

REPORT TO: Mayor and Members of Council

PREPARED BY: Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Services

DIVISION: Animal Control

MEETING DATE: July 16, 2025

SUBJECT: RTC - Cat Control Services Proposal

PROPOSED MOTION

THAT Council receives the report entitled Cat Control Services Proposal,

AND THAT Council approves the proposed Cat Control Services Agreement with the Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, to provide cat control services;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Municipality.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives the report entitled Contracted Cat Control Services Proposal,

AND THAT Council approves the proposed Cat Control Services Agreement with the Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, to provide cat control services;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Municipality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of North Middlesex currently has an established regulatory framework and contracted service in place for dog control; however, no equivalent program exists for cats. This has created a service gap in the community, with municipal staff receiving calls

almost daily from residents seeking assistance with stray, feral, or nuisance cats. These inquiries highlight a growing and unmet need for cat control services in North Middlesex.

In response to this issue and following an inquiry from the Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter regarding service opportunities, staff explored a cat control service model that could meet the needs of our residents while remaining cost-effective.

The proposed Cat Control Services Agreement would provide municipal access to a qualified contractor operating under a retainer and mileage model. Under this model, the Municipality would pay a fixed monthly retainer to ensure availability of service, with mileage reimbursed for each call made on our behalf. The agreement is designed to be scalable and responsive to service demands.

This report recommends entering into the proposed agreement to formally extend animal control efforts to include cats, respond to resident concerns, and promote animal welfare in the community.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Fiscal Responsibility By seeking fiscal sustainability by balancing service needs, demands, and growth

Quality of Life, Recreation, Parks, and Culture By creating and maintaining high-quality public spaces and promote aging in place in the community

BACKGROUND

The Municipality of North Middlesex currently has an established Animal Control Services Agreement in place for dogs; however, this agreement does not include services related to cats, as the current provider does not handle stray, feral, or nuisance cats. As a result, the Municipality has no formal regulatory framework or service program in place to address cat-related concerns.

Over the past year, municipal staff have seen a noticeable increase in calls and complaints related to stray and feral cats, including concerns regarding animal welfare, property damage, and public nuisance. These calls are now occurring on an almost daily basis, demonstrating a significant gap in available services and rising community concern.

In mid-2025, the Municipality was approached by Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter to explore the potential for a contracted cat control service. Staff subsequently engaged in discussions to develop a service agreement that would be responsive to North Middlesex's needs while also allowing for flexibility, cost control, and future evaluation.

The proposed agreement is structured as a pilot program, enabling the Municipality to assess service demand, outcomes, and potential long-term regulatory options without committing to a permanent service model at this time.

DISCUSSION

The Municipality recently entered into a two-year agreement for dog control services, following a public tender that received limited submissions. The chosen provider was the only viable option, underscoring the challenges in securing animal control services in rural areas.

Currently, there are no dedicated formal intake facilities for cats within the Municipality. As a result, residents and staff have historically had to rely on out-of-boundary providers such as the Humane Society London & Middlesex or other rural rescue organizations. This has posed challenges in terms of accessibility, response time, and the Municipality's ability to monitor or track outcomes.

The proposed agreement with Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter offers a structured and humane approach to managing stray and abandoned cats. The Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter, located in Glencoe (approximately 25–30 km from North Middlesex's municipal boundary), is capable of providing structured cat control services. While not within municipal limits, it remains a practical and accessible option for responding to incidents within the Municipality.

The agreement allows the Municipality to share program updates and contractor contact information on its website. The shelter operates daily and may be called upon to respond to emergent cat removal situations in North Middlesex, supporting emergency services.

A one-year pilot program will allow the Municipality to evaluate community need, service volume, and overall program impact without a long-term commitment.

The service model focuses on the removal and rehoming of cats, rather than operating on a catch-spay-release basis, which supports both animal welfare and the reduction of nuisance complaints within our communities.

The draft agreement has been reviewed by Municipal legal counsel and the Municipality's insurance provider. No concerns were identified with respect to legal or risk implications as presented within.

FINANCIAL

The proposed Cat Control Services Agreement with the Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter is structured as a pilot program with clearly defined costs to allow the Municipality to evaluate the demand and scope of service over a one-year term.

The proposed retainer amount of \$750 plus applicable taxes is based on a conservative estimate of anticipated cat control service volume during the pilot program, set at approximately 15 calls annually. This approach was benchmarked against the current dog control contract, which carries a higher retainer due to the increased complexity and urgency of dog-related calls. Mileage and other variable costs will be billed separately according to the Municipality's established rates. This retainer amount supports a cost-effective pilot while enabling the contractor to maintain readiness and service capacity.

The retainer is a baseline to be paid as a flat fee covering basic readiness, operational costs, and anticipated volume.

Retainer Fee

- The Municipality will pay a monthly retainer of \$750.00 plus HST (\$847.50 inclusive) to secure the availability of service.
- This results in a total annual retainer cost of \$10,170.00.

Mileage Reimbursement

- In addition to the retainer, the Municipality will reimburse the Contractor for mileage at the rate outlined in the current Fees and Charges By-law.
- Mileage rates currently reflect \$0.70 per KM
- Mileage will be billed based on the actual travel distance related to service trips within North Middlesex.

If the Contractor is already within North Middlesex when dispatched to an additional location, mileage may be billed from the current location to the next location only (and not back to base between locations).

Intake paperwork will be completed by the contractor for each call to document service details, to be submitted with invoices for payment, which allows for the transparent monitoring of service usage.

This service was not included in the 2025 operating budget, as the opportunity and community need for cat control services emerged after the budget was finalized.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Of the identified annual retainer cost, only \$5,085 (less rebated portion of HST) and any mileage charges will impact the 2025 budget year. Staff will attempt to find savings in other expense lines to offset this increase and will identify them during the variance reporting process.

The full annual impact will be incorporated into the 2026 budget request.

ATTACHMENT

Draft Cat Control Services Agreement – Southwest Middlesex Animal Shelter

Prepared By: **Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk**

Reviewed By: Ralph D'Alessandro, Director of Finance /Treasurer

Approved By: Carolyn Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer