

Proposed Amendments to Bylaw 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999

ISSUE

The report is requesting approval to amend Bylaw No. 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council:

1. That proposed amendments to Bylaw No. 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999, be approved; and
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to make the necessary amendments to Bylaw No. 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999.

BACKGROUND

On a bi-annual basis, Administration reviews [Bylaw No. 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999](#) (Animal Control Bylaw) and [Bylaw No. 8176, The Dangerous Animals Bylaw, 2003](#) (Dangerous Animal Bylaw). The Administration previously reported on this subject to City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) held on October 31, 2022.

Administration is supported by the Animal Services Working Group, a group of specialists, animal experts and representatives of the community at large, who provide consultative and collaborative feedback to help inform the Administration. More specifically, this group is comprised of representatives from:

- Saskatoon Animal Control Agency;
- Saskatoon Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;
- Saskatchewan Population & Public Health Authority;
- A Clinical Associate from the University of Saskatchewan, Western College of Veterinary Medicine; and
- A member of the general public.

One of the roles of the Animal Services Working Group is to assist with the bi-annual review of the Animal Control Bylaw and Dangerous Animals Bylaw.

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, at its [meeting](#) on January 10, 2024, considered a communication expressing concern about the number of animals permitted in a residential home and resolved:

“That the correspondence with respect to limiting the number of animals in a household be sent to administration for inclusion in the annual review of the

Animal Control Bylaw for a report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Proposed Amendments

Animal Control Bylaw

After a review of the Animal Control Bylaw, comments and concerns raised by a variety of sources, such as the Animal Services Working Group and members of the public, Administration is recommending two amendments to the bylaw. The amendments are designed to align with and improve upon existing enforcement mechanisms and enhance responsible pet ownership. The two proposed amendments are:

1. Not allow an animal other than a dog to enter into or remain in an off-leash area. The justification for this change is to avoid conflict with dogs within off-leash areas. For example, there have been instances where horses have been known to ride within the Chief Whitecap Off Leash Area which can cause conflict and safety issues between animals and owners. The applicable fines are proposed to be the same as provided in Schedule 7(d); prohibited dog in off-leash area: \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for second and \$300 for each subsequent offense.
2. Prohibit false information by a person when applying for a license. The justification for this change is to avoid false information on dog and cat licences, such as spayed or neutered status. The applicable fines are proposed to be the same as provided in Schedule 7(a); failure to license cat or dog: \$250 for first offense, \$300 for second and \$350 for each subsequent offense.

The Dangerous Animals Bylaw

After a review of the Dangerous Animals Bylaw, Administration is not recommending any changes.

Trap Neuter Release Program

In June 2023, SCAT Street Cat Rescue Inc. presented to the Animal Services Working Group with a request to facilitate a Trap Neuter Release (TNR) program within the city to assist with the community cat population. The Administration has conducted some preliminary research of other municipalities. Additional research is required to determine all the implications, risks, and costs associated with a TNR program. Administration will report on a potential TNR program as an option for consideration during the 2026/2027 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations.

Household Animal Limits

The City of Saskatoon (City) does not currently limit the number of animals allowed in a residential home. The correspondence received at the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, at its meeting on January 10, 2024, with respect to limiting the number of animals in a household focused on addressing the potential for animal neglect and hoarding.

In July 2024, Administration sent a survey to 22 Canadian municipalities with 13 municipalities providing a response (see Appendix 1). It should be noted that each province has slightly different legislation related to animal cruelty which impacts municipal

roles. As a result, there is a range of service providers involved in animal cruelty investigations and enforcement, including municipalities directly, police, third party service providers or provincial agencies filling the role, as noted here in Saskatchewan. Included below is a summary of the responses collected from the 13 municipalities:

- Twelve (12) of the 13 municipalities have set a limit for the number of animals residing in a single dwelling;
- The City of Regina is the only city that replied, which currently does not have a limit for the number of animals per household;
- The City of Lethbridge has a limit on dogs per household, not cats;
- The City of London provides various layers of limits; cats versus dogs, spayed/neutered versus not spayed/neutered, as well as different limits for residential dwellings versus multi-unit dwellings;
- Average limit per household is 4 dogs, 6 cats or a combined total average of 8 (limits range from 3 to 12);
- Eight (8) of 13 municipalities manage bylaw enforcement internally and 5 contract a third-party for bylaw enforcement; and
- Several municipalities reported additional civic resources including staff for bylaw enforcement of household animal limits.

Municipalities that implemented these changes allowed for grandfathering rights to be in effect until the end of the animals' life or provided a grace period where animals were required to be given up. Although municipalities have implemented a threshold limit, it does not eliminate animal welfare issues from arising.

Administration, in consultation with the Animal Services Working Group, is not recommending any changes to the Animal Control Bylaw to limit the number of pets per household for the following reasons:

- In Saskatoon, Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan (APSS) enforces *The Animal Protection Act, 2018*, and provides animal welfare legislation, education and investigative services. The APSS have dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced Animal Protection Officers with administrative staff stationed in Saskatoon and elsewhere, to assist with the resolution of concerns about animal welfare across Saskatchewan. Residents with concerns about animal welfare or neglect are directed to contact APSS;
- Implementing a pet limit per household would require additional financial resources. Administration recognizes the significant financial challenges facing the City and the 2025 Animal Services operating budget does not include the financial resources required to implement and enforce a household pet limit. Additional financial resources would be required through the operating budget for investigation and enforcement of a household pet limit by way of the contract with Saskatoon Animal Control for Bylaw Enforcement.
- The concern raised assumes that households with multiple pets results in animal cruelty; and

- Implementing a household limit would require further research to determine how to manage foster situations, legitimate breeder operations, boarders, etc. and to develop an implementation strategy.

Administration will continue to focus on responsible pet ownership messaging and directing residents with animal welfare concerns to APSS to enforce *The Animal Protection Act, 2018*, and provide animal welfare legislation education.

If directed by City Council, Administration could provide a report for consideration during the 2026/2027 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations for the implementation of a limit to the number of pets per household, including costs, implementation plan, bylaw amendments, enforcement, fines and criteria for exemptions.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Pending approval by City Council of the proposed amendments, the City Solicitor's Office will bring forward the amendments to the Animal Control Bylaw for approval to a future meeting of City Council.

To promote public awareness of these amendments, they will be highlighted and referenced on the Animal Services webpage.

APPENDICES

1. Animal Services Survey Summary – Animal Limits

REPORT APPROVAL

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SP/2025/PDCS/RCD/Proposed Amendments to Bylaw 7860, The Animal Control Bylaw, 1999/sk & mt