Building Responsible Pet Ownership Communities
The Calgary Model
In North America we do not have a problem with pet overpopulation, stray animals, nuisance or vicious animals – we have a problem with responsible pet ownership.

Virtually every animal that ends up in a shelter or on the street is there because a human relationship failed them.
Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein

Shifting from traditional animal control to responsible pet ownership
Animal Services

We encourage responsible pet ownership through licensing, public education and enforcement.

- Protect people from animals
- Return pets to owner
- Care for impounded animals
- Subsidized spay/neuter programs
- Obtain compliance to the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw
Vision

• Create a government department that citizens want to work with
• Create a collaborative environment with animal interest groups
• Eliminate euthanasia as an animal management strategy
• Focus on humane animal management strategies – a “No More Homeless Pets” philosophy:
  • Return to owner
  • No healthy adoptable animal euthanized
  • Utilize the clinic and veterinary skills to make more unclaimed animals adoptable
  • Utilize behaviour modification to correct issues to allow the animal to be adopted
  • Programs to teach and support responsible pet guardianship
• Reduce aggressive animal incidents
• Be self-supporting without tax dollars

Thursday, October 22, 15
From Vision to Action

1. Identify the issue
2. Engage stakeholders
3. Build a process that works
4. Educate people to use it
   • 95% voluntary compliance
5. Back it up
   • 5% enforcement
6. Measure it
   • how do you know you are improving
Identify the Issue

What are the *behaviors* in our community that are creating problems or threatening public safety

What is the desired outcome

Do we have the authority to regulate the issue – if not, who does
BSL - is the issue particular breeds or is the issue aggressive canine behavior

Pet Limits - is the issue the number of animals or is the issue related to noise, smell or care being given to the animals
Engage the Stakeholders

- Educate the public on the issues and how the proposal will address the issues
- Gather opinions on the issues and solutions
- Provide an opportunity to be heard
- Measure support or opposition to the proposal
Engage the Stakeholders

- Who will be affected by this regulation
  - Community animal experts
  - Public
  - Victims of an incident
- What will their position be
- What are their interests
Build Processes that Work

- Use a standard business project process (SMART)
- Gather data on the current state in the community and vision where we would like it to be
- What facts are available
- What facts do we need to find or validate
Build Processes that Work

- Engage the stakeholders in the solutions
- How will you measure and report on the progress
- Be realistic in how long it may take to implement change – identify the milestones
- The regulation on its own is not the whole solution – what needs to be done to support it
Public Education

• Education is the most powerful tool to change behavior
• Build knowledgeable citizens – why we have these rules
• Give people good information to support making good choices
• Supports the perception of fairness
Four Principles of Responsible Pet Ownership

1. Licence and provide permanent identification for pets
2. Spay or neuter pets
3. Provide training, physical care, socialization and medical attention for companion pets
4. Do not allow pets to become a threat or nuisance in the community
Ethical Procurement of Companion Animals

First, ask yourself if this is the right time to bring a companion animal into your family.

Do your research on your companion animal’s physical needs, what to expect for medical, food and care costs, what type of training, socializing and exercise will be needed – can you provide it over the 10 to 20 year commitment?

Source companion animals only from credible rescues or ethical breeders.
Enforcement

- Final step if all else failed - consequences
- Needs to be effective – perception of getting caught
- Needs to provide deterrent value – cost of non-compliance
- Perception of fairness
Measurement

- Confirms if the bylaw is being successful or not
- Tracks changes or trends in the community
- What to measure and what is it telling you
Our Responsible Pet Ownership Partners

A successful animal program requires working relationships with three key stakeholders:

- **Regulatory** — The City of Calgary, The Province of Alberta
- **Humane** — Calgary Humane Society (SPCA), Animal Rescue Foundation, MEOW Foundation
- **Medical/Service Providers** — Calgary Vets, AVMA, breeders, trainers, pet stores
Understanding Collaboration
What we Expect
Understanding Collaboration
How it Really Works
Shifting from Animal Control to Responsible Pet Guardianship

- Regulating the right end of the leash
- If we change the human behaviors to being responsible guardians, the animal issues will solve themselves.
- Creating services that people actually want.
- Being more preventative to reduce the responsive, penalizing approach.
The Importance of Bylaws

- Serve two roles:
  - set a minimum standard of acceptable behaviour
  - achieve compliance to that standard
- Help us live together as neighbours based on agreed upon rules
- Provide a process for resolution
  - investigation, mediation, enforcement
Performance Indicators
(How do we know we are doing a good job)

- Impounded animal numbers
- Return to owner rates
- Aggressive animal incidents
- Euthanasia rate
- Percent of animals licensed
- Number of bylaw infractions charged
- Financial performance
Remove Barriers

An effective program removes barriers to responsible pet ownership.

- Licensing needs to be market sensitive and convenient.
- Providing a no-cost spay/neuter program removes barriers for low income citizens.
- Public education programs teach citizens how to be responsible pet owners.
Dog Licensing Program

- All dogs 3 months and older require a licence
- Zero tolerance for unlicensed dogs - $250 penalty
- Annual licence fee:
  - $36 altered
  - $58 intact
Licensing Program: Cats

- Cat licensing became mandatory – 2007 January 1
- $250 fine for an unlicensed cat
- Cats with permanent ID (tattoo or microchip) are not required to wear a tag
Cat Licensing Program

- All cats 3 months and older require a licence
- Zero tolerance for unlicensed cats
- Annual licence fee:
  - $15 altered
  - $30 intact
Licensing Campaigns

Since 1999, periodic licensing campaigns with:

- Stepped up enforcement;
- Extensive media advertising;
- “Amnesty”
Key Program Messages

• Responsible Pet Ownership has its rewards. The card is a tangible reward that adds even more value to the license.

• By using the card a couple of times, pet owners recoup their licensing fees.

• The card provides discounts on partnering quality merchants’ products and services.
Our Partners cont’d.
Licensing: Making it Easy

- Renewal notices automatically sent out
- Easy payment options:
  - In person at 2 locations
  - Telephone (3-1-1, 24/7)
  - [www.calgary.ca/animalservices](http://www.calgary.ca/animalservices)
  - At bank
  - By mail
  - Night depository
  - Directly to an officer
Licensing Compliance

- Follow up on all licence non-renewals
- Officers can check for a valid animal licence using onboard computer or radio dispatch
Licensing Compliance

- Park patrols
- Impounded dogs and cats may not leave facility without a licence
- 6 month free licence for adopted dogs and cats
The Licensing Advantage

- Enables Animal Services to quickly reunite missing pets with their owners
- Identifies that a lost animal has a caregiver/owner
- A licensed animal is one phone call away from going home
Officer Training

- Officer Field Safety
- Dog Handling
- Lifts, Loading & Transporting
- Leash Techniques
- Capture and Control Tools
- Breeds and Behaviour
- Aggressive Incident
- Investigation
Dog Handling

- Officer Safety
- Controlling the Animal
- Confidence Building
- Learning Animal Behaviour
Canine Behaviour

- Calming Signals
- Distance Increasing Signals
- Distance Decreasing Signals
- Officer Confidence Building
Aggression Investigation

- Get Control of the Aggressive Animal
- Ensure Victim Assistance is Provided
- Establish Facts/Collect Evidence
- Determine Action to be Taken
- Follow Through
Animal Behaviour Assessments

- Dogs involved in Aggressive Incidents
- Dogs Being Made Available for Adoption
Behaviour Assessments on Dogs Involved in an Aggressive Incident

- Determine what may have triggered the behaviour and assess the animal to determine recommendations

  Charges or Nuisance Order or Vicious Animal Order

- Nuisance Order – Conditions

  Confinement, control measures and training by a certified pet dog trainer

- Vicious Dog Orders – Conditions

  Euthanize, confinement, control measures and training by a certified pet dog trainer
Dogs Being Made Available For Adoption

- Determine Suitability
  - Open Adoption
  - Adopt with Conditions
  - Hold for Initial Training and Re-Test
  - Not Suitable for Adoption
Public Education School Programs
ECS – Grade 6
Role of Education

• Corrects myths or misconceptions
• Supports knowledgeable citizens
• Transforms misunderstanding
• Changes behaviour
• Key to voluntary compliance
School Programs

- PAWS Dog Bite Prevention Program: ECS – Grade 6
- Dogs in Our Society: Grade 1
- Urban Coyotes: Grades 3 – 6
School Presentations

- All curriculum based
  - Urban Coyotes – Social Studies or Science focus
  - includes content and process
  - grade-appropriate support materials
  - interactive programs
- Educators present programs in the schools
- No cost
- Budget from licensing
- Interactive - geared to classrooms not assemblies
Performance Indicators
(How do we know we are doing a good job)

- Impounded animal numbers ↓
- Return to owner rates ↑
- Aggressive animal incidents ↓
- Euthanasia rate ↓
- Percent of animals licensed ↑
- Number of bylaw infractions charged ↓
- Financial performance ↑
Calgary’s Population

People (2010): 1,071,515
Dogs (2010): 122,325
Cats (2010): 91,551
Licensing Compliance

Dogs

- 111,500 licensed dogs as of 2011 December
- Approx. 90% compliance

Cats

- 51,500 licensed cats as of 2011 December
- Approx. 55% compliance
Cats Impounded

2010

- 869 impounded
- 55% (479) returned to owner. Of these:
  - 18% driven directly home (84)
  - 82% picked up from Animal Services (395)
- 27% adopted (232)
- 18% euthanized (158)

2011

- 886 impounded
- 49% (430) returned to owner. Of these:
  - 18% driven directly home (77)
  - 82% picked up from Animal Services (353)
- 31% adopted (277)
- 20% euthanized (179)
Owner Awareness

Can you help me get home?

I was found in your neighbourhood on July 21, 2010 and brought to the Animal Services Centre at 2201 Portland Street SE. If you know my owners, please tell them where I am. They can pick me up between 10:00am and 7:00pm on weekdays or between 10:00am and 4:00pm on weekends.

THE CITY OF CALGARY
ANIMAL & BYLAW SERVICES
Disposition of Cats
Dogs Impounded

2010

- 4330 dogs impounded
- 87% (3746) returned to owner.

Of these:
- 32% driven directly home (1209)
- 68% picked up from Animal Services (2537)
- 8.5% adopted (374)
- 4.5% euthanized (210)

2011

- 4576 dogs impounded
- 87% (3992) returned to owner.

Of these:
- 36% driven directly home (1427)
- 64% picked up from Animal Services (2565)
- 8% adopted (344)
- 5% euthanized (240)

Thursday, October 22, 15
Disposition of Impounded Dogs

Thursday, October 22, 15
Continuous Improvement

- Develop public spay/neuter program
- Build spay/neuter clinic (Opened July 2, 2009)
- Increase number of licensed cats
- Increase number of licensed dogs to 100%
- Research lifetime licence with microchip
- Work towards 100% return to owner
- Increase use of Drive Home Program
- Be a best practice city in animal management
- No More Homeless Pets within 5 years
Questions?