

Rockwall Animal Services Department
Euthanasia Policy Draft
FAQ's

1. Will the City Council goal of a 90% Live Outcome for animals at the Rockwall Animal Adoption Center be impacted or compromised? No, the City is committed to maintaining our live outcome rate at or above 90%. The adoption of this euthanasia policy as written or amended will not impact the 90% Live Outcome.
2. What are “companion animals”? The City of Rockwall draft policy cites the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Their definition defines companion animals as “domesticated or domestic-bred animals whose physical, emotional, behavioral and social needs can be readily met as companions in the home, or in a close daily relationship with humans. Typically, these animals are provided shelter, food, water and medical care by the owner”. These would include dogs, domestic cats, domestic birds, domestic amphibians and domestic rodents. Under this definition, wild animals such as coyotes, feral hogs, bobcats, wild snakes and feral cats would not be categorized as “companion animals”.
3. How do animals react to a shelter environment? Animals react differently to being introduced in the shelter environment. For many animals, the conditions may be better than where they came from, either strays or from irresponsible pet owners. They are provided food and water daily, their kennel is kept clean and they are vaccinated when they come into the shelter. The shelter environment can be very noisy at times and this can cause stress on some of the animals. Some animals become aggressive, some become despondent and others exhibit no change in behavior at all.
4. What criteria is used to determine if a dog is dangerous? What is the source of the City’s definition of a dangerous dog? The City of Rockwall adopted the definition of a “dangerous dog” from the Health and Safety Code, Chapter 822. A dangerous dog shall be defined as: A) makes an unprovoked attack on a person that causes bodily injury and occurs in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own; or (B) commits unprovoked acts in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own and those acts cause a person to reasonably believe that the dog will attack and cause bodily injury to that person.
5. Why is the definition of a dangerous dog important? The City of Rockwall Animal Services Department serves two roles. The department operates the Rockwall Animal Adoption Center which provides animal adoption services, provides quarantine areas for State required mandatory quarantine areas for animals involved with bite cases and houses unwanted animals until an adoption partner can be found. The second role of the Animal Services Department is to

protect the public from dangerous animals, whether domesticated or wild, remove nuisance animals from areas and prevent the outbreak of animal borne illnesses.

6. **What are feral cats?** While stray cats are pet cats that have been lost or abandoned, feral cats are typically the offspring of lost or abandoned cats or other feral cats that have not been spayed or neutered. Stray cats are accustomed to contact with people and are tame, but feral cats are not accustomed to contact with people and are typically too fearful and wild to be handled. Whereas stray cats may be reunited with their families or adopted into new homes, feral cats do not easily adapt or may never adapt to living as pets in close proximity with people.
7. **Why does the policy allow for feral cats to be euthanized?** Feral cats can be found in all parts of the City. They survive on their own with little or no assistance from people. If a feral cat is trapped and comes to the shelter, the cat must be vaccinated, provided a Rabies vaccine and be spayed or neutered prior to being released or adopted. Without donations, this is a cost to the tax payers that cannot be recovered in most cases due to an extremely low interest in the adoption of a feral cat. Once the animal has been vaccinated and altered, it will typically stay at the shelter for an extended period of time because the animals are not easily adoptable. They are perfect for a “barn cat” but barn owners are generally not willing to pay a \$60 adoption fee for a feral cat.
8. **What is Trap/Neuter and Release?** Trap/Neuter and Release or TNR, is a program where feral cats are trapped, returned to the animal adoption center and are vaccinated, altered, given a Rabies vaccine and then returned to where they were trapped and released. The theory behind the TNR program is that as the cats are altered, they cannot reproduce and the feral cat colony dies out after a period of time.
9. **Why doesn't the City adopt a TNR Program?** On most occasions, when a feral cat is trapped, it is at the request of a homeowner where the cat(s) are a nuisance. Returning the cats back to where they were trapped is not meeting the needs of the homeowner. The costs of altering, Rabies vaccination and other required vaccinations are paid for by the tax payers at a cost of approximately \$60 per cat.