



# Board Agenda Item 9

DATE: June 21, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: David Luchini, RN, PHN, Director, Department of Public Health

SUBJECT: Amendment of Fresno County Ordinance Code, Title 9 - Animals

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Conduct first hearing to amend the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Title 9 - “Animals” by adding Chapter 9.10 “Community Cat Population Management”; waive reading of the Ordinance in its entirety; and set the second hearing for July 12, 2022;**
- 2. Designate County Counsel to prepare a fair and adequate summary of the proposed Ordinance; and**
- 3. Direct the Clerk to the Board to post and publish the required summary in accordance with Government Code, Section 25124(b)(1).**

The recommended actions will add Chapter 9.10, “Community Cat Population Management” to Title 9, “Animals” of the Ordinance Code of Fresno County to properly recognize the County’s support to manage the community cat population in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County in the most humane way possible. It introduces the Community Cat Protocol and provides clarification regarding the County’s support to help manage the cat population. The Community Cats protocol is a preferred cat population control service delivery system, currently being used by the Animal Control contracted vendor to implement the Trap, Neuter and Return program. The recommended actions would result in the first hearing of the ordinance and set a second hearing for July 12, 2022. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board choose not to add the above-listed Chapter in Title 9, “Animals”, the animal control enforcement procedures for the County will remain unchanged; however, the above-listed Chapter in Title 9, “Animals” will continue to lack clarity regarding the County’s support to address the cat population control issues in the unincorporated areas.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost with the recommended actions. Mandated animal control services are fully funded with a yearly allocation of County General Fund dollars. The yearly County General Fund allocation offsets both contractor cost and operational costs associated with the Animal Control Shelter Services. Services related to cat population management are currently funded and provided under the existing contract with Fresno Humane Animal Services, at a cost of \$30,000 per year. This cost will continue to be included in the contractor’s yearly budget.

DISCUSSION:

It is estimated there are currently approximately 66,000 free roaming (“community”) cats in Fresno County. Local jurisdictions struggle to manage the community cat population and for many years have utilized the trap and remove technique that typically results in the killing of cats. This technique has proven inefficient, ineffective, and inhumane. Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) is a management technique by which community cats are humanely trapped, evaluated by a licensed veterinarian, sterilized and vaccinated against rabies, and returned to their original habitat. TNR is recognized nationally as one of the most effective and efficient methods of reducing and controlling the population of community cats, as well as disease control. TNR provides a humane, safe, cost saving alternative to help shelters keep community cats from entering their facilities and reduce the number of free-roaming cats in the jurisdictions they serve.

By approving the Ordinance, the County will establish definitions and protocols surrounding the management of the County’s community cat population and prioritizes TNR as the most humane method for the stabilization of the population. Furthermore, the addition of this Ordinance shows an additional commitment to the contracted animal control vendor for the management of the community cat population and improves chances of success by the vendor when applying to funding organizations directly tied to community cat management programs. Municipalities that show interest and engagement (either monetarily or legislative or both) in solving community problems are the ones funded most often. This demonstrates a willingness to progress, solve and take responsibility for their own issues. These funding organizations are much more inclined to invest in municipalities that share the responsibility of solutions.

The proposed amendment will add Chapter 9.10, “Community Cat Population Management” to provide further clarification regarding the County’s support to help manage the cat population in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County in the most humane way possible. It introduces the Community Cats protocol as a preferred cat population control management system, which is currently being used by the Animal Control contracted vendor to implement the TNR program.

The recommended amendments to the Fresno County Ordinance Code, summarized on Exhibit A, add Chapter 9.10, Sections 9.10.10 Definitions, 9.10.20 Funding, 9.10.30 Community Cat Protocol, and 9.10.040 Record Keeping

The sections recommended for addition include the following (summarized):

- 9.10.10 - Definitions** establishes terms used in the Community Cat Population Management.
- 9.10.20 - Funding** provides that the County may (limited to resources available), assist the County animal control vendor by providing funding to offset the costs of carrying out Community Cat Management Population services in unincorporated areas of Fresno County.
- 9.10.30 - Community Cat Protocol** establishes the procedure by which County animal control shelter will incorporate practices to assist caregivers with trapping, neutering and returning the Community Cat back to its established location.
- 9.10.40 - Record Keeping** mandates that all records pertaining to Community Cats be kept separately and apart from other shelter animals.

The Department has posted the recommended ordinance amendments to its website, sent proposed revisions to all animal control agencies in Fresno County, and held a public meeting June 9, 2022, to hear public comments and concerns.

With your Board’s approval, the second reading will be held July 12, 2022, and if approved will take effect 30 days after.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Amended Ordinance  
Amended Ordinance - Red Lined  
On file with Clerk - Ordinance Summary

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander