

Item	11
Manager's Report No.	14
Council Meeting	99/05/17

TO: CITY MANAGER

DATE: 1999 MAY 12

FROM: DIRECTOR FINANCE

File: A53

SUBJECT: KING COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL

PURPOSE: To provide information requested by Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

Council, at its meeting of 1999 May 03, requested clarification with respect to animal control operations in King County, Washington. This report responds to questions raised by members of Council.

King County provides Animal Control Services for a metropolitan area that includes many Seattle area municipalities with a population estimated at 1,033,815. The communities of Des Moines, Medina, Newcastle, Normandy Park, Renton and Seattle provide their own Animal Control Services either through a City-operated pound or through their local police department.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY COUNCIL

1. **What is included in King County's classification of "unadoptable" for cat euthanization?**

King County divides its cat euthanization statistics into two categories: "healthy and adoptable" and "unadoptable". Both categories include cats entering Animal Shelters as strays and cats that have been turned over to Animal Shelters by their owners. While a number of cats are turned over to Animal Control Services for humane destruction, others are turned in when their owners can no longer provide a home for their pets. King County does not tally the number of cats euthanized at owners request but estimates that between 300 to 500 cats are turned over by their owners in any given year.

The Burnaby S.P.C.A. does not keep cat euthanization statistics by classifications that relate to the adoptability of the animal. Burnaby's statistics are classified into two categories: "cats euthanized" and "cats euthanized at owners' request".

Attachment 1 provides a per capita comparison of total cats euthanized for Burnaby and King County.

2. Does King County have an educational program that has lead to the decline in cat kills?

King County operates no formal or informal education program to promote responsible pet ownership. The Humane Society for Seattle/King County, a not-for-profit organization, promotes responsible pet ownership through classroom presentations. As well, this organization operates a low cost spay and neuter clinic for King County residents.

3. How effective do King County staff think the spay/neuter bylaw has been in reducing cat euthanasia?

King County's Animal Control Ordinance (Bylaw) requires that all cats and dogs over the age of six months be altered unless the pet owner has purchased an unaltered pet licence. An unaltered pet licence is \$55 per year, compared with a cost of \$15 per year for an altered pet licence. Pet owners who purchase an unaltered pet licence also receive a voucher for \$25 toward the spay or neutering of their pet.

King County staff feel that this pet licencing requirement, in concert with the spay and neuter voucher, has helped to reduce the number of cats euthanized.

4. Does King County have a pet information line or local television coverage to promote responsible pet ownership?

King County Animal Control Services has an automated telephone line known as 296-PETS. The line provides recorded information about pet licencing requirements and this includes information about the differentiated licencing scheme that promotes the spaying and neutering of cats and dogs.

King County staff feel while the pet information line may have some role to play in the promotion of the pet licencing program, it was developed in response to budget cuts and the resulting reduction in staff at King County Animal Shelters. Some citizens complain about the difficulty in reaching staff through the automated system.

King County uses local government access television to advertise dogs and cats available for adoption. Voice overs that accompany these advertisements remind viewers that pets in King County must be spayed or neutered in order to qualify for a low-cost altered pet licence.

This report is for the information of Council.



Rick Earle
DIRECTOR FINANCE

BP:dh
Attachment

cc: Animal Shelter Superintendent

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ATTACHMENT 1

CAT EUTHANIZATION ON A PER CAPITA BASIS - 1998

	TOTAL CATS EUTHANIZED	HUMAN POPULATION	CATS EUTHANIZED PER 1000 POPULATION
BURNABY	424	189,722	2.235
KING COUNTY	4,392	1,033,815	4.248

- ▶ Human population figures are 1998 estimates.
- ▶ King County population only includes the area served by King County Animal Control Services.