

26 May 2016

Barbara A. McEwan
Deputy City Clerk
City of Vaughan | Office of the City Clerk
2141 Major Mackenzie Dr
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

C 1
COMMUNICATION
CW (WORKING SESSION)
JUNE 1 / 16
ITEM - 2

VIA EMAIL clerks@vaughan.ca

Re: To be added to the agenda of The Committee of the Whole on June 1/16

Hon. Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and Members of Council

We would like to provide our support for a Trap Neuter Return program in Vaughan.

Toronto Street Cats is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization that is a member of the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition. Since our inception in 2010, we have spay/neutered over 4,000 feral cats for free, and built over 4,000 shelters to keep feral cats warm.

We are able to provide our services as a result of our partnership with the Toronto Humane Society – they provide us use of their public spay/neuter clinic once or twice a month, as well as space in their garage where we store our tools and materials and hold workshops twice monthly to build feral cat shelters.

Our group supports hundreds of volunteer colony caretakers who have invested countless hours humanely trapping unsterilized feral cats. They bring these cats to our clinics where the cats are spay/neutered, vaccinated, examined while under sedation, given a de-fleaing agent, and microchipped. We also remove the tip of the left ear of each cat – this is the international sign identifying that the cat has been sterilized.

The microchip numbers are recorded in the Toronto Humane Society's database. Should the cat at any time be brought in as a stray to the Toronto Humane Society, Toronto Animal Services, or any local agency with the ability to scan for a microchip, the microchip number will enable the receiving agency to trace the cat back to the Toronto Humane Society where its records will identify the colony caretaker who originally trapped the cat. The colony caretaker will then be contacted such that the cat can be returned to its colony, thereby also preventing unnecessary euthanasia (in the past feral cats brought to the city-run shelter would have been euthanized because they were not adoptable). This process was established by Toronto Animal Services in conjunction with Toronto Humane Society.

Our free spay/neuter services have been used repeatedly by colony caretakers from the towns of Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, and Woodbridge. After reviewing our records (those maintained since we started capturing the data electronically in a database) we computed that our group has spay/neutered close to 100 street cats from Vaughan.

How do we measure the impact that our work in Trap-Neuter-Return is having? A number of years ago, Dr Christine Wilford DVM, co-founder of the free feline spay/neuter clinic "The Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Project", in the Seattle area, sought assistance from the University of Washington's Math Department to calculate the reproductive potential of one female cat.

Armed with the scientifically collected data from wildlife biologist Dr Michael Stoskopf's population studies of feral cat colonies in North Carolina, the consensus of the U of W's Math Department professors demonstrated that one female cat, and her offspring, can produce between 100 and 400 cats by the end of seven years. Using the conservative end of these results, 100 cats, Toronto Street Cats has been able to prevent the unwanted births of over 380,000 cats over the next 7 years. The prevented impact on city resources and taxpayer dollars is incalculable.

Time and again research¹ has proven that Trap-Neuter-Return works; makes feral cats healthier and ends the breeding cycle. It also ends the myriad common behaviors associated with outdoor cats. Yowling, fighting, spraying and roaming—all of these are mating behaviors that stop once a cat is neutered. Part of an effective, well managed Trap-Neuter-Return program also involves the providing of a set feeding area and schedule, both of which further discourages the roaming of feral cats.

Outdoor cats have been part of our landscape for thousands of years, and always will be. Compassionate and effective solutions to help cats and communities coexist peacefully are readily available and have been in practice with great success all over North America. We have been proud of the incredible progress we've seen in Toronto, working closely with Toronto Humane Society, Toronto Animal Services, and many local cat rescue groups. We fully support all efforts to implement a robust and effective Trap-Neuter-Return program in Vaughan; working closely with volunteers and local rescue groups who have already been, for years, working hard, advocating for Trap-Neuter-Return and for a more fulsome solution to deal with the feral cat issue.

"Traditional" methods of animal control involving "catch and kill" have proven endless, and costly. Pursuing the path of Trap-Neuter-Return will reduce euthanasia of cats, will provide support to volunteer colony caretakers/trappers and other rescue groups, all while addressing community concerns – a truly win-win situation. Toronto's efforts have proven that investment in this approach is a worthy endeavor that has led to success.

We encourage you to review the benefits of a Trap Neuter Return program as a method of reducing the number of feral and stray cats in your community.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Dr Hanna Booth DVM, lead vet and co-founder at 416-678-1786.

Regards
Toronto Street Cats

¹Finkler, Hilit, Idit Gunther, and Joseph Terkel. "Behavioral differences between urban feeding groups of neutered and sexually intact free-roaming cats following a trap-neuter-return procedure." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 238, no. 9 (2011):1141-1149.

Finkler, Hilit, Erez Hatna, and Joseph Terkel. "The impact of anthropogenic factors on the behavior, reproduction, management and welfare of urban, free-roaming cat populations." *Anthrozoös* 24, no. 1(2011):31-49.

Hughes, Kathy L. and Margaret R. Slater. "Implementation of a Feral Cat Management Program on a University Campus." *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 5, no. 1 (2002): 15-28.

Hughes, Kathy L., Margaret R. Slater, and Linda Haller. "The Effects of Implementing a Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Program in a Florida County Animal Control Service." *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 5 (2002): 285-289.

Levy, Julie K., David W. Gale, and Leslie A. Gale. "Evaluation of the Effect of a Long-Term Trap-Neuter-Return and Adoption Program on a Free-Roaming Cat Population." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 222, no. 1 (2003): 42-46.

Natoli, Eugenia, et. al. "Management of Feral Domestic Cats in the Urban Environment of Rome (Italy)." *Preventative Veterinary Medicine* 77 (2006): 180-185.

Neville, P.F. and J. Remfry. "Effect of Neutering on Two Groups of Feral Cats." *The Veterinary Record* 114 (1984): 447-450.

Scott, Karen C., Julie K. Levy, and Shawn P. Gorman. "Body Condition of Feral Cats and the Effect of Neutering." *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* 5, no. 3 (2002): 203-213.