

No-Kill Committee's Pilot Study Proposal

Overall Reactions: We do not need a pilot study. There is no question but that good no-kill programs work. We just need to do it. This is an unnecessary and expensive delay. Continuing the current animal control program while adding this delay tactic is expensive and (IOHO) unethical.

An effective no-kill program involves much more than TNR. It must include better adoption programs, encouragement of tolerance, reduction in abandonment and animal abuse, and must address the availability of animals from pet shops, back-yard breeders, newspapers, etc. These components can be effectively accomplished with very little expense.

This plan is intrusive, will lead to citizen resentment. It should be totally voluntary.

This plan will cause animal suffering and death. The methodology described is lacking in many essential safeguards.

The city should have brought in an expert. The expense would have been minimal. As it is, Jazzpurr is bringing in experts for our June No-Kill national conference (www.jazzpurr.org/conference2003.htm). Yet no city administrator, councillor or member of the no-kill committee has registered for the conference.

A primary component of an effective community solution is to involve the community, particularly those who have expertise in the issue. Not allowing Jazzpurr and the local rescue groups to be full members is, IOHO, a mistake.

There are much better, simpler, more effective, more efficient methodologies.

Questions and Concerns about the Study/Project Itself:

1. If this is a "study" what are the objectives of the study? What hypothesis is being tested? What is the research design? What is the research methodology? What before or baseline measures and after or outcomes measures are being taken? What statistical analysis will be employed? How is the project itself being evaluated? If the plan involves retrapping subject cats, that is not feasible.
2. Compelling people to keep "owned" cats indoors will be impossible; it will lead to great resentment, counter-compliance and lawsuits.
3. What provision is being made to ascertain the legal status of the subject cats? Assuming that they are "unowned" because the "owned" cats are to be kept indoors is unrealistic. Veterinarians cannot treat or operate on cats without the "owner's" permission. Ontario

veterinarians have been sued for neutering animals without the permission of the “owner”, even when it was an apparent rescued stray. **Subject cats must be advertised in the Windsor Star for three days before surgery can be legally performed on them.**

4. What is the trapping phase within one neighbourhood?
5. Free microchipping clinic is a good idea, although expensive.
6. Volunteers: as outlined, this is a huge project. Hundreds of volunteers will be needed. This will require a sophisticated volunteer management program to recruit, interview, train, supervise, evaluate, recognize the volunteers. This is not without considerable expense.
7. Trapping: good trapping technique takes at least three days, with the final day being the actual day of trapping. This requires a volunteer with each trap. The traps **MUST BE WATCHED** and the animal retrieved as soon as captured and kept warm (or cool) and safe until surgery - **OTHERWISE THE TRAPPED CATS CAN DIE**. Animals must be kept food-free before surgery. Transferring feral animals from a trap into a cage, then into a trap/carrier to a clinic and so on is extremely stressful to the animal and to the people attempting to do the job.
8. The plan calls for a single employee to travel around and pick up the cats in the traps. This is logistically quite impossible.
9. The plan calls for zero vaccinations. This will be opposed by the Health Unit. These cats must have rabies vaccination. Certainly, there has not been a case of rabies in Essex County in many years, however, if a subject cat does contract it, serious consequences can ensue - not the least of which is the city’s liability. The importance of full vaccination of feral cats is controversial. FYI - Jazzpurr gives the full FVRCP series in its feral fix program. It should be noted that at a recent conference at Tufts Veterinary School in Boston, a researcher reported that a single injection of rabies vaccine provided complete protection to a feral colony that was challenged seven years later. The Feline Practitioners Association now recommends most vaccines be given only every three years; and many veterinary medical schools are now teaching that immunity to a specific antigen, once acquired, is life-long in dogs and cats as it is in all other vertebrates and that subsequent “booster vaccinations” are not only useless but can be dangerous.
10. The plan calls for making clinical appointments after the cats are captured and brought to a shelter. This is organizationally unrealistic. What veterinary clinic(s) can absorb such demand in such short a time period? Keeping the cats in traps or cages pre-surgically any longer than necessary is cruel and can lead to injury and death.
11. The plan makes no provision for post-care of the cats. This is an essential component. Someone must oversee their well-being. Cats should be confined and watched for post-surgical complications several days after surgery. Cats **must** be protected from cold after surgery. Professional associations (e.g. AVMA) denounce programs that do not provide

for feral colony managers or others to supervise the well-being of cats that have been through TNR programs. Other organizations strongly recommend providing training and support to feral colony managers.

12. Relocation: There is no provision for cats that need to be relocated. It cannot be assumed that all residents will agree to this or that it is safe to return the cats to their original location. A site for effective relocation and re-orientation must be included in an effective TNR program.
13. **Costs:**
 - a. **Chipping Clinic:** Is this the cost of veterinarian services?
 - b. **Traps:** Tomahawk live traps can be purchased for \$37US - with exchange and shipping that is approximately \$60 - \$65 CD. Therefore \$2,500 would purchase approximately 38 traps. What is the rationale of setting only 38 traps? Is the assumption that existing traps would also be utilized? Where would they be set?
 - c. **Microchips and Reader:** shall it be assumed that the plan is to microchip approximately 1980 cats at \$15 per microchip? Why is the purchase of a reader included? Everyone has one.
 - d. **Veterinarian Fees:** For 250 cats, this is an expense of \$120/cat. This is only \$10 - \$15 less than full clinic fees (Average fee of neutering is \$99; spaying \$165).

The overall cost cited is \$240 per cat. That is absurd. A full-time non-profit spay/neuter clinic can sterilize the cat, vaccinate it, ear-tag it for \$40/cat.

It should be a program that is done FOR the people and the cats, not TO them. A voluntary program where people voluntarily bring cats into a full-time clinic is much more effective in terms of results, and the costs are 1/6th of what is being proposed.