

Cat Service and Regulation Options

Current Cat Regulations and Services provided

Currently St. Albert does not regulate cat activity within the Animal Bylaw. This means that the City does not prohibit cats from roaming in public or on private property and cat owners are not required to get a license.

Anecdotally, Administration does not believe St. Albert has a feral (wild/homeless) cat problem. However, it is recognized that many residents have expressed concerns over the years with roaming neighborhood cats.

Even though the City does not prohibit cats from roaming or requiring licenses, residents do have some options on dealing with nuisance cats they find on their own private property. Options include:

1. Speaking with the cat owner (if known) about the matter;
2. Placing products up that deter cat activity (such as physical barriers, motion-sensor water sprayers, or safe chemical deterrents);
3. Humanely trap cats (taking the captured cat back to the owner if known, releasing it at the edge of the property, or surrendering it to a humane society).

City Administration currently promotes responsible cat ownership on the City website. This promotion includes information for cat owners as well as residents who are impacted by a nuisance cat. <https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/mes/cat-information/>

Municipal Enforcement Peace Officers within St. Albert have enforcement authority under the *Animal Protection Act* and as such will act and respond to calls for service for cats who are found to be in distress. These types of calls can include cats who are found immobile, have noticeable health issue (malnourished) and in some cases will respond when cats are found to be in distress due to extreme weather.

Lost and found cat reports are also currently accepted from residents through the main RCMP/Municipal Enforcement 24/7 complaint/dispatch line. These reports are recorded and when a match is found staff will put the parties in contact with one another in an effort to reunite the cat with the owner.

In the last number of years social media has started to play a more significant role in reuniting lost/found animals including cats. Facebook sites like St. Albert Pet Place, St. Albert Lost or Found Pets are examples where residents are taking a grass roots approach to reuniting pets prior to looking to the Municipality to provide the service.

Other Municipalities – Cat Bylaws

The below table represents what other Municipalities have in terms of cat regulations within their community.

Municipality	Calgary	Edmonton	Red Deer	Strathcona County	Lethbridge	Medicine Hat	Airdrie	Leduc
Pop.	1,265,344	966,199	100,418	98,381	99,769	63,018	68,091	33,000
Cat Bylaw	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Prohibited to be loose on City Property	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Prohibited to be loose on Private Property	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Licence Required	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Licence Fee	\$18 /yr Fixed \$38 /yr Intact	\$21 /yr Fixed \$76 /yr Intact	N/A	✗	✗	\$15 /yr Fixed \$50 /yr Intact	\$15 /yr Fixed \$30 /yr Intact	\$50 lifetime Fixed \$100 Lifetime Intact
Total No. of Cat Licences	37,105	32,396	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,267	1,959	969
Fine for offences	\$100 - \$250	\$50 – \$250	\$30 - \$60	✗	✗	\$30 - \$250	\$50 - \$150	\$50 - \$100

Cat Control Service Options

There are a number of factors that should be considered when contemplating the implementation of new a Cat Bylaw or increased service levels related to cats. The financial impact will vary depending on the type of regulations passed and the expectations of service to the community. Administrations financial estimates and information is preliminary and has been provided a very high level due to the number of unknown factors.

Administration has identified four (4) main options for council's consideration on services related to roaming cats.

Option #	Summary	Timing	Operational/ Organizational Impacts	Financial Impacts	Likelihood of Success
Option 1 Increased Education/Awareness	Increase the presence of responsible cat ownership information,	Q1 2020	Low operational impacts	Low Financial Impacts. Can be done within existing budget.	Low likelihood of success to eliminate all nuisance roaming cat

responsible cat ownership program	Lost and Found cat services, through social media channels				issues however, can be done within existing resources.
Option #	Summary	Timing	Operational/ Organizational Impacts	Financial Impacts	Likelihood of Success
Option 2 Cat Licence Program Only (No Prohibition for roaming).	Create new legislation that would require cat owners to purchase cat licences only.	Q1 2021	Medium Operational impact. Requires software program adjustments, purchase of tags, promotion and education of new requirement.	Medium Financial impact. Estimated operating cost between \$10,000 to \$30,000/year	Low likelihood of success to eliminate all nuisance roaming cat issues. Cat licencing alone (without a corresponding service to impound found cats) would not make a noticeable impact to the nuisance cat concerns. A licencing program may assist with controlling the pet population through a spay/neuter program and reduced licence fees.
Option #	Summary	Timing	Operational/ Organizational Impacts	Financial Impacts	Likelihood of Success
Option 3 Prohibit Cat roaming on Private Property	Create new legislation that would prohibit unwanted cats from entering private property. This would give officers the legal authority to impound cats that are found on private property.	Q2 2022	Significant Impact. Requires internal resources to draft legislation, implement licencing program, create educational material, develop/secure impounded cat services (kennel, adoption, euthanasia), hire	Significant financial impact Estimated operating cost between \$150,000 to \$300,000 /year. *This estimate assumes an outside kennel contract could be secured. If not, significant Capital and other operating costs would be incurred	Medium to High likelihood of success to eliminate nuisance roaming cat issues. This regulation would be similar to the what is seen in Edmonton and Leduc.

	(assumes cat licensing will be a requirement)		extra staff and purchase specialized equipment.	for building and operating a municipal kennel. *some cost savings could be seen if Council were to choose to place the onus on residents to purchase/rent their own cat traps as well as be required to transport and surrender captured cats to the City.	
Option #	Summary	Timing	Operational/ Organizational Impacts	Financial Impacts	Likelihood of Success
Option 4 Prohibit Cat roaming on Private and City Property (similar to current dog regulations)	<p>Create new legislation that would prohibit unwanted cats from being off-leash/roam on private property as well as City/public property.</p> <p>This would give officers the legal authority to impound cats that are found loose just like dogs.</p> <p>(assumes cat licensing will be a requirement)</p>	Q2 2022	<p>Significant Impact.</p> <p>Requires internal resources to draft legislation, implement licencing program, create educational material, develop/secure impounded cat services (kennel, adoption, euthanasia), hire extra staff and purchase specialized equipment.</p>	<p>Significant financial impact</p> <p>Estimated operating cost between \$150,000 to \$400,000 /year.</p> <p>*This estimate assumes an outside kennel contract could be secured. If not, significant Capital and other operating costs would be incurred for building and operating a municipal kennel.</p> <p>*some cost savings could be seen if Council were to choose to place the onus on residents to purchase/rent their own cat traps as well as be required to transport and surrender captured cats to the City.</p> <p>*This level of regulation would assume that the municipality may have to set traps in public parks in special</p>	<p>High likelihood of success to eliminate nuisance roaming cat issues.</p> <p>This service option is anticipated to have a higher rate of success as a result of targeting all loose cats within the boundaries.</p> <p>This regulation would be similar to the what is seen in Calgary and Red Deer.</p>

				circumstances to respond to an allegation of a feral/wild cat clutter.	
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Other Considerations

Implementation of cat regulations will be a significant change for the community and as a result Administration anticipates that many residents who have come accustom to owning a roaming cat (or whose cat accidentally gets out) will express dissatisfaction.

Conversely, Administration would also anticipate that many residents who have had concerns with nuisance roaming cats will express satisfaction.

Administration also anticipates that the rate of cat euthanasia in the community will increase. In many other municipalities the rate of impounded cat being claimed is still relatively low. There are a number of factors that influence a negative cat ownership culture that will often end in impounded cats not being claimed. These factors include the relatively low cost to purchase a new cat, the relatively high cost to claim a cat (fines and fees), and the unfortunate view by some that cats are disposable pets. As a result, humane societies and re-homing organizations in the region are often at or over capacity. The inevitable reality is that the municipality will be required to euthanize many unclaimed impounded cats. Based on other municipalities experiences it is estimated that approximately 200 - 300 cats would be impounded in a given year.