

Community Cat Management Program – Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR)

Neighborhoods Subcommittee
October 29, 2024



Agenda

- Why Is This A Community Issue?
- Surrounding Cities Programs
- History of Chandler's TNR Program
- Current Status of TNR Program
- Proposed Amendments to TNR program
- Long Term Future Improvements to TNR program



2023-2025 Strategic Framework

- **Neighborhoods:**
“To sustain an exceptional quality of life for Chandler residents, preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods is paramount.”
 - A holistic neighborhood improvement approach that connects City departments, non-profits, businesses, faith agencies and residents.



Why Is This A Community Issue?

- Lack of regulation regarding cats at state and local levels
 - Cats reproduce quickly
 - Colonies grow when pet owners abandon or fail to spay/neuter
- Public health concerns related to feral cats
 - Feral cats can carry diseases transmissible to humans and pets
 - Cat waste in public spaces poses sanitation issues
 - Colonies can attract other wildlife seeking food
- Feral cats can negatively impact the ecosystem balance in parks due to their hunting habits
- Feral cats often suffer from malnutrition, disease, and injuries, resulting in a poor quality of life

Why Is This A Community Issue?

- Cats may damage gardens, yards, and property and can create noise disturbances, especially during mating season
- Feral cat issues can create division within communities with complaints on both sides of the issue
 - Residents often disagree on how to handle feral cats
 - Some want to protect and feed them, while others view them as nuisances
 - Potential legal actions between neighbors
 - In rare, extreme instances, reports have been made of animal cruelty where feral cats have been injured or killed
 - Volunteers may be fearful of hostility and retaliation
 - Volunteers may continue to feed after TNR process is completed

Community TNR Programs

- Resource requirements for an effective community TNR program:
 - Managing feral cat populations requires coordinated effort between government, non-profits, volunteers and residents
 - TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) programs need community support and education on how to properly care for feral cats
 - Requires funding
 - Feeding stations and seasonal shelters require ongoing maintenance which is usually provided by volunteers
 - Requires locations for cats to recover from surgery
 - Sick and injured cats require additional care

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control

- Maricopa County Animal Care & Control (MCACC) is the lead agency in issues involving animals in Chandler.
 - Chandler Police Department also has some resources to deal with animal complaints and care.
- Except in limited circumstances, MCACC does not retrieve cats or directly provide TNR services.
- MCACC has multiple partners that support TNR and will respond to sick or injured cats.
- MCACC offers core vaccines, flea and tick preventions, and routine care while cats are in their custody.

What Other Cities are Doing

City	TNR Program
Buckeye	Refer to Maricopa County website for resources
Gilbert	No TNR; Sec. 6-7. – Feeding- It is unlawful to feed, or place food for any wild or feral animal on town-owned property or a public right-of-way except the parks and recreation director may in his or her discretion authorize specific person(s) to feed wild or feral animals for the purpose of animal rescue, rehabilitation or management.
Mesa	Animal Control Division (does not contract with MCACC) \$1,000,000.00 approx. annual budget 3 employees – 1 specialist + 2 additional hybrid employees with an additional \$300,000.00 Agreements with 2 different partners
Phoenix	Refer to Maricopa County website for resources
Queen Creek	Refer to Maricopa County website for resources Pinal County practices TNR for any feral cats brought into their care
Scottsdale	Refer to Maricopa County website for resources
Tempe	Animal Welfare Office (part of Community Health & Human Services Dept.) \$500,000.00 approx. annual budget Full-time staff for TNR Dedicated facility

[Link to detailed
report](#)

Chandler's Initial TNR Program

Neighborhood Assistance Program - TNR

- Program started in 2014 and expanded in 2016 based on a proposal from residents.
- Neighborhood must be registered with the city. TNR activities limited to approved boundaries.
 - \$1,000 limit per neighborhood. 2019-2023 rate \$35 per surgery thru ADLA.
- From FY19/20 - FY22/23, city budgeted \$65,000 for TNR program.
- In FY24/25 City Council approved additional \$30,000 for TNR program.
 - In March 2024, city contracted with Saving One Life to manage TNR program.

Chandler's Initial TNR Program

Neighborhood Assistance Program - TNR

- Required signatures of 10 residents from that neighborhood
 - Reduced to 4 in 2019
 - Reduced to 2 in 2021
 - Allowed one signature to be from a volunteer rather than resident in 2021
- In 2021, the application process was streamlined by moving from paper to digital applications.
- HOA, apartment complex, condo must have written permission of the management entity.
- City staff processed applications and served as mediator with neighborhoods.
- Worked in conjunction with Animal Defense League of Arizona to trap, spay/neuter, clip, and return feral cats.

Chandler's Current TNR Program

TNR Program

- City entered agreement with Saving One Life on March 21, 2024, to assist staff with program demand

Scope of work includes:

- Establishing a consistent approach to daily colony feeding
- Providing food needed to stock feeding stations
- Monitoring colony health
- Supporting trap, neuter, and return program activities
- Securing the support of neighborhoods where feeding stations are established
- Providing education to neighborhoods where feeding stations are established
- Monitoring cleanliness of area surrounding feeding stations and dispose of litter resulting from feeding activities outside of the established stations
- Providing opportunities for kittens to be adopted
- Program is limited to residential properties, registered neighborhood. HOA, apartment complex, or condo must have management entity permission.
- No cap on money spent in a neighborhood. 2023-present rate is \$60 per surgery.

Program Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Potential Solutions
Improper feeding techniques lead to attraction of other feral animals during TNR and after TNR	Contractor will increase education to volunteers, utilize proper feeding stations, and address other feral animals. Feeding will only happen during TNR
Complaints of feeding dish appearances	Contractor will create and utilize “boulders” that hide the feeding dishes
Disputes between property owners, management companies and or volunteers	Contractor will increase training to volunteers and stress the importance of property owner permission Contractor will serve as a mediator in disputes Partner and volunteers will agree to walk away if a neighborhood/business does not want TNR on property
Periodic confusion around whether volunteers are acting in official capacity on behalf of City	Contractor will take full responsibility
Cats are being poisoned or shot	Contractor will increase education to the public
Burdensome application; for registered neighborhoods only	Streamline application and expand to include commercial properties
Without neighborhood registration process, community members may not know who to contact with questions/concerns	Contractor will address questions/concerns from residents

Proposed Amendments To Chandler's Current TNR Contract

- Increase marketing for the program
- Streamline application process
 - Eliminate requirement to be a registered neighborhood and associated boundaries
 - Nonprofit contractor is responsible for ensuring permission is given by private property owner and management company, if applicable
 - Contractor responsible for disputes between property owners and volunteers
- Expand program to commercial properties (requires property owner approval)

Future Program Ideas

Animal Management Program

- Mobile Unit to provide no cost/low-cost spaying/neutering of cats and dogs on a quarterly basis
 - Potential future budget request
- Shot clinics at neighborhood events
 - Potential future budget request
- Educational sessions as part of neighborhood events
 - Requires increased partnerships
- Responsible pet ownership marketing campaign
 - Potential budget enhancement request
- More frequent and structured communication among City, volunteers, and nonprofits (e.g. stakeholders group)



Proposed TNR Timeline Program

Next 30-60 days

- Amend the current Saving One Life contract to include commercial properties and eliminate the neighborhood registration process
- Research costs for future program ideas
- Continue pilot TNR program with downtown commercial properties
- Increase community education on TNR
- Increase marketing on best feeding practices
- Coordinate opportunities for Saving One Life to have more community visibility (e.g. event booths, training sessions in neighborhoods in high demand of service, mailed marketing)

Questions?

