



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Douglas Schulze, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Doug Schulze, City Manager

MEETING DATE: February 11, 2025

SUBJECT: City-Sponsored Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic Days Proposal

RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion and direction to City Manager.

BACKGROUND:

A proposal for City-sponsored low-cost spay/neuter clinic days has been submitted by Debbie Fernandez Cram of Animals of the Pass and Lexi Peer of Cherry Tales Animal Sanctuary.

Introduction

Since the Banning Animal Shelter's contract was ended on January 9, 2024, and A.R.E. (Animal Rescue) was given 180 days to vacate the premises, our community has been facing a severe animal welfare crisis. With no sheltering options available, local organizations like Animals of the Pass have been left to manage a skyrocketing number of stray and abandoned animals. Unfortunately, Animal Control's hands are tied, and Banning has effectively become a dumping ground for unwanted pets. The result has been an overwhelming increase in deceased animals on the streets and a rampant rise in unplanned litters of puppies and kittens.

Without proper resources and a dedicated city department to handle this, we have seen a dramatic uptick in the number of animals needing care, which has placed a tremendous burden on local groups. This is further exacerbated by the uncontrolled number of free pet giveaways that continue to occur, leading to even more pets being abandoned or left to roam the streets.

We are requesting the city fund one or more additional low-cost clinic days through the Animal Action League (AAL) mobile unit. These clinic days would provide spay/neuter services, vaccinations, and microchipping, helping to alleviate the overpopulation crisis and reduce the number of animals suffering or dying on our streets.

Proposal Overview

We are requesting \$4,000 per additional clinic day, which would cover:

- Full sterilization procedures for approximately 26 pets per day.
- Rabies vaccinations as required by law.
- Pain management and post-operative care.
- Operational costs for AAL to bring their mobile unit to our community.

Impact and Benefits

1. *Reducing Stray and Unwanted Litters*
 - Additional clinic days will help prevent hundreds of unplanned litters each year, directly reducing the number of stray and abandoned animals.
 - This proactive approach will lead to lower euthanasia rates and reduce the burden on local shelters and animal control.
2. *Addressing the Banning Animal Welfare Crisis*
 - Since January 9, 2024, when the Banning Animal Shelter's contract ended, the city has seen a significant rise in the number of stray animals.
 - With Animal Control's hands tied and no sheltering options available, Banning has become a dumping ground for pets, leading to a sharp increase in the number of deceased animals found on the streets.
 - The rise in unplanned litters, particularly from free puppy and kitten giveaways, has contributed to the crisis, with more animals being left to roam without proper care.
 - By providing more low-cost spay/neuter services, we can directly address the overpopulation and reduce the number of animals suffering on the streets.
3. *Financial Benefits for the City*
 - By reducing the stray animal population, the city can reduce its spending on animal control services, sheltering, and medical care for animals.
 - Investment in spay/neuter services will yield long-term savings by addressing the root cause of overpopulation.
4. *Supporting Responsible Pet Ownership*
 - We are committed to reaching out to local pet owners who may not be aware of the importance of spay/neuter services.
 - Animals of the Pass will volunteer our time to advocate for the importance of spay/neuter, microchipping, and vaccinations, especially in preventing diseases.
 - Through our group pages and outreach efforts, we will help educate the community and ensure they understand the necessity of responsible pet ownership.
5. *Strengthening Community Collaboration*
 - In addition to Animals of the Pass, we are excited to partner with Cherry Tales Animal Sanctuary, a new 501(c)(3) organization led by Lexi Pierre, which focuses on animal rescue and welfare.
 - We will work closely with the city and local groups to ensure that residents are aware of clinic dates, the booking process, and the importance of these services.
 - Our group will be actively involved in outreach, appointment scheduling, and transportation for residents who may need assistance getting their pets to the clinic.
6. *Filling a Gap in City Services*
 - The city does not currently have a dedicated department to address pet overpopulation, but local organizations like ours are stepping up to fill this gap. We are willing to volunteer our time and resources to help raise awareness and encourage community participation.
 - With the city's support, this initiative will create a sustainable, collaborative effort to improve the welfare of animals in our community.

Implementation & Timeline

- Upon approval, the additional clinic days could begin as early as March 2025, subject to scheduling with AAL.
- Animals of the Pass, in collaboration with Cherry Tales Animal Sanctuary, will work on outreach,

ensuring that residents are informed and prepared to participate.

- After six months, we propose a review to assess the impact of this initiative and evaluate whether additional resources or clinic days are necessary.

Request & Conclusion

We respectfully request that the city consider funding one or more additional AAL clinic days per month, at a cost of \$4,000 per day. This initiative will have a direct and lasting impact on reducing the number of stray and unwanted animals in our community, while also encouraging responsible pet ownership.

By working together with local organizations, we can ensure that our community understands the importance of spay/neuter services and has access to affordable care. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and work with the city to implement this vital initiative.

Please let us know the next steps to have this item considered for the February 11 city council agenda.

Sincerely,

Debbie Fernandez Cram

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JUSTIFICATION:

Dumping of kittens and puppies occurs when dogs and cats are not spayed/neutered. The cost of spay/neuter at veterinary clinics is cost prohibitive for some pet owners.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost for each low-cost spay/neuter clinic day is \$4,000.

ALTERNATIVES:

Not applicable, discussion only.

BUDGETED?:

No

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT:

No