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Parkland County Animal Shelter, it varies how long they stay in the shelter before getting adopted out or to a humane society wants to take it. • About 15% of cats are returned to owners, with 85% being adopted, turned over to partner agencies or euthanized. • After 72 hours the cat can be adopted out or given to a humane society to find owners. Lots of times the cat will sit in the shelter for an extended period because cats are not wanted; the cost of housing/feeding and vet bills are then paid by the City. • It would be good to develop a program that if a cat was still in the shelter after a set period there would be some sort of program to get the cat out of the shelter and not incurring costs the whole time. |

| |
|---|
| Town of Stony Plain |
| Urban population: 17,800 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 111 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 10 • Maximum capacity of facility: 12 • The Town has a contract with Parkland County Animal Shelter. The shelter also has relationships with cat/animal rescue organizations in the area. • The shelter has a daily rate of approximately \$22.50/day for each animal brought in. • If the cat is claimed by the owner they are responsible to cover this fee. • If the cat is sent to a rescue organization or adopted, the Town pays the fees. • The Town pays veterinary fees, for euthanasia. • About 46% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 52% are adopted through available options. • About 2% are euthanized. Euthanasia is the last resort. |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. Rental fee is \$100 for 10 days, plus \$10 for each additional day. • 13 traps are available for rent. • Damage deposit is \$100. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • Traps are only available to rent during the warmer months of the year and the renters are made aware they are subject to the <i>Alberta Animal Protection Act</i>. • The Town Mechanics maintain the traps as part of their maintenance schedule. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <p>Cat-at-large file is created when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resident drops the animal at the shelter. • A cat is trapped/captured by a Bylaw Officer, using a trap or by hand if the cat is friendly/manageable. • Bylaw Officer will attempt to return the cat to an owner first, if possible, e.g., through licencing information. • If that is unsuccessful, the cat is taken to the shelter and the Bylaw Officer completes the intake and checks further for ownership information. • The shelter provides cat food, water, a bed and a litter box. • The shelter completes paperwork required by Parkland County. • Under the terms of the Contractor (Shelter) Agreement, the rest of the care and release is coordinated by the shelter. • If the animal requires veterinary care once it has been placed at the shelter, the shelter staff contact a Bylaw Officer to deliver the cat to and from the veterinarian. |

| |
|--|
| Fort Saskatchewan |
| Urban population: 27,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 60 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 48 hours (2 days) • Maximum capacity of facility (kennel): 4 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. Rental fee is \$51.00 for 7 days; \$51 deposit required. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. Cannot be used on public property. • There are 7 traps available for rent; low maintenance, cleaned after use. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feral cats are seized or taken to kennel. • Domestic cats are seized; a statement taken from the person turning in the cat. • Bylaw Officer will attempt to return the cat to an owner first, if possible, e.g., through licencing information. • Cat is posted on a Facebook site. • Cat is turned over to Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) after 48 hours and kept there on a 5-day hold, then is available for adoption. EHS bills the City for each cat taken to EHS. • About 50% of cats are returned to the owner, and 50% are taken to EHS. |
| Officer Costs, Facilities and Equipment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer time and vehicle; officer costs for handling cats. • Equipment needed for both the main kennel area and vehicles. • Bylaw Officer equipment: traps, cat net and cat nabber, animal stretcher for vehicles, cat and duty gloves, travel kennels • Main kennels, litter boxes and litter, food, dishes, cleaning supplies. • Facebook web page set up and maintenance. File management system and cost of maintaining. • Costs per animal, for services provided by EHS. Veterinary costs for euthanasia and cremation. • Cat litter is disposed of into a garbage bag and placed in the waste collection bin at the kennel facility. • Occasional use an emergency veterinary location in Edmonton, which is open 24 hours. • Training for officers |
| Comments/suggestions |
| <p>Does the cat licencing program work: Yes.</p> <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <p>There is an inadequate program for feral cats. If ferals are included in a program, then there will be a significant increase in the number of cats seized. Having cats microchipped would assist in returning cats to their owners. Having a vet on contract may help reduce costs for vet care if the program is larger than ours.</p> |

| |
|---|
| Leduc |
| Urban population: 32,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 110 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 20 • Maximum capacity of facility (contractor kennel): 10 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. No rental fee or deposit. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. Cannot be used on public property. • There are 6 traps available for rent; low maintenance, cleaned after use. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw Officer will attempt to return the cat to an owner first, if possible, e.g., through licencing information. • Cat is transported to a contracted kennel service where it is claimed or given to a rescue. • Captured/seized cats are euthanized only when a significant injury is present; veterinary costs are \$160 per incident. • About 35% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 61% are adopted through available options. • About 4% are euthanized. |
| Contracted Service Provider |
| Our contracted kennel is paid through the contract services agreement. This ends up being approximately \$29,000 a year for both cats and dogs. They do not receive additional funds “per animal”. |
| Comments |
| <p>We have had great difficulty in obtaining compliance with our Animal Licensing and Control bylaw when it comes to cat owners.</p> <p>Improving the requirement for ID (city purchased "tag" vs allowing owner provided) and allowing some discretion for what is satisfactory may result in greater compliance.</p> |

| |
|---|
| Red Deer |
| Urban population: 100,000 Rural population: 20,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 45 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 10 • Maximum capacity of facility: 40 • About 3% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 93% are adopted through available options. • About 4% are euthanized. |
| Contract Service Provider |
| The City pays about \$20,000 month to <i>Alberta Animals Services</i> , under a services contract. The contractor provides all animal related services in Red Deer (including cats). |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. There is no fee, but a \$20 deposit is required, for a five-day rental period. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. Traps are only available May 15 to September 30. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • There are 20 traps available for rent. • Person must feed, water and care for any trapped cat in a humane manner until delivered to Animal Services. • Traps are cleaned/sanitized on return. Occasional repair of damaged traps. |
| Other |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat is removed from trap, vaccinated, checked for identification (microchip, tattoo, tag), photographed and intake. • Intake is done by contractor at the shelter. • Shelter software is used, where an intake number is assigned and a photo of the cat is added to the lost and found section of the shelter website. • Shelter staff take time to intake the cat, vaccinations, animal health and behavior evaluations, sometimes grooming care. Veterinarian fee for time, cost of euthanasia. • Litter is disposed of in City landfill. |
| Comments |
| <p>Does the cat licencing program work: N/A</p> <p>Suggestions for change: City of Red Deer does not have a cat license portion to the Bylaw. The Bylaw only deals with cats running at large. Cat licensing would help off-set the cost to run the program and also help with return-to-owner numbers, if owners were required to have their cats licensed.</p> |

| |
|--|
| Grande Prairie |
| Urban population: 70,000 Rural population: 30,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 700 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 23 • Maximum capacity of facility: 180 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. \$10 fee for 5-day rental. A \$50 deposit is required. • Trap must be checked hourly; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • Person must not harm or tamper with animal or trap. Cat must be turned into the Pound or Enforcement once it is caught. • City has 5 traps available for rent. • Basic trap maintenance, metal mechanisms, locks, and chains. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat is taken to the Regional Pound. At the pound we fill out an intake form, a municipal tag with violations on it (often run at large and/or fail to license), and a kennel tag. • Cat is placed in a cat kennel. If the cat is not claimed in 5 days then it is considered abandoned and becomes the property of the City of Grande Prairie. • The cat is taken to a local veterinarian; the fee per cat seized is \$15/day boarding fee and any medical treatment required. • Euthanasia costs are \$180. • About 15% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 12% are adopted through available options. • About 73% are euthanized. |
| Facilities |
| Litter boxes are dumped into the garbage each day. Bags are thrown into garbage bin outside until pickup. The facility uses wood pellets for litter, cost is low and it is biodegradable. |
| Monthly costs: \$3400 for animal holding facility (Regional Pound). |
| Comments |
| <p>Does the cat licensing program work: Yes and No</p> <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <p>Increase in education on licensing in general and the fact that indoor cats need to be licensed. Having the ability to utilize microchips as part as the licensing system. Many cats do not wear collars or tags. Offering microchips instead of license tags, might help increase the reclaim rate. The microchip can be added into the licensing database along with a tag number. Many animal owners complain their pets lose the tags and cannot keep track of them. Adding in a section for abandoning animals, there are many people who dump cats out in the farm areas or outside in a box of the animal facilities.</p> |

| |
|--|
| Sturgeon County |
| Rural population: 22,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are not involved in capturing cats. There is no cat bylaw in place. • Number of cats captured per year: 0 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 0 • Maximum capacity of facility: 0 |
| Comments |
| When a cat is captured, the citizen is required to take it to the Edmonton Humane Society, if room is available. |

| |
|---|
| City of Wetaskiwin |
| Rural population: 12,500 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 300 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 3 • Maximum capacity of facility: 20 • About 6% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 14% are adopted through available options. • About 80% are euthanized. |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • City has 10 traps available for rent; general cleaning and disinfection on return. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat is checked by shelter staff for any identification (Tattoo, M/C, City Tags or Name Tags). If ID is found, the owner is contacted and cat held for up to ten days. If no ID is found, then cat is held for 3 days. • After holding period, the cat is turned over to local animal shelter or to a local veterinarian. • The fee per cat is \$15/day boarding fee and any medical treatment required. • Euthanasia cost is \$80. • Monthly costs: \$3500 for veterinarian/shelter/euthanasia. |
| Comments |
| <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <p>Limit the number of animals per household.</p> |

| |
|---|
| Morinville |
| Urban population: 10,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Bylaw Officers on staff, plus 5 casuals. • Bylaw Officers are not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 75 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 4 • Maximum capacity of facility: 6 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program, for maximum 7 days. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • There are 3 traps available for rent. • Cleaned and sterilized after each use. Inspect and repair if possible, but usually just replace a damaged trap. Traps are usually replaced every 2 years. • Person must deliver cat to pound services or call for Bylaw Officer to pick up. Person must remain responsible for the cat until the Bylaw Officer can attend. |
| Comments |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs include \$144.75 for every unclaimed/impounded cat, not including medical fees if required. • Costs total around \$11,000 annually for cats. <p>We currently run a no-kill program. No cats are euthanized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 14% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 86% are adopted through available options. <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory spay/neuter, or more promotion to have this done. • Mandatory permanent ID (tattoo/microchip); the number of cats that are wearing their ID/tags when found is low. |

| |
|---|
| Calgary |
| Urban population: 1.3 million |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are involved in capturing some cats. • Number of cats turned in per year: 5000 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 10 • Maximum capacity of facility: 40 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. Refundable fee of \$120; maximum 30 days. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • There are 30 traps available for rent. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <p>Captured cats are returned to owner, if possible, e.g., through licencing information.</p> <p>A full range of services are provided through the City's Animal Services Centre. (Also has partnerships with Calgary Humane Society and Calgary Academy of Veterinary Medicine.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impound fee of \$44.00 + GST and a cat housing fee of \$22.00 per day • Euthanasia costs range from \$50-500. • About 20% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 70% are adopted through available options. • About 10% are euthanized. |
| Facilities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter/facility (Animal Services Centre) is 15,000 square feet. • Initial cost of facility: \$500,000 • Monthly operating cost: \$25,000 • Health tech staff feed and clean the cats. • Use contractor for maintenance of facility. |
| Comments |
| <p>Does the cat licencing program work: Yes</p> <p>Suggestions for change: All is operating efficiently for now.</p> |

| |
|---|
| Edmonton |
| Urban population: 975,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 Bylaw Officers on staff. • Bylaw Officers are not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats turned in per year: 3600 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 10 • Maximum capacity of facility: 168 |
| Humane Trap Rentals |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a humane trap rental program. Fee of \$75 for 3 days. • Trap must be checked daily; cannot be used in temperatures below a set threshold. • Trap cannot be used on public property. • There are 40 traps available for rent. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captured cats are returned to owner, if possible, e.g., through licencing information. • Cat is held for 3 days if no ID and 10 days if ID. If not claimed can be sent out to another agency for adoption. • Example: Barn Buddies Program, Trap/Neuter/Release Program (Ferals) <p>A full range of services are provided through the City's Animal Care and Control Centre. The Centre is located next to and partners with Edmonton Humane Society, e.g., for cremation and TNR program.</p> <p>TNR program cost is \$40 - 100 per cat. Costs vary (e.g., if dollars are recouped by owner reclaiming the cat).</p> <p>Approximately \$40 for hold and euthanasia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 10 of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 80% are adopted through available options. • About 10% are euthanized. |
| Facilities |
| <p>The EHS shelter/facility is 2100 square feet; initial cost of facility was \$13,000,000.</p> <p>Given partnership with EHS, the City has no monthly operating costs for a facility.</p> <p>EHS kennel care staff feed and clean the cats.</p> <p>EHS maintains the facility.</p> <p>Cat litter disposed in garbage/to landfill. (City rules/practices may change in future)</p> |
| Comments |
| <p>Does the cat licencing program work: No</p> <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <p>City allows cats to roam on public property and makes difficult for enforcement.</p> <p>TNR program better option than euthanasia.</p> |

| |
|--|
| Municipal District of Provost |
| Urban population: 2,000 Rural population: 3,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff. • Bylaw Officer is involved in capturing cats. • M.D. has one trap; there is no trap rental program. • Number of cats captured per year: 10 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 2 • Maximum capacity of facility: 6 |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feral cats are released on local farms. • Tame cats are held for up to 3 days. • Contract facility has 6 enclosures. • Euthanasia cost is \$70. |
| Comments |
| Suggestions for change: Bylaw fine for cat running at large. |

| |
|--|
| Town of Cardston |
| Urban population: 3,900 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff. • Bylaw Officer is involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: "MANY" • Average number of days kept in shelter: 3 |
| Humane Trap Rental |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a trap rental program, with 5 traps available. Duration of rental is situational. • Trap must be checked daily. Cannot be used overnight. Cannot be used in temperatures below a certain degree centigrade. Cannot be used on public property. • Traps checked/inspected prior to rental. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat is held for 72 hrs. If not claimed, all efforts are made to locate a rescue. • Partners are Okotoks Pound Rescue and Last Chance Rescue, Pincher Creek |

| |
|---|
| Town of Valleyview |
| Urban population: 2,000 Rural population: 20,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff. • Bylaw Officer is not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 30 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 4 |
| Humane Trap Rental |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a trap rental program, with 5 traps available. Fee is \$50. Duration of rental is 7 days. • Trap must be checked daily. Cannot be used overnight. Cannot be used in temperatures below a certain degree centigrade. Cannot be used on public property. • Traps checked/inspected prior to rental. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person transports the cat to the local veterinarian. • If not picked up within 4 days, then adopted after being spayed/neutered. • If feral, cat is euthanized. • Boarding is \$21/day; euthanasia is \$25. • About 60% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 20% are adopted through available options. • About 20% are euthanized. |
| Comments |
| Does the cat licencing program work: No Suggestions for change: Limit the amount of cats per household. |

| |
|---|
| Town of Okotoks |
| Urban population: 28,000 Rural population: 800 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Bylaw Officers on staff, plus one part-time officer and 2 administrative staff. • Bylaw Officer is not involved in capturing cats. |
| Comments |
| Instead of trapping and obtaining cats-at-large we are looking at instituting a cat trespass bylaw to address nuisance cats where neighbors are aware of where they come from. |

| |
|--|
| Town of Vermilion |
| Urban population: 4,100 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff |

| |
|---|
| Town of Millet |
| Urban population: 1,900 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff. • Bylaw Officer is not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats turned in per year: 5 • Average number of days kept in shelter: 3 |
| Humane Trap Rental |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a trap rental program, with 5 traps available. Fee is \$5, with \$20 deposit. • Duration of rental is 7 days. • Trap must be checked daily. Cannot be used overnight. Cannot be used in temperatures below a certain degree centigrade. Cannot be used on public property. |
| Options for Return to Owner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat is taken to an animal shelter for health check; if adoptable, the shelter will provide an adoption. • Cat held for 3 days if not identifiable. • Held for 10 days with identification, or if the cat has already been spayed/neutered. • \$45 charge on release of cat to owner, plus \$40/day for each day in shelter. • \$50 for euthanasia. • About 1% of captured cats are successfully claimed back by the owner. • About 98% are adopted through available options. • About 1% are euthanized. |
| Comments |
| Suggestions for change: Need a round-up done once a year to get cats off the street. Unfortunately we do not have the staff to do that. Cats are captured on a call-out basis only, or when a trap has been rented. |

| |
|--|
| Town of Vulcan |
| Urban population: 2,000 |
| Enforcement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Bylaw Officer on staff. • Bylaw Officer is not involved in capturing cats. • Number of cats captured per year: 0 |
| Humane Trap Rental |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a trap rental program, with 2 traps available. Refundable deposit of \$25. • Duration of rental is 7 days. • Trap must be checked daily. Cannot be used overnight. Cannot be used in temperatures below a certain degree centigrade. Cannot be used on public property. • Person must sign letter stating animals will be dealt with in line with legislation/SPCA. • Traps must be returned undamaged and cleaned, in order to get refund. • Policy states those trapping cats must either release cat on site, deliver to owner or deliver to approved animal rescue. This is all on the cat trap renter's time and money. • One option used is to release the cat on site, hoping that being trapped will deter the ongoing presence of the cat. |
| Comments |
| <p>The Town of Vulcan didn't want to expend any costs for a problem that only effects less than 5% of our population. This is why the Town of Vulcan adopted a policy requiring people using traps to deal with the cats humanely and within legislation.</p> <p>Suggestions for change:</p> <p>I would definitely require cats to be licensed as otherwise there is no way to identify cats and prove ownership to charge owners violating town bylaws. The best change we did make was last year; we went from having the town responsible for taking care of trapped cats as we had a partnership with Heaven Can Wait out of High River, however, when their funding decreased, it made this partnership no longer feasible. This is when we put the responsibility of trapped cats back on to the people that rented the traps.</p> |

Requirements for a Successful Cat Bylaw

Implementation of a practical cat bylaw and related bylaw management processes must reflect a balanced approach.

This includes:

- clearly written bylaw, including licencing rules, owner duties, and penalties for violations
- effective bylaw management and administrative processes that support and facilitate humane treatment of cats
- provision of quality services to County residents, related to bylaw enforcement and management

Based on review and analysis of the environmental scan and numerous conversations with other jurisdictions, there is no “single” or perfect solution to the County’s cat question. There is a lot comparative information to process and many factors and program elements to consider before the County potentially implements a cat bylaw.

Based on the environmental scan, some municipalities are reasonably satisfied with their existing bylaws, programs and/or processes, and would recommend no major changes. Several larger programs appear to be functional and effective, e.g., Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer. In such cases, having a shelter/facility or a partnership(s) with a shelter/facility is a key factor in the success of the program.

Practical Features of a Cat Bylaw

Most importantly, the successful implementation of a cat bylaw and management program in Strathcona County must address domesticated *and* feral cats.

Among other elements, the program must address effective ways to humanely deal with recovered cats, whether stray, abandoned or feral.

Although the legal responsibilities of cat owners must be clear, there must also be some recognition that some cats will be lost or become stray, even if an owner is following applicable laws and bylaws.

Overall, the bylaw must be sensible, and realistically enforceable. It must include wording that allows for a “measure of forgiveness”, i.e., that provides CPOs with the ability to use their discretion when dealing with a case or circumstances.

Such wording and discretionary powers will allow CPOs to use communications skills and educational approaches to boost community/owner understanding, build trust, and help to assure ongoing compliance.

The duties of cat owners must be clearly phrased and generally reflective of community wishes. The owner-related clauses, as well as the entire bylaw, should be well-founded in law, and clearly enforceable.

In general, the bylaw must address the expressed concerns of County residents who are most clearly or sometimes affected by cats in the County. As noted earlier in *Discussion of General Cat-related Issues and Concerns*, there are some citizen concerns in relation to feral, abandoned, stray and off-leash cats.

Each of these issues can affect a good number of citizens, so the bylaw should establish relevant rules and processes that are realistic.

Importantly, a cat bylaw should reflect the County's established commitment to fair and humane treatment of animals, as demonstrated in our *Responsible Dog Owner Bylaw* and our *Animal Control Bylaw*.

About Registration/Licensing

Licensing of cats is the first step towards effective management of domestic cats in Strathcona County. The primary purpose of licensing is to encourage owners to take responsibility for identifying their cat(s) and following the cat bylaw. An effective licensing program requires rules and processes to be clearly set out in the bylaw.

The more cats that are licenced (and identifiable with tags/tattoos/microchips/licencing-owner information), the easier it is to return them to their owner. Increased licensing helps to reduce the number of cats given up for adoption or euthanized.

A licensing program is not a mandatory requirement of the management of a cat bylaw. However, based on the environmental scan, some municipalities without a licensing program reported a smaller percentage of cats returned to owners. Without a licensing program, these municipalities rely heavily on partnerships with adoption/fostering agencies, and they also report higher rates of euthanasia.

Benefits

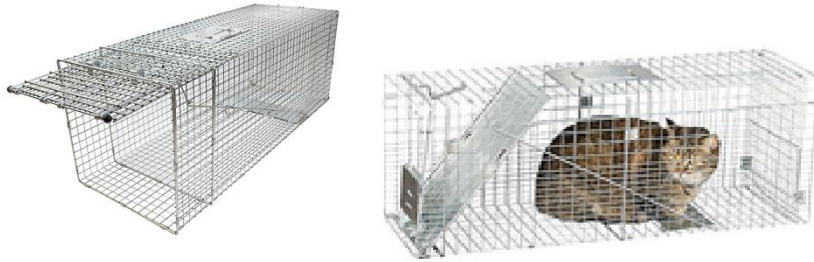
- A properly managed registration process would facilitate the effective return of recovered cats to owners.
- It would provide clear data to the County on the number of licenced (domestic) cats in urban and rural parts of the community.
- Licence revenue would help to off-set some of the program costs.

Challenges

- The program would require registration/licencing software. (Use and administration of such software for dogs has proven to be a challenge at times, over the past two years.)
- Licensing would be a new requirement for cat owners in the County. An initial communication and education campaign would be needed, with ongoing messaging over time. With licensing requirements included in a new cat bylaw, there will need to be set fines for violations. Similar to the *Responsible Dog Owner Bylaw*, the fine amount needs to be significant, as this helps to boost compliance.
- With the licensing requirements in place, there will be a need to address any violations. In general, we can anticipate at least a minor or moderate level of non-compliance. This would result in some necessary investigational work that would require additional time spent by CPOs, i.e., increased CPO workloads.
- Managing a licensing program requires additional support staff.

About Humane Trap Programs

As noted in the environmental scan results, many municipalities have a humane trap program. A cat's agility, speed and dislike of human contact make it notoriously difficult to capture, whether in the wild, or in rural or urban locations. As determined in the environmental scan, most municipalities have their Bylaw Officers use passive traps to capture roaming cats.



At a minimum, a humane trap program requires equipment (traps and more), administration (rental fees, etc.) and facilities (location for traps and for captured cats).

Benefits

- A humane trap program offers citizens adoption to take legal, independent action to deal with stray, abandoned or feral cats on their property.
- A humane trap is a simple way to capture a cat without causing injury.
- Once captured, the trap can be used to transport and safeguard the cat until it is taken or transferred to a cat kennel or a home.
- Although cat traps may be expensive to purchase initially (\$65.00 to \$120.00 each), they will likely last for many years, if properly maintained.
- The traps are easy to use and anyone can be trained in the operation and maintenance/cleaning of the traps.

Challenges

- Once trapped, a cat needs to be transferred to a proper kennel facility. The County does not currently have a facility that is properly designed or equipped to provide for the caring of cats or other animals, e.g., dogs. Building such a facility would have a significant financial impact (\$500,000 to \$1,000,000).
- A proper trap program would require between 15 and 20 traps. They would need to be maintained, cleaned and administered, e.g., available for rent or loan to County residents.
- In order to house, maintain and administer the traps, we would require a storage space, suitable for maintenance, cleaning, storage and administration. (This need for a holding/storage space would be true, even if a kennel facility was not built. If a kennel facility was built, the trap program could be included within that facility.)
- A trap program would require full time attendants to feed the cats and clean the kennels daily.
- A trap program would also require a suitable, properly equipped vehicle, including a cat management area, e.g., for traps, cargo, storage.

About Animal Seizure

As needed and where appropriate, CPOs could also potentially use humane traps to capture cats. This would need to be carried out within the parameters of a cat bylaw. Once seized and housed, a cat will need to be offered for adoption, or euthanized.

Some of the most successful municipal programs for long-term cat management have involved key partnerships with local shelters and/or humane societies, e.g., Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, and Parkland County.

In such cases, an important element has been the establishment of robust adoption programs. Strathcona County has recently been in discussions with the Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) about cat management. The EHS has *tentatively* agreed to accept cats from Strathcona County at a price of \$350.00 for female cats and \$300.00 for male cats. Such cost may prove to be somewhat prohibitive, but could potentially be one practical option for the County, in cases where all other prior options or alternatives have failed.

Historically, the practical ability of EHS to accept any cats from Strathcona County has been intermittent, based on space/capacity limitations at the EHS facility.

In the final analysis, the County needs to make a decision about the overall management of cats that are left in our care, including stray, abandoned and feral cats.

As determined through the environmental scan, almost every municipality uses an established protocol for euthanization. This is typically done as a last resort, and is carried out through in-house veterinarians or in partnership with a local veterinarian. In Strathcona County, the typical cost for feline euthanasia is approximately \$120.

Benefits

- A robust in-house adoption program would help to boost the number of cats that are adopted into a safe home with local families.
- A partnership with one or more local, not-for-profit organizations will help to reach a larger group of potential new owners or foster families, for cats seized by the County.
- A partnership with local veterinarians will contribute to effective population management of cats, through spaying and neutering, adoption efforts, and euthanization.
- As an additional cost cutting process, disposal of cat carcasses could be done through the present contract with the Ardrossan Landfill. Another option that could be used is the Riley Landfill, which is presently used for the disposal of animal carcasses.

Challenges

- Any adoption program would require County support services employees to screen applicants and ensure cats are ready for adoption. Such a program would require a minimum of two full time employees with very specialized training in cat handling.
- Any partnership with adoption agencies would require County staff to manage the program locally, as well as a means of delivery to take cats to fostering families or new owners.
- Partnering with local veterinarians for spaying/neutering, adoption and/or euthanasia would have a significant financial impact on Strathcona County.

- Moving cats to the Edmonton Humane Society facility could potentially result in significant costs to Strathcona County. Historically, the ability to use EHS has been uncertain due to space/capacity limitations.

About Disposal

Disposal of cat carcasses is a specific issue that needs to be considered as part of a cat bylaw management program.

At times, CPOs are called to attend locations where a dead cat has been found, e.g., on a roadway or on private property.

Disposal of cat carcasses will be done through the agreed process with Strathcona County Transportation and Agricultural Services. Presently, they use the Ardrossan Landfill as well as the Riley Landfill.

Additional Considerations

- Some cats (whether feral or domestic) cannot be caught by cat traps or other means and the problem reported by the resident cannot be resolved.
- Cat traps can only be used for part of the year, i.e., in warmer months when the weather is not below zero. In cold weather, a cat's paws (pads) can be injured/frozen by the cold, while held in the trap.
- Proper training and equipment is needed for CPOs to be able to safely handle cats, reduce risk of injury, and avoid disease transmission. Cats carry some diseases which can severely affect a human, i.e., if a CPO is bitten or scratched.
- Proving cat ownership can be very challenging. Compared to the dog population, fewer cats are microchipped. In addition, cat tattoos are sometimes impossible to read.
- Some owners or residents in the County have a large number of cats. Some of these locations are commonly referred to as "cat houses" where too many cats are present. In cases where there may be a cat house issue in the County, it will require extensive resources and equipment from multiple agencies to deal with situation. In such cases, the Edmonton Humane Society or other shelters would not likely be able to assist, given their own capacity issues and demands.
- Most veterinarians will not euthanize a healthy feral or domestic cat.

Options for a Cat Bylaw Management Program

Option 1

| Cat Bylaw Management Program (Estimating 300 Cats Seized Annually) Option 1: Full Scope Implementation | |
|---|--|
| HIGHLIGHTS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scope bylaw, addressing required licencing, fees, fines for violation, general rules and compliance, maximum holding period for captured cats, etc. • Full shelter facilities with veterinarian partnerships. • Full adoption program along with partnerships with third-party adoption and fostering agencies. • County responsible for all enforcement, administration and infrastructure • Construction of a new County facility (shelter-kennel), or repurpose an existing facility/building for the management of the program, as well as housing of the cats. • Facility and operations to meet provincial animal welfare standards with 2 full time labourers for cleaning, feeding and maintenance of traps. • Cat Registry Software (for licencing records) • CPOs involved in bylaw enforcement, plus active involvement in capturing of stray/abandoned cats • Administration/support staff to manage the licencing, case management, adoption and fiscal concerns. | |
| ESTIMATED COSTS | |
| Community Peace Officer(s) (CPO) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 CPO, salary and benefits • 1 CPO, onboarding (computers, desk, training) | |
| Vehicle Costs | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 CPO marked vehicle specially designed for cat transportation • maintenance and gas | |
| Administration/Support Staff (bylaw enforcement) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time administrative/support staff, salary and benefits • 2 full-time administrative/support staff, onboarding (computers, desk, training) | |
| Labourers (Maintenance, feeding, cleaning) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time labourers, salary and benefits | |
| Facility Staff and Operations | |
| Initial costs (land, utilities, etc.) and construction | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small, capacity for 20 to 40 cats: \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 | |
| Facility Operations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cat food • cat litter and cleaning supplies • trap storage and maintenance • other | |
| Trap Costs | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 traps at \$120/per (initially, with more purchased when needed) • Cleaning and maintenance, \$500/year (general maintenance by staff) | |

| |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement costs (\$500 year, e.g., 4 damaged traps per year) |
| Veterinary Services (Contract Service Provider) |
| <i>General Examination and Spay/Neuter Cats, prior to adoption</i> Estimated \$500 per cat, on arrival at facility, e.g., shots, examination by vet, spay/neuter, etc. |
| <i>Euthanasia</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated \$120 per cat, for euthanasia, through a veterinary service. Disposal of euthanized cats requires access to a cremation facility or use of a waste disposal site/landfill that accepts dead pets/animals. |
| Estimated Revenues (Cost Recovery) |
| Various fees and other revenue will offset a small portion of operating costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing fees Trap Rental Fees Impoundment Fees Fines |

Option 1, Cost Table

| Line Item | Start-Up (first year) | Annual |
|---|---|---|
| Administration, bylaw enactment and establish operational aspects | \$50,000 (cat tags, legal service assistance) | N/A |
| CPO Salary and benefits | \$242,000 | \$242,000 |
| Vehicle and equipment | \$110,000 | \$110,000 |
| Administrative/support staff and benefits | \$135,658 (2 FTE) | \$135,658 (2 FTE) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusive of licence administration (cat registry), trap rentals, other roles | \$250,000 software | |
| Building/infrastructure | \$500,000 – \$1,000,000 (small or medium/large), construction \$50,000 operating costs | \$50,000 (operating costs) (depending on maximum capacity, e.g., 20 to 40 cats) |
| Facility labourers | \$120,000 (2 FTE) | \$120,000 (2 FTE) |
| Facility Operations (food, litter, traps, etc.) | | |
| Cat Traps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> purchase, repair, replace | \$3,000 (initial purchase, 25 traps) | \$500 (regular cleaning, plus repair and/or replace 4 per year) |
| Veterinary Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shots/examinations/spay/neuter euthanasia | \$400 x 300 cats/annually = \$120,000 \$120 x 50 cats/annually = \$6,000 | \$400 x 300 cats/annually = \$120,000 \$120 x 50 cats/annually = \$6,000 |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Awareness Campaign | \$10,000 (communication materials, pamphlets, newspaper ads, electronic boards, etc.) | \$2,000 (ongoing awareness/services campaign) |
| Total Cost | \$1,596,658 to \$2,096,658 | \$786,158 |
| Cost Recovery | | |
| • trap rental fees | \$1,250 | \$1,250 |
| • impoundment fees | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| • fines | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| • licensing 500 cats | \$17,500 | \$17,500 |
| Total Recovery | \$29,750 | \$29,750 |
| Estimated Cost <i>(subject to correction and reassessment, these figures are broad estimates, with some line items based on current salary and labour costs)</i> | \$1,566,908 to \$2,066,908 | \$756,408 |

Option 2

| Cat Bylaw Management Program (Estimating 300 Cats Seized Annually) Option 2: Partial Scope Implementation | |
|---|--|
| HIGHLIGHTS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial scope bylaw would not have a licensing component or fines for violation. It would not have any rules pertaining to the maximum number of cats. The Bylaw would have rules pertaining to stray, off-leash, abandoned and feral cats, granting authority to CPOs to capture and hold cats. Construction of a new County facility to hold and maintain humane traps as well as cats pending transfer, to a local partner/adoption agency, or to a veterinarian for treatment/adoption or euthanasia. Cats would be kept for a period of less than three days. Facility and operations to meet provincial animal welfare standards with 1 full-time labourer for cleaning, feeding and maintenance of traps. 1 CPO involved in bylaw enforcement, plus active involvement in capturing of stray/abandoned cats, return of claimed cats to owners, along with some minor maintenance of the facility. 1 full-time Administration/Support staff to manage the seized cats, return of claimed cats to owners, case management, transfers, partnerships and fiscal concerns. | |
| ESTIMATED COSTS | |
| Community Peace Officer(s) (CPO) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 CPO, salary and benefits 1 CPO, onboarding (computers, desk, training) | |
| Vehicle Costs | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 CPO marked vehicle specially designed for cat transportation maintenance and gas | |
| Administration and Support Staff (bylaw enforcement) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 administrative/support staff, salary and benefits 1 administrative/support staff, onboarding (computers, desk, training) | |
| Labourers (Maintenance, feeding, cleaning) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 full-time labourer, salary and benefits | |
| Facility Staff and Operations | |
| Initial costs (land, utilities, etc.) and construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small facility with limited capacity of 5 to 10 cats – \$250,000 - \$500,000 | |
| Facility Operations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cat food cat litter and cleaning supplies trap storage and maintenance other | |
| Trap Costs | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 traps at \$120/per (initially, with more purchased when needed) Cleaning and maintenance, \$500/year (general maintenance by staff) Replacement costs (\$500 year, e.g., 4 damaged traps per year) | |
| Veterinary Services (Contract Service Provider) | |

General Examination and Spay/Neuter Cats for adoption

None

Euthanasia

- Estimated \$120 per cat, for euthanasia, through a veterinary service.
- Disposal of euthanized cats requires access to a cremation facility or use of a waste disposal site/landfill that accepts dead pets/animals.

Estimated Revenues (Cost Recovery)

Various fees and other revenue will offset a small portion of operating costs

- Trap Rental Fees
- Impoundment Fees

Option 2, Cost Table

| Line Item | Start-Up (first year) | Annual |
|--|--|---|
| Administration, bylaw enactment and establish operational aspects | \$50,000 (cat tags, legal service assistance) | N/A |
| CPO Salary and benefits | \$121,000 | \$121,000 |
| Vehicle and equipment | \$110,000 | \$110,000 |
| Administrative/support staff and benefit | \$64,000 (1 FTE) | \$64,000 (1 FTE) |
| Building/infrastructure | \$250,000 – \$500,000 (small facility), construction | \$10,000 (operating costs) capacity, e.g., 5 to 10 cats) |
| Facility labourer | \$60,000 (1 FTE) | \$60,000 (1 FTE) |
| Facility Operations (food, litter, traps, etc.) | | |
| Cat Traps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> purchase, repair, replace | \$3,000 (initial purchase, 25 traps) | \$500 (regular cleaning, plus repair and/or replace 4 per year) |
| Veterinary Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> euthanasia | \$120 x 100 cats/annually = \$12,000 | \$120 x 100 cats/annually = \$12,000 |
| Awareness Campaign | \$10,000 (communication material, pamphlets, newspaper ads, electronic boards, etc.) | \$2,000 (ongoing awareness/services campaign) |
| Total Cost | \$680,000 to \$930,000 | \$379,500 |
| Cost Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trap rental fees impoundment fees | \$1,250 \$1,000 | \$1,250 \$1,000 |
| Total Recovery | \$2,250 | \$2,250 |
| Estimated Cost <i>(subject to correction and reassessment, these figures are broad estimates, with some line items based on current salary and labour costs)</i> | \$677,750 to \$927,750 | \$377,250 |

Option 3

| Cat Bylaw Management Program (Estimating 300 Cats Seized Annually) Option 3: Bylaw Enactment and Enforcement, with Use of Contracted Service Provider (CSP) | |
|---|--|
| HIGHLIGHTS | |
| <p><i>County role</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scope bylaw, addressing required licencing, fees, fines for violation, general rules and compliance, off-leash rules, traps, limit on number of cats per owner, etc. • County responsible for all enforcement and administration (including licencing), but <u>not</u> infrastructure • Cat Registry (for licencing records) • Contracted CPOs involved in bylaw enforcement <p><i>Contract Service Provider role:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will operate its own shelter/facility, with identified contract services provided to the County • Will be responsible for its own costs, e.g., facility staff and operations • Will administer the return of cats to their owner, adoption options, or euthanasia. • Contractor staff on request will capture and deliver stray/abandoned cats to a shelter facility • Contractor staff facility will receive delivered cats from residents directly | |
| ESTIMATED COSTS | |

| Line Item | Start-Up (first year) | Annual |
|---|---|--------|
| Estimated total <i>(subject to correction and reassessment, these figures are only general estimates, with some line items based on current salary and labour costs)</i> | | |
| COST OF CONTRACT with CONTRACT SERVICE PROVIDER (CSP) | <p>Annual value of contracted services to the CSP is indeterminate, but might/could be based on a handling/drop-off charge, per cat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 cats/year at \$400/cat = \$120,000 • 500 cats/year at \$400/cat = \$200,000 • 700 cats/year at \$400/cat = \$280,000 <p>The \$400 fee could be inclusive of assistance with capture, plus delivery to the facility and subsequent handling and care of the cat, including adoption options and euthanasia.</p> | |

Discussion of Outcomes/Risks with each Option

| Anticipated Outcomes vs. Potential Risks | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>ALL OPTIONS</p> <p>In general, there is a risk of some citizen backlash if the County does not establish a cat bylaw.</p> <p>Based partly on e-mail history, citizen interactions with Councillors, and other anecdotal information, it is fair to say that a good number of residents would like to see a cat bylaw brought into force. For some, the status quo is not acceptable.</p> <p>It's possible that the financial costs of any cat bylaw management program may be prohibitive, or may be more costly or problematic than the status quo.</p> | | |
| OPTION | Anticipated Outcomes | Potential Risks |
| <p>Option 1 – Full Scope Implementation, including licencing, administration, enforcement and infrastructure/facility.</p> | <p>County responsible for all enforcement, administration and infrastructure.</p> <p>This Bylaw creates a full program management with licensing as well as fines for violations</p> <p>This option would generally be responsive to citizen concerns about having a bylaw and a <i>County-operated</i> cat shelter/facility.</p> | <p>Initial start-up and construction costs are high.</p> <p>Ongoing annual operating costs may be significant, with some risk of annual increases.</p> <p>New types of violations/fines will be created, e.g., not having a cat licence. Achieving full compliance could be problematic, depending on citizen acceptance and understanding.</p> |
| <p>Option 2 – Partial Scope Bylaw – Partial management</p> | <p>A Bylaw to give CPOs the required authority for seizure and management of stray cats.</p> <p>This option would address the majority of the concerns raised pertaining to stray cats, without a complex administrative process or citizen involvement.</p> | <p>Without a robust registration/licencing program, fewer cats will be returned to owners.</p> <p>There will need to be increased reliance on partnerships with local adoption/fostering agencies.</p> <p>There will be a higher rate of euthanization.</p> |
| <p>Option 3– Bylaw Enactment and Use of Contract Service Provider.</p> | <p>This option would generally be responsive to citizen concerns about having a bylaw and a <i>County-based</i> cat shelter/facility</p> | <p>Finding a qualified contract service provider that meets all requirements may be a challenge. At the time of the report, there was no contractor</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>(privately-run, under contract to the County).</p> | <p>available within the Capital Region able to provide a quote. As a result, the quoted prices originated from a contractor in Central Alberta.</p> <p>Ongoing annual costs for the Service Contract(s) may be subject to increases, in line with any negotiated or set contract terms.</p> <p>Citizen and County satisfaction levels with the Contractor need to be tracked, over time.</p> <p>Contract terms must allow for measures to ensure all services meet requirements, with an option to terminate the contract with notice.</p> |
|--|---|--|

Appendices

Appendix A: Alberta Animal Protection Act

The complete text of the Alberta Animal Protection Act and the Alberta Animal Protection Regulation are available from the Alberta Queen's Printer.

- Act: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/A41.pdf>
- Regulation: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/A41.pdf>

The penalties for non-compliance with the *Alberta Animal Protection Act* may include monetary penalties up to a maximum of \$20,000, prohibition of animal ownership for a period determined by the courts and any other terms and conditions a court deems appropriate.

The Act includes:

- a definition of distress
- detailed list of duties that must be performed by animal care providers
- powers of Peace Officers
- prohibition against abandoning animals

Under the Act, no person shall cause an animal to be in distress. An animal is in distress if it is:

- (a) deprived of adequate shelter, ventilation, space, food, water or veterinary care or reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold,*
- (b) injured, sick, in pain or suffering, or*
- (c) abused and subjected to undue hardship, privation or neglect.*

Under the Act, a person who owns or is in charge of an animal must:

- (a) ensure that the animal has adequate food and water,*
- (b) provide the animal with adequate care when the animal is wounded or ill,*
- (c) provide the animal with reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold, and*
- (d) provide the animal with adequate shelter, ventilation and space.*

Based on the Act's provisions for ventilation and space, animals kept in holding facilities are entitled to fresh air and sufficient room to carry out normal activities.

The Act requires that animals receive proper medical attention (veterinary care) when needed.

Based on the requirement for reasonable protection from injurious heat or cold, it is an offense to fail to protect animals from extreme temperatures.

The Act allows Peace Officers to take various enforcement actions. Here are some examples:

- can take an animal into custody or otherwise relieved of distress if the Officer is of the opinion – on reasonable and probable grounds – that the owner or caretaker is not likely to provide for the animal
- can take an abandoned animal into custody – whether or not it is in distress; abandonment includes being left more than 24 hours without adequate food, water or shelter, or being left behind by former tenants of a rental property

Under the Act, an “abandoned animal” includes an animal that:

- (a) is left for more than 24 hours without adequate food or water or shelter*
- (b) is left for 5 days or more after the expected retrieval time from a registered veterinarian or from a person who for money consideration or its equivalent stables, boards or cares for the animal, or*
- (c) is found on premises with respect to which the tenancy agreement has been terminated*

Under the Act, a person who honestly reports suspected animal distress cannot be prosecuted. The Act forbids malicious reports or reports without probable grounds for the belief.

Note that various sections of the *Criminal Code of Canada* deal with cruelty to animals.

Appendix B: Cat Bylaw, additional historical documentation

The seven documents (attached .PDFs) in this Appendix B supplement the Cat Bylaw Chronology presented near the beginning of this Report.

- 2019, August Briefing, cat bylaw
- 2016, Council Key Messages, cat bylaw
- 2011, Cat Licence Review Doc, info to Council
- 2010, Estimated Costs, cat bylaw
- 2009, Legal Services document, Regulation of Cats
- 2008, Legal Services memo, re Councillor Inquiry, regulation of cats
- 2008, Enforcement Services cat bylaw memo

Appendix C: Questions included on Detailed Survey

The complete results of the survey are available in Excel (.xlsx) format on request.

In summary, 18 Alberta municipalities responded (in whole or in part) to the survey.

| Tombstone Information | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency name (per municipality) • Contact name and information • Urban population • Rural population • Number of Bylaw Officers in agency | |
| Cat Bylaw Management Program | |
| Are your Bylaw Officers actively involved in the capturing of loose cats? | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| Do you have a humane trap rental program? | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| If yes, is there a cost to the rental? | <input type="radio"/> Yes \$ _____ <input type="radio"/> No |
| If yes, is there a deposit required? | <input type="radio"/> Yes \$ _____ <input type="radio"/> No |
| If yes, how long are the traps loaned for? | |
| If yes, what are the restrictions on the use of the traps? | |
| How many traps are you currently using? | |
| What maintenance is required on the traps? | |
| How many cats do you seize per year? | |
| Once captured, what is your process with the cat? | |
| How long do you keep the cats, on average? | |
| What are the options to dispose of cats? <input type="radio"/> Returned to the owner through the licensing information <input type="radio"/> Returned to the owner through a social media campaign <input type="radio"/> Adoption by citizen through our own in-house program <input type="radio"/> Adoption through an external agency partner <input type="radio"/> Taken to the local humane society or local vet for adoption <input type="radio"/> Euthanasia <input type="radio"/> Other - Explain: | |
| Who are you partnered with to dispose of cats? | |
| What are the costs associated with the seizure of cats? | |
| What are the costs associated with the euthanasia of cats? | |
| What percentages of cats are claimed back by owner? | |
| What percentages of cats are adopted through your programs? | |
| What percentages of cats are euthanized? | |
| The next questions are related to cat housing facilities: | |
| How long do you keep the cats in your facility? | |
| How many cats can you house at one time? | |
| Who is responsible for the feeding? | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Who is responsible for the cleaning? | |
| Who is responsible for the maintenance of the facility? | |
| What process do you have in place for waste management involving litter? | |
| What size is your housing facility? | |
| What was the initial cost of your housing facility? | |
| What is the monthly cost of your housing facility? | |
| General Questions | |
| Do you feel your cat licensing program works? | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| What, if anything, would you change? | |

Appendix D: Cat Control, Website Text

As of March 2020, the County website states:

Cat control

Strathcona County does not have a Cat Bylaw, however property owners can take steps to humanely deter unwanted cats from their yards and flower beds.

- Some plants and herbs naturally deter cats by giving off smells that cats dislike, including Rue, Lavender, Pennyroyal, Lemongrass, Coleus and Citronella.
- There are numerous types of cat repellent sprays and granules, which can be purchased at many hardware stores.
- Water is an effective repellent. Gently spraying or splashing water on a cat is a useful method for keeping them away.
- Remove any food sources that may be attracting cats into your yard. Ensure garbage / compost bins are securely shut.
- Bury chicken wire in the soil in the flower beds that you especially don't want cats to enter.
- While property owners can take steps to deter cats from their yards, bear in mind **you cannot, under law, do anything to harm the animal.**

Cats in distress or abused

If you suspect a stray or abandoned cat is in distress or has been abused, make a complaint to:

- **Alberta SPCA**
Phone: 1-800-455-9003

Appendix E: Organizations

Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)

- <https://www.albertaspca.org>

As stated on the SPCA website:

- The vision of the Alberta SPCA is that every animal in Alberta be treated humanely.
- Our mission is to protect, promote and enhance the well-being of animals in Alberta. To accomplish this, there must be acceptance that humans are responsible for the welfare of animals, and there must be an understanding of the physical and behavioural needs of animals.

Edmonton Humane Society

- <https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com>

Offers a full range of services, including adoption:

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/what-we-do/services>

Zoe's Animal Rescue Society

- <http://www.zoesanimalrescue.org>

This volunteer-run organization operates in Edmonton and is open/available to Strathcona County residents.

Programs/services include:

- Spay Neuter Return (SaNeR) Program
- Support People and Animals in Marginalized Communities
- Education for Children and Communities
- Adoption Program
- Commitment to Force Free Handling

Little Cats Lost (Edmonton)

- <https://www.littlecatslosttnr.org/about>

Website excerpt:

- Operating in Edmonton, Alberta, Little Cats Lost (Trap-Neuter-Return) Society is made up of a small group of compassionate, intelligent, volunteers that believe in the humane treatment of cats, owned or un-owned.
- Our mission is to humanely reduce euthanasia and the growth rates of feral cat colonies by preventing their breeding cycles through spay/neuter practices, while educating the public on the merits of a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program in our community.

Appendix F: Informational Links

For general background information, links to a number of sample, topical articles are presented below.

- Inclusion in this listing does **not** indicate support or approval for the author or any opinions expressed.
- Readers may wish to do their own searches, on relevant or related topics.

The Moral Cost of Cats

A bird-loving scientist calls for an end to outdoor cats “once and for all”

- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/moral-cost-of-cats-180960505/>

Abandoned cats impact on songbirds (link to results from this Google search phrase)

- https://scholar.google.ca/scholar?q=abandoned+cats+impact+on+songbirds&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar
(multiple scholarly articles are found at this link)

To save birds, should we kill off cats?

Our feline friends are killing billions of birds every year. A fan of both animals believes there are humane solutions.

- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/09/essay-to-save-birds-should-we-kill-off-cats/>

The Deadly Consequences of ‘No-Kill’ Policies

- https://www.peta.org/features/deadly-consequences-no-kill-policies/?utm_source=PETA::Google&utm_medium=Ad&utm_campaign=0518::acom::PETA::Google::PETA%20Saves::searchad&gclid=Cj0KCQiAqY3zBRDQARIsAJeCVxMiyxPrYr-D5mpSzWO3dcHgwpcchaxABIKQkv9VTw8Qftn-Ev4Ph5YwaAp7EEALw_wcB

Estimated Number of Birds Killed by House Cats in Canada; published in Avian Conservation and Ecology, 2013

- This research article is summarized on the *Keep Cats Safe and Save Bird Lives* website: <https://catsandbirds.ca>. This organization is led by Nature Canada, the oldest national nature conservation charity in the country.

Summary (with emphasis added in *italics*, for some key points in the last paragraph):

This study by Environment Canada scientist Peter Blancher was designed to create a credible estimate of the rates of bird predation by cats, identify information that would help improve those estimates, and identify species potentially vulnerable to population impacts.

Blancher estimates that cats kill between 100 million and 350 million birds per year in Canada, 38% of those by pet cats, and the rest by feral cats. It is important to note that Blancher arrived at these figures by studying data from other countries, and that the number of feral cats is, in Blancher’s words, “very crudely estimated.” As he goes on to note, “Until data are available from well-designed studies representing various regions and rural/urban situations in Canada, it will be difficult to be much more definitive. Current estimates would be most improved with better knowledge of feral cat numbers and the prey they take. Data on predation rates by pet cats in Canada would also be very helpful.”

Regardless of the actual figures, there is no doubt that some outdoor cats, and especially feral cats, do kill birds. And there is also no doubt that we need to act now to help birds, who play vital roles in our ecosystems.

The article identifies 115/468 species that regularly occur in Canada that are vulnerable to cats because of their nesting or feeding behaviour (birds that rarely go to the ground – i.e. forage in trees – were not considered vulnerable). *Forty of these species are often present in urban or suburban landscapes, where impacts of high cat densities on bird populations have been demonstrated elsewhere.* Twenty-three species at risk in Canada (COSEWIC 2012) are among the potentially vulnerable species identified; *all of these birds nest on or close to the ground in open landscapes in southern Canada, two on islands. Predation by cats is mentioned as a concern in status reports or recovery plans for at least 10 of these species.*

Nothing to Sneeze At: Cats Worse Than Dogs for Allergies

- <https://www.livescience.com/36578-cat-worse-dogs-allergies-pets.html>

How Cat Poop Can Affect Your Health

- <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-cat-poop-can-affect-your-health>