

# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

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June 30, 2006

To: Board of Health  
From: Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health  
Subject: Dog and Cat License Fee Amendments

Purpose:

To propose amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 441, Fees, in order to simplify the fee structure for dog and cat licensing while continuing to reward pet owners who sterilize their pets.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Implementation of this new fee structure is scheduled for September 1, 2006. Toronto Public Health's 2006 Operating Budget includes revenues of \$1.146 million from dog licenses and cat registrations. While it is difficult to determine the exact impact on revenues, based on the characteristics of dogs and cats licensed in 2006 (with all other things being equal) the proposed change in fees would positively impact anticipated revenues. At its meeting on March 29 and March 30, 2006 Council adopted the Board of Health Report entitled "Dog and Cat Licensing Strategy" which recommended that "any year-end deficit resulting from the licensing strategy initiative be reported to the Board of Health and Budget Advisory Committee and funded from within the Toronto Public Health approved budget for 2006 and beyond". Any variance from budget including corrective measures will be reported through the 2006 Year-End Variance Report. The 2007 Proposed Operating Budget will be revised early in 2007 to reflect actual revenues collected in the last four months of 2006.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concur with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Municipal Code Chapter 441 – Fees, be amended so that effective September 1, 2006 the following fees shall be paid to the City of Toronto for dog licences and cat registrations:

Sterilized dog licence \$25.00; Sterilized cat registration \$15.00; unaltered dog owned by a senior citizen \$30.00, sterilized dog owned by a senior citizen \$12.50; unaltered cat owned by a senior citizen \$25.00, sterilized cat owned by a senior citizen \$7.50.

- (2) Municipal Code Chapter 441 – Fees, be amended so that effective September 1, 2006 the following fees be deleted: microchipped dog licence \$35.00; microchipped cat registration \$25.00; microchipped dog licence owned by a senior citizen \$25.00; microchipped cat registration for a senior citizen \$15.00; spayed or neutered dog licence \$25.00; spayed or neutered cat registration \$15.00; spayed or neutered dog licence for a senior citizen \$20.00; spayed or neutered cat registration for a senior citizen \$10.00; spayed or neutered and microchipped dog license \$20.00; spayed or neutered and microchipped cat registration \$10.00.
- (3) The Medical Officer of Health report to Board of Health and Budget Advisory Committee early in 2007 with revised estimates of the Dog and Cat Licensing Fees revenues based on actual fees collected from September through December 2006; and
- (4) That the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect to the foregoing, including the introduction in Council of any Bills that may be required.

Background:

At its June 22, 2006 meeting, the Animal Services Advisory Subcommittee requested that the Medical Officer of Health report back to the Board of Health at its meeting on July 17, 2006 providing an update on the status of the online Dog and Cat Licensing project, and any further changes that would have to be made, regulatory or otherwise, including a reduced fee structure for spaying and neutering and eliminating the fee structure for microchipping.

Comments:

In the fall of 2006, Toronto Animal Services will launch its online Dog and Cat Licensing program which will be available to anyone who has access to the City's web site. This program will allow residents of the City of Toronto to apply for a new pet license or to renew an existing license online, with a credit card payment. This program is consistent with the City's e-Service initiative. The project is currently within budget and on schedule; however, to remain on schedule, final decisions regarding the licensing fee structure must be made within the next few weeks.

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 441-21 sets out fees charged for animal services including dog licensing and cat registration. The current fee structure is:

<b>Current Fee Structure:</b>	<b>Dog License</b>	<b>Cat Registration</b>
Unaltered Animal	\$60.00	\$50.00
Microchipped	\$35.00	\$25.00
- Owned by Senior Citizen	\$25.00	\$15.00
Spayed or Neutered	\$25.00	\$15.00
- Owned by Senior Citizen	\$20.00	\$10.00
Spayed or Neutered and Microchipped	\$20.00	\$10.00

The proposed fee structure is:

<b>Recommended Fee Structure:</b>	<b>Dog License</b>	<b>Cat Registration</b>
Unaltered Animal*	\$60.00	\$50.00
Sterilized Animal*	\$25.00	\$15.00
*Note: 50% discount if pet is owned by a senior citizen		

The proposed revisions to the fee structure will continue to positively reward responsible pet owners that sterilize their animals.

There are more unwanted dogs and cats in the community and animal shelters than there are sufficient suitable adoptive homes. The two main reasons for this overpopulation are the birth of unwanted pets and the straying of unidentified pets. Pets that are sterilized of course cannot procreate and pets that are licensed or microchipped (a microchip is an alphanumeric encapsulated identifier that is inserted under the skin of a dog or cat that, when read with a special scanner, provides information that can link the animal with the registered owner) can be identified and quickly returned to their owners. As the number of pet owners who sterilize, license and/or microchip their pets increases, the number of displaced and unwanted animals should decrease over time.

In order to simplify the fee structure, special categories for microchipping will be eliminated, however, Toronto Animal Services will continue to promote microchipping through its education programs. Simplifying the fee schedule will assist in efforts to license a larger proportion of Toronto dogs and cats. This will increase the number of lost and stray pets that are safely and quickly reunited with their owners. Eventually this will result in lower sheltering costs to the municipality and a decrease in the number of unwanted animals that are euthanized.

Conclusions:

In an effort to recognize responsible pet owners and at the same time simplify the current dog and cat licensing fee structure, it is recommended that the new fee structure indicated in the chart above be adopted. It is also important that any changes in fee structure be approved no later than July 28, 2006 so that these changes can be incorporated into the online pet licensing service that is currently under development and scheduled for release in the fall of 2006.

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