



STAFF REPORT

Title: Animal Care and Control Centre (ACCC) - Update

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

Executive Summary:

The City began operations of the Animal Care and Control Centre (ACCC) on January 15, 2023. This report is provided as an update on the operations of the facility from January to August 2023.

Background:

Section 7(h) of the *Municipal Government Act* establishes that a council may pass bylaws for municipal purposes respecting wild and domestic animal and activities related to them. Bylaw No. 755-PL-22, Animal Care and Control Bylaw establishes the regulation of the care and control of animals in the City, including the following:

- Animal Licensing
- General Regulations for Responsible Animal Control
- Impoundment
- Traps
- General Animal Care and Welfare Regulations
- Animal Bites and Attacks
- Vicious Animals
- Animal Control Tribunal establishment
- Enforcement

Monthly summary reports on the statistics related to animal control are provided to City Council, through the Reports to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Administration has prepared this report as a more detailed update on the operations of the ACCC and animal licensing efforts of the City.

Animal Care and Control Center

The City has designated the Animal Care and Control Centre (ACCC) to keep animals impounded pursuant to the bylaw. The facility opened on January 15, 2023. The Service Levels of the ACCC are to:

- Provide a safe location for cats and dogs caught running-at-large in the City to be held to facilitate reuniting them with their owners. The holding period established



is three (3) days if the animal has no identification and ten (10) days if the animal has identification. This is in accordance with the *Animal Protection Act*, RSA 2000, c A-41.

- In addition to holding animals-at-large, the ACCC provides a location to impound cats and dogs found in contravention of the following provisions of Bylaw No. 755-PL-22, Animal Care and Control Bylaw:
 - Section 9.3.2 – where the health of an animal is in immediate jeopardy constituting an emergency situation, the Officer is authorized to take the animal into protective impoundment for a maximum period of five (5) days;
 - Section 9.4 – receive animals pursuant to an eviction, incarceration, fire, medical emergency, or similar situation.
- If the cat or dog is not claimed, the animal would be transferred to an adoption and/or rescue facility where efforts can be made to re-home the animal. In line with this operational model, the City's Animal Care and Control Centre does not accept surrenders of dogs or cats from owners who determine they no longer want to, or are able to, keep them.

During their stay at the ACCC, animals are checked for identification and advertised on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/CoCLACCC. Every animal that enters the facility is provided safe shelter, food and water, and are cared for while efforts are made to locate their families.

The ACCC is currently open to the public Monday to Saturday as follows:

- Monday to Friday 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- Saturday 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Outside of these hours, Municipal Enforcement can be called 24/7 for animal control.

If an animal is found to be in distress, or suffering, Municipal Enforcement takes the animal to an emergency veterinarian on call for assessment.

The following summary of operations, is presented as follows:

- Animal Intake Data
- Animal Holding Period Data
- Animal Leaving the ACCC Data
- Dog & Cat Guests Details (attached)
- Animal Licensing Data

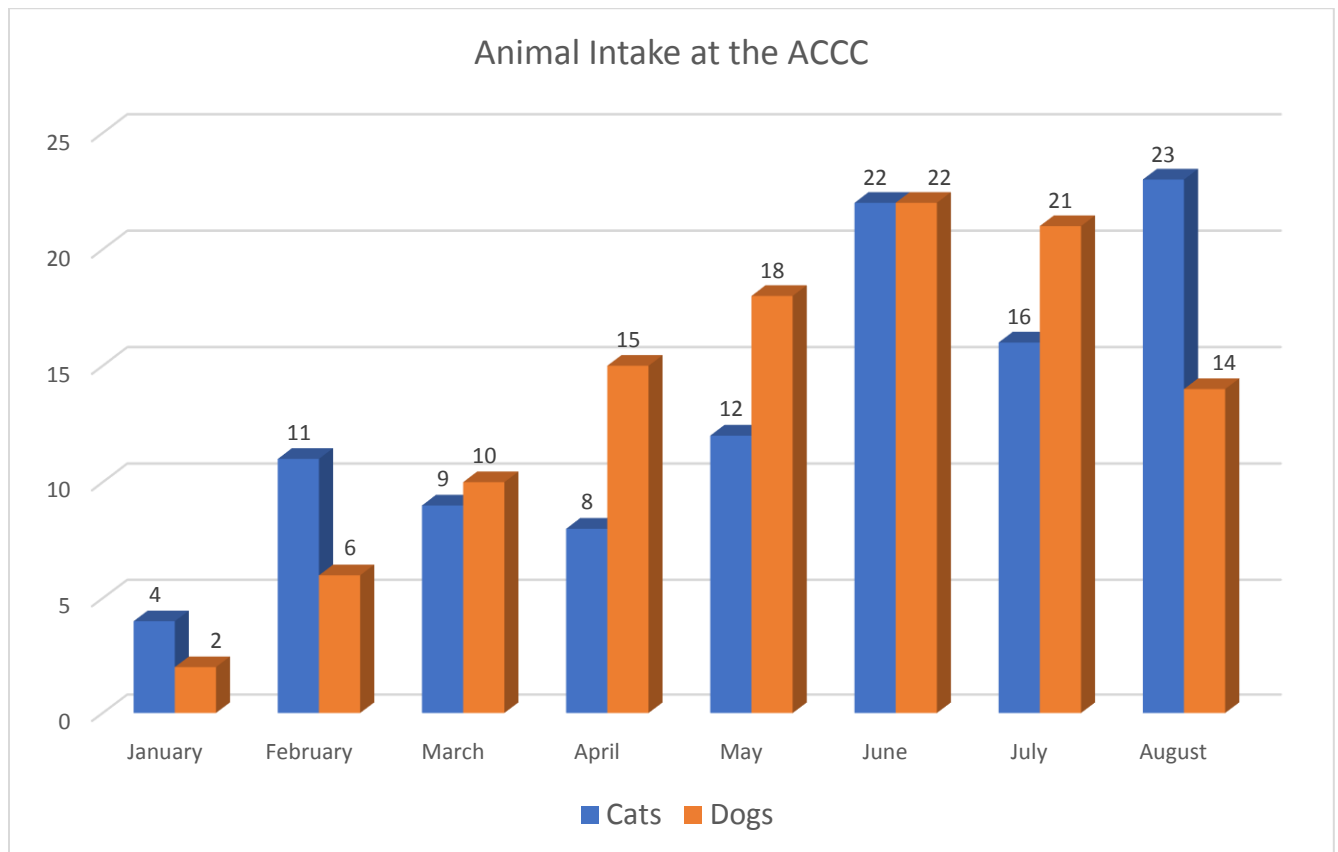


ANIMAL INTAKE DATA:

A summary of the total number of animals that were taken into the ACCC is below:

INTAKE	Cats	Dogs	TOTAL
January	4	2	6
February	11	6	17
March	9	10	19
April	8	15	23
May	12	18	30
June	22	22	44
July	16	21	37
August	23	14	37
TOTAL	105	108	213

*Note there are several animals that entered the ACCC on more than one occasion (due to being found at-large, returning home, and then being at-large again which would count that animal more than once.

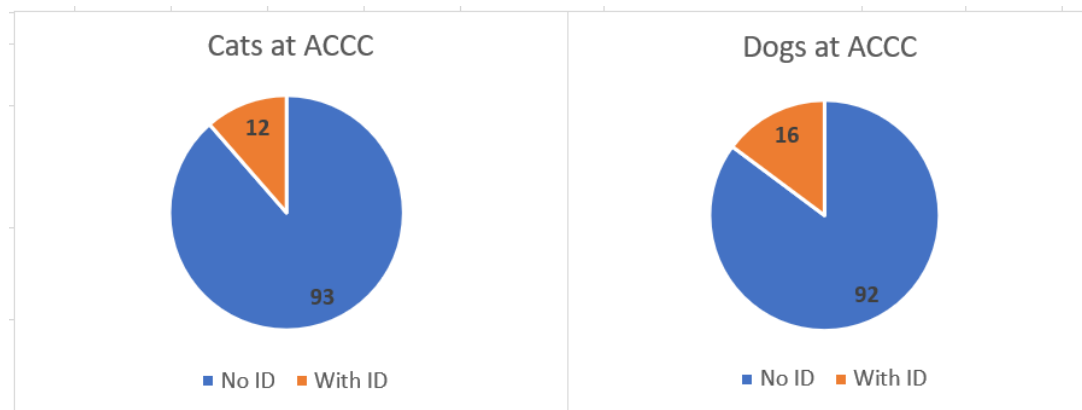




Of the total 213 animals that were brought into the ACCC, 66% were brought in by Municipal Enforcement staff:

INTAKE	Cats	Dogs	TOTAL
Municipal Enforcement	66	75	141
Member of the Public	38	31	69
N/A (unknown)	1	2	3
TOTAL	105	108	213

Only 15% of dogs, and 11% of cats that entered the ACCC had identification (animal tag, tattoo, or microchip despite the fact the licenses are free and well marketed:



ANIMAL HOLDING DATA:

Dogs held at the ACCC were kept from between 1 day to 50+ days:

- 92% of dogs transferred to a shelter were held beyond the holding period, this was after contacting multiple shelters and being told that the shelters were not accepting transfers at that time due to being full.
- Animal care was provided for an additional 313 days for dogs “over holding” due to lack of shelter spaces for transfers
- Overholding affected 22 dogs for an average of 14 days of over holding.

DOG HOLDING SUMMARY	Dogs Returned to Owner	Dogs Transferred to Shelter*	TOTAL
Average Stay at ACCC	2 days	18 days	7 days
Longest Stay at ACCC	5 days	50+ days	50+ days



The summary of dog overholding at the facility is:

DOG OVER HOLDING	Dogs Returned to Owner	Dogs Transferred to Shelter*	TOTAL
Number of Animals Kept over Holding Period	0 of 74	22 of 24	22
Number of Animals Kept over Holding Period that had ID	0	2 of 24	2
Average Number of Days over holding period	0	14 days	14 days
Longest Number of Days over Holding Period	0	47+ days	47+ days

*include animals still at ACCC

Cats held at the ACCC were kept from between 1 days to 15 days:

- 92% of cats transferred to a shelter were held beyond the holding period, this was after contacting multiple shelters and being told that the shelters were not accepting transfers at that time due to being full.
- Animal care was provided for an additional 284 days for cats “over holding” due to lack of shelter spaces for transfers
- Overholding affected 67 cats for an average of 4 days of overholding

CAT HOLDING SUMMARY	Cats Returned to Owner	Cats Transferred to Shelter*	TOTAL
Average Stay at ACCC	2	7	6
Longest Stay at ACCC	6	15	15

The summary of cat overholding at the facility is:

CAT OVER HOLDING	Cats Returned to Owner	Cats Transferred to Shelter*	TOTAL
Number of Animals Kept over Holding Period	1 of 27	66 of 72	67
Number of Animals Kept over Holding Period that had ID	0	1 of 72	1
Average Number of Days over holding period	0	4 days	4 days
Longest Number of Days over Holding Period	1 days	12 days	12 days

*include animals still at ACCC



Administration has contacted over 25 animal rescues and adoption facilities across Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan in effort to find locations that will take the animals. In each instance, when an animal reached the end of their holding period, efforts were made to find a shelter or adoption facility to take the animal. Staff continue to call facilities to find transfers for animals as quick as possible. All facilities have indicated that they are full, with the exception of the LHS which has taken animals as they have room to do so.

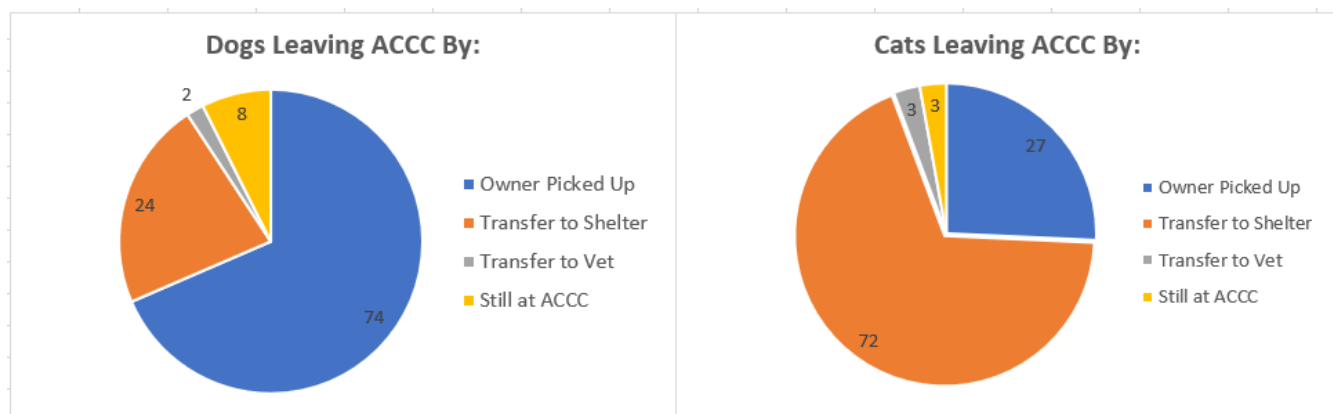
ANIMALS LEAVING THE ACCC DATA:

A summary of how the animals left the ACCC is below:

LEAVING FACILITY	Cats	Dogs	TOTAL
To Owner	27	74	101
To Animal Shelter	72	24	96
To Certified Educational Institution	0	0	0
To Veterinarian	3	2	5
TOTAL	102	100	202
Still at the ACCC as of August 31 st	3	8	11
TOTAL	105	108	213

The data can be summarized as follows:

- 69% of dogs that entered the ACCC were returned to their Owner
- 8% of dogs (2 of 24) transferred to a shelter had ID
- 26% of cats who entered the ACCC were returned to their Owner
- 3% of cats (2 of 72) transferred to a shelter had ID
- Overall, approximately half (47%) of animals (dogs & cats) that entered the ACCC were returned to an Owner





The Bylaw 755-PL-22, Animal Care and Control Bylaw sets out the impound fees for animals that are picked from the ACCC by their owners as:

Impound Fees

Animal Intake Fee	\$50
Daily Care Fee	\$20
Vet Fees	Per vet bill

Total Payment (received and issued) for animals leaving the ACCC:

	Cats	Dogs	TOTAL
Paid to Shelter(s)	\$1,920	\$3,780	\$5,700
Received from Owners	\$1,500	\$4,080	\$5,580

From January to August 31, 2023, 108 dogs and 105 cats entered the facility. Detailed reports on each animal is attached for reference to this report.

Animal Licensing Data

Bylaw No. 755-PL-22, Animal Care and Control Bylaw establishes the requirements for animal licensing in the City of Cold Lake.

5.1 Every Owner of a Dog or a Cat that is apparently six (6) months of age or older must register their Animal with the City and obtain an Animal License.

5.5 The Owner must obtain a License prior to January 1st in each calendar year, for each Dog or Cat to be Licensed, and shall pay the annual License fee outlined in Schedule "A".

Administration has been working to educate the public about the importance of animal licensing and the role that that plays with responsible pet ownership, public safety, and animal control. Information is being shared by:

- Social media
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Municipal enforcement public engagement
- Community outreach to partner agencies.

In December 2022, the City's animal licensing program was initiated:



2023 Licensed Purchased In:	Dog Licenses	Cat Licenses	Total
2022	443	154	597
January 2023	134	105	239
Feb 2023	97	41	138
March 2023	133	35	168
April 2023	54	24	78
May 2023	44	18	62
June 2023	51	16	67
July 2023	39	18	57
August 2023	29	26	55
TOTAL	1,024	437	1,467

We have been advised by other municipal animal control facilities, that an average community would expect to have 1 animal licensed per 10 residents in the community. Based on this information, the City should expect at least 1,600 animals licensed. It is anticipated that the City has more animals within the community than this average estimate, as the City of Cold Lake is a pet friendly community. It is anticipated that there are many residents that have yet to license their animals.

Schedule “E” of Bylaw No. 755-PL-22 sets out the fines related to failing to abide by the licensing requirements:

Section	Description	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
5.1	Unlicensed Animal	\$100	\$200	\$300
5.5	Expired License	\$100	\$200	\$300
5.7	Fail to affix License to collar	\$100	\$200	\$300
5.14	Use License for another Animal	\$100	\$200	\$300
5.15	Provide false information	\$200	\$400	\$600

Responsible Pet Ownership

It has been the priority of Administration to promote responsible pet ownership through communications with the public including social media campaigns, newspaper, radio, digital board at the Energy Centre, and interactions with members of the public.

Operating of the ACCC from January to date has produced interesting and concerning data in relation to pet ownership/control within the community. In particular, several concerning trends have been noticed in the community in relation to irresponsible pet ownership, which have financial implications on the operational model of the facility and staffing levels required:



- The majority of cats (85%) and dogs (89%) that enter the ACCC are unlicensed, despite licensing being heavily promoted and free in 2023.
- The majority of cats and dogs that enter the ACCC are not spayed or neutered.
- On more than one occasion pregnant cats are found at-large and brought into the ACCC.
- On more than one occasion a litter of kittens and very young puppies that are too young to be away from their mothers have been found alone and at-large and brought to the ACCC.
- A number of dogs have been caught running-at-large and brought to the ACCC on more than one occasion.
- A number of dog owners continue to allow their dogs to regularly be off-leash within the City of Cold Lake. Some dog owners have expressed that they believe they have a right to have their dogs off-leash if they are well trained.
- A number of cat owners continue to allow their cats to regularly be at-large within the City of Cold Lake. Some cat owners have expressed that they believe they have a right to have their cats roam free within the City, as that is how cats should be.
- A number of cats (67) and dogs (22) have been kept at the ACCC far beyond the holding period (10 days or 3 days). These animals have been held in excess of the holding period due to an inability to find an animal rescue, shelter, or organization that has room to take the animals:
 - The Lakeland Humane Society (LHS) is often full, and unable to accept dogs and/or cats (for days, weeks or months at a time) even where a significant surrender fee is being offered to take the animals. We understand that for large portions of the year, the LHS has been closed to animal surrenders. This often results, in pet owners abandoning their pets, which are eventually picked up by Municipal Enforcement or members of the public and brought to the ACCC.
 - Animal shelters and rescue facilities across Alberta (and western Canada) are stating that they are full and unwilling to take animal surrenders, even for a surrender fee. With the exception of one animal rescue in Southern Alberta, all other animal rescues contacted have stated each time contacted that they are unable to take in any animals due to an overload.



Edmonton: <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/animal-care-shelters-facing-capacity-challenges-in-edmonton-across-alberta>

Calgary: <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/every-single-kennel-is-full-calgary-humane-society-urges-adoption-of-animals>

Bonnyville: <https://www.lakelandtoday.ca/bonnyville-news/full-doghouse-an-ongoing-reality-for-bonnyville-and-district-sPCA-6992335>

Red Deer (and area): <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/pet-surrenders-alberta-shelter-capacity-1.6936705>

Morinville: <https://morinvillemews.com/2023/07/27/scars-in-crisis-and-in-need-of-pet-adoptions/>

- Staffing costs for care of animals beyond the holding period is significant; and additional budget will need to be established for this to continue.
- The ACCC facility has not been designed for longer-term holding of animals. It was designed as a temporary holding facility, with the intent that the animals leave the facility a maximum of ten (10) days after they enter. The *Animal Protection Act* legislates a minimum standard of care for animals; the ability to keep animals in an environment free from distress becomes more difficult the longer the animal stays in the facility as it has not been built for long term stays.

Administration has prioritized working with the public and education over stricter enforcement approaches. Issuing fines for animals-at-large and unlicensed animals have been used only in rare and exceptional circumstances.

To date, dogs and cats have been held in excess of their holding periods, in an effort to find an animal shelter, rescue, or organization that is able to take the animals. The City has not euthanized any healthy animals due to space constraints, or over holding.

In order to maintain/reduce costs with the operations of the ACCC, reduce the number of animals visiting the facility, and the number of days the animals require care,

Administration recommends Council consider implementing an aggressive approach to promotion of responsible pet ownership within the City:

1. Implement increased animal license fees for 2024 for dogs and cats that are not spayed/neutered; and vicious dogs. Encouraging pet owners to spay and neuter their pets will decrease pregnancies and uncared for kittens and puppies. This is in line with license fees in St. Albert, Airdrie, and Brooks.
 - Basic license \$75 annually (increase from \$40)



- Neutered and Spayed \$30 annually (increase from \$20)
 - Vicious Animal \$200 annually (increase from \$50)
2. Implement a mandatory spay/neuter regulation for all animals in the City. It has been reported that the City of Edmonton is debating a mandatory spay and neutering of all animals in the City in the fall 2023 in an effort to alleviate the growing number of unwanted animals that are uncared for.
 3. Implement a zero tolerance for unlicensed animals in the community (first offence is \$100).
 4. Implement a zero tolerance for Animal-at-Large (first fine is \$200).
 5. City fund a spay and neuter clinic for cats and dogs within the City of Cold Lake.
 6. Consider alternative options to transfer animals after the holding period.

Alternatively, Council may wish to allocate additional funds to operate the ACCC (for additional staffing, supplies, etc). However, over time maximum capacities will likely still be experienced; and difficult decisions will need to be made for the animals surrendered and abandoned within the community.

Alternatives:

This report is provided for information and Committee discussion.

Recommended Action:

This report is provided for information and Committee discussion.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

Yes

Submitted by:

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer