



Animal Services

Responsible Euthanasia Policy and Schedule of Fees

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Responsible Euthanasia Policy

- **Identified Issues and challenges:**
 - Reviews and audit conducted in 2024 found DAS lacked formal written, adopted policy
 - Animal Industry as a whole, lacks an established, standardized process
 - Review of various entities confirmed lack of consistent practices across shelters and rescues
- **Policy Purpose:**
 - Ensure humane, ethical, and consistent decision-making regarding animal euthanasia
 - Establishment of Review Team and Roles
 - Sets clear decision-making, documentation, and approval process
 - Establish criteria for emergency euthanasia including after action review
- **Policy Development:**
 - Review of suggested best practices from a variety of sources
 - Draft of policy reviewed by:
 - Internal Staff
 - Best Friends Animal Society
 - Outside consultants
 - Policy Review Committee
 - Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

Key Policy Components

- **Limiting Euthanasia**

- No stray animal euthanized prior to expiration of its stray-hold period (72 hours)
- No stray animal euthanized on a day that the shelter is not open to the public
- Animal Services will not euthanize animals who do not meet the criteria set out by this policy.
- No animal shall be euthanized solely because the Shelter is at capacity.
- Euthanasia will be done in accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Subchapter D, *Standards for Allowable Methods of Euthanasia for Animals in the Custody of an Animal Shelter*
- The Animal Services Director (or their designee) shall approve all animal euthanasia recommendations.

- **Establishment of Euthanasia Decision Categories and Criteria:**

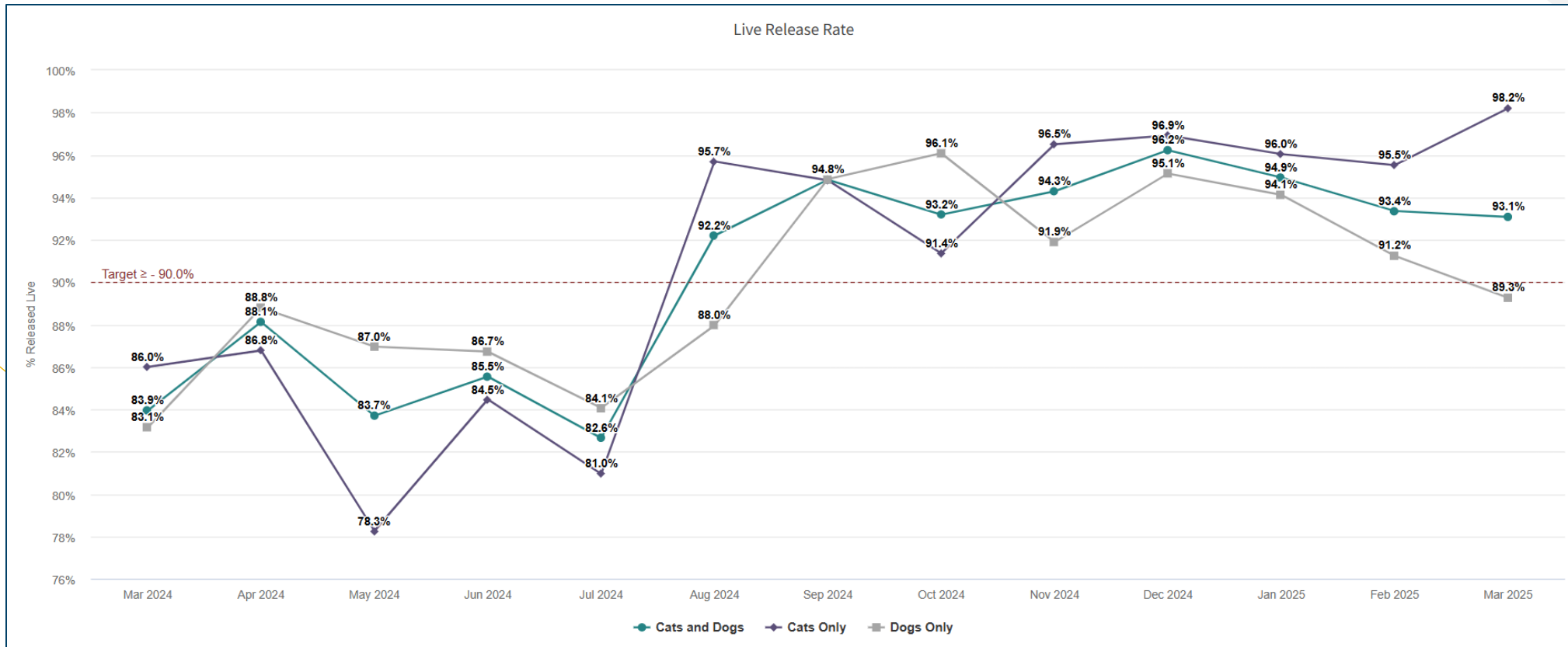
Category	Considerations
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An animal that is suffering from an acute or chronic disease, illness, condition, or pain that cannot be alleviated to a satisfactory degree, given the practical and financial resources available, or • An animal that poses a health risk to other animals or people
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In cases where behavior modification is not possible, such as an animal with a behavioral problem that results in suffering, risk to itself, other animals, people, or the environment that cannot be mitigated
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final order by a court of legal authority to euthanize an animal • An animal that must be euthanized pursuant to Chapter 6-Animals of the Code of Ordinances City of Denton, Texas, Texas Health and Safety Code, or Texas Penal Code.
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife suffering from an injury that cannot be alleviated to a satisfactory degree • Wildlife or high-risk rabies vectors who are at higher risk to transmit the virus to other animals or people (bats, racoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes) • Neonates or unweaned wildlife without a mother who cannot be provided appropriate care given the practical resources available
Prohibited Animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An animal that is considered unlawful to possess within the City limits as defined by Chapter 6, Sec. 6-2.- Definitions, of the Code of Ordinances City of Denton, Texas and cannot be placed in a timely manner with a rescue or other animal welfare entity
Neonates/ Unweaned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neonates or unweaned animals without a mother who cannot be given appropriate care

Review Team and Assessment Process

- Review Team:
 - Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM): Provides medical evaluations
 - Management Team Member: Facilitates review process, ensures documentation completeness, and submits assessments
 - Shelter Staff Member: Offers hands-on insights from daily interactions and provides perspective
 - Animal Services Officer: Offers hands-on insights from daily interactions and provides perspective
 - Shelter Behaviorist: Provides behavioral evaluations
 - Animal Services Director: Reviews all recommendations, validates the review process, and logs final approval in system
- Process Outline:
 - Physical review of animal
 - Review of animal's profile in shelter management software
 - Use of Welfare Assessment Tool
 - Submission of documented findings for final review and approval by Director
- Emergency Euthanasia
 - Time-critical circumstances where convening the full team is not feasible
 - Authorized by Director
 - Post-evaluation by Review Team to ensure adherence to policy

Implementation and Findings

- Began Beta Testing September 16, 2024
- Worked to refine documentation process
- Continued to seek feedback from outside experts and staff
- Current Live Release Rate (LRR) of 93.1% for March 2025
- LLR has been above 90% since implementation in September



Policy Next Steps

- Policy is currently in use since Beta testing began on September 16, 2024
- Vetted by City's Legal department and Policy Review Committee
- Received recommendation for approval from Animal Shelter Advisory Committee on May 14, 2025
- Seeking feedback from Council
- Plan to bring back to Council in June for formal adoption
- Separate from audit follow up which is planned for August



Animal Services Schedule of Fees

Responsible Euthanasia Policy Operational Considerations & Fiscal Impact

- Resource Constraints, balancing Animal Welfare with Fiscal Responsibility
- Ethical Considerations & Transparency
- Explore developing a cost-benefit framework
- Current Spend on external Veterinary Services \$77,058
 - 82 animals treated
 - 32 cases Parvo/specialty not able to treat at shelter
- Staff recommends updating current Schedule of Fees

	FY 25 <i>(as of 4/26/25)</i>	FY 24	FY 23	FY 22
External Services Spend	\$ 77,058	\$ 3,721	\$ 20,698	\$ 3,911
# of Animals Treated	82*	7*	91	15

**X-Rays no longer outsourced as of Nov 2023*

Cost of Service Estimates & Evaluation Process

- Current fee schedule adopted in 2013
- Informal Department Cost of Service Study conducted
- Benchmarking with surrounding and like cities
- Evaluation of current fees, current cost recovery rate, and impact on the community
- Proposed fees reflect recent Chapter 6 Ordinance changes, current practices, and offset increase in expenses for goods and services

Care Activity	Direct Cost (per animal)			
	FY 25(*YTD)	FY 24	FY 23	FY 22
Animal Intake (<i>microchip, exam, vaccination</i>)	\$77.68	\$76.98	\$76.46	\$50.90 <i>*No microchip</i>
Spay/Neuter	\$98.87/dog \$84.45/cat	\$98.43/dog \$84.13/cat	\$97.86/dog \$83.86/cat	\$97.74/dog \$83.78/cat
Housing & Care (<i>*average based on annual intake</i>)	\$774/year \$2.12/day	\$716/year \$1.96/day	\$509/year \$1.40/day	\$534/year \$1.46/day
Annual Intake	5,760 <i>*projected</i>	5,485	5,305	4,745

Proposed Rate Changes & Additions

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Adoption Fee		
Cat & Dog	\$60	\$40
Ferrets, Rabbits, Exotics	\$10	\$40
Small Furies <i>(hamster, guinea pig, & similar)</i>	N/A	\$10
Fowl	N/A	\$10
Impound Fee- Class A, Unaltered <i>(dogs, cats, fowl, each animal)</i>		
1 st impound	\$20	\$50
2 nd impound <i>(Required sterilization*)</i>	\$30	\$75 \$150 with sterilization
3 rd impound <i>(and every impound thereafter)</i>	\$45	\$100

Proposed Rate Changes & Additions

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Impound Fee- Class A, Altered <i>(dogs, cats, fowl, each animal)</i>	N/A	
1 st impound	N/A	\$20
2 nd impound	N/A	\$30
3 rd impound <i>(and every impound thereafter)</i>	N/A	\$45
Impound Fee- Class B <i>(prohibited, exotic, or wild animals)</i>		
1 st impound	\$34	\$100
2 nd impound <i>(Required sterilization*)</i>	\$50	\$150
3 rd impound <i>(and every impound thereafter)</i>	\$75	\$200
Daily Handling Fee	\$8	\$10
Daily Quarantine Fee	\$8	\$ 10/day

Proposed Rate Changes & Additions

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Carcass Handling/Dead Animal Disposal Fee	\$20	
Drop off at Animal Shelter	\$15	\$35
City pick up of Animal	\$35	\$55
Dangerous Animal Fee	\$200	\$200
Dangerous Dog Sign	N/A	\$100
Prohibited Animal Permit Fee	\$35	\$75
Microchip Fee	N/A	\$25
Owner Surrender Fee-Altered	N/A	\$45
Owner Surrender Fee-Unaltered	N/A	\$75

Proposed Removal of Rates

Description	Current Fee
Impound Fees- Class B <i>(goat, sheep, lamb, pig, sow, calves, foals, and animals of the same approximate size and weight)</i>	
1 st impound	\$30
2 nd impound	\$40
3 rd impound	\$75
4 th impound	\$113

Description	Current Fee
Impound Fees- Class C <i>(cattle, mules, horses, ponies, and animals of the same approximate size and weight)</i>	
1 st impound	\$35
2 nd impound	\$50
3 rd impound	\$75
4 th impound	\$115

Proposed Removal of Rates

Description	Current Fee
Animal Euthanasia Fee	\$30
Dog and Cat Registration Fee	
Not Sterilized	\$25
Sterilized	\$4

Proposed Rates & Fees:

COUNTY Animals

- Collected by City from owners of animals received from County

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Impound Fee- Class A, Unaltered Animal		
1 st impound	\$20	\$55
2 nd impound <i>(Required sterilization*)</i>	\$30	\$80
3 rd impound <i>(and every impound thereafter)</i>	\$45	\$105
Impound Fee- Class A, Altered Animal		
1 st impound	\$20	\$25
2 nd impound	\$30	\$35
3 rd impound <i>(and every impound thereafter)</i>	\$45	\$50

Proposed Rates & Fees: Services Rendered to Denton COUNTY

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
DSHS Head Shipment for Rabies Specimen	\$70	\$125
Animal Quarantine- 10 days	\$60	\$150
Necropsy	N/A	At cost
Animal Holding		
Impound Fee	N/A	\$50
1-3 days	\$15/\$20/\$25	\$15 per day
4 days	\$30	Previous impound and holding fee above + \$150 sterilization fee and \$15 for 4 th day
5+ days	\$0	All impound and holding fees above plus \$15 for each day in care beyond 4 days.

Proposed Rates & Fees for Services Rendered to Denton County

Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Intake Exam (for public drop off)	N/A	\$55
Medical Services		
Treatment for common illness (in-house)	N/A	\$150
X-Rays	N/A	\$100
PCR Test	N/A	\$150
Outsourced medical services	N/A	At cost
Sterilization Surgery	N/A	\$150
Carcass Handling/ Dead Animal Disposal Fee	N/A	\$50

Proposed Removal of Rates for Denton County

Description	Current Fee
Animal Euthanasia Fee	\$30
Dog and Cat Registration Fee	
Not Sterilized	\$25
Sterilized	\$4
Credits	Impound fees collected from owners at reclaim are credited to the County fees for services

Schedule of Fees

Next Steps

- Received recommendation for approval from Animal Shelter Advisory Committee on May 14, 2025
- Seeking feedback from Council
- Plan to bring back to Council in June for formal adoption
- If approved, plan to implement July 1, 2025- will work with Marketing and Communications on publication plan
- Updated fees for County will be incorporated into revised Interlocal Agreement (ILA)
 - ILA currently in review process
 - Plan to bring to Council in June for review and approval



Questions