



Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Item – {{section.number}}.C.

City Council Meeting
May 19, 2025



Strategic Priority 2: Community Empowerment and Engagement

Enhance the sense of community and connection in Westminster through engaging methods of communication and dialogue that improve accessibility, increase understanding, and encourage participation in civic and City life.



Strategic Priority 3: Community Health and Safety

Invest in innovative and collaborative approaches to provide a continuum of services that preserve, promote, and protect the health, safety, and environment of Westminster.

Subject: First Reading of Councillor’s Bill No. 19 Amending 6-7-1 of the Westminster Municipal Code to Permit Trap, Neuter, and Return of Feral Cats

Prepared By: David Frankel, City Attorney
Mark Brostrom, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney II

Recommended City Council Action:

Pass Councillor’s Bill No. 19 amending section 6-7-1 of Westminster Municipal Code to allow the public to trap, neuter, and return feral cats to the community without criminal liability if they follow Westminster Municipal Code provisions.

Summary Statement:

Feral cats, and feral cat colonies, present particular problems to municipalities because of the tendency of cat populations to expand rapidly if unmanaged. Typically, a feral cat cannot be placed for adoption because of its lack of socialization, which can lead to euthanization. Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) is a process where a feral cat can be temporarily removed from its habitat so it can be spayed or neutered, which mitigates the growth of feral cat communities without resorting to euthanasia. When TNR is performed, the cat will also be marked by the removal of a portion of their ear in a process called eartipping.

Presently, City ordinances would not permit TNR because an individual who provided sterilization to a feral cat may be described as its custodian, and thereby become responsible for its ongoing care. The suggested amendment would exempt individuals engaged in TNR from the definition of custodian, allowing TNR in Westminster. The amendment would not require substantial amendments

to the City's existing ordinances promoting animal welfare. The proposed update to the City ordinances would include an amendment to the definition of custodian, as well as newly define the terms "Eartipping" and "Trap-Neuter-Return."

All other ordinances designed to ensure the humane treatment of animals would remain in place, meaning anyone engaged in TNR activities would be required to do so in a humane manner in compliance with the code.

Fiscal Impact:

\$0 in expenditures

Source of Funds:

Not applicable

Policy Issue(s):

Should the City amend Section 6-7-1, W.M.C., regarding definitions of Custodian, to allow Trap-Neuter-Return activities in Westminster and additional amendments for the associated definitions of Eartipping and Trap-Neuter-Return?

Alternative(s):

City Council could decide not to pass the proposed ordinance which would continue the present prohibition of TNR in Westminster.

Background Information:

Individuals from the community approached City Council requesting City ordinances be amended to allow TNR in Westminster. This revision amending Section 6-7-1 of the Westminster Municipal Code would allow TNR to occur in Westminster legally and would not conflict with other provisions of the animal code.

The suggested ordinance amendments would allow interested individuals to participate with TNR in Westminster without substantial revision to the established ordinances or cost to the City. The amendment has been narrowly crafted to allow TNR without vacating animal welfare ordinances that Staff views as necessary and effective at addressing concerns commonly raised to animal management.

The City Attorney's Office consulted with Animal Management in the Police Department to ensure that their input was considered and included in the draft.

The proposed code that originated from citizen concerns would promote the Strategic Priority of Community Empowerment and Engagement by encouraging individuals to participate and interact with Counsel and their community. The Strategic Priority of Community Health and Safety is met by mitigating feral cat populations in the community.

Respectfully submitted,



Jody L. Andrews
City Manager

Attachments:

Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of Title VI of the Westminster Municipal Code