



Proposed Title 17 Code Updates

City of Tacoma

Government Performance and Finance Committee
January 21, 2025

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OVERVIEW



- Review animal overpopulation problem
- Review proposed Title 17 code changes
- Discuss next steps

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ANIMAL OVERPOPULATION

Animal shelter and Animal Control resources are frequently overburdened in Tacoma:

- HSTPC resorting to doubling or tripling kennel occupancy and waiving or reducing adoption fees on multiple occasions
- 2022-2023: 311 received 758 animal issues complaints
- 2023-2024: 311 received 1,451 animal issues complaints
- 2024-2025: 311 received 1,467 animal issues complaints

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ANIMAL OVERPOPULATION

High numbers of unhoused animals can result in:

- Rising animal shelter costs
- Potential increase in euthanasia for healthy and adoptable animals
- Increased animal suffering due to limited support resources
- Sanitation concerns for the public and environment
- Public safety concerns
- Increased public frustration

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2024: Outreach with HSTPC, Animal Control, and constituents

2025: Proposed updates to TMC Title 17 include:

- Updates to help to address overpopulation
- Additional miscellaneous updates

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17.01.110 Mandatory spay/neuter for impounded dogs and cats – exception.

A. No unaltered dog or cat that is impounded ~~more than once in any 12-month period~~ may be redeemed by any person until the animal is spayed or neutered. The alteration shall be accomplished by the animal shelter or by any duly licensed veterinarian in Pierce County authorized by the animal shelter. In all cases, the veterinarian fees shall be paid at the time of redemption by the animal's owner.

B. Exceptions. The alteration shall not be required upon a showing of proof of alteration from a licensed veterinarian. The alteration shall not be required if the owner or other person redeeming the animal provides a written statement from a licensed veterinarian stating that the spay or neuter procedure would be harmful to the animal.

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PROPOSED REVISIONS



17.05.040 Annual license fees.

A. Adult Dogs and Cats:

Cat Altered	\$3020
Cat Unaltered	\$17565
Dog Altered	\$4030
Dog Unaltered	\$17565

B. Reduced rates for senior citizens, 65 years of age or older, ~~and~~ individuals with a permanent disability, ~~and individuals who qualify for the Tacoma Public Utility bill assistance program:~~

Cat Altered	\$5
Cat Unaltered	\$10035
Dog Altered	\$10
Dog Unaltered	\$10035

C. License for Indoor Pig: \$40.00

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PROPOSED REVISIONS



17.05.010 License required

D. ~~After August 1, 2002, absent proof of prior ownership, the~~ The following are the maximum number of dogs and cats which may be licensed by a resident of the City or kept at a street address or physical location in the City:

- ~~1. Six dogs or six cats or any combination of dogs and cats totaling six animals.~~
- ~~2. After April 1, 2025, absent proof of prior ownership, only one of the total maximum number of dogs and cats may be licensed as unaltered.~~
- ~~3. It is unlawful for any person found to house more than the maximum number of dogs and cats.~~

Violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

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PROPOSED REVISIONS



Banning breeding, advertising, and sale of companion animals for profit:

- The Deliberate Breeding of Companion Animals for Profit is Prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person to deliberately breed any companion animal, namely any dog, cat, or rabbit, for the purposes of profit.
- Advertisement and Sale of Companion Animals Prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or offer for sale any companion animal, namely any dog, cat, or rabbit.
- Exception for Accidental Litters
- Exception for Rehoming Fees

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PROPOSED REVISIONS



Community Cats

- New definition:
 - “Community cat” refers to an unowned, free-roaming cat that may be receiving care from a community member or may be stable without intervention in its resident area. These cats are generally feral and may or may not be reproductively sterilized. Community cats are not defined as stray cats, and they do not have a legal owner and are not routinely microchipped.
- Potential modest revenue to support low cost spay and neuter for community cats from increased fees
 - Honorary Council Member fundraiser
- Spay and neuter for community cats that are impounded and returned

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PROPOSED REVISIONS



Additional miscellaneous updates:

- Indoor and outdoor pig updates
- Updates to various fees
- Separating injury to domestic animals or livestock from injury to humans
- New permit timeline and notification for potentially dangerous dogs

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NEXT STEPS



- City Council Consideration – Study Session on February 18

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