

# HALIFAX

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**Item No. 14.1.5**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**January 24, 2017**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by   
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by   
Jane Fraser, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** October 7, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Funding Program for Spaying and Neutering of Cats

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## **ORIGIN**

April 26, 2016 motion of Regional Council:

Moved by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Nicoll,

Request a staff report on the feasibility of establishing a permanent grant program for spaying and neutering cats. Furthermore, this report is to return to Regional Council in October, 2016.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, section 79*

- (1) Council may expend money required by the Municipality for
- (av) a grant or contribution to
  - (vii) a registered Canadian charitable organization

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve the creation an Administrative Order to establish a 5-year pilot grant program to assist with the spay and neutering of cats. The program would commence in 2017-18 and provide funding of up to \$50,000 annually to charitable organizations pending operating budget capacity, as described in the Financial Implications section of this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

Spay/neutering (SN) cats can help reduce pet overpopulation and improve the quality of animal health. Currently in HRM, there are numerous agencies that offer low-cost spay and neutering services to low income families and/or students. These agencies include the Metro SPCA, Bide Awhile, Spay Day HRM Society and various Veterinary Clinics. SN programs are designed to be offered to people who own their animals as opposed to being used for the spaying and neutering of unowned or feral animals.

Trap/Neuter and Return (TNR) programs are defined as a program through which free-roaming, unowned cats are humanely trapped, spayed or neutered, medically treated and subsequently returned to the locations where they were found. These cats are unadoptable and referred to as “feral”.

In May 2013, Council provided a one-time grant of \$40,000 to the NS Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSSPCA) for infrastructure improvements to its shelter to facilitate a spay/neuter clinic. NSSPCA and Spay Day submitted a letter dated July 29, 2015 proposing to Regional Council a joint venture requesting \$50,000 to extend their TNR programs. They estimated with this new funding source 1000 cats could be SN with these funds. Regional Council approved the funding on April 26, 2016.

At the August 4, 2015 meeting of Regional Council, a motion was passed for staff to assist in the formation of a Domestic and Feral Cat Committee (DFCC) with members from, but not limited to, local veterinarians, the SPCA, Cat Rescue groups, Provincial representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. This Committee having been formed is to be an advisory body to staff assisting in issues of domestic and feral cats. The first meeting of this committee took place February 17, 2016 and six subsequent meetings have been held.

## **DISCUSSION**

It is staff's understanding that Council's motion stems from concerns expressed regarding a cat overpopulation issue in HRM.

Consultation with the Domestic and Feral Cat Committee confirmed there is a cat overpopulation problem, primarily with free roaming cats in urban and suburban Halifax/Dartmouth. Consensus of the DFCC concluded a TNR Program is where funding is needed to achieve the greatest current benefit. A second funded program of educational resources for the community and cat owners is seen to be the next most beneficial support to the cat over population issue.

Staff has completed a review of 28 Canadian municipalities relative to SN and TNR Programs. Twenty of the municipalities support SN and/or TNR Programs. Seventeen municipalities offer programs that are substantially supported by organizations such as humane societies, veterinary hospitals and rescue groups. This funding is provided in diverse forms including grants, vouchers, rebates and subsidies. The remaining three municipalities offer in-house SN and/or TNR Programs. Eight municipalities do not fund SN or TNR Programs. Staff research and a jurisdictional scan are attached as Appendix A.

Benchmark research from other Municipalities suggests there are essentially two main program approaches:

- Municipal owned and operated programs
- Humane Organization(s)-run programs.

HRM Legal Services staff advised the HRM Charter requires an amendment to allow the municipality to directly provide either a SN or TNR program. Alternately, a program operated by an external, charitable organization can be funded through a grant or contribution under Section 79(1)(av)(vii) of the Charter.

HRM does not have a Grant funding program that could accommodate the level and type of funding anticipated by Council's motion. HRM's current Community Grants program provides for project-specific grants in the amount of up to \$5,000 and capital grants in the amount of up to \$25,000. Also, under HRM's Community Grants program operating costs are not eligible for funding and therefore costs associated with utilities, wages, etc., are deemed ineligible; HRM Grants are also non-recurring.

Recently, Regional Council has received multiple requests for funding support in amounts that exceed the Community Grants program guidelines. As part of the work on the Auditor General's report on Grants and Donations, staff is reviewing the overall granting policy. In the interim, the *HRM Charter* does permit Regional Council to provide a grant or contribution to a registered Canadian charitable organization.

### HRM Program Options

In consideration of the foregoing discussion and the motion of Council, staff has identified the following options:

1. Request that the Province amend the *HRM Charter*

Considering the length of time it takes to amend the *HRM Charter* and considering Council's current slate of priority Charter amendments, this option is not recommended.

2. Amend the Grant Funding Program

The scope of HRM's grant funding program is currently under review. While consideration of this issue may come in scope a full analysis is not concluded to date.

3. Create an Administrative Order

Sourcing grant funding from an AO to charitable organizations for the purpose of spay and neutering cats permits an open application process with merit based evaluation awards with known criteria and outcomes. The effectiveness of work done through the program will be evaluated on an annual basis.

If Council wishes to support the issues of SN and TNR on a regular basis, staff recommends that a grant program be established by AO. The program could be set up on a recurring basis and for a five year period, with evaluation of benefit and ongoing need prior to the end of the 5-years. An annual program budget allocation of \$50,000 is recommended with awards of differing amounts based on the type and scale of service.

Such a program would provide an open and accountable process to any registered Canadian charity engaged in this work, allowing an equal opportunity to access funding. Any new program would be coordinated with the existing Community Grants Program to prevent duplication or overlap.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed grants program currently has no funding and cannot be accommodated within existing Planning & Development resources. Should Regional Council approve the new grants program for the spaying and neutering of cats, this will be a direct pressure on the 2017-18 budget. The \$50,000 annual grants program will be dependent on Regional Council's inclusion of it in the 2017-18 operating budget, now in development. The proposed cost centre is S320 (Animal Control).

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with this report.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Staff has consulted with the Domestic and Feral Cat Committee which is made up of local veterinarians, the NSSPCA, the NSMVA, the Shelter Keeper, Conservation group, Cat Rescue groups, and Provincial representatives from the Department of Natural Resources.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are environmental implications with this report. The spaying and neutering of cats may reduce the cat population therefore having a positive impact on the birds and other wildlife that are vulnerable to injury and death by cats.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Regional Council may decide not to approve the recommendation to approve the creation of an Administrative Order to establish a grant program to provide funding of \$50,000 annually to charitable organizations for the purpose of spay and neutering cats. This alternative is not recommended.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A – Jurisdictional Scan of Municipalities

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Original Signed

## APPENDIX A

Municipality	Municipal Program	Humane /Charitable Organization Program
<b>Nova Scotia</b>		
<b>Wolfville</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No programs for cats and no funding is provided to local groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local non-profit Valley W.A.G.G is responsible for stray and unwanted felines.</li> </ul>
<b>CBRM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual grant of \$25,000 to the Feral and Abandoned Cat Society (FAACS) The funding supports a TNR program as well as providing spay/neuter assistance to low income families. The grant amount is factored into the Bylaw Departments spay/neuter budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPCA works with Cape Breton Animal Hospital who provide a low income spay/neuter program for the public and for rescue organizations.</li> <li>\$75+tax for male and \$100+tax for female. Program began in 2015 and is predominantly used by rescues with future attempts at advertising to low-income families. Payment plan , installments on the cost of spay/neuter are available and once fully paid the surgery occurs.</li> </ul>
<b>Colchester County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015/2016 the county allocated \$5000 towards a program to help deal with feral cats and to create a low income spay/neuter program.</li> </ul>	
<b>Town and Municipality of Digby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2003, local rescue has received \$3300 from the Municipality of the District of Digby and \$1100 from the town of Digby.</li> <li>Council has discussed potentially purchasing a year's supply of cat food to support the rescue group.</li> </ul>	
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>		
<b>Charlottetown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No programs for cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two non-profit, all volunteer organizations, Spay Aid PEI and CAT</li> </ul>

		Action Team of PEI help the public with low cost spay and neuter.
<b>New Brunswick</b>		
<b>Moncton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No programs for cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moncton SPCA offers a program to help low income families when the funds are available. The client has to apply for this and application is not guaranteed.</li> </ul>
<b>Fredericton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No program for cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car-ma, animal rescue has a privately run feral cat colony spay/neuter program. Their Trap-Neuter-Release program runs from approximately March-October</li> </ul>
<b>Saint John</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No program and no intentions. The city does not provide any funding for not for profit groups/rescues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to locate any program</li> </ul>
<b>Newfoundland</b>		
<b>St John's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low income spay/neuter program at a cost of \$85 (includes a license) for residents.</li> <li>No TNR program currently. No funding is provided to rescues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mollie's Dream is a local rescue group that conducts TNR with right ear tipping however receives no government funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Quebec</b>		
<b>Montreal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montreal is composed of 19 boroughs, each borough has jurisdiction over animal control. Most boroughs fund the Montreal SPCA's TNR program for feral cats, at a cost of approximately \$10,000 per year. In addition there is a lower cost of registration for sterilized cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montreal SPCA through a private anonymous donor is able to offer a low income spay/neuter program. The SPCA also runs a successful Trap-Neuter-Release-Maintain Program from April to November in a partnership with 8 boroughs.</li> </ul>
<b>Côte Saint-Luc</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began a TNR program in 2010 via Committee work. The municipality assists financially as per the city website however no official amounts are listed.</li> </ul>	

<b>Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with the SPCA; invested \$6000 in 2015/16. The city's participation in this program has allowed 118 cats to be sterilized and documented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPCA run program</li> </ul>
<b>Ontario</b>		
<b>Ottawa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ottawa has a revenue-neutral spay and neuter clinic at a cost between \$141-186 for cats.</li> <li>Approximately 3500 animals annually (includes dogs as well). The majority of the surgeries completed are on domesticated cats. However they do perform surgeries on Feral cats that are brought in by rescues.</li> <li>The city of Ottawa has received grants from Petsmart over the past 3 years. A "Blitz Grant" is available to residents of Ottawa who are on financial assistance or in community housing. The fee is \$20.00 per resident and the grant pays the difference. (2014 Blitz Grant \$62,020 sterilized 400 dogs and cats and 2015 Blitz Grant \$90,250 sterilized 700 cats.</li> <li>The second grant is a "Geographical Grant", which has no financial restrictions or fee for the client and the grant covers a specific outlined area chosen by the city, which is a neighborhood in which they deem have the greatest need financially. (2013/2014 Grant - \$49,920 sterilized 312 cats, 2014/2015 Grant, \$23,450 sterilized 183 cats, and 2015/2016 Grant, \$77,000 sterilized 524 cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ottawa Human Society is setting up a Cat Spay Neuter Mobile Unit through Petsmart Charities Funding. At this time they are in the planning stages with the mobile to be operating this summer. Ottawa Humane Society provides support to residents that are assisting feral cat colonies.</li> </ul>
<b>Toronto</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low cost spay/neuter program for the public at one of their clinics, they will also be imminently launching a mobile spay/neuter service. Surgeries cost between \$38-68 depending on age and gender. 3000 surgeries per year. They do conduct surgeries for TNR caretakers -TNR days 915 feral cat surgeries in 2015.</li> <li>Toronto is a member of the Toronto Feral Cat Coalition which offers free spay/neuters to registered feral cat colony</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Toronto Feral Cat Coalition provides workshops, maps and registers colonies, stabilizes and reduces cat colonies. As per an article from October 2015, the municipal government requires developers to donate money to local community groups. The developers have agreed</li> </ul>

	<p>caretakers. There are no funds provided to the coalition directly. In addition they practice a shelter-neuter-return for any cat that is picked up that isn't considered adoptable. TNR program is listed in the Toronto Municipal Code.</p>	<p>to donate \$100,000 to the volunteer program to help them have traps, cages and operate the recovery centre to address the cat over-population problem.</p>
<b>Mississauga</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No low income spay/neuter program. A report is expected to go before Committee later this year which will provide greater acknowledgement and regulation of rescues and TNR programs, and provide exemption to certain bylaws.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Catharines Ontario SPCA clinic offers the same services as listed above.</li> </ul>
<b>Hamilton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not have a program for residents as they share a building with the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA who does offer a program and they do not want to duplicate services.</li> <li>• Does not provide any funding to the SPCA.</li> <li>• City employees are currently working on a Cat Strategy that if approved may mean they will provide funding for TNR and low cost spay neuter programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hamilton/Burlington SPCA offers a Community Assistance Program for low income households of \$75.</li> <li>• Working with colony caretakers and volunteers to access spay/neuter surgeries and resources to guide them in taking care of colonies. Registered Colonies are tracked in order to accurately measure change over time.</li> </ul>
<b>Windsor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of the program is \$50,000 and the vouchers are released in several phrases. Approximately 700 vouchers available per year. City runs spay/neuter voucher program (as well as in 5 other area municipalities. Half of the vouchers go to low income residents to fix their own cats, and half to residents of any income to fix feral/community cats Limited to 4 feral or 2 low income vouchers and are redeemable at any participating vet clinic. Vouchers are not issued to rescues; however they are able to encourage individuals who work with the rescues to get the cats altered.</li> <li>• Feral cat colonies are well mapped, and they are able to show a relationship between where the colonies are vs. where the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spay/neuter program for cats through Humane Society which is self-funded. The society's program is a high volume spay/neuter clinic, which fixes owned cats or community/feral cats for people at a low cost. Other than the City of Toronto they are the only ones doing SNR</li> </ul>

	voucher applications are received and redeemed from.	
<b>Kingston</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Kingston Initiative (Rescue Group), received 25,000.00 in 2014-15 and 2015-16 from the city for a spay/neuter program. The city also provides \$250 voucher for spay/neuter through their Municipal Fee Assistance Program. Eligibility is based on the LICO's.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Kingston initiative has a spay and neuter program.</li> </ul>
<b>London</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A low income spay/neuter subsidy and a tracked Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return program.</li> <li>Current budget amount of \$150,000 from money collected from dog and cat licenses is diverted to these programs as well as adoption initiatives. In 2015, the city TNR'd approximately 750 cats and through low income subsidized 123 cats and 79 dogs.</li> </ul>	
<b>Sudbury</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subsidy Spay/Neuter program for low income residents with unlimited access to reduced rates. A coupon is issued to participating veterinarians with the cost being \$125 for female and \$100 for male, the remaining balance is paid by the resident. Here is a limit of 4 coupons available due to a pet limit under the current bylaw.</li> <li>The program is currently only for owned cats, however in the fall of 2016 there will be changes made to the low income program as well as introducing a TNR program.</li> </ul>	
<b>Oshawa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The city of Oshawa does not have a program other than cats coming through the shelter. There is no financial support for cat rescues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous meetings about a low income program have occurred in conjunction with city staff and local rescues.</li> </ul>
<b>Manitoba</b>		
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A low income Spay and Neuter Program. \$20 per surgery to the Human Society, the owner pays \$20 and the Humane Society covers the rest. Pet licensing revenues help to cover the cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Winnipeg Humane Society runs the SNAP program in conjunction with the city. They perform</li> </ul>

	<p>of this Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIXIT Grant program open to non-profit community organizations (including Veterinarians) to apply for to support high volume, low cost spay/neuter surgeries.</li> <li>• 50% of gross cat license sales go towards supporting the FIXIT program; therefore the total grant amount is dependent on amount of licenses sold.</li> </ul>	<p>approximately 5,000 surgeries per year at a budgeted cost of \$75,000. They also run a TNR program which a \$20 donation to help offset the cost of surgery and care.</p>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>		
<b>Saskatoon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$35,000 base grant plus revenue from licensing that subsidizes a spay/neuter program (SSNP) that is offered to Saskatoon residents with proof of low income who have been a resident for at least one year. The resident is responsible for \$25 with the remaining balance covered by the veterinarian and the city and the cat must be registered first.</li> <li>• The funding for this program comes from the fine revenue for violations of the Animal Control Bylaw and Dangerous Animal Bylaw. Current funding will allow for 200 surgeries yearly with the program being on a first come, first service basis with a maximum of two pets per household. They are currently exploring the possibility of a mobile bus, and have been successful with a partnership with the local vet college.</li> </ul>	
<b>Regina</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides funding to the Regina Humane Society to run their low income spay/neuter program. For 2016 they are on track to provide \$162,000 which is an increase of \$14,700 from the last year.</li> <li>• The program is utilized quite a bit and Humane Society has control over the program however has to provide a record of how the money was spent. Private rescues are currently responsible for TNR programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regina Humane Society – low income spay/neuter program.</li> </ul>
<b>Alberta</b>		
<b>Calgary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No costs domestic cat spay/neuter program for eligible low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MEOW foundation also has a</li> </ul>

	<p>income Calgary residents. The city provides the MEOW foundation with an ongoing grant of \$20,000 per year for a contract of 5 years, at which point it is reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The city also provides a large amount of money to the Calgary Humane Society. A large portion of income for Calgary comes from the animal licensing.</li> </ul>	<p>low-cost spay/neuter program for cats called SNAP as well as a TNR program.</p>
<b>Edmonton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide \$50,000 per year to the Edmonton Humane Society, some of which helps to fund their “Prevent Another Litter Subsidy” or “PALS” program. The funding comes from the Branch operating budget which is offset by licensing revenue.</li> <li>• The city does work with other local rescue groups in particularly those who do not meet the Humane Society’s qualified for adoption. There is an Animal Rescue fund which is a grant for which rescue groups are eligible to apply. It does not need to be used for surgeries however there are certain limitations. \$30,000 is allocated per year which a maximum of \$2,000 per quarter, per group. The program is well used; however they do provide frequent reminders due to turn over of rescue groups.</li> <li>• At this time they do not have any formal programs in place for feral cats however are beginning to look at strategies for dealing with cat overpopulation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edmonton Humane Society – PAL Program</li> </ul>
<b>British Columbia</b>		
<b>Burnaby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a rebate of \$15 of up to two cats per household to Burnaby residents who want to spay/neuter their pets. At this time there is not much traction for the program, considering changing to a program based on low income and to cover the whole amount of the surgery. However at this time there is nothing on the books;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate organization that conducted a TNR program but due to its success it is no longer required as it has curbed the population. Privately funded.</li> </ul>
<b>Vancouver</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The city does not provide any funding to either SPCA or VOKRA however they do have an annual Animal Welfare Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver chapter of BC SPCA offers a low cost spay neuter program for</li> </ul>

	<p>that is available for not for profit groups to apply for. The money is usually split between at least 2 organizations that have helped support the City of Vancouver Animal services. The grant is \$10,600 per year and comes from the Community Service Group budget.</p>	<p>people on fixed incomes. There is a private rescue called Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association (VOKRA) that is independently run, successful at making a huge headway dealing with the feral cat populations, they have done a spay/neuter release program with the feral colonies.</p>
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