



**SERVICE
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Feral and Community Cat Overview and Potential Policy Considerations

Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee

February 17, 2026

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Presentation Overview



- **Purpose, Definitions & Background**
- **Service Request Data**
- **Community Concerns**
- **Other Cities**
- **Current City Code & Considerations**
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Purpose, Definitions & Background

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- Provide an understanding of Feral / Community Cats.
- Explain the concerns and impacts.
- Seek Committee guidance on potential policy considerations.

Definitions

Definitions:

- FERAL CAT - means any homeless, wild, or untamed cat.
- COMMUNITY CAT - means any free-roaming cat, regardless of socialization or sociability, cared for by one or more known or unknown residents of the immediate area.

Key Differences:

- **Socialization & Behavior:**

- **Feral Cats:** Unsocialized, born in the wild, and fear humans. They typically remain hidden and avoid human contact.
- **Community Cats:** A broader term that includes both unsocialized (feral) and free-roaming cats. Free-roaming cats may be friendly, meow for attention, and allow approach, while feral cats do not.



Background

Due to increased concerns expressed during numerous Animal Advisory Commission Meetings regarding Feral/Community Cats, Dallas Animal Services created and began tracking service requests (SRs) related to feral/community cats

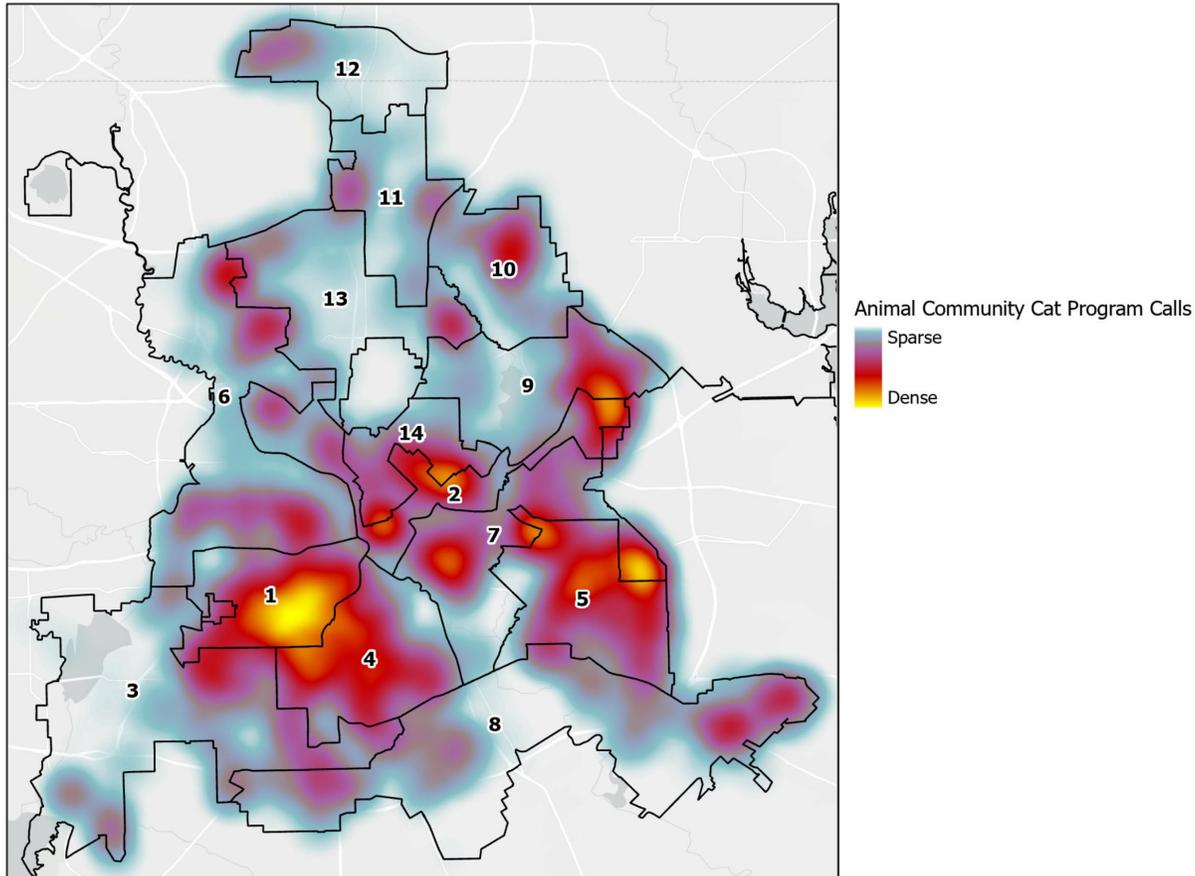
- A “Community Cat” SR type was created in August 2023
- Data from these requests informed the creation of a Community Cat Pilot Trap Neuter and Return (TNR) Program in Fiscal Year 2024-25
 - As part of this program DAS created an internal response team (Team Tabby) to assist with the TNR efforts
 - In FY 24/25 Team Tabby completed 1,451 TNRs
 - 9K kitten births potentially prevented
 - Preventing over 5K neonate kitten intakes
 - Reduction in disease spread, including zoonotic diseases like rabies, intestinal parasites, etc.
 - Enhanced community partnerships



Service Request Data

Feral / Community Cat Data: *Service Requests*

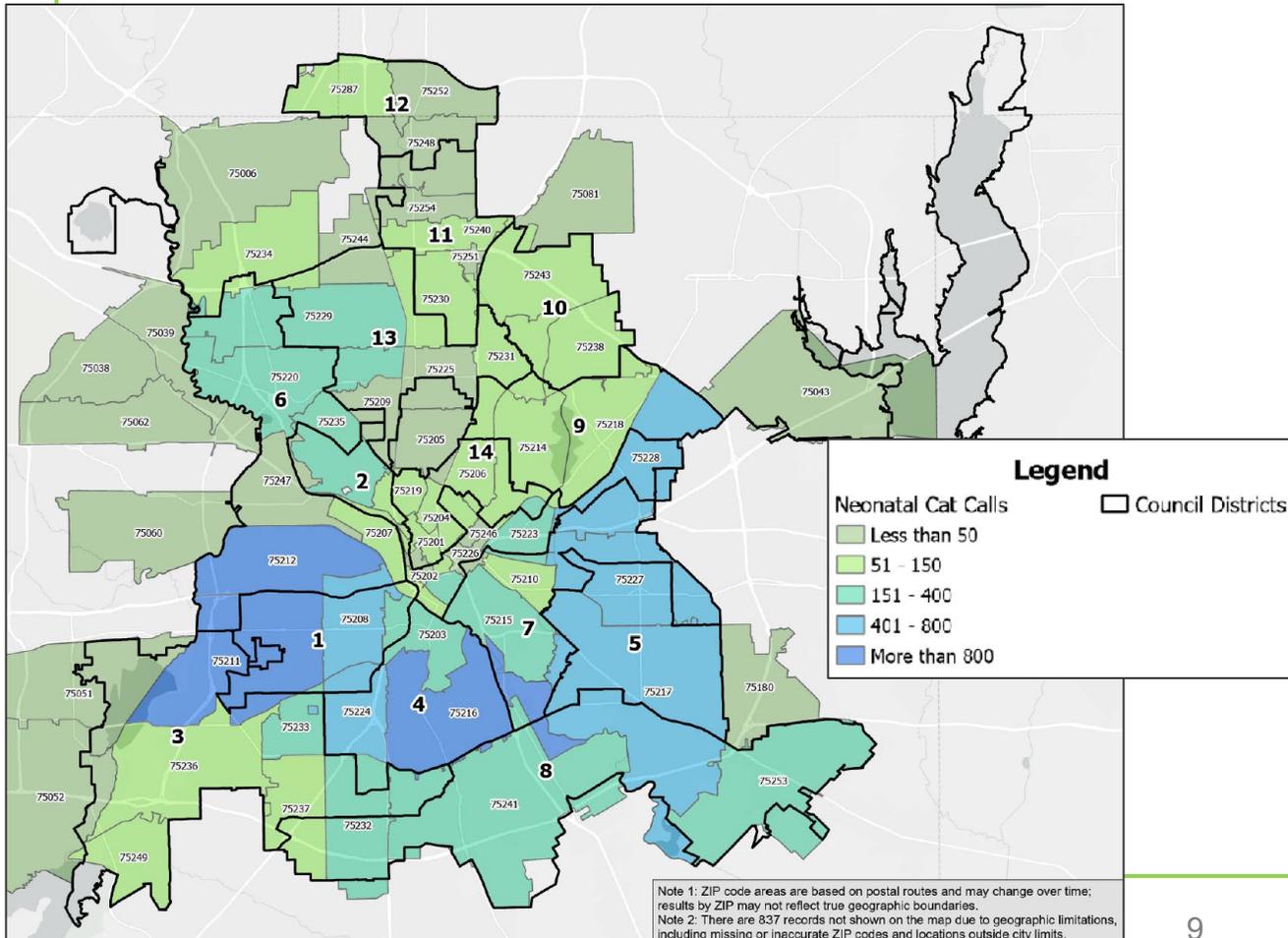
Between August 2023 and September 2025, **8,491** Feral/Community Cat SRs were submitted



Zip Codes with Most SRs	% of Total Comm Cat SRs	Council District(s) in Zip Code
75217	9.03%	5, 8, 7
75227	7.68%	7, 5
75216	6.69%	4, 7, 8
75228	6.35%	2, 9, 7
75211	6.15%	1, 3, 6
75208	4.71%	1, 6
75224	4.29%	4, 1, 3
75212	3.86%	6
75253	3.78%	8
75241	3.32%	8, 3

Feral / Community Cat Data: Neonatal Arrivals

Between August 2023 and September 2025, DAS received a total of **10,599** neonatal kittens



Zip Codes with Most SRs	% of Total Comm Cat SRs	Council District(s) in Zip Code
75211	10.72%	1, 3, 6
75212	9.32%	6
75216	6.83%	4, 7, 3, 8
75227	6.03%	7, 5
75208	5.64%	1, 6
75224	5.14%	4, 1, 3
75228	3.98%	9, 7
75241	3.87%	8, 3
75220	2.90%	6, 2
75253	2.56%	8

*Zip Code unknown for 10.28% of neonates

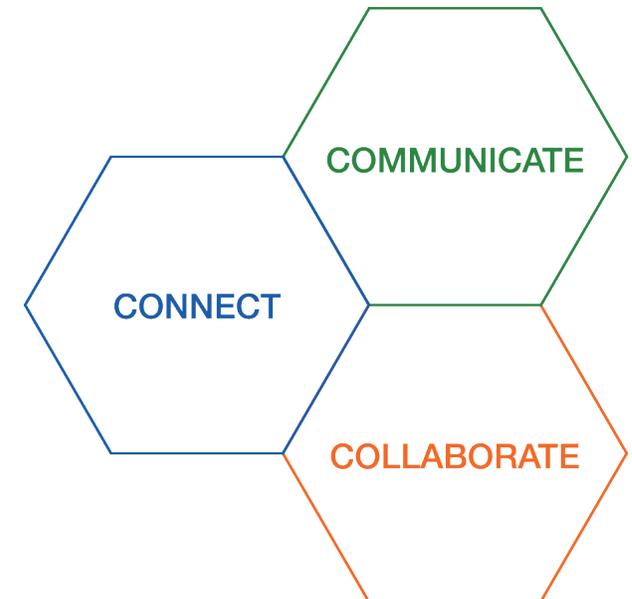


Community Concerns

Community Concerns

Feedback:

- Community members have raised concerns about feral/community cats, including quality-of-life, public health, and animal welfare issues
 - In April 2025, a community listening session was held in Bishop Arts to hear resident concerns
 - Following that meeting, DAS began reviewing state law, City Code, and approaches used by other municipalities in addressing feral/community cats
 - DAS has been working with the Animal Advisory Commissioners to coordinate further ongoing engagement discussions regarding all things DAS to include feral/community cat concerns





Other Cities

Other Cities

- **Fort Worth, TX** – Has a Feral & Stray Cat Trap, Neuter, and Return Program in city code designed to reduce euthanasia and manage community cats humanely
- **Houston, TX** – Amended the policies to include provisions relevant to Trap-Neuter and Return (TNR) to include community cat care, along with how the city recognizes and addresses community cats under local law
- **Austin, TX** – Official community cat/TNR program is operated in partnership with the local humane society; recognized by the city as the approach to managing outdoor cats, used to support TNR / community cat care
- **Wylie, TX** – City ordinance sponsors a Trap-Neuter-Release Feral Cat Program with guidance on sterilization, vaccination, and feeding rules for colonies



Current City Code & Considerations

Current Code & Policy Considerations

Current City Code:

- **7-1.1 Definitions** Sec. (19) FERAL CAT means any homeless, wild, or untamed cat.
- **7-3.1 Loose Animals** Sec. (c) It is a defense to prosecution under Subsection (a) that the animal was:
 - (2) a feral cat participating in a trap, neuter, and return program approved by the director.
- **7-4.6 Limitation on the number of dogs and cats in dwelling units** Sec. (d) In determining the number of dogs or cats harbored on the premises of a dwelling unit under Subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the director shall not count any dog or cat under six months of age or any feral cat participating in a trap, neuter, and return program approved by the director.

Policy Considerations: Amend Chapter 7 ANIMALS to include:

- **7-1.1 Definitions**
 - Provide additional definitions for Community Cat; Community Cat Caregiver; Community Cat Colony, Ear-Tipped Cat and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
- **7-3.1 Loose Animals**
 - Sec. (c) Defense to prosecution (2)
 - To include Community Cat
- **7-3.3 Trapping Animals**
 - Add offenses for trapping of Feral/Community Cats for purposes of euthanasia or relocation; also include any defense to prosecution for these activities
 - Add a provision detailing the rights of property owners/occupants regarding trappers and care givers
- **7-3.6 Community Cat Standards**
 - Detail the TNR standards for Community Cat management and requirements for Community Cats (sterilization, vaccinations, ear-tip, etc.)



Merits & Considerations

Merits: Community Cat Framework

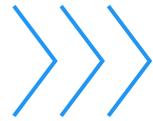
- **Public Health Benefits:** Vaccinating cats against rabies during the process protects the community.
- **Population Control:** Effectively stabilizes and reduces outdoor cat populations over time by preventing new litters.
- **Improved Cat Welfare:** Sterilized cats live healthier lives, avoiding the stress of breeding and fighting.
- **Reduce Nuisance Behaviors:** Neutered cats stop yowling, fighting, and spraying, which alleviates complaints from residents.
- **Longterm Cost Savings:** Reduces costs associated with animal intake, care/housing, and potential euthanasia.

Challenges and Considerations

- **Wildlife Impact:** Free-roaming cats may continue to prey on birds and other small mammals.
- **Resource Demand:** Requires dedicated volunteers for trapping, veterinary partnerships, and clear communication/education about goals and outcomes.
- **Ineffective if Inconsistent:** To truly decrease the population, most of the cats in a colony must be sterilized; otherwise, the population persists.
- **Community Concerns:** Some residents may object to cats in their yards, regardless of their neutered status.
- **Not a "Quick Fix":** It takes time for the population to decline, and it may not fully eliminate cats in an area.

Next Steps

Next Steps:



Finalize Draft Ordinance

Incorporate Committee input into draft ordinance language



Quality of Life, Arts and Culture

April 20, 2026
Staff will brief the Committee on recommended amendments



City Council Consideration

May 27, 2026



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