

Local Government Animal Bylaws in British Columbia:
Current State Analysis and Emerging Practices

By

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This research presents an exploration of the current state of animal bylaws across the 25 most populated municipalities in B.C. and the identification of emerging practices for animal bylaws. The focus is on the duties placed on owners to both control their animals to prevent threats and provide care for them to ensure their wellbeing.

Findings include a gradual shift in some animal bylaws from regulations focused on control and preventing threats stemming from animals, in particular dogs, towards a more all-encompassing approach that promotes responsible pet ownership. This entails a balance between control requirements and care requirements that recognizes both the potential risks associated with pets and their ability to have positive impacts on individuals and communities.

The thesis concludes with several recommendations for municipalities considering changing their animal bylaws, including the need for comprehensive provisions on cats and increased care and anti-cruelty requirements, as well as an overview of areas for further research.

Key words: animal bylaws; responsible pet ownership; B.C. municipalities; local government

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis contributes to the academic and grey literature on local government animal bylaws and lays the groundwork for exploratory research specific to local governments in British Columbia. The research conducted for this research entails a literature review and policy analysis of local governments in British Columbia with the goal of analyzing the current state of animal bylaws as well as identifying emerging practices for animal bylaws. In this context, emerging practices represent new, innovative policy instruments that present an opportunity for further research to confirm whether they can be considered best practices or smart practices (Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press, 2013). Criteria for best or smart practices can vary but, in this context, may enhance the positive outcomes associated with companion animals in human populated spaces while minimizing potential adverse impacts. Identifying these practices can support local governments in their planning and decision-making to fulfil their purpose of “[...] providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit [and] fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community”, as laid out in the *Community Charter* (Community Charter, 2003).

The focus of this thesis is on non-human animals that are allowed to be kept on residential property in a given community. Colloquially, these types of animals are often referred to as *pets* or *companion animals*; however, the definition of these terms is nuanced and thus explored in greater detail in later sections of this thesis. The research examines animal bylaws as they relate to obligations imposed on owners of companion animals. Particular attention is paid to animal bylaws or bylaw provisions on dogs and cats; however, other companion animals are mentioned where appropriate.

The literature review represents an exploration of the governance of domesticated animals via policy tools on a broader scale, drawing from national as well as international research. The review examines common challenges associated with domesticated animals, policy tools utilized to address some of these issues, and their efficacy as well as the broader discourse surrounding the management of domesticated animals from a public health perspective. The policy analysis, on the other hand, specifically examines animal bylaws of British Columbia’s local governments by highlighting similarities and differences between local governments, examining how the governance of animals has developed over time and identifying emerging practices.

Problem Statement

Domesticated animals have a long tradition in many cultures, and they have become an integral part of both urban and rural spaces of Canada (Dean et al., 2017; Serpell, 2003). Past research has highlighted the health benefits that pet ownership can provide not only to pet owners but to communities as a whole (Headey, 1999; McNicholas et al., 2005; Toohey & Rock, 2011). At the same time, governments and communities alike acknowledge the potential adverse impacts of domesticated animals such as the risk of injury through attacks (Overall & Love, 2001), uncontrolled breeding and associated transmission of diseases (Stavisky, 2014), and threats to biodiversity (Twardek et al., 2017).

In addition to these large-scale impacts, community residents may experience day-to-day nuisances such as finding feces left by roaming animals on private property, being subjected to noise caused by howling or barking animals, experiencing conflict with roaming animals in off-leash areas, among others. This can be particularly significant in local governments with a lack of resources to enforce applicable bylaws. From a governance perspective, these issues put pressure on mayors and councillors to balance the needs and desires of pet owners with the needs of the community as a whole, understanding that no solution will be satisfactory to all parties.

In efforts to minimize the potential negative effects of pet ownership and to provide a framework for the existence of animals in private and public spaces, jurisdictions across Canada have introduced various animal bylaws. As found through this research, provinces and territories generally leave it to local governments to pass specific animal bylaws governing such practices as the licensing of pets, duties of care, and leash requirements. This decentralized approach leads to bylaws that vary from community to community with little guidance from higher levels of government. While this approach allows local governments to respond to regional needs and values, it also results in a “patchwork of regional programs with different legislation, resourcing levels, and levels of emphasis on enforcement, licensing, and education” (Clarke & Fraser, 2013). As such, the range of utilized policy tools and their effectiveness is generally unknown (Clarke & Fraser, 2013).

While many local governments face similar animal-related problems, these issues are commonly addressed on an individual basis with each community performing their own research and jurisdictional reviews in the hopes of identifying smart practices. The scope of the problem is illustrated by the sheer number of local governments reviewing current animal bylaws and proposing and passing changes. In 2021 alone, various local governments in Canada have either proposed or adopted new bylaws or changes to bylaws related to animals or are in the drafting process. This includes the City of Nanaimo (City of Nanaimo, 2021b), the City of Victoria (van der Zwan, 2021), the City of Winnipeg (Unger, 2021), the City of Castlegar (Kline, n.d.), the City of Calgary (City of Calgary, 2021), the Town of Ponoka (MacInnis, 2021), the City of Kingston (King, 2021), and the City of Red Deer (Zielinski, 2021), among others.

In addition to the practical implications of animal bylaws and their necessity in the context of local communities, philosophical questions around the necessity for animal rights and animal welfare legislation have emerged. These contemporary discussions imply the potential for animal bylaws to not merely balance the benefits and risks of animals to humans, but to also address the well-being and welfare of animals. This is a further dimension that local governments have to reckon with, particularly in the context of balancing human interests with those of companion animals and the philosophical questions that inevitably arise.

Current literature on the topic of local animal bylaws is primarily of conceptual nature; scholars have developed frameworks for the analysis of animal bylaws and to support local governments in developing bylaws that promote public health (M. J. Rock et al., 2014). Others have performed studies related to specific aspects of pet-ownership and animal regulation such as spay neuter legislation (Coleman et al., 2010), leash policies (M. J. Rock et al., 2016; Toohey & Rock, 2015), dog bites and rabies (M. J. Rock et al., 2017), among others. Advocacy groups such as the

B.C. SPCA have released reports outlining what they deem to be best practices for the care of animals and provided examples of municipalities that have implemented them. Based on a review of relevant literature, no scholarly research has been published on the current overall state of animal bylaws in British Columbia and emerging practices.

Significance of Contribution

This contribution to the literature highlights the broad scope of animal-related problems local governments are confronted with and aims to support local governments in their governance and future decision-making through the identification of emerging practices.

Fair and comprehensive animal bylaws can protect domesticated animals, their guardians, non-pet owners and wildlife, and can also provide an optimal balance between benefits associated with pet ownership and potential adverse impacts. Contrary, inadequate bylaws pose risks to local governments through increased need for public spending on health care, animal control services, environmental conservation, and more. Other outcomes include heightened public pressure and contention between constituents with and without pets.

For local governments in British Columbia, this research may aid in the development of new animal bylaws as it presents an inventory and evaluation of the current state of bylaws across the largest local governments. As mentioned above, several local governments in B.C. each year consider amending existing animal bylaws or implementing new animal bylaws to address emerging issues. This research can support individual B.C. local governments in their efforts to conduct literature reviews and jurisdictional scans and perform research on emerging and smart practices.

For the research community, this thesis can support the identification of future research endeavours to confirm whether emerging practices can be considered ‘best’ or ‘smart’ practices.

Purpose and Scope

This research aims to fill the current gap in the literature by performing a jurisdictional scan of the current animal bylaw landscape in British Columbia and identifying emerging practices for animal bylaws.

The scope of the study is determined as follows:

- The research focuses on local governments while provincial and federal matters will only be examined to the extent that they relate to local jurisdiction and governance. While the literature review examines scholarly contributions from any relevant jurisdiction, the policy analysis focuses solely on local governments in British Columbia, Canada.
- The analysis is limited to municipal or regional district bylaws; broader local government policies and plans will not be addressed, however, may present opportunities for subsequent future research.
- The research focuses on obligations imposed on owners/guardians of companion animals related to their control and care. Other matters regulated in animal bylaws, such as

enforcement through animal control officers, impounding, commercial breeding, pet stores and other commercial activities are not included.

- This research will primarily focus on animal bylaws as they apply to dogs and cats as the most prominent pets in Canadian cities. Other animals will be mentioned where provisions apply to all companion animals or where otherwise relevant.
- Laws and regulations passed by self-governing First Nations and bylaws passed by First Nation bands are not included in the scope.

Research Questions

The primary question guiding the research process is ‘What is the current state of animal bylaws in B.C. local governments as they relate to obligations pet owners have?’

Secondary research questions are:

- What kind of animals are pet owners allowed to keep on residential property in B.C.?
- What kind of animals must owners license across B.C. and what is the associated cost?
- To what degree do local government animal bylaws across B.C. address control and care requirements, respectively?
 - How do the title and purpose statement of bylaws relate to control and care?
 - What obligations exist for owners to control their pets?
 - What obligations exist for owners to provide care for their pets?
- To what extent do obligations extend to dogs, cats, and other pets?
- What are similarities and differences between animal bylaws across B.C. municipalities?
 - Are older animal bylaws different from more recent bylaws?
 - What are emerging practices commonly included in more recent bylaws?

Key Terms

To facilitate the research process and more clearly define the research scope, the following terms are defined as follows in the thesis:

Bylaws

Laws adopted by municipal councils or regional district boards in British Columbia in accordance with the Community Charter, Local Government Act or Vancouver Charter.

Bylaws allow local governments to exercise their statutory authority by regulating, prohibiting, or imposing requirements in relation to areas outlined in sections 8 and 9 of the *Community Charter* (Community Charter, 2003). They allow regional districts to do the same under the *Local Government Act* within their authority. The City of Vancouver may, as the only municipality, exercise their statutory authority under the *Vancouver Charter*. The bylaw adoption process required for a bylaw to take legal effect includes three readings and final adoption by the local council or regional district board (Government of British Columbia, n.d.).

In some cases, provincial or other approval is required, or additional requirements for the adoption of bylaws are imposed by local bylaws or other legislation (Government of British Columbia, n.d.).

Animals

All non-human animals that may be owned and kept on residential property according to a local government's animal bylaws.

The original intent for this study was to examine *pets* and how their possession is governed by local governments. During the initial research and conceptualization of the research questions, it became clear that using the term 'pet' when examining bylaws lacks clarity and poses an inherent problem of definition.

Dictionary definitions of the term *pet* include “a domesticated animal kept for pleasure rather than utility” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) or “an animal that you keep in your home to give you company and pleasure” (Collins Dictionary, n.d.). Eddy (2003) addresses the difficulty of defining the term *pet* and acknowledges the inadequacies of common dictionary definitions. Based on these definitions, determining whether an animal is a pet does not depend on its species but rather on the nature of the relationship with its owner. As such, the classification of pets is not always clear and the same animal might be considered a pet at one point in time (e.g., while living with a loving family) but not at another (e.g., if it were to be put in a shelter) (Eddy, 2003). These definitions also do not sufficiently address animals that might be kept for pleasure but are primarily classified as farm animals and/or provide some degree of utility. This is the case for some poultry or bees that owners might have a bond with but that also produce eggs or honey.

In the context of bylaws, local governments tend to regulate the keeping of pets based on species rather than based on whether the animal is kept for pleasure or utility. Granted, they tend to regulate those species that are commonly and historically kept for pleasure in British Columbia (e.g., dogs and cats), but whether an individual actually keeps them for this purpose is usually not essential. Not all pet owners treat their pets kindly or derive pleasure from having them around – nevertheless, these animals are included in bylaws.

As a result of the considerations above, the research will examine animal bylaws, rather than pet bylaws. In this context, animals include all non-human animals that may be owned and kept on residential property according to a local government's animal bylaws. It should be noted that the term 'pet' may still be used, where appropriate, particularly when referencing literature that uses the term or when used colloquially, for instance in the term 'pet owner,' More frequently, literature will also use the term 'companion animal' as a synonym for pet.

Structure of Thesis

The thesis starts off with background information on the legislative and policy landscape related to animals in Canada in **Chapter 2**. This section examines key sections of the federal *Criminal Code*, compare provincial jurisdictions, and briefly describes B.C.'s *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*. Further, Indigenous governance of animals by First Nation bands as well as self-governing First Nations are explored, followed by an overview of local government authority

over animals in B.C and a scan of some of the stakeholders relevant to the topic of pets. **Chapter 3** entails the literature review. This section explores research on the positive impacts of pet ownership on human health and quality of life, the risks and adverse impacts of pet ownership, local government policies and smart practices utilized to balance potential threats with benefits associated with pets, as well as previous reviews of animal bylaws in British Columbia. **Chapter 4** details the methodological approach and methods for data collection underlying the research, the ways in which data was analyzed as well as the potential limitations of the analysis. **Chapter 5** presents the findings of the research and lays out different aspects of animal control/governance that are common across B.C. municipalities, including control requirements, care provisions, licensing requirements and fees, and allowable/prohibited animals. **Chapter 6** includes a discussion and analysis of findings and provides answers to the primary and secondary research questions. **Chapter 7** concludes the thesis with final thoughts and recommendations to local governments as well as the research community based on the preceding chapters.

Chapter 2: Background – Policy Actors

All four orders of government have laid out laws and regulations regarding animals and their treatment. This chapter presents an overview of the most relevant legislation enacted by different governments to regulate and protect companion and other animals in Canada as well as some of the stakeholder groups that have an interest in animal-related issues.

Federal Government

Regulation of animals on the federal level is limited; the *Health of Animals Act* regulates the transportation of animals, and the *Meat Inspection Act* stipulates provisions around the handling and slaughtering of animals at federally regulated slaughterhouses (Fraser et al., 2018, p. 297). More relevant in this context are the limited number of criminal charges related to animal cruelty in sections 444 to 447 of the Canadian *Criminal Code*. The Code makes it an offence to willfully and without lawful excuse kill, poison, or injure dogs, birds or animals that are kept for a lawful purpose (Criminal Code, 1985). It furthermore criminalizes the willful causing of unnecessary suffering to an animal or a bird, and the promotion of or participation in the fighting or baiting of animals or birds, among others (Criminal Code, 1985).

It is noteworthy that animals are categorized as property and that section 445 only prohibits the killing of animals without lawful excuse. Courts have stated that owners of animals, including pets, can authorize the killing of that animal so long as no other sections of the Criminal Code apply, e.g., causing unnecessary suffering (*R. v. D.L.*, 1999). Other lawful excuses may include provisions in legislation such as section 2 of Ontario's *Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act* which allows any person to kill a dog that is found injuring or killing livestock or poultry (Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act, 1990).

Provincial and Territorial Governments

Provinces and territories have the primary responsibility for enacting regulations that govern the welfare of animals, which includes wildlife, farm animals and pets (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2021). While the specific legislation varies between provinces and territories, it generally covers a broad scope of animal welfare concerns and is more specific than the offences laid out in the federal *Criminal Code*.

The animal law advocacy group Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) (2017) argued in a 2017 study that Nunavut and the Northwestern Territories have some of the weakest animal protection laws in Canada, partially because the applicability of protections is limited to dogs. On the other hand, they maintain that Prince Edward Island and Manitoba have some of the strongest animal protection laws. British Columbia ranks 5th in the study, with a range of protections that apply to most species but according to ALDF, there is a need for better definitions and standards of basic care for animals. The scope of ALDF's review was limited to legislation enacted for the purpose of animal protection (including wildlife and farm animals, where applicable) while laws governing specific activities, such as transport and slaughter of farm animals or hunting and trapping of wildlife, were excluded (Animal Legal Defense Fund, 2017).

In 1996, the Province of British Columbia introduced the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* that establishes standards of care for animals and empowers the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to enforce animal cruelty laws through authorized agents (Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1996). The Act states that a person responsible for an animal must not cause them to be in distress and it lays out provisions for the transport of animals, among others. Much of the Act concerns itself with the SPCA's authorities and duties related to animals in distress, and it provides avenues for persons who own animals to have decisions made by the SPCA reviewed and appeal them with the B.C. Columbia Farm Industry Review Board.

Wild and exotic animals are further governed under the provisions of the *Wildlife Act* and its Controlled Alien Species regulation (B.C. Ministry of Forests, n.d.). Individuals are prohibited from keeping any 'prohibited' controlled alien species in the regulation without a special permit. Certain 'restricted' controlled alien species may be kept, provided they are under a certain length. It should be noted that local governments may enact bylaws that go further than the provisions laid out in the CAS regulation. This may lead to a person being allowed to keep an exotic animal under provincial jurisdiction but not in a particular local government due to its bylaw on exotic animal. The breadth of local government jurisdiction is discussed further below.

Indigenous Government

Indigenous governments in B.C. have authority over some aspects of animal and pet ownership within their jurisdiction, depending on their status as either a band under the *Indian Act* or a Modern Treaty Nation. While Indigenous governments share similar authorities on making bylaws and laws, individual nations may have differing approaches to regulating animals and pet ownership.

Under the *Indian Act*, the council of a band or First Nation government, may make bylaws to “[...] provide for the health of residents on the reserve and to prevent the spreading of contagious and infectious diseases [...], the prevention of disorderly conduct and nuisances [...], the protection against and prevention of trespass by cattle and other domestic animals [...]” (Indian Act, 1985), among others. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, for instance, has passed a Dog Bylaw in 2017 (Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, 2017).

Modern Treaty First Nations whose right to self-government has been recognized by B.C., such as the Nisga'a in British Columbia, can manage the administration of people, lands, and resources, and have authority to pass laws (not just bylaws) on a broad range of matters (Nisga'a Final Agreement Act, 1999). The range of this authority varies based on the individual agreements negotiated between the First Nation, the federal government and the provincial government (BC Treaty Commission, n.d.). The Animal Control Regulation passed by the self-governing Tsawwassen First Nation serves as an example (Animal Control Regulation, 2013).

Many First Nations deal with a unique set of challenges when it comes to the control of domesticated and other animals. This includes a lack of veterinary services, infrastructure, and animal welfare services that often lead to a disproportionate overpopulation of animals, specifically dogs, and associated negative public health outcomes such as injuries to humans

through attacks and the spread of disease (Aboriginal Community & Animal Advocacy Connection, 2020). Additional issues arise when non-Indigenous rescue groups insert themselves in Indigenous communities with the mission of “rescuing” animals that they deem to be stray animals (Martens, 2020). These groups operate with a very narrow, Western perspective of what pet ownership entails and do not acknowledge that many First Nations allow domesticated animals to roam freely, and that dog ownership is often determined by means other than microchips and veterinary records (Aboriginal Community & Animal Advocacy Connection, 2020).

Local Government

Local governments are responsible for the provisions of essential service and facilities to its community, such as roads, hospitals, parks, schools, streets, clean water, policing, and fire protection (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 4). Broadly speaking, local governments in B.C. include special-purpose institutions such as school districts, regional hospital districts, and regional library districts, however, the “core” local government consists of 161 municipalities and 27 regional districts (Bish & Clemens, 2008, pp. 5, 6). In the context of this research, local government refers to the “core” local government.

Approximately 89% of B.C.’s population resides within municipalities, despite them covering only around 11% of B.C.’s landmass (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, n.d.). B.C. municipalities provide a wide range of services and derive their powers from provincial legislation, which dictates the scope of their authority. The *Community Charter* governs municipal powers, including those regarding animals. The Charter states that a “council may, by bylaw, regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in relation to [...] animals [...]” (Community Charter, 2003). Bylaws that pertain to wildlife fall under concurrent authority of municipalities and the province and require approval from the responsible minister. Division 6 of the *Community Charter* further lays out that municipalities may establish different classes of animals on the basis of sex, age, size or breed, and establishes municipalities’ ability to seize animals under certain circumstances. Division 6 further contains special powers municipalities have in relation to dangerous dogs, such as the ability to apply for destruction of the dog to the Provincial Court (Community Charter, 2003). The City of Vancouver represents an outlier as the only municipality not governed by the *Community Charter* but rather the *Vancouver Charter*. While there are many similarities between the two statutes, the *Vancouver Charter* grants Vancouver additional powers such as the authority to prohibit businesses and distinct planning and land-use tools (Vancouver Charter, 1953).

Regional districts derive their powers from the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*. They serve as the local government for areas of the province that are not incorporated as municipalities, provide a framework for inter-municipal cooperation and the provision of inter-municipal services, and provide a limited number of mandatory functions such as corporate and financial administration and solid waste management (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 49). Regional districts may also provide services on a voluntary basis to individual municipalities or an entire region. This may include airports, animal control, public transit, recreation, garbage collections, and others (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 50).

Local governments may use several tools for the enforcement of their bylaws, ranging from public education and seeking voluntary compliance up to monetary fines and, in the case of serious contraventions, prosecution under the *Offence Act* with a maximum penalty of \$50,000 and 6 months of imprisonment (Ministry of Local Affairs, n.d.).

In conclusion, while some provinces limit the authorities of municipalities concerning some types of animals (e.g., wildlife), municipalities can generally pass bylaws regarding pets at their discretion, in accordance with other applicable legislation. Bylaws can vary greatly between municipalities, but many include provisions for standards of care, leash restrictions, licencing requirements, and more. Municipal animal bylaws almost always include specific stipulations for dogs, while other species have historically received significantly less attention. A number of municipalities have opted to transfer some aspects of service provision and enforcement related to animal control to their respective regional districts. This will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

Other Stakeholders

There is a variety of non-government actors that have an interest in animal policies and bylaws. This includes animal advocacy groups like the Animal Alliance of Canada, the Canada Federation of Humane Societies, which represents various Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), Humane Societies and rescue organizations (Humane Canada, n.d.). These groups put pressure on all orders of government to enact progressive animal welfare legislation and collaborate with governments in the drafting of such legislation. In 2017, the B.C. SPCA created a set of Model Animal Responsibility Bylaws to support local governments in addressing animal-related issues in their communities (BC SPCA, 2017). The bylaws cover issues such as basic care requirements, licensing and registration, ownership of exotic animals, and more (BCSPCA, 2017).

Pet owners and other community members alike are affected by local animal bylaws and other regulations. The amendment of local bylaws is oftentimes contentious, particularly where additional restrictions are imposed on pet owners. For instance, the City of Nanaimo's Animal Responsibility Bylaw, which was adopted in 2021, includes a provision prohibiting cats from running at large in public and private spaces (City of Nanaimo, 2021b). The City's website allowed for constituents to provide comments and feedback on the proposed changes and the entries highlight the broad range of opinions on the matter and the controversy associated with the amendment (City of Nanaimo, 2021a).

This chapter illustrates the legislative landscape surrounding animals in Canada, the division of authorities over lawmaking on this subject matter, as well as the stakeholders affected by the laws. While the focus of this thesis is on local government bylaws only, it is crucial to keep in mind that legislation passed by other levels of government still applies. For instance, even if a local government does not explicitly state that a person may not cause unnecessary suffering to an animal, the *Criminal Code* still applies and may be used to prosecute a person causing unnecessary suffering. On the other hand, local governments may choose to explicitly state

offences that may already be covered by other legislation to allow for direct and more timely enforcement with a lower threshold, utilizing the enforcement tools mentioned above.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The existence of companion animals in public spaces and their impact on the well-being of humans, other animals, and society as a whole has been subject to extensive research in Western scholarly circles, with several relevant scientific studies written since the 1970s. A significant subsection of the research focuses on specific aspects of pet ownership, such as their positive impact on levels of physical activity, community-building, mental health, and quality of life in general. On the flipside, attention has also been paid to potential adverse effects of pet ownership such as transmission of diseases, threats to biodiversity, and risk of injury through attacks. Overall, studies on the benefits of pets suggest correlations, however, some have been criticized for their methodological shortcomings and have generally struggled to establish causal directions (Headey et al., 2008, p. 482; Utz, 2014, p. 11). This means there is ongoing debate about the question of whether people become healthier after acquiring pets, or whether healthier people are more likely to get pets in the first place. There seems to be consensus that pets have the potential to positively impact overall human health and well-being; however, questions remain around the exact mechanisms that lead to these improvements.

At a policy level, limited research has addressed the local government perspective and investigated which policy mix can best mitigate potential threats caused by pets while maximizing the positive impacts. A few authors, including M. Rock, C. Degeling and G. McCormack, have specialized in the topics of pets, policies and public health and have made significant contributions to the sphere of local government animal policies from a holistic perspective (Rock, 2013; Rock et al. 2014; Rock et al. 2016, Rock et al. 2017). In addition, there is a significant number of studies that have evaluated the efficacy of individual policies, such as spay/neuter requirements, off-leash parks, roaming prohibitions, and licensing requirements (Toohey & Rock, 2015; Hunter & Brisbin, 2016; Rahim et al., 2018).

Overall, as shown in the following literature review, scholarly publications tend to focus primarily on dogs while paying less attention to cats and leaving out other types of animals. Policy instruments in Canada are mainly examined on the local government level, which is in line with the jurisdictional authority local governments have regarding animals. Research about the animal policy landscape in British Columbia is limited to publications by advocacy groups and non-profits like the B.C. SPCA.

A review of relevant scholarly literature provides an overview of the current state of research, identifies dominant and emerging themes, and highlights gaps in the literature.

The following search terms were used to find scholarly literature:

- Animal/pet bylaws
- Animal/pet policies
- Animal welfare laws
- Animals local government
- Animals local governments

- Benefits of pet ownership
- Risks of pet ownership
- Animal/pet bylaws in British Columbia

The following library databases were used to find resources:

- Internal UVic database
- Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)
- Business Source Complete (EBSCO)
- Google Scholar

The following themes are addressed in the literature review:

- Positive impacts of pet ownership on human health and quality of life
- Risks and adverse impacts of pet ownership
- Emerging discussions around the status of companion animals and animal welfare
- Local government policies and smart practices

Positive Effects of Pet Ownership on Human Health and Quality of Life

Research on the benefits associated with companion animals is vast. Early studies trace back to the 1970s and the field has steadily progressed since in terms of quantity, geographic areas studied, and types of issues researched. Early research of the 1970s and 1980s began to focus on the positive effects of pets on humans and their health; however, many of the studies have since been criticized as being anecdotal and scientifically invalid (Marx, 1984; Utz, 2014, p. 3). As research progressed into the 1990s, some studies shifted away from the focus on human health towards a more holistic approach of evaluating overall quality of life which focuses on “clinically relevant aspects of subjective symptoms, feelings, and well-being” (C. Wilson, 1994, p. 4, 7). Overall, research since the 1970s has provided indications that pets can have a positive impact on overall health and quality of life of their human guardians. For example, this link is supported by studies showing the decreased utilization of physician services by the pet-owning elderly (Siegel, 1990, p. 1084), improved health-outcomes in humans within 10 months of acquiring a pet (Serpell, 1991, pp. 719–720), and reduced stress-levels in seniors when walking with a dog compared to alone (Motooka et al., 2006, p. 62). Studies have indicated benefits of pet ownership for mental health (Allen et al., 2002, p. 738; Bolin, 1987, p. 34), physical health (Bauman et al., 2001, p. 634; Headey et al., 2002, p. 98; Serpell, 1991, pp. 719–720; Toohey & Rock, 2011, p. 7) as well as increased social interactions and community-building (McNicholas & Collis, 2000, pp. 68–69; Robins, 1991, pp. 21–23).

Yet not all studies are fully conclusive. For example, Gorrity and Stallones (1998) conducted a review of 25 empirical studies between 1990 and 1995 on the effects of contact with companion animals on their human partners’ quality of life and tentatively concluded that contact with pets can benefit humans on psychological, physical, social, and behavioural levels. They qualified

this conclusion; however, by emphasizing that these benefits are only apparent in certain situations under certain circumstances. While 16 of the 25 studies observed at least some positive effect of having contact with companion animals, 11 of the 25 studies reported at least partial negative results. The question whether pets positively impact human health or whether healthier humans are more likely to own pets has also been subject of discussion, particularly in the wake of studies showing correlations between pets and human health that could not establish causal direction (Headey et al., 2008, p. 482; Utz, 2014, p. 11). One of the limitations of this research is that many of these studies had a cross-sectional design, meaning data was collected only at one point in time and no long-term observations were made. Several studies have since provided stronger support for a causal connection, indicating that pets can cause improvements in human health (Headey et al., 2002, p. 98, 2008, pp. 491–492; Headey & Grabka, 2007, p. 307). This causal direction was supported by a longitudinal study design, which entails collecting information from the same people over a period of time.

While the volume of publications related to pets and their potential benefits has slowed down in the last decade compared to the volume of publications in the 90s and early 2000s, contemporary studies provide further support for the potential benefits of companion animals in therapeutic settings (Ginex et al., 2018, pp. 7–8), suggest pets' ability to foster positive social interactions (Nagasawa et al., 2015, p. 336) and establish a correlation between pet ownership and some improved health-outcomes (Phelps et al., 2022, p. 35; Xie et al., 2017, pp. 4–5).

Risks and Adverse Impacts of Pet Ownership

Several studies and academic literature underline potential adverse effects of pet ownership with issues ranging from uncontrolled breeding, overpopulation, transmission of diseases (Stavisky, 2014), roaming animals and associated threats to biodiversity (Frank, 2004; Hughes and MacDonald, 2013; Mcruer et al., 2017; Twardek et al.), to risk of injury through attacks (Overall & Love, 2001; Duperrex et al., 2009).

Uncontrolled Breeding and Overpopulation

Uncontrolled breeding and overpopulation driven by unaltered, at large animals is commonly associated with cats. National population estimates suggest a population of about 9.3 million owned cats in Canada in 2017 and about 261,000 homeless sheltered cats in 2016 (Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, 2017, pp. 10, 15). The number of homeless cats at-large, on the other hand, is difficult to approximate while considered to be the primary contributor to overpopulation concerns as only a small percentage of them are believed to be sterilized (Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, 2017, p. 28; Levy et al., 2014, p. 269). The rough estimates range from 1.4 million to 4.2 million homeless for at large cats in Canada (Blancher, 2013) although a recent cat population model developed by researchers associated with the University of Guelph, Ontario, may enhance the accuracy of future estimates (Flockhart & Coe, 2018). Flockhart and Coe's (2018) model has been cited in subsequent publications synthesizing and further building on factors contributing to cat abundance and activity (Bennett et al., 2021; Thompson et al., 2022).

The overpopulation of cats puts a strain on sheltering facilities and requires significant governmental expenditures to curb the problems associated with overpopulation, some of which are discussed in greater detail below (Coleman et al., 2010, pp. 400–401).

While homeless, at large dogs are not much of a concern in most of urban Canada, this remains an issue in many rural communities (Boissonneault & Epp, 2018, p. 492) and many urban areas still struggle with high numbers of dogs in sheltering facilities, largely as a result of surrender by their previous owners (Kay et al., 2018, p. 379). Many argue that this is exacerbated by commercial breeders and private owners that produce a large number of animals each year to meet public demand (Frank, 2004, p. 108). People that decide to purchase dogs from breeders as opposed to adopt from a shelter thus incentivize the production of additional animals while also reducing the available adoptive homes for animals in shelter (Coleman et al., 2010, p. 398). Overcrowded shelters have been shown to negatively impact animal welfare and animal stress levels, as well as facilitate the transmission of disease agents among animals (Kay et al., 2018, p. 375).

Transmission of diseases

Humans are receptive to zoonotic diseases, which are caused by pathogens that are transmitted from animals to humans (Provincial Health Services Authority, n.d.). Research highlights that domesticated animals can act as a bridge between humans and wildlife when it comes to transmission and emphasizes the need for targeted surveillance and intervention initiatives (Schurer et al., 2014, p. 1184; Stull et al., 2013, pp. 1–2; A. Wilson et al., 2021, p. 5). Human infection through pets can occur through humans' accidental consumption of pets' fecal material, close contact like petting and licking, as well as consumption of contaminated food or water, or undercooked meat containing infective tissues (Damborg et al., 2016, p. 28; Esch & Petersen, 2013, pp. 59–60). Bacterial infections may also occur as a result of animal bites (Damborg et al., 2016, p. 28). The overall risk of disease transmission has been established not only for dogs and cats, but also for birds, rodents, rabbits, amphibians, and reptiles (Damborg et al., 2016, pp. 28–34). A recent study released by the University of British Columbia provides further evidence for the transmission of diseases through roaming cats (University of British Columbia, 2021).

Threats to biodiversity

On the issue of biodiversity, free-roaming and feral cats and dogs have been documented to negatively impact wildlife through predation (Bonnaud et al., 2011, p. 598; Franklin et al., 2021, p. 12; Hughes & Macdonald, 2013, p. 348; Mori et al., 2019, p. 7; Twardek et al., 2017, p. 382). While there are no exact statistics on the number of wildlife preyed on by pets, estimates indicate that cats kill between 100 and 350 million birds per year in Canada (Blancher, 2013). Both cats and dogs are assumed to have contributed to the decline of threatened species, particularly on islands (Borroto-Páez, 2009, p. 2288; Nogales et al., 2013, pp. 808–809). Twardek et al. (2017, p. 383) underline that most studies on predation only take into account actual deaths, disregarding the additional harm caused by injured animals as a result of predation by dogs, cats or other domesticated animals. Particularly cat-caused injuries make up a significant portion of rehabilitation facilities' intake, as much as 30% at a facility in California (Jessup, 2004, p. 1377)

and around 28% in four facilities in Italy (Ancillotto et al., 2013, p. 370). According to the B.C. SPCA Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre, cat-caused injuries make up at least 20% of their total intake (Crighton, 2020).

Injury through attacks and other nuisances

The risk of injury through companion animals, particularly through dogs, has become a growing concern. Dog bites can lead to physical and emotional trauma experienced by humans and in some instances may facilitate the transmission of zoonotic diseases (Julien et al., 2020, p. 554). The fear of a potential attack alone may negatively impact levels of physical activity as it may deter individuals from frequenting parks where dogs may be present (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 979; Westgarth et al., 2014, p. 7). This is further exacerbated by the presence of dog feces which may act as a deterrent for people visiting parks (McCormack et al., 2010, p. 716) and may facilitate the transmission of parasites. A study examining self-reported dog bites in humans in urban and rural households in southern Ontario showed that the odds of an individual in a rural household being bitten by a dog was 0.53 the odds of an individual in an urban household (Julien et al., 2020, p. 558). 77% of reported dog bites were perpetrated by unleashed dogs and 83% of respondent-owned dogs were vaccinated against rabies at the time of the incident (Julien et al., 2020, p. 561).

Emerging discussions around the status of companion animals and animal welfare

For many centuries, the long-held belief of human dominion over other animals has shaped understandings about animals' subordination and lack of moral agency in the Western world (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 48). For instance, laws in medieval and early modern England reflected the assumptions that animals have no soul or feelings (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 49). Where legislation provided protection to certain animals, this was primarily to protect a person's interest in the animal and the value that they can derive from it (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 48). Only in the late 17th and 18th century did conversations about the moral obligations of humans towards animals start to emerge, and Britain introduced their first ever anti-cruelty law in 1822 (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 52). Over time, discussions started to shift away from the conceptualization of pets as property that require protecting towards discussions around human stewardship of animals, and more recently animal's legal rights that aim to eradicate the power imbalance in the relationships between humans and animals (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, pp. 60–64).

Scholars have argued that existing animal welfare legislation, which may include animal bylaws, theoretically infer certain rights onto animals by way of imposing legal duties on people to protect animals (Stucki, 2020, p. 554). However, these implied rights suffer from a “conspicuously low threshold for permissible infringements” (Stucki, 2020, p. 550), and are often outweighed by human interests, even if those may be comparatively trivial (Stucki, 2020, p. 550). Whether specific animal welfare provisions can be interpreted as rights or not, these discussions imply the potential for animal legislation to not merely balance the benefits and risks of animals to humans, but to also address the well-being and welfare of animals.

Even in addressing the welfare of animals, the power imbalance between humans and companion animals remains. Tuan argues that pet-keeping involves a combination of affection and domination through which humans aim to ‘subdue the unruly forces of nature’ and control them for their purposes (Tuan, 1984, as cited in Fox & Gee, 2019). Discussions like these put the legitimacy of animal bylaws as tools of control into question.

Local Government Policies and Smart Practices

While the literature on potential benefits and challenges of companion animal ownership is vast, limited attention has been paid to the ways in which local governments, or local governments in the Canadian context, can exercise their powers to minimize adverse outcomes related to pet-ownership.

Rock, in collaboration with other researchers, has published several studies related to policies enacted by local governments to promote positive health outcomes associated with pet ownership while minimizing potential adverse effects. A number of these studies are designed around the concept of *One Health*, which acknowledges the interdependence of human, animal and environmental health and aims to combine expertise from various disciplines to achieve better overall health outcomes (Shomaker, 2015, p. 997). Rock et al. (2014) draw from this concept and put forward a conceptual framework to support local governments in developing and assessing policies on pets that promote public health. They highlight the necessity for animal bylaws as they legitimize the presence of pets in cities, thus promoting the positive direct and indirect health outcomes associated with pet ownership while also mitigating the potential harm and annoyance caused by pets. Rock et al. (2014, p. 979) identify five overlapping spheres of activity in which local governments can enact policies on pets: “(i) preventing threats and nuisances from pets, (ii) meeting pets' emotional and physical needs, (iii) procuring pets ethically, (iv) providing pets with veterinary services and (v) licensing and identifying pets.” For each of these spheres, the authors discuss how specific policies have the capacity to improve public health and they highlight the need for further research in certain areas. The following section utilizes the framework established by Rock et al. to discuss research on local government policies on animals.

Preventing threats and nuisances from pets

Early pet policies stemmed primarily from ‘concerns for public order’ and preventing threats and nuisances has been at the forefront of conversations about the governance of pets in public spaces (Atkins, 2012, p. 223).

When it comes to dogs, bites are of particular concern. Clarke and Fraser (2013) examined the relationship between various animals control measures and the reported incidence of dog bites towards human in urban local governments in Canada. They found that reported dog bites were generally higher in local governments with higher levels of ticketing, licensing, staffing, and budget, however, local governments with very active ticketing showed a significant reduction in reported dog bites (Clarke & Fraser, 2013, p. 145). Further, the data showed no indication of lower rates of dog bites in local governments with breed-specific-legislation compared to those without (Clarke & Fraser, 2013, p. 149). This is in line with other research on policies banning

specific breeds (MacNeil-Allcock et al., 2011, p. 446). Dog bites towards other dogs are also of concern and while it is uncommon for attacked dogs to suffer severe injuries or death, these incidents can result in negative welfare impacts on both the attacking dog (i.e., euthanasia) and the attacked dog, as well as expensive veterinary costs and legal consequences (Montrose et al., 2020, pp. 7–8).

Several studies call for increased educational interventions by local governments to promote the prevention of dog bites, however, the efficacy of such programs has not been conclusively confirmed (Clarke & Fraser, 2013, p. 149; Duperrex et al., 2009, p. 10). Further, there is an ongoing debate about the role of off-leash parks and their association with disease transmission and risk of attacks. While some research suggests that off-leash behaviour of dogs is associated with increased parasitism in dogs as well as an increased rate of dog bites, evidence does not appear to be conclusive (Rahim et al., 2018, p. 436). In light of the benefits associated with dogs-supportive spaces such as off-leash parks, including increased dog-walking frequency and associated physical activity, research commonly focuses on strategies to mitigate potential harm as opposed to the outright banning of off-leash parks (Rahim et al., 2018, p. 436; Toohey & Rock, 2015). This may include choosing a location that is not directly near schools or playgrounds, fencing the park, providing access to dog waste bags and hand-sanitizing stations, providing clear signage, among others (Rahim et al., 2018, p. 436; Westgarth et al., 2014, p. 8). While dogs in public spaces such as off-leash parks can be controversial, research suggests that such conflict may bring about significant opportunities to positively impact policies on public spaces, improve amenities in existing off-leash areas, and bring about positive change for humans and companion animals alike (Toohey & Rock, 2015, p. 565).

Historically, cats have received less attention than dogs when it comes to policies regulating their existence in public spaces, however, this is slowly changing. As outlined in earlier sections, major concerns related to cats are predation of other animals and transmission of diseases. This is almost exclusively applicable to cats that are allowed to freely roam outside at least part of the time and feral cats that do not have owners. Policy tools may range from spay/neuter regulations (discussed in further detail below), mandatory chipping, licensing laws and possession limitation laws to roaming-at-large prohibitions, trap-neuter-release programs for feral cats (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 285; Sumner et al., 2022, pp. 2–11). Roaming prohibitions are viewed as particularly effective, yet at the same time are subject to much controversy. Proponents cite increased risks of parasites and diseases, predation of wildlife and other animals, injuries or death caused by traffic, nuisances to neighbours, or cats getting lost as reasons for roaming prohibitions (Tan et al., 2020, pp. 1–2).

A survey of veterinarians across British Columbia showed that 79% of participants do not recommend cats' unsupervised outdoor access based on safety and disease concerns (Sherwood et al., 2019). Conversely, some research suggests negative health and welfare issues of keeping cats strictly indoors such as obesity and stress as a result of containment (Zoran & Buffington, 2011, p. 599). While it has been suggested that restricting outdoor access for cats may lead to behavioural issues as natural behaviours such as hunting and exploring are being limited, empirical research on this has been limited (Tan et al., 2020, p. 7). In practice, roaming

prohibitions for cats on a local government level occur on a spectrum, with some lacking prohibitions entirely, some requiring roaming cats to be spayed and neutered, some requiring cats to be leashed when outside, and some banning roaming cats entirely (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, pp. 295–297; Tan et al., 2020, p. 6). Of course, such prohibitions on cats running-at-large do not extend to feral cats; instead, some jurisdictions have opted for trap-neuter-release programs in which stray cats, often travelling in colonies, are trapped, neutered and then either put up for adoption or released (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 297). While such programs may curb the overpopulation problem in feral cats, critics are still concerned about cats' preying on wildlife and transmitting diseases (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 303). Further, such TNR programs are often costly, time intensive and require more than 70% of feral cats to be neutered for the population growth to slow (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 303).

More novel approaches to minimizing the potential threats associated with companion animals and ensuring they are being cared for include considerations of owner liability. For instance, the *Animal Liability Act* was introduced by a B.C MLA in 2016 in an attempt to hold pet owners accountable for the actions of their animals, particularly when it comes to attacks. Critics argued that the Act would create a system of absolute liability with no consideration of the circumstances of an incident (Breder, 2016). The Act ultimately did not pass, however, conversations about owner liability for their pets' actions remain current. Perdomo et al. (2021, p. 5) argue for the creation of a novel compulsory health and survival insurance scheme which would include civil liability insurance for harm caused by companion animals as well as insurer-approved pet shelter in case an owner needs to abandon their pet. The creation of a mandatory liability insurance was also proposed during the discussions around the *Animal Liability Act* in B.C. (Bosco, 2016).

Meeting pets' emotional and physical needs

The positive effects of companion animals largely depend on the human-animal bond and thus the ability and willingness of humans to meet the emotional and physical needs of their companion animals (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 980). While many of the policy tools outlined in the previous paragraph do contribute to the well-being of companion animals (e.g., off-leash parks), albeit more indirectly, this section focuses on rules and policies that primarily concern themselves with the emotional and physical well-being of companion animals. On a local government level, policies may be established around basic standards of care to prevent harm to dogs, cats and other companion animals. Many Western jurisdictions have had policies that prohibit dogs from being left unattended in public spaces since the 1800s, while requirements to have dogs be leashed when in public have become more common in the 1970s (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 980). Some jurisdictions impose possession limits as a means to curb overpopulation, to ensure pets are provided with sufficient space and care, and to discourage 'animal hoarding' (Holmberg, 2015, p. 78; Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, pp. 287–289, 293). Hoarding occurs when individuals acquire more animals than they have the capacity to care for, potentially leading to overcrowding, health problems, lack of veterinary care and disease transmission (Dozier et al., 2019, p. 366; Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 292).

Procuring pets ethically

Rock et al. (2014, pp. 980–981) address the topic of ethical procurement on two levels: firstly, the issue of competing claims to the same pet and secondly, the conditions under which animals are bred and raised for sale. The first issue might come up in instances where a companion animal was rehomed through the local government without the previous owner’s knowledge or if a person decided to keep a lost pet they found, leading to anger and resentment towards the new owner as well as the government (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 980). The authors propose that local governments could prevent this by establishing high-quality sheltering facilities for impounded animals, making it more likely for citizens to turn in lost pets as opposed to keeping them. On the other hand, if citizens fear an impounded animal may be euthanized, they may be less likely to turn in lost pets to the government (Coleman et al., 2010). Further, licensing and other identification requirements (discussed in more detail below) may facilitate reuniting lost animals with their owners (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 980). On the issue of breeding conditions, so-called ‘puppy mills’ are of particular concern as well other forms of maltreatment related to the breeding and raising of animals. Studies found that particularly high-volume commercial breeding establishments that sell dogs directly to the consumer or indirectly through pet stores are linked to behavioural and emotional issues in dogs, compared to other sources such as non-commercial breeders (McMillan, 2017, p. 24). On a policy level, some jurisdictions opt for a breeder registration and licensing requirement that may include minimum standards of care as well as authorities for inspections (Limb, 2018; Matheson, 2016; Smith, 2012, p. 92).

Providing pets with veterinary services

Spaying and neutering (SN) requirements are some of the most relevant local government policies related to veterinary services. SN, or sterilization, is viewed as a successful tool to curb overpopulation and as a result, reduce the financial burden on government to shelter unwanted animals and prevent more animals from being euthanized in shelters (Coleman et al., 2010, p. 395). Further, sterilization may contribute to the prevention of dog bites, as unaltered male dogs represent the group that is most likely to bite, as well as other unwanted behaviours including aggression, wandering, and spraying/markings (Coleman et al., 2010, pp. 395, 404; Zanoski, 2012, p. 25). When it comes to policy decisions, many jurisdictions opt for incentivizing pet owners to sterilize their animals rather than making sterilization outright mandatory. One approach to this is offering low-cost SN programs to subsidize the cost of the procedure to motivate individuals unable or unwilling to pay the full cost (Zanoski, 2012, p. 25). According to a survey of veterinarians in British Columbia, 67% of respondents support the principle of low-cost spay-neuter services. Some research suggests that such programs may lead to desirable changes in shelter intake and rates of euthanasia, however, multiple studies cite a lack of data availability to conclusively confirm the impact of low-cost SN programs (Scarlett & Johnston, 2012, p. 68; White et al., 2010, p. 210). Coleman et al. (2010) provide support for spay/neuter legislation that entails significantly higher licensing fees for unsterilized animals and a utilization of revenue generated through this to fund low-cost SN programs, feral cat programs and educational programs. Such differential licensing fees have been adopted by some North American jurisdictions as early as the 1970s and research suggests that these policies have

facilitated increased sterilization rates in dogs and a decrease in shelter intake numbers (Rowan & Kartal, 2018, p. 17). Rock et al. (2014, p. 981) suggest implementing policies that require pets to receive veterinary services prior to being adopted, or a ‘veterinary bill of health’. This could facilitate veterinarians identifying relevant health issues and other problems that may pose threats, cause nuisances, or impact human-animal bonds (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 981).

Licensing and identifying pets

Many jurisdictions, dating back to the mid-1800s, require dogs to be licensed, and some local governments extend this requirement to cats as well (Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 63; Pemberton & Worboys, 2007, p. 79; M. Rock, 2013, p. 205). Through licensing, people can “establish a public claim to a particular animal” (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 982). This practice can facilitate the reunification of lost pets with their owners and can assist in investigating pet-related threats and nuisances (M. J. Rock et al., 2014, p. 982). As well, licensing can provide a revenue source for governments to invest in community services such as animal shelters, educational programs, subsidized spay/neuter services, and more (Coleman et al., 2010, p. 396; Hunter & Brisbin, 2016, p. 63; M. Rock, 2013, p. 206). Some jurisdictions opt to include microchips or tattoos as a condition for licensing for identification purposes (Borthwick, 2009, p. 188). Research has shown that pets with permanent and/or visual identification have a significantly higher likelihood of being reunited with their owners (Dingman et al., 2014, p. 46).

Literature Review Summary and Conceptual Framework

This review presents an overview of the academic literature on the benefits and challenges associated with companion animals, emerging discussions around the status of non-human animals, as well as the policy tools utilized to manage domesticated animals.

Various studies have indicated positive correlations between pet ownership and health/quality-of-life indicators such as stress levels, physician visits, mental health, community building, and more. Yet uncertainty about causality remains in the wake of several inconclusive studies and the limited number of longitudinal studies indicating a causal relationship. Literature examining threats associated with pet ownership focuses on uncontrolled breeding and overpopulation, transmission of diseases, threats to biodiversity, and potential injuries through attacks and other nuisances. While these challenges are largely accepted to be true, their extent and impact have not been conclusively confirmed and are oftentimes region-specific. Where research on the benefits of pets has primarily been conducted through a lens of individual physiological and psychological health with a lesser focus on community interactions, the potential risks have predominantly been examined from an ecological and public health perspective and, to a lesser extent, from an individual physiological health perspective.

Rock et al. (2014) identify five overlapping spheres of local government activity that relate to the management of companion animals: preventing threats and nuisances, meeting emotional and physical needs, procuring pets ethically, providing veterinary services, and licensing and identifying. Each of these spheres contain several policy tools utilized by local governments to balance the potential benefits and risk associated with companion animals in private and public spaces. The focus of this thesis is on obligations imposed on pet owners in local government

animal bylaws, with attention to requirements related to the control and care of animals, respectively. Within the model proposed by Rock et al. (2014), this most closely aligns with preventing threats and nuisances, meeting emotional and physical needs, as well as licensing and identifying. This is further interconnected with providing veterinary services where differential licensing fees incentivize pet owners to sterilize their pet or bylaws require mandatory sterilization. The current state analysis takes an inventory of bylaw provisions that relate to these categories and aims to uncover emerging practices that have the potential to provide an optimal balance of minimizing adverse impacts associated with pet ownership and maximizing benefits.

It should be noted that animal bylaws only address certain policy tools such as basic care requirements, roaming restrictions, possession limits, licensing requirements, among others. Some other policy tools, particularly initiatives such as public education campaigns or low-cost spay/neuter programs are usually not outlined in bylaws but rather represent a piece of public policy. These tools are out of scope for the research at hand but present opportunities for future examination.

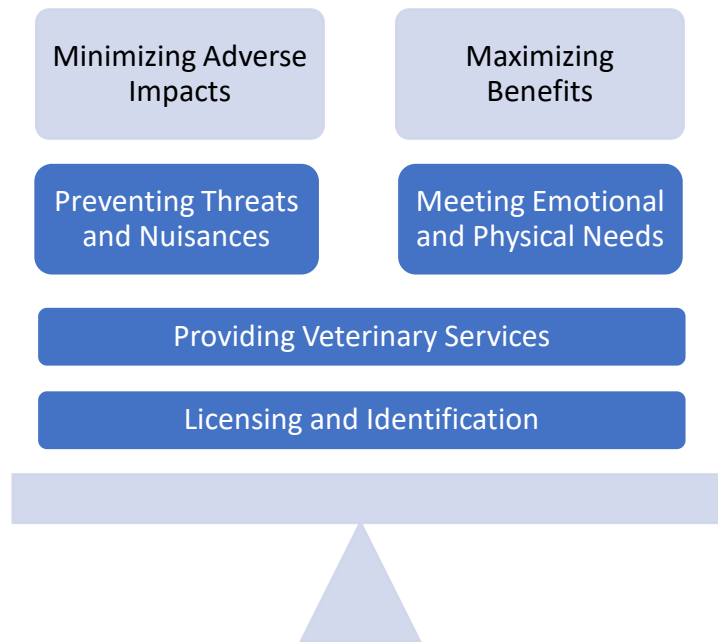


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

The following chapter outlines the overall methodological approach that guided the presented research, the specific methods utilized to collect data, the ways in which data was analyzed, and the limitations of the analysis.

Methodology

The underlying methodology of the presented research includes a current state analysis and the identification of emerging practices.

The current state analysis provides an inventory of bylaw approaches deployed by local governments in British Columbia to manage animals in human populated spaces. It further determines to what extent bylaws vary across local governments and if there is such a thing as a 'status quo.' The evaluation and comparison drew primarily from qualitative data found in documents across local animal bylaws. Some quantitative data, such as fees for licensing, were also included and formed a part of the analysis.

The initial idea for this research was to develop best or smart practices for animal bylaws culminating from the literature review and policy analysis. The concept of smart practices is derived from best practices research which aims to find the 'best' solutions to problems by examining what approaches work well in other jurisdictions and by determining their applicability in a broader context (Bardach, 2012). Bardach (2012) maintains that 'smart' is a more realistic term as it is close to impossible to objectively determine that a practice is the 'best' to address a particular problem. The term 'smart' also acknowledges that the 'best' or 'most ideal' approach is not necessarily practical amongst budget and time constraints. Instead, smart practices describe solutions that capitalize on latent potential to "generate something of public value relatively cheaply" (Bardach, 2012, p. 111).

Throughout the research process it became clear, however, that it is challenging, if not impossible, to determine a specific set of best or smart practices from the local government perspective, for a variety of reasons. For one, research on best practices for animal bylaws and, more broadly, animal policies draws from a variety of disciplines that are not necessarily in alignment with one another. For instance, an ecologist may argue that it is a best practice to prohibit cats from running at large to prevent negative impacts on the ecosystem while animal behavioural scientists may argue that this negatively impacts their well-being and fundamentally goes against the nature of cats. Best practices for local government bylaw enforcement, on the other hand, indicate that a local government should only adopt bylaws that it has the capacity to enforce to ensure administrative fairness and instill trust in the government. In reality, a local government may not have adequate resources to ensure enforcement of roaming cats, for instance. On top of these considerations are political pressures that local government councillors may face in adopting bylaws that are controversial.

As a result of the above considerations, the presented research focuses on the identification of emerging practices, which are practices that are "new, innovative and which hold promise based

on some level of evidence of effectiveness or change that is not research-based and/or sufficient to be deemed a ‘promising’ or ‘best’ practice.” (Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press, 2013, p. 7). Emerging practices are important as they indicate areas where future research may be beneficial and, in the context of municipal bylaws in B.C., provide specific points of references where future research may be conducted on the specific experiences and outcomes municipalities experience since implementing said emerging practices. This could take the form of expert interviews with municipal staff who can speak to the practical implications of their animal bylaws.

Methods

The primary method for data collection utilized secondary data in the form of local government bylaw documents to conduct a policy analysis. Policy analysis refers to a process that “creates knowledge in and of the policy-making process that enables policy analysts to scrutinize causes, consequences, and performance of governmental public policies” (Dunn, 2008, as cited in Radin, 2020, p. 3). In practice, policy analysis can encompass a wide range of activities including jurisdictional scans and the comparison and evaluation of different policy options (Bardach & Patashnik, 2020). In this research context, the policy analysis was carried out through a systematic review and comparison of bylaws which represent the most important legal tool utilized by local governments to establish and enforce provisions.

Sample

There are a total of 161 municipalities in B.C, representing approximately 89% of the province’s population (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, n.d.). The analysis included the twenty-five B.C. municipalities with the highest population (Table 1). Cumulatively, the population of all municipalities subject to the analysis contained a total population of 3,546,014, accounting for roughly 71% of B.C.’s total population according to the 2021 Census (Government of Canada, 2022). Bylaws were obtained from online databases published by the respective local governments.

Most municipalities have enacted their own bylaws regarding animal control; however, a few municipalities have transferred some or all aspects of animal control, including bylaw enactment and enforcement to regional districts. This includes:

- Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD), whose animal bylaw applies to City of Abbotsford, the City of Chilliwack, the City of Mission, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, and the District Locality of Kent
- Central Okanagan Regional District (CORD), whose animal bylaw applies to the City of Kelowna, and the City of West Kelowna
- Northern Okanagan Regional District (NORD), which regulates animal control in the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream, and Village of Lumby

For the purposes of this analysis, each municipality is counted separately, even if they are both governed by the same regional district bylaw. This allows for a consistent comparison across municipalities as opposed to a conflation between municipalities and regional districts. In some

instances, provisions also differ slightly across municipalities covered by the same regional district bylaw (e.g., different licensing fees) or municipalities that are covered by a regional district bylaw have additional bylaws that are specific to their municipality (e.g., City of Vernon is covered by *City of Vernon Animal Regulation and Animal Pound Bylaw* and *Regional District of North Okanagan Dog Control Bylaw*).

It is further noteworthy that some local governments include provisions related to the keeping of animals across multiple bylaws. For instance, licensing fees are sometimes laid out in specific *Fee Bylaws* that include all fees a local government imposes, or provisions related to noise caused by animals are sometimes included in specific *Nuisance/Noise Bylaws* dealing with nuisances of all types. At times, local governments will have different bylaws dealing with different aspects of animal control; the City of Surrey, for instance, has a *Chicken Keeping Bylaw*, an *Exotic Animal Bylaw*, a *Spay/Neuter Bylaw*, and a *Bee Keeping Bylaw*, in addition to their “primary” *Animal Responsibility Bylaw*. In the context of this research, a municipality’s main bylaw, commonly titled ‘animal control bylaw’ or ‘animal responsibility bylaw’ or a version thereof, is referred to as the ‘primary bylaw’. The primary bylaw usually contains the greatest number of provisions and deals with dogs or animals as a whole, as opposed to other specific types of animals such as bees or poultry.

Throughout this analysis, all relevant bylaws were consulted and included, unless otherwise noted. Specific bylaws on animals other than dogs and cats were reviewed to inform the analysis, however, they were not examined in the same amount of detail as the ‘primary’ animal bylaws. Bylaws related to Zoning, Pet Stores, Kennels, among others are not included in the analysis, however, may pose opportunity for more detailed research.

#	Municipalities	Population (2021)	Primary Bylaw Name	Year Enacted
1	City of Vancouver	662,248	Animal Control Bylaw	2005
2	City of Surrey	568,322	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2017
3	City of Burnaby	249,125	Animal Control Bylaw	1991
4	City of Richmond	209,937	Animal Regulation Bylaw	2005
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	153,524	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013
6	City of Coquitlam	148,625	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2011
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	144,576	Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw	2014
8	District Municipality of Langley	132,603	Animal Control Bylaw	2005
9	District Municipality Saanich	117,735	Animals Bylaw	2004
10	City of Delta	108,455	Animal Control Bylaw	2010
11	City of Nanaimo	99,863	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2021
12	City of Kamloops	97,902	Dog Responsibility and Control Bylaw	2011
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	93,203	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013
14	City of Victoria	91,867	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2011
15	City of Maple Ridge	90,990	Animal Control and Licencing Bylaw	2012
16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	88,168	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	1988
17	City of New Westminster	78,916	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2013
18	City of Prince George	76,708	Responsible Animal Ownership Bylaw	2017

19	City of Port Coquitlam	61,498	Animal Control Bylaw	2017
20	City of North Vancouver	58,120	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	2010
21	City of Langford (CRD)	46,584	Animal Regulation and Impounding Bylaw	1986
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	44,519	Dog Control Bylaw	2021
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	44,122	Animal Control and Licence Bylaw	2008
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	41,519	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013
25	City of Penticton	36,885	Animal Control Bylaw	2021
	Total Population	3,546,014		

Table 1 Overview of Examined Municipalities and Animal Bylaws

Data Collection

To capture the content of different bylaws, information for each municipality was captured in an Excel spreadsheet. Broader categories of issues were identified and broken down into more specific provisions. For instance, the category “Animal welfare” is broken down into provisions relating to basic care requirements, cruelty prohibitions, restrictions around animal performances, ventilation requirements, securing animals in vehicles, tethering restrictions, choke collar restrictions, and outside shelter requirements. For each municipality, the spreadsheet captures whether provisions on the specific topic are included in its animal bylaws and how those provisions are worded.

The spreadsheet captures bylaw information for each municipality on the following items/categories:

- Year published, Year consolidated
- Title and purpose
- Preventing Threats and Nuisances
 - Running at large prohibitions
 - Prohibition of biting or attacking of persons or animals
 - Disturbance prohibition
 - Removing excrement
 - Confining animals with diseases
 - Confining female dogs in heat
 - Specific dog designations
- Meeting Emotional and Physical Needs
 - Basic care requirements
 - Cruelty prohibitions
 - Possession limits
 - Animal performances
 - Enclosure requirements
 - Securing animals in vehicles
 - Tethering restrictions
 - Outside shelter requirements
- Licensing and Identifying

- Provisions Specific to Cats
 - Mandatory identification
 - Voluntary registration
 - Spay/Neuter requirements
 - Running at large prohibitions
 - Other notable provisions
- Prohibited/Allowable Animals

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred on a quantitative and qualitative basis. To begin the analysis, the title and purpose of each bylaw was examined to capture which words were most used (e.g., responsibility, control, care, welfare, licensing, etc.). In the bylaw text, individual provisions within each of the above-named categories were examined and Excel formulas were used to count how many municipalities include a provision on the specific topic. This helped to answer questions such as: “How many municipalities include basic care requirements in their animal bylaw(s)?” or “How many municipalities include leash requirements in their animal bylaws?”

The data was examined further to understand which animals certain provisions apply to. This allowed the answering of further questions such as: “How many municipalities have running at large prohibition that apply to cats?” or “How many municipalities have licensing requirements for cats?”. In addition to wanting to understand how many municipalities include certain provisions in their bylaws and to which kind of animals they applied, further analysis was conducted to highlight the differences and commonalities among provisions. For instance, while almost all municipalities have licensing requirements for dogs, the cost of a licence varies among local governments and discounts may apply for obtaining a license early in the year, having an altered dog, or being a senior. Another example would be basic care requirements which exist in most municipalities, but their scope can vary. Additionally, where appropriate, attention was paid to provisions in recently adopted bylaws to understand how certain provisions have evolved over time and where new practices appear to be emerging.

It should be noted that the objective of this review is not to highlight specific municipalities that “need to improve”, but rather to understand the breadth of animal bylaws that exist and provide an overview of the current state. Where appropriate, specific municipalities were highlighted where they have particularly noteworthy provisions.

Limitations of Analysis

There are certain limitations to this research, both related to the scope of considerations and methodological approach.

Scope Limitations

To start, bylaw documents can provide insight into a municipalities priorities and decisions, but they do not indicate what goes on “behind the scenes” and the process that led to the bylaw being implemented the way it was. Bylaws do not show what challenges local governments encounter

while trying to adopt bylaws, what pressures they experience from citizens and different advocacy groups, and where compromises had to be made. These limitations provide opportunities for further research to help fill these gaps. This could take the form of primary research involving municipal staff (e.g., surveys or interviews), pet owners and the general public, as well as secondary research through a thematic analysis of news coverage, social media content and public consultation forums.

In addition, bylaws only represent the subsection of a local government's overall animal policy that sets out requirements and other legally binding provisions. Animal-related initiatives such as public education campaigns or low-cost spay/neuter services can be a valuable policy tool to manage domesticated animals in public spaces and additional research including these initiatives could enable a more comprehensive evaluation of local governments' management of animals in B.C.

Lastly, the focus on animal bylaws presumes the necessity of regulation of animals through written legal documents to manage humans' co-existence with companion animals. This understanding is shaped by Western understandings of governance and legal culture that relies on written laws and the enforcement of such laws through the Western justice system. Further, this focus assumes that humans have a unique authority to control and, to an extent, subjugate animals for their own purposes, a perspective that differs from understandings in cultures that understand humans to be equal to other animals. There are arguably ways to co-exist with other animals that do not rely on bylaws.

Methodological Limitations

For one, the analysis is limited to bylaw documents that are publicly available. Many local governments include disclaimers on their website that the presented bylaws are not official legal documents but presented for information and research purposes only. Some indicate that efforts are made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of online bylaw documents but assume no liability in case of errors. To mitigate the risk of including out-of-date bylaws in the analysis, all included local governments have been contacted and have confirmed that the online version is the most current.

The sample of 25 municipalities represent a sizable portion of B.C.'s population (approx. 71%), however, is not representative of all 161 municipalities in B.C. The findings of this thesis should not be construed to apply to all municipalities but rather to provide an overview of animal bylaws in the largest municipalities in B.C. Further research is required to confirm the findings of this research on a larger scale.

Lastly, there is potential for human error as each municipal bylaw was examined manually and data was captured in a spreadsheet. Effort was put into capturing and analyzing the data with great diligence and attention to detail, however, oversights or accidental omissions cannot be ruled out. This underlines the importance of understanding this analysis as an overview of the state of animal bylaws in B.C., rather than an evaluation of individual municipalities' bylaws.

Chapter 5: Findings: Policy Analysis and Smart Practices

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the policy analysis conducted across the 25 largest municipalities in B.C. This includes an analysis of bylaw titles, general provisions related to preventing threats and nuisances as well as related to meeting emotional and physical needs, specific provisions related to cats, and an examination of which animals municipalities allow or prohibit.

Part of the analysis presented in this chapter includes identifying which animals certain bylaw provisions apply to. Some bylaw provisions may apply to specific animals, such as licensing requirements for dogs, while some provisions may simply apply to ‘animals’ in general. The exact definition for ‘animal’ used by municipalities varies and a full list of definitions can be found in *Appendix A: Definition of “Animal” by Bylaw*. In the context of this chapter, when a provision is identified as applying to ‘animals’, this means it applies to dogs, cats, and other animals included in the respective municipality’s definition of animal. If a provision does not apply to dogs or cats, it is specifically listed.

Bylaw Title and Purpose

Examining the title and purpose of bylaws can provide initial insights into a municipality’s objective and provide an indication of how pet ownership is conceptualized over time. Note that where local governments have more than one bylaw related to animals, only the “primary” animal bylaw was examined in this section. This is typically the bylaw containing the most provisions and provisions of general nature, as opposed to more specialized bylaws such as bee keeping bylaws or exotic animal bylaws. It should further be noted that the title and purpose of a bylaw on its own can not be used to draw conclusions about the content of the bylaw and its implications for the governance of animals; however, as noted above, it may serve as a first indication of the umbrella policy area a municipal government is focusing on.

The analysis showed that the titles and purpose of bylaws could generally be divided into two categories (Figure 2); the first category representing a focus on *control* of animals, signified through words like *control*, *regulation*, *licensing* and *impounding*. On the other hand are bylaws more aligned with *care* of animals, including the words *responsibility*, *welfare*, *prevention of cruelty* and *care*. See *Appendix X* for a detailed breakdown by municipality.

Overall, 16 of the bylaw titles fall into the category of *control*, 5 are aligned with *care*, and 3 fall into both categories. The District of Saanich *Animals Bylaw* is the only bylaw to fall into neither category. The most common bylaw title is *Animal Control Bylaw* or some variation thereof. The earliest bylaw of this kind is Burnaby’s *Animal Control Bylaw*,

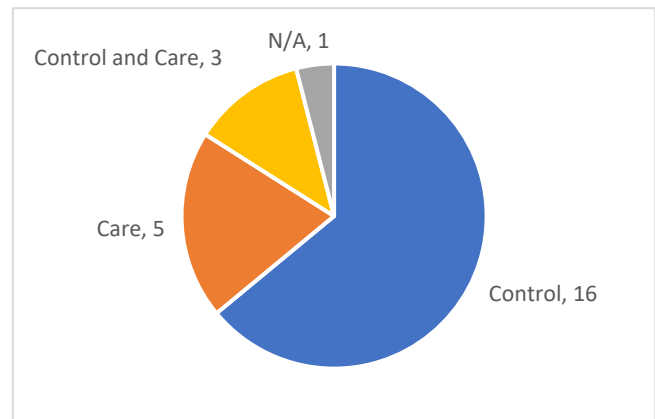


Figure 2 Bylaw Title Category

which was adopted in 1991. The most recently adopted bylaw in this category is Penticton’s *Animal Control Bylaw* from 2021. More recently, some animal bylaws have shifted to include *responsibility* or *care* in the title. The earliest bylaws in this category were introduced in 2011 and include Kamloops’ *Dog Responsibility and Control Bylaw*, Coquitlam’s *Animal Care and Control Bylaw*, and Victoria’s *Animal Responsibility Bylaw*. Notably, the Kamloops bylaw includes both *responsibility* and *control* and Coquitlam’s bylaw includes both *care* and *control*. Out of the 15 new animal bylaws enacted since 2011, 8 include *responsibility*, *responsible* or *care* in the title. 3 out of those also include also include *control* in the title.

The City of Nanaimo serves as an example for this gradual change in animal bylaw titles and the intentions behind it. The city commissioned an independent report examining their previous *Licensing and Control of Animals Bylaw* from 1995 and providing recommendations based on current best practices. One of the recommendations included changing the name to emphasize

responsible pet ownership as opposed to licensing and control.

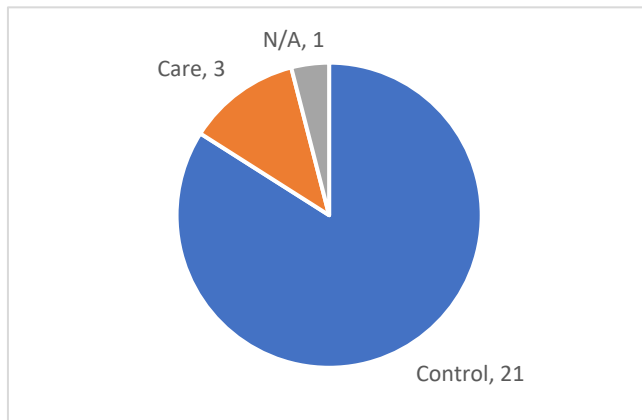


Figure 3 Bylaw Purpose Category

All but one bylaw further contains a sentence or paragraph about its purpose (Figure 3). Most commonly, bylaws indicate *regulation*, *licensing*, and *control* to be part of the purpose of the bylaw. Only one bylaw includes *care* in its purpose, one includes *animal welfare* and once includes *prevention of cruelty*. These three bylaws all contain *care* or *responsibility* in their title.

Appendix B: Overview of Bylaw Titles by

Category provides a detailed overview of the category that each examined bylaw falls into.

Preventing Threats and Nuisances

As discussed in earlier chapters, preventing threats and nuisances stemming from domesticated animals has been a primary objective of animal policies and laws since their inception in Western society. Historically, this objective has been achieved through imposing means of control onto animals and their owners that limit their ability to cause harm. In current local government animal bylaws, this often takes the form of running at large prohibitions, leash requirements, disturbance prohibitions, among others. Additionally, most jurisdictions contain more restrictive provisions for specific dogs that have displayed certain aggressive or dangerous behaviours. In a few instances, jurisdictions apply these provisions based on the breed of dog, irrespective of actual behaviour. More information on various control requirements can be found in *Appendix C: Overview of Animal Control Requirements*.

Running at large prohibition

All 25 municipalities have running at large prohibitions in some form (Figure 4). This commonly entails a prohibition on letting animals be on private property that is not the owner’s without their consent, a requirement to have animals under the immediate control of a responsible and

competent person when not on the owner’s property, and/or the requirement to have animals leashed to a responsible and competent person in specific public places (e.g., highway or school ground). Some animals, such as wild animals or poultry, are generally restricted to the owner’s property in the examined bylaws.

14 municipalities do either not include cats in their running at large prohibitions or specifically exempt all cats from the running at large prohibition. 7 municipalities only exempt altered cats from running at large prohibitions, and 3 municipalities include all animals, including cats in their at large prohibition. 1 municipality only includes dogs in their running at large prohibition. Notably, the 3 municipalities which prohibit cats to be at large entirely, regardless of whether they are altered or not, are the City of Victoria, the City of Nanaimo, and the City of Prince George.

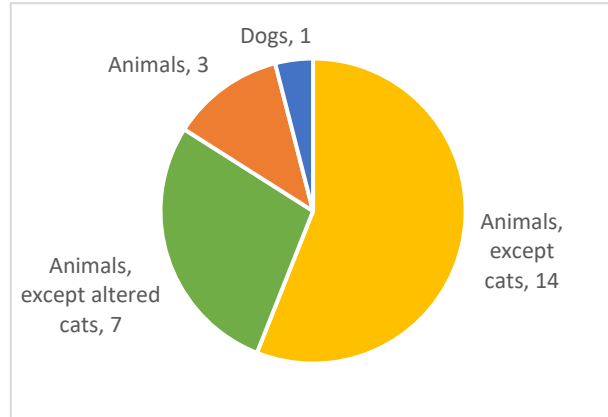


Figure 4 Running At Large Prohibition Applicability

Prohibition of biting or attacking of persons or animals

21 out of 25 municipalities explicitly prohibit owners from letting their animals bite, attack or otherwise harm persons and other animals (Figure 5). 13 municipalities apply this provision to dogs while 8 extend it to animals in general. The exact wording in bylaws varies and commonly prohibits some combination of the following behaviours: biting, attacking, injuring, harassing, chasing, killing, aggressively pursuing, displaying aggressive behaviour, or threatening. The majority of municipalities explicitly prohibit aggressive behaviour or other threatening behaviours, even if this does not result in a physical attack. Exceptions include 4 municipalities [the City of Burnaby, Township of Langley, the City of Port Coquitlam, and the City of

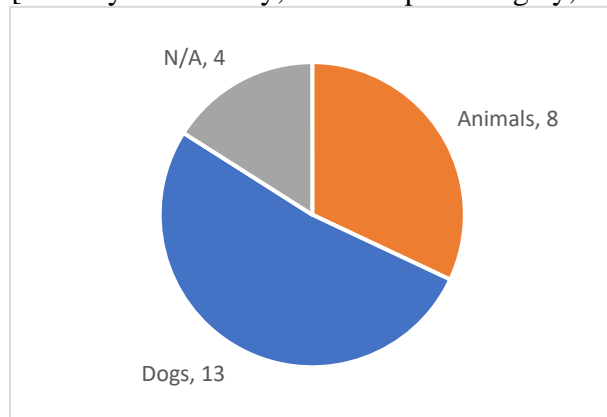


Figure 5 Prohibition of Biting or Attacking of Persons or Animals Applicability

Penticton which mention physical attacks only.

Explicitly prohibiting owners from letting their animals bite or attack enables bylaw officers to directly enforce these provisions, for example by way of fines. When a municipality does not have provisions prohibiting biting or attacking another animal or person, it may still impose consequences on owners through designating dogs as aggressive or dangerous. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Disturbance prohibition

All municipalities include provisions related to preventing animals from disturbing the quiet, peace, enjoyment or comfort of persons in the

vicinity or the neighbourhood through barking or howling (Figure 6). 13 municipalities include these provisions directly in their animal bylaws, while 11 include these provisions in a separate noise bylaw. The City of Victoria is the only municipality to include provisions in both its animal bylaw and in its noise bylaw. 12 municipalities have worded their disturbance prohibition to simply state that persons may not allow animals to cause disturbances through barking or other noises. 13 have chosen to add some form of timeframe to determine what extent of noise is prohibited. In some instances, these provisions complement a more general provision related to disturbances. For example, the City of Richmond prohibits animals from barking or causing other sounds “continually or sporadically or erratically for any period in excess of one-half hour of time”. 8 municipalities extend their disturbance prohibition to dogs only, while 16 include all animals. The City of Kamloops represents an outlier as the only municipality that extends disturbance prohibitions to animals, except for dogs. This may be explained by the fact that provisions on dogs were removed from the overall *Animal Control Bylaw* and included in a separate *Dog Responsibility and Control Bylaw* in 2011. The intent may have been to have these provisions still apply to dogs, however, the current wording in the bylaw does not indicate this.

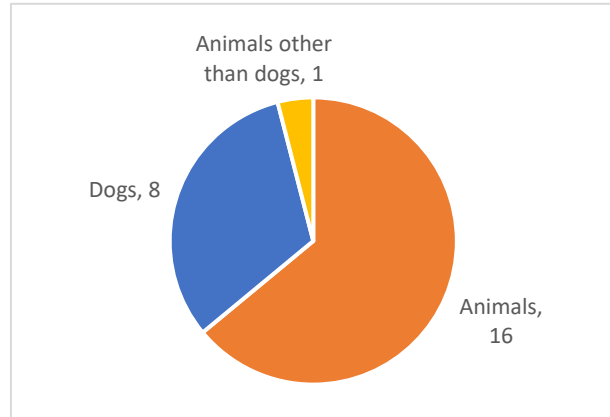


Figure 6 Disturbance Prohibition Applicability

Removing excrement

All but one of the examined municipalities include provisions requiring owners to immediately remove excrement deposited by an animal outside of the owner’s property and dispose of it in a sanitary manner (Figure 7). 18 municipalities extend this requirement to dogs only while 6 extend it to animals in general. Noteworthy variations include the District of Saanich which exempts blind persons accompanied by a service dog from these requirements or the City of

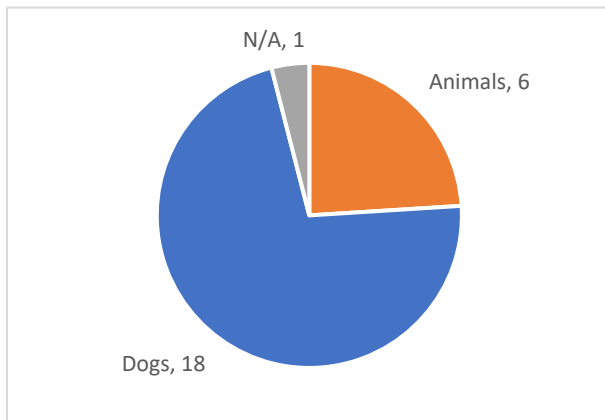


Figure 7 Removing Excrement Requirement Applicability

Vancouver which exempts service dogs in the company of a person who is physically disabled or blind. The City of New Westminster, the City of Prince George, and the City of Vernon have additional provisions requiring owners to possess a suitable means of facilitating the removal of dog feces when off the owner’s property and provide proof of their compliance when requested by a bylaw officer.

Confining animals with diseases

15 out of 25 municipalities require owners to confine animals with infectious or communicable diseases or, in some cases, diseases that pose a threat to the safety or health of a person or animal (Figure 8). 4 municipalities impose this requirement on dogs only, 10 on animals in general, and 1 specifically on dogs and hens. Several municipalities include exemptions to the confinement requirement for veterinary visits and/or require owners to seek veterinary care to treat animals with diseases.

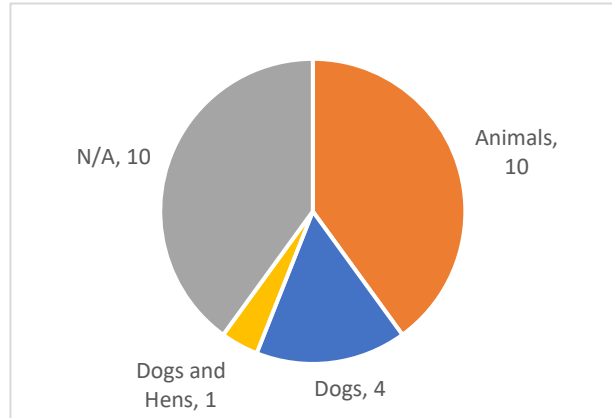


Figure 8 Confining Animals with Diseases Applicability

Confining female animals in heat

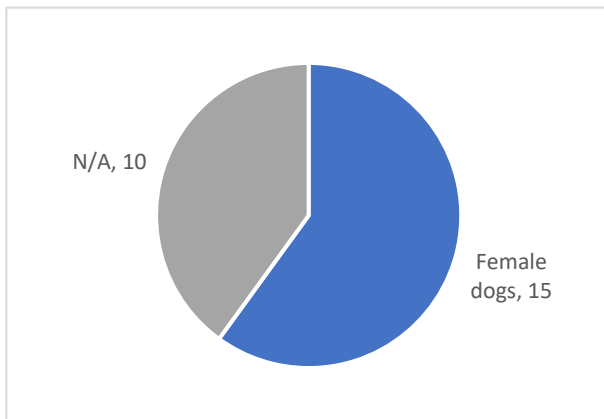


Figure 9 Confining Female Animals in Heat Applicability

15 out of 25 municipalities require owners to confine female dogs when they are in heat (Figure 9). 4 of these municipalities specifically refer to unaltered female dogs, however, this is essentially redundant since altered female dogs do generally not have heat cycles. Some municipalities merely state that the owner needs to confine the dog, while others provide more detailed requirements. For instance, this may entail keeping the dog securely confined within a building or enclosure capable of preventing the escape of that dog and the entry of other

dogs. A few municipalities allow owners to take dogs in heat outside for the purpose of urinating or defecating on the owner’s private lands when held on a leash.

Specific Dog Designations

It is common for local governments to create specific designations for dogs and apply different requirements to their owners.. These designations any combination of the following:

- aggressive dog
- nuisance dog
- vicious dog
- dangerous dog

A detailed breakdown of dog designation categories by local government can be found in *Appendix D: Overview of Dog Designations*.

Designation Process

In most cases, a municipality's animal bylaw specifies a procedure which leads to a dog being designated in one of the categories above. For instance, in the City of Vancouver if an animal control officer has reasonable grounds to consider a dog to be an aggressive dog, they may deliver written notice to the dog owner to advise them of the requirements for aggressive dogs. Dog owners can apply for a determination that the dog is no longer aggressive, provided they meet certain requirements. Similar processes are followed in the City of Surrey, City of Abbotsford, City of Coquitlam, City of Chilliwack, City of Mission, among others.

Aggressive Dog Designation

20 municipalities have a designation for aggressive dogs. Exact definitions vary, but include:

- a dog that has, without provocation, displayed aggressive behaviour or bitten another domestic animal or a person. (City of Vancouver)
- a dog that (a) has without justifiable provocation displayed Aggressive Behaviour toward a person or Animal; or (b) Has without justifiable provocation caused a Minor Injury to a person or Animal. (City of Surrey)
- any dog that has attacked, bitten, or caused injury or attempted to attack, bite, or cause injury to a person or domestic animal as determined by an Animal Control Officer. (City of Kelowna)
- a dog which meets one or more of the following conditions: (a) a Animal Control Officer has reasonable grounds to believe is likely to cause injury to a person or domestic animal based on repeated aggressive behaviour; (b) has, without provocation, caused a non-serious injury to a person or another domestic animal while on public property or while on private property other than property owned or occupied by the person responsible for the dog. (District of Saanich)

Nuisance Dog Designation

7 municipalities have a designation for nuisance dogs. Exact definitions vary, but include:

- a dog (1) that has been impounded 3 times within the previous 24 months; (2) for which the owner of the dog has been found liable for 3 or more tickets issued by an Animal Control Officer within the previous 24 months; or (3) for which the total number of impounds and tickets for which they have been found liable, totals 3 within the previous 24 months. (City of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission)
- any dog that has been At Large or impounded three times in the last 12 months or whose Owner has been issued a Bylaw Offence Notice or Municipal Ticket three times in the last 12 months, or a dog that is menacing by repeatedly charging or lunging at a fence. (City of Kelowna)

Vicious Dog Designation

5 municipalities have a designation for vicious dogs. Exact definitions vary, but include:

- a dog that (a) has without justifiable provocation caused a Serious Injury to a person or Animal; or (b) has a known propensity, tendency or disposition to Attack without justifiable provocation; or (c) has on more than one occasion caused a Minor Injury to a person or Animal; or (d) has while Running at Large, aggressively pursued or harassed a person without justifiable provocation or has a demonstrated a propensity, tendency or disposition to do so as deemed by an Animal Control Officer or Animal Shelter Manager. (City of Surrey)
- a dog that (1) has, without provocation, caused a minor injury to a person on more than one occasion; (2) has, without provocation caused a minor injury to a domestic animal on more than one occasion; (3) the Animal Control Manager has reasonable grounds to believe that, based on repeated aggressive behaviour, is likely to cause a minor injury on more than one occasion to a person or domestic animal or is likely to cause a serious injury to a person or domestic animal; or (4) is a Dangerous Dog. (City of Coquitlam)

Dangerous Dog Designation

20 municipalities have a designation for dangerous dogs. Exact definitions vary, but include:

- a dog that (a) has killed or Seriously Injured a person; (b) has killed or Seriously Injured an Animal, while in a Public Place or while on private property, other than property owned or occupied by the person responsible for the Dog; (c) has previously been deemed a Vicious Dog and has since Attacked or caused injury to a person or Animal after being deemed a Vicious Dog; or (d) as defined in the *Community Charter S.B.C. 2003 c. 26*, as amended. (City of Surrey)
- a dangerous dog as defined in Section 49 of the *Community Charter* (City of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission)
- any dog that has seriously injured or killed a person or domestic animal as determined by an Animal Control Officer in accordance with section 49 of the *Community Charter* and its amendments. (City of Kelowna)

Section 49 of the *Community Charter* defines a dangerous dog as a dog that (a) has killed or seriously injured a person, (b) has killed or seriously injured a domestic animal, while in a public place or while on private property, other than property owned or occupied by the person responsible for the dog, or (c) an animal control officer has reasonable grounds to believe is likely to kill or seriously injure a person. Animal control officers have additional authorities under the *Community Charter* related to dangerous dogs, including the ability to apply to the Provincial Court for an order to have that dog be destroyed.

The City of Langford is the only examined municipality that has provisions for dangerous animals, not just dangerous dogs. In this context, “dangerous” means “any animal that has

attacked or bitten, attempted to attack or bite or chased any person or animal or wildlife but excludes any attack by a dog on other animals or wildlife engaged in molesting livestock.” That said, most of the provisions in the bylaw still apply to dangerous dogs only. The one difference is that dangerous animals are deemed not to be under the direct and continuous control of a person when it comes to determining whether an animal is at large.

Specific Provisions

Once a dog has been designated as aggressive, vicious, nuisance or dangerous, additional requirements for control apply in accordance with the respective bylaw. In many cases, these restrictions apply universally to all dogs with that designation. Some bylaws also provide an animal control officer or pound keeper with the authority to attach conditions to dog licenses of aggressive, vicious, nuisance or dangerous dogs which can be individual to each dog.

These requirements commonly include all or some of the following:

- Muzzling in public places
- Leashing at all times
- Confining in enclosure when on owner’s property
- Prohibition from off-leash areas
- Displaying warning sign on owner’s property
- Permanent identification
- Requirement to spay/neuter
- Retaining animal trainer
- Obtaining liability insurance

In respect to the requirement to obtain liability insurance, municipalities usually require insurance covering any damages for injuries caused by the dog with a minimum coverage amount of usually \$500,000, \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000.

Breed-specific requirements

3 of the examined municipalities automatically attach a designation to certain breeds of dogs. For instance, pit bulls, pit bull terriers, and similar breeds are considered vicious in the City of Burnaby, dangerous in the City of Richmond, and aggressive in the District of West Vancouver.

Meeting Emotional and Physical Needs

As discussed in Chapter 3, the understanding of non-human animals as creatures with feelings and emotions that are worth caring for is relatively recent in many Western cultures. In the context of this analysis, bylaw provisions that concern themselves with meeting the emotional and physical needs of animals include basic care requirements, cruelty prohibitions, possession limits, restrictions around animal performances, indoor and outdoor shelter requirements, and tethering restrictions, among others. *Appendix E: Overview of Animal Care Requirements* provides an overview of these provisions by municipality.

Basic care requirements

21 out of the 25 examined municipalities have included basic care requirements for animals in their bylaws. 17 municipalities extend these basic care requirements to animals in general, and 4 to a specific subsection of animals. In the case of the City of Vancouver, requirements apply to dogs and hens, in the District of Saanich, they apply to dogs, cats and rodents, in the City of North Vancouver, they apply to dogs and in the City of Kamloops they apply to animals and birds, but not to dogs. As discussed earlier, the City of Kamloops represents an outlier, and the intention may be to have these requirements apply to dogs as well.

Basic care requirements commonly include the need to provide sufficient potable water and food, clean food and water receptacles, the opportunity for sufficient exercise, and veterinary care where required. Some municipalities keep these requirements rather short, while others include more detail, for example:

- A person who keeps a dog, or a person who has care, custody or control of a dog, must give the dog food, water, shelter, and exercise sufficient to maintain the dog in good health. (City of Vancouver)
- No Owner shall keep any Animal in the City unless the Animal is provided with: (a) clean potable drinking water and food in sufficient quantity and of a recognized nutritional quality to allow for the Animal’s normal growth and the maintenance of the Animal’s normal body weight; (b) food and water receptacles which are clean; (c) the opportunity for regular exercise sufficient to maintain the Animal’s good health, including daily opportunities to be free of an Enclosure and exercised under appropriate control; and (d) necessary veterinary care when the Animal exhibits signs of pain, injury, illness, suffering, or disease. (City of Surrey)

Noteworthy variations include the City of Coquitlam which requires owners to provide animals with daily opportunities for social contact with people or animals in addition to the more common requirements above.

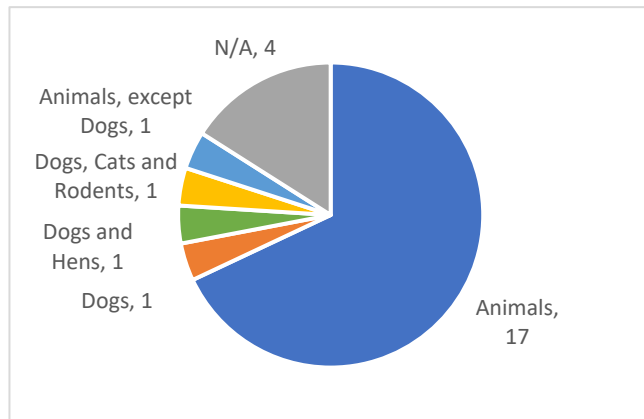


Figure 10 Basic Care Requirements Applicability

Cruelty prohibitions

8 out of 25 municipalities contain explicit anti-cruelty provisions in their bylaws. All 8 municipalities extend these cruelty prohibitions to animals in general. Where basic care requirements indicate what owners must provide for their animals, cruelty prohibitions prescribe what owners must not do to their animals, usually related to abuse and violence. While exact provisions vary across municipalities, they commonly prohibit persons from teasing or tormenting an animal, causing an animal to suffer, punching an animal, or training an animal to fight. The City of Nanaimo contains rather detailed prohibitions related to cruelty, including abandoning an animal, using poison or weapons on an animal, teasing, tormenting, beating or choking an animal, allowing an animal to suffer, and training an animal to fight. Notably, the City of New Westminster and the City of Penticton also prohibit owners from using harsh physical or verbal corrections to train animals.

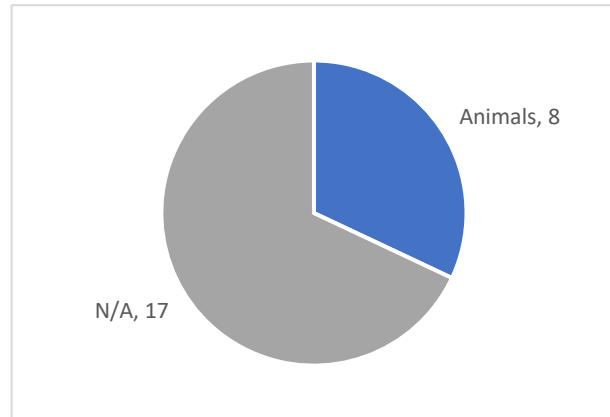


Figure 11 Cruelty Prohibitions Applicability

Possession limits

All 25 municipalities have some form of possession limits on animals. This takes the form of overall possession limits (e.g., no more than 12 animals), possession limits for specific animals (e.g., no more than three dogs and three cats), or a combination of both (e.g., no more than a total of five animals consisting of no more than three dogs or three cats). The exact breakdown varies widely across municipalities, and examples include:

- No more than three dogs, no more than six, in aggregate, hamsters, guinea pigs, cats, rabbits, reptiles and other small animals, no more than 12, in aggregate, pigeons and other birds, and no more than four hens (City of Vancouver).
- No more than 12 animals overall, and no more than four dogs or five cats or six companion animals, no more than 12, in aggregate, small flock birds, mice, and rats, among others, no more than four hook bill birds and rabbits, among others, and no more than six, in aggregate, guinea pigs or reptiles (City of Nanaimo).

Municipalities generally exclude animals under a certain age, usually around a few weeks, from these possession limits as well as individuals that operate a commercial kennel or breed animals with a valid license.

Animal performances

13 of the examined municipalities prohibit certain animal performances (Figure 12). In 7 instances, this extends to wild and/or exotic animals, and in 2 bylaws this extends to “prohibited animals”, which in both cases encompass wild/exotic animals. 4 municipalities prohibit animal performances for animals in general, however, list several exemptions. These commonly include exhibitions involving dogs, horses and ponies, agricultural fairs or pet shows, and magic acts, provided the animals are treated in a humane manner. The City of Kamloops requires owners to have the approval from the Community and Protective Services Director before holding a dog show, performance or gathering. Bylaws at times also lay out specific conditions that need to be met to operate certain animals performances or exhibitions (e.g., pony ride, petting zoo).

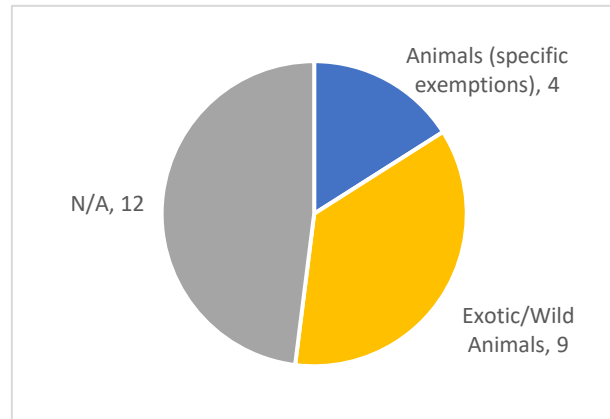


Figure 12 Animal Performances Applicability

Enclosure requirements

23 of the examined municipalities include specific requirements in their bylaws related to keeping animals in enclosures (Figure 13). In 18 cases, this applies to animals in general, in 3 instances, this extends to dogs only, in 1 case it specifically applies to dogs, cats, and rodents, and in 1 case it applies to animals, with the exception of dogs.

Enclosure requirements commonly include the need to provide adequate air ventilation, temperature and size of the enclosure to “maintain the animal in good health” (City of Vancouver) or to “prevent the Animal from suffering discomfort or heat related injury” (City of Surrey). Some municipalities also specifically speak to providing sufficient shade to protect animals from direct rays of sun at all times and some specify a maximum amount of time for which an animal may be kept in an outside enclosure per day. A few municipalities have more limited requirements which only necessitate the provision of adequate ventilation while in an enclosure (e.g., City of Burnaby, City of Richmond, District of Saanich, City of Port Coquitlam, City of North Vancouver). The City of Kamloops only requires the regular cleaning and sanitization of enclosures for animals. The City of Victoria and District of West Vancouver prohibit owners from keeping animals in an enclosure where the temperature exceeds 30 degrees Celsius.

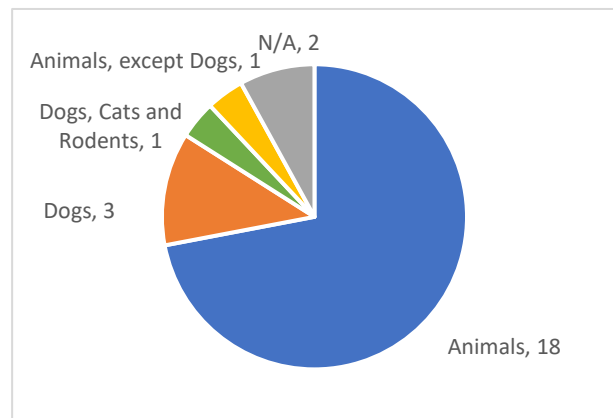


Figure 13 Enclosure Requirements Applicability

Securing animals in vehicles

15 of the examined municipalities include specific requirements related to securing animals in vehicles (Figure 14). 12 municipalities apply these requirements to animals in general while 3 municipalities include only dogs in these requirements.

Requirements commonly include securing animals in such a way to prevent them from falling or being thrown out of the vehicle, for example by way of a body harness or other mechanism.

Some bylaws specify that these requirements apply to animals kept in a vehicle outside the passenger compartment, while some apply to animals in vehicles generally. The City of Nanaimo includes additional restrictions related to exercising dogs from a car, which is prohibited, or from a bike, which requires owners to retain two-handed control of the bike at all times. The City of Penticton also prohibits owners from exercising animals by allowing them to run next to a motor vehicle.

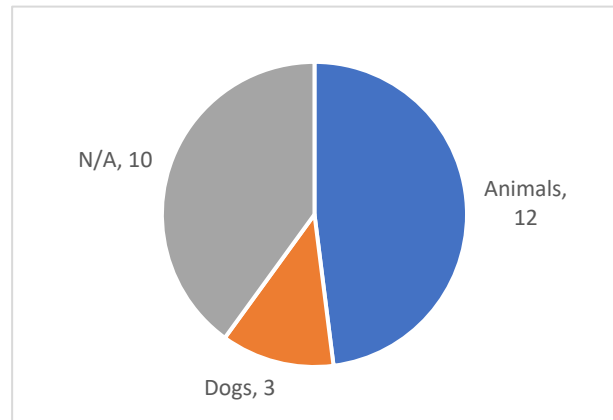


Figure 14 Securing Animals in Vehicles Applicability

It should be noted that the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* speaks to the transportation of animals and requires animals to be inside the passenger compartment of a vehicle or confined in a secure manner when outside of the passenger compartment. Municipalities with bylaws on the transportation of animals may do so to enable enforcement on a local level and to provide added detail or protections beyond the provincial legislation.

Tethering restrictions

22 of the examined municipalities impose specific requirements and restrictions when it comes to tethering an animal, i.e., tying an animal to a fixed object to restrict its movement (Figure 15). In 13 municipalities, these restrictions apply to animals in general, in 8 municipalities, these restrictions specifically apply to dogs, and in 1 municipality they apply specifically to dogs, cats and rodents.

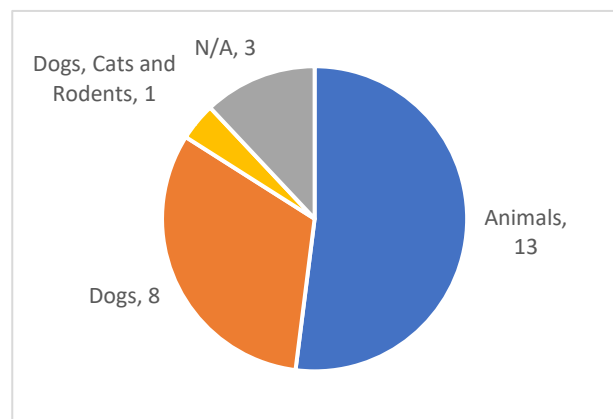


Figure 15 Tethering Restrictions Applicability

These provisions commonly include restrictions on the means used to tie the animal, such as the prohibition of choke collars or ropes that are tied directly around an animals neck. Some municipalities also restrict the amount of time an animal may be tethered while unattended or require a tether to be of sufficient length to allow for free movement, which is sometimes specified in the bylaw. Notably, the City of Prince

George only restricts leaving animals unattended while being tethered but imposes no specific requirements related to the means of tethering.

Outside shelter requirements

20 of the examined municipalities include outside shelter requirements in their bylaws which owners need to abide by when keeping animals outside. 15 municipalities have these requirements in place for animals in general, 3 for dogs, 1 for dogs, cats and rodents, and 1 for domestic animals except altered cats.

Requirements commonly include the need for protection from weather conditions, including direct rays of sun, sufficient size, bedding that can maintain normal body temperature, and a requirement to regularly clean and sanitize the shelter.

For instance, the City of Burnaby requires that “every person who keeps a dog that spends time outdoors shall ensure that the dog, while outdoors, has shelter from the heat, cold and wet and that the shelter has sufficient space to allow the dog to turn freely and to easily stand, sit and lie.” Some municipalities include more expansive requirements with a great amount of detail. For example, the City of Nanaimo requires an owner of animal to ensure the animal has protection from all elements and does not suffer from hypothermia, hyperthermia, dehydration, discomfort, or exertion causing pain, suffering, or injury. Outdoor shelter must further provide protection from heat, cold and wet that is appropriate for the animals weight and type of coat, sufficient space to allow the animal the ability to turn about freely; at least two times the length of the animal in all directions, at least as high as the animal’s height plus 10 %; protection from direct rays of sun, and bedding that will assist in maintaining normal body temperature. Further, dogs may not be confined in an enclosure for more than 10 hours within a 24-hour period in Nanaimo.

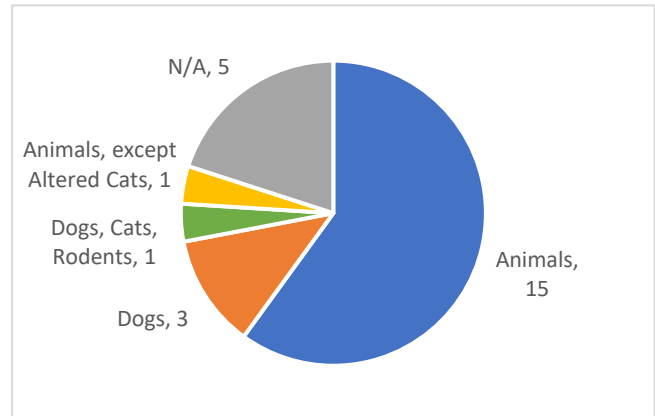


Figure 16 Outside Shelter Requirements Applicability

Licensing and Identifying

All of the examined B.C. municipalities require persons keeping dogs to obtain an annual license with the respective City and pay the annual licence fee, where applicable. More detailed information can be found in *Appendix F: Overview of Licensing Fees*. The age at which dogs must be licensed varies from as young as 8 weeks (City of Richmond) to as old as 6 months (City of Coquitlam, Delta, Kamloops, Nanaimo, among others) (Figure 17). The average age at which local governments require licensing is 4 months.

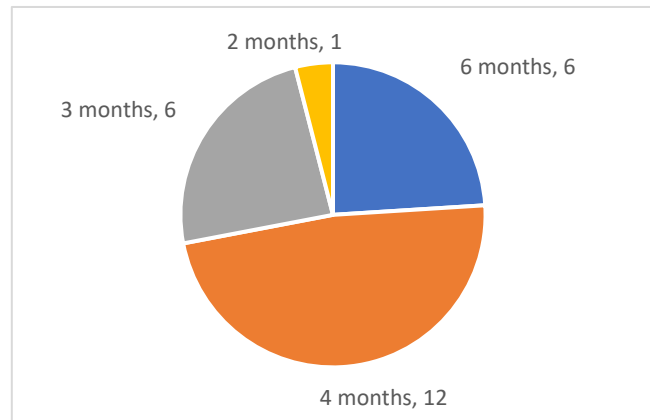


Figure 17 Licensing Age for Dogs

The cost for an annual licence varies based on multiple factors; almost all municipalities offer a discount for altered dogs and either a discount for early payment or a surcharge for late payment. The average licensing fee across the examined municipalities for 2023 is \$60 for unaltered dogs and \$30 for altered dogs. The City of Vernon has the lowest licensing fees for unaltered dogs at \$25 (note that the city has recently decided to remove differential licensing for altered and unaltered dogs). The highest licensing fees for unaltered dogs can be found in the City of Surrey and the District Municipality of North Vancouver at \$82. The City of Chilliwack has the lowest licensing fees for altered dogs at \$24, and the City of Surrey has the highest licensing fees for altered dogs at \$51.5. Including late payment fees, the averages for unaltered and altered dogs increase to \$75 and \$41, respectively. A few municipalities have introduced a discount on dog licenses for seniors, making a dog license for an altered dog as low as \$12.50 in the City of Maple Ridge. Most municipalities have also implemented higher licensing fees for aggressive or dangerous dogs or dogs with other designations. License fees for dangerous dogs range from \$150 (District of Saanich) to \$583.50 (City of Surrey).

Notable recent developments related to dog licensing include the City of Vernon (RDNO) which recently removed differential licensing fees for altered and not altered dogs to “encourage more dog owners to license their dogs” (Regional District of North Okanagan, 2020). Further, the City of Vancouver first introduced differential licensing fees for aggressive dogs in 2023 (City of Vancouver, 2023).

Provisions specific to cats

Previous sections have highlighted various care and control requirements contained in animal bylaws, some of which apply to cats. This section will dive deeper into municipalities with specific provisions on cats in animal bylaws, including mandatory identification, cat registration, spay/neuter requirements, and running at large prohibitions.

Mandatory Identification

7 of the examined municipalities require mandatory identification for cats (Figure 18). Some municipalities provide more flexibility as to the means of identification than others. The City of Richmond, City of Delta and City of Penticton specify that the identification must be sufficient to enable any person finding the cat to contact the owner and includes, but is not limited to,

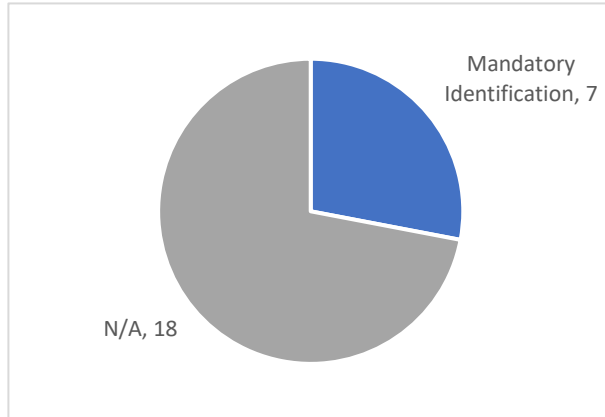


Figure 18 Mandatory Identification Applicability

collar and tag, tattoo, or microchip implant. The City of Nanaimo indicates that identification may take the form of a collar, harness, traceable tattoo, microchip or other suitable device. On the other hand, the City of Surrey and City of Prince George require that a cat has identification at all times which must be one of the following: a collar or tag, a traceable tattoo, or traceable microchip. The City of Surrey exempts cats in quarantine and cats brought into the city for the purpose of entering them in a cat show or exhibition, however, they are not allowed to be at large. The City of New

Westminster is the only municipality that requires that a cat has *permanent* identification which includes a traceable tattoo or microchip.

On the importance of mandatory identification, Surrey’s bylaw indicates the following: “Cat identification will provide cats protection under the law equal to that afforded dogs, by establishing ownership which, in turn, will encourage cat owners to take full responsibility for their pets’ welfare.” and “Cat identification will reduce the number of unowned cats at large, thereby reducing unwanted litters, overpopulation, and the costs to the City for euthanizing owned cats at large.”

Voluntary Registration

None of the examined municipalities require cats to be registered with their jurisdiction, however, two include the option for voluntary registration in their bylaws (Figure 19). The City of Coquitlam allows cat owners to register their cat by submitting a registration application and ensuring the cat has permanent identification. On the city’s website, owners are encouraged to register their cats so that they can be reunited in case the cat is brought to an animal shelter. The City of Kamloops allows for registration with the city by making an application and paying a one-time registration fee of \$40.

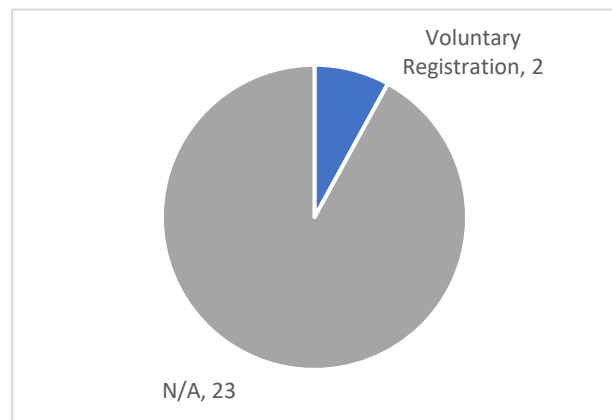


Figure 19 Voluntary Registration Applicability

Spay/Neuter Requirement

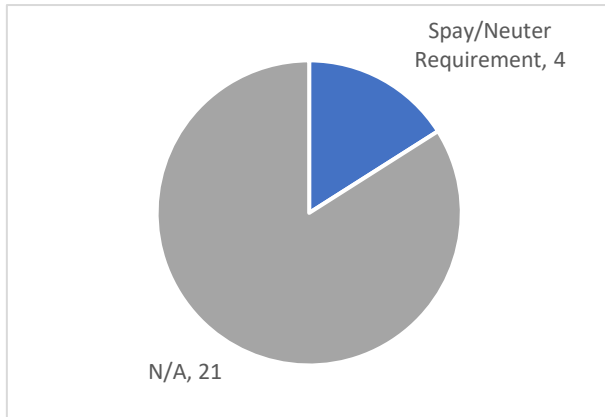


Figure 20 Spay/Neuter Requirement Applicability

4 municipalities require cats to be spayed or neutered. The City of Surrey, City of Richmond, the City of Delta and the City of Nanaimo all have this requirement for cats that are or appear to be over the age of 6 months, but exempt individuals that hold a valid cat breeding permit. The City of Delta specifies that this requirement does not apply to cat owners who do not normally reside in the municipality, provided they do not allow their cat to be at large.

Running at Large Prohibition

15 municipalities do not prohibit cats from running at large, 7 municipalities prohibit unaltered cats from running at large, and 3 municipalities prohibit all cats from running at large (Figure 21).

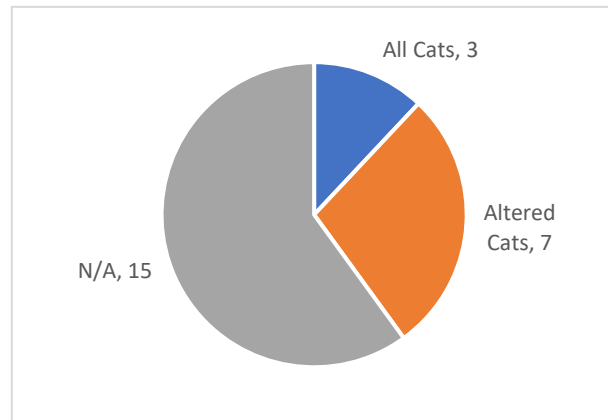


Figure 21 Running at Large Prohibition Applicability

Other notable provisions

A few municipalities include other noteworthy provisions related to cats that do not fit into the categories above. For instance, the City of Nanaimo prohibits persons from feeding feral cats, which the city defines as cats “that [are] unsocialized to humans and [have] a temperament of extreme fear and resistance to contact with humans”. Feeding of feral cats is only allowed as part of a city-approved organization’s Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) program. The City of Prince George requires owners to ensure their cat’s (and dog’s) vaccinations are up to date. The city further allows individuals to place humane traps on their property for the purpose of catching a cat that is at large, provided that a number of conditions are met to ensure the safety of cats. Further, the City of Penticton contains a provision stating that an owner who permits their cats to be at large shall assume all risks associated with the cats being at large.

Prohibited/Allowable Animals

The majority of municipalities specify which animals are prohibited from being kept as pets (or which are allowed to be kept as pets), although specific provisions vary. Generally, provisions on prohibited or allowable animals fall into one of the below categories.

Most common is the prohibition of wild or exotic animals, either by listing an exhaustive list of prohibited species in an appendix to the animal bylaw or, less commonly, including a definition for wild or exotic animals. Prohibited exotic and wild animals vary across municipalities and

may include coyotes, foxes, crocodiles, lions, tigers, anacondas, pythons, hyenas, bears, venomous reptiles and snakes, elephants, black widow spiders, tarantulas, and non-human primates, among many others. Prohibitions on exotic and wild animals apply in 13 of the examined municipalities, while one municipality only prohibits the keeping of venomous snakes. In most cases, the bylaws will list exemptions to these prohibitions which may include the premises of a veterinarian, the premises of the B.C SPCA, impounding facilities, the premises of educational or research institutions, and/or the premises of the RCMP or municipal police forces, among others.

Three municipalities do not specify which animals are prohibited but rather indicate which are allowed to be kept as pets. The City of Penticton is the only municipality to include an exhaustive list of allowable animals as an appendix to their animal bylaw. The list includes cats, dogs, domestic ferrets, domestic mice, domestic rats, rabbits, chinchillas, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, hedgehogs, freshwater and saltwater fish, small and medium birds, and small reptiles and amphibians under two meters, including snakes, bearded dragons, frogs and salamanders. The City of West Vancouver indicates that no person may keep an animal in the municipality other than a pet, which is defined as a domesticated dog, cat, rabbit, ferret, hamster, guinea pig, gerbil, or bird, and includes reptiles and other animals if they are kept inside a dwelling unit, but does not include livestock, poultry, or wildlife as defined by the *Wildlife Act*. Exceptions include chickens, animals being driven or conveyed through and beyond the municipality, and animals participating in any lawful parade, circus, show or other demonstration. The City of Vernon indicates that the keeping of animals other than companion animals or animals regulated under the *Wildlife Act* is prohibited in all zones of the city. Companion animals are defined as “any species of cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, rodents, reptiles or Mini Pigs able to be accommodated within a premise as part of the household but does not include controlled alien species except as regulated under the *Wildlife Act* [...]”. Other animals that are explicitly allowed include hens, pigeons, bees, and animals that are specifically allowed in specific parts of the municipality according to the zoning bylaw.

A number of municipalities indicate that certain domestic animals are prohibited unless a number of conditions are met, often related to a minimum required lot size, zoning bylaw provisions, or the need for a permit. The exact species of animals that are prohibited as well as the conditions under which they may be kept vary greatly. Examples include the City of Richmond which prohibits poultry on any structure used for human habitation or on a parcel with an area of less than 2,000 square meters. Wild animals are further prohibited unless, in the opinion of the animal control officer, adequate provision is made to ensure that the animal is securely contained and poses no risk to public safety. Domestic farm animals are prohibited on all one-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, or multiple-family dwellings.

Four municipalities do not contain specific sections on prohibited or allowable animals in their animal bylaws. Provincial law, including the *Wildlife Act* and the Controlled Alien Species regulation still apply and many exotic animals are prohibited under this legislation or require a permit.

It should be noted that having a special permit from B.C. to allow certain controlled alien species does not override local government bylaws.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Analysis

The purpose of this research was to determine the current state of animal bylaws in B.C. local governments as they related to obligations pet owners have. This chapter aims to answer the primary and secondary research questions by examining the emerging themes stemming from the literature review and policy analysis.

Current State and Evolving Practices

Throughout this research project, efforts were made to not only analyze the current state of animal bylaws across B.C., but also understand how ideas around the best approaches to managing animals have evolved over time. This has proven to be challenging as bylaws are frequently amended and the different versions of the same bylaws are not sufficiently documented or publicly available. For instance, the District of Saanich's Animal Bylaw passed in 2004 and has had 16 amendments since which make up the current consolidated version of the bylaw. Some municipalities include notes indicating which provisions were changed or implemented through certain amendments, however, it is not always clear whether a specific provision was first introduced with this amendment or merely changed. Obtaining historical versions of older bylaws may present an opportunity to expand on the presented findings, however, this was outside of the scope of the research at hand.

That being said, there is some indication that older bylaws tend to reflect a more traditional approach to the governance of animals through means of control intended to prevent threats caused by animals. This suggests an understanding of animals as posing an inherent threat that needs to be contained with little regard for their wellbeing or an understanding of environmental factors that might contribute to animals' behaviour. Historically, there has also been a disproportionate focus on regulating dogs, while cats and other animals are only given limited attention. More recently introduced animal bylaws appear to take a more all-encompassing approach with dedicated provisions related to cats and other animals such as bees and hens. Provisions on control remain prevalent, however, are increasingly complemented by requirements related to the care of animals and a focus on owner responsibility.

While this shift can be observed through the analysis of bylaw titles, control provisions, care requirements, and specific provisions on cats, it should be emphasized that these findings are preliminary and that not all of the more recently adopted animal bylaws reflect this.

Evolving Bylaw Titles

The titles of bylaws have evolved over time to reflect concepts of animal responsibility and care. None of the examined animal bylaws adopted before 2011 include words in their title that would suggest requirements for care or responsibility towards animals. Indeed, the focus before 2011 was on control and regulation, implying an inherent threat stemming from animals that needs to be contained. Since 2011, more municipalities have passed animal bylaws with titles that highlight responsibility and care, suggesting a focus on owners of animals and their

responsibilities towards their animals and community. This is the case for 8 out of 15 bylaws passed since 2011.

The City of Nanaimo presents an example of this evolution that is well documented. The city recently decided to repeal its 1995 *Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw* and introduce an *Animal Responsibility Bylaw* in 2021. The change of title (and content) was made after an independent review put forward recommendations to align the bylaw with modern best practices and bring about a shift towards animal responsibility.

Comprehensive Control Requirements

Provisions related to the control of animals have a long history and can be found in all the examined municipalities, albeit to different extents.

Provisions that exist across all or all but one municipalities include running at large prohibitions, requirements to remove excrement, and dog designations. All municipalities contain prohibitions on animals at large whereby more than half of bylaws exempt cats and just over a quarter exempt cats that have been spayed or neutered. Over a quarter of examined municipalities require owners of dogs to remove excrement deposited by dogs immediately, while just under a quarter extend this requirement to all animals. Designations for dogs exist across all municipalities, however, specifics vary greatly.

A few control provisions apply predominantly to dogs, including prohibitions from biting or attacking persons and requirements to remove excrement from public places. Others, including disturbance prohibitions and requirements to confine diseased animals, predominantly apply to all animals, as defined in the respective bylaws, where they exist.

Expanding Care Requirements

Where control requirements in municipal bylaws are well established and generally exist to a similar (although not equal) extent across municipalities, care requirements vary more widely, particularly when it comes to prohibitions of cruelty towards animals.

Almost all municipalities contain some basic care requirements that owners must follow and the majority of those apply to all animals, as defined in the respective bylaw. Differences exist in the level of detail to those requirements, ranging from short provisions requiring food, water, shelter, and exercise sufficient to maintain an animal's health, to more detailed requirements specifying nutritional quality of food, daily opportunities for exercise outside of an enclosure, necessary veterinary care, clean water and food receptacles, among others. Other provisions related to care that almost all municipalities have in place include enclosure requirements, tethering restrictions, and outside shelter requirements. Enclosure requirements and outside shelter requirements overwhelmingly apply to all animals, while tethering restrictions mostly apply to all animals but are still restricted to dogs in a number of cases. Where these provisions are in place, they again vary in detail; enclosure requirements may merely require the provision of adequate ventilation or the regular cleaning of enclosures, but some include more detail such as specific temperature requirements or maximum timeframes that animals are allowed to be kept in enclosures every day. Tethering requirements range from not allowing tethered animals to be unattended to

prohibitions of choke collars or ropes that are tied directly around an animals neck, minimum length requirements for tethers, and maximum timeframes in which animals may be left unattended while tethered. Outside shelter provisions at times require that animals be provided with protection from the heat, cold, rain and direct sunrays, and go into more details at other times, specifying the need for sufficient space to allow free movement, minimum dimensions proportionate to the size of the animal, and protections form the elements appropriate to the animal's weight and type of coat.

Provisions that are less common but still prevalent with just over half of examined municipalities include restrictions on animal performances and requirements to secure animals in vehicles. Where in place, restrictions on animal performances are mainly focused on exotic and wild animals where they are required to perform tricks, fight or participate in performances for the amusement or entertainment of an audience. A few municipalities have prohibitions on performances or shows involving any kind of animal, with several exceptions in place. Overall, prohibitions on animal performances appear to have a long tradition, appearing in current bylaws going back to 1992 and being included in new animal bylaws as recently as 2021. Provisions related to securing animals in vehicles apply to all animals in most cases and only to dogs in a few instances.

Lastly, only a small number of municipalities have enacted specific cruelty prohibitions in their bylaws. Some of these provisions speak more generally to not causing or allowing an animal to suffer or not doing any act that may tease or annoy an animal. Municipalities such as the City of Nanaimo provide more detail with prohibitions on abandoning animals, using poison, firearms, bows and arrows on an animal, teasing, tormenting, beating, kicking, punching, choking or provoking an animal, in addition to prohibitions on causing or allowing an animal to suffer. Several municipalities also prohibit owners from training their animals to fight. Cruelty prohibitions appear to be a more recent practice in municipal animal bylaws with the earliest appearance in the City of Delta's 2010 *Animal Control Bylaw*. 8 out of the 15 bylaws introduced in 2010 and after include cruelty prohibitions, while 7 do not. Notably, cruelty provisions in New Westminster's 2013 bylaw were introduced through an amendment in 2018 and Coquitlam's 2011 bylaw was amended in 2022 to incorporate these requirements. The City of Victoria's 2011 bylaw was amended in 2018 to strengthen anti-cruelty provisions (BC SPCA, 2018). Other municipalities with cruelty prohibitions may also have introduced them through subsequent amendments, however, amendments are not always tracked in consolidated versions of bylaws.

It is further noteworthy that all the bylaws with cruelty prohibition apply to animals in general and not only to dogs, which is more prevalent in other provisions. An explanation of this may be that municipalities that go beyond the 'status quo' by explicitly prohibiting cruelty in their bylaws are the same that take an overall progressive approach to their bylaws and would then also extend these provisions to all animals. Circling back to the discussion around bylaw titles, another notable observation is the fact that 7 out of the 8 municipalities with cruelty prohibitions in place are those with primary animal bylaws whose title relates to concepts of care. It should be noted that acts of cruelty towards animals are prohibited in provincial legislation. As such, these

acts may still be prosecuted on the provincial level, however, municipalities without specific cruelty provisions are not able to enforce this on a local level.

Overall, the City of Nanaimo, City of Surrey, City of New Westminster, City of Coquitlam, and City of Victoria contain the greatest number of care provisions. These bylaws were first adopted in 2021, 2017, 2013, 2011, 2011, respectively.

Limited Provisions on Cats

Discussions around regulations for cats are oftentimes subject to controversy, especially when it comes to aspects of control in public spaces. Where extending basic care standards and other care requirements to cats (and other animals for that matter) may be seen as sensible by the general public and cat owners alike, opinions on matters of controlling cats differ. As discussed in earlier chapters, free roaming cats can negatively impact ecosystems, contribute to overpopulation, and facilitate the transmission of diseases. At the same time, owners may be concerned about the welfare of indoor-only cats which may lack opportunities for exercise and enrichment.

To this day, only a limited number of municipalities have enacted specific bylaw provisions related to cats. Identification requirements are included in just over a quarter of examined bylaws and go back as far as 1998, when Surrey passed its *Spay/Neuter Bylaw* for cats. These requirements are increasingly prominent in more recent bylaws and are included in half of related bylaws passed since 2011. Only 2 municipalities include provisions related to voluntary cat registration in their bylaws. Spay/Neuter requirements are included in less than one fifth of examined bylaws with the earliest appearance in Surrey's bylaw from 1998, with others included in bylaws from 2005, 2010 and 2021. The most common provisions related to cats are running at large prohibitions. The three municipalities that ban roaming cats are the City of Nanaimo, City of Victoria and the City of Prince George.

Overall, the City of Nanaimo's 2021 bylaw arguably contains the most extensive provisions on cats, requiring mandatory identification and sterilization of cats, and prohibiting cats from running at large. While the discussion around incorporating cat provisions into bylaws is becoming more prevalent now, municipalities like Surrey have had mandatory identification and sterilization requirements as early as 1998.

Emerging Practices

This research has identified several emerging practices that indicate a shift in the conceptualization of animal bylaws and, to an extent, the conceptualization of companion animals in human populated spaces. At the same time, this research has brought about questions about the practical aspects of implementing sound animal bylaws and the various considerations that influence local governments in adopting animal bylaws.

Minimizing Threats and Enhancing Benefits

As discussed in earlier chapters, emerging practices represent new, innovative policies that have the potential to be smart or best practices through advanced research and evidence. In the context

of this thesis, smart practices represent instruments that can enhance the positive outcomes associated with animals in human populated spaces while minimizing potential adverse impacts. If smart practices were only about preventing threats stemming from pets, the most sensible approach might be to enact very strict forms of control such as banning pet ownership altogether or restricting all pets to an owner's private property only. This would, however, prevent companion animals and their owners to participate in daily life and actualize the benefits pet ownership can have on physical and mental health as well as community interactions.

Smart practices acknowledge the various benefits that pet ownership can provide to individuals and communities and impose control to the level necessary to protect communities while ensuring animals are well cared for. Providing care for pets has historically not been focus of animal regulations, however, represents an important aspect of animal bylaw smart practices by promoting healthy pets and strong bonds between owners and their pets. Research has shown that this enhances, or even enables, many of the benefits associated with pets and at the same time reduces potential threats and nuisances stemming from animals (Rock, 2013, p. 980). While ethical and philosophical considerations are not the focus of this research, they do lend further support to care requirements as a means to not only maximize benefits to humans but also prioritize the wellbeing of animals.

The City of Nanaimo poses as an example for a municipality that acknowledges the importance of owners taking responsibility to both control their animals and provide care for them in order to protect communities and enhance benefits for humans and pets alike. An independent report that the city commissioned to review their past animal bylaw summarizes some of the considerations above as follows: “Modern animal control services are based on the concept of responsible pet ownership. This concept recognizes that the potential for pets to play a positive role in the community is dependent, almost entirely, on the attitudes and actions of pet owners. In the case of pet dogs, responsible pet owners are those who take the steps necessary to protect their dogs' health and welfare, and to ensure that their dogs do not become a threat or nuisance in the community” (Neilson Strategies Inc., 2020, p. 14).

Analysis of Municipal Animal Bylaws

The analysis of municipal bylaws on its own does not provide sufficient support for the identification of “smart” practices. A particular provision may be common across municipalities in B.C. but that does not necessarily mean it is “smart”. Examining some of the more recently passed animal bylaws and identifying practices that may deviate from the ‘status quo’ can give indications about emerging practices that certain municipalities deem to be “smart” practices.

Increasingly, municipalities have started to expand animal bylaw provisions to animals other than dogs. Municipalities that enact these provisions most commonly extend them to all animals, as opposed to specifying specific species that they apply to (e.g., dogs and cats). The exact definition of animal differs across municipalities but commonly reflects the definition of animal in the *Community Charter*: “any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being.” Some municipalities exclude certain animals such as wildlife or bees, or they provide an exhaustive list of domestic animals that are included in the definition.

Specific provisions beyond those of general applicability are increasingly found for the regulation of cats, providing more legitimacy to the existence of cats as pets and expanding some of the control requirements commonly associated with dogs to cats. These provisions on cats are particularly controversial with proponents deeming them necessary to fill a regulatory gap and protect the ecosystem, public health and cats themselves, and others expressing concerns about the imposed level of control. The increasing regulation of cats can be considered an emergent practice more so than specific bylaw provisions as these vary even across the municipalities with cat regulations in place. Universal roaming at large prohibitions for cats remain uncommon, however, are more prevalent for unaltered cats. Mandatory identification also appears to be a more recent emerging practice that can be observed in an increasing number of bylaws. Overall, while most of the animal bylaws include similar provisions around dogs, great variety in the specific regulation of cats (or lack thereof) remains.

Care requirements, especially anti-cruelty provisions are gaining more popularity in recent animal bylaws. These bylaws do not only prescribe what owners of pets ought to do (e.g., provide sufficient water, food, veterinary care) but also what owners ought not to do. These provisions almost always prohibit causing an animal physical harm and, in some cases, also include acts that would intimidate, provoke or otherwise harm the animal emotionally. The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* includes broad anti-cruelty language including the duty to protect animals from circumstances that are likely to cause the animal to be in distress and a prohibition on causing an animal to be in distress (Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1996). Local governments with anti-cruelty bylaw provisions include more detailed provisions that allow for enforcement on a local level. The question of enforcement capacity of anti-cruelty provisions remains and may present an opportunity for subsequent research.

Another observation is the increased tendency to add more detail provisions in bylaws which may enhance enforcement. The B.C. Ombudsperson's Best Practices Guide on Local Government Bylaw Enforcement highlights that bylaws that are too vague, uncertain or unspecific may be struck down as unenforceable and may hinder fair and consistent enforcement (The Office of the Ombudsperson, 2016). For instance, bylaws requiring animals to be provided with food, water, shelter, and exercise sufficient to maintain an animal's health may be interpreted differently by different people. If enforcement action takes place, it may be vulnerable to challenge based on what constitutes sufficient exercise to maintain an animal's health and how each of these components are defined. More specific provisions, for example in Surrey's 2017 bylaw, speak to requiring "the opportunity for regular exercise sufficient to maintain the Animal's good health, including daily opportunities to be free of an enclosure and exercised under appropriate control [...]".

Hurdles to Implementation

It is impossible to provide a "one size fits all" solution to animal control across municipalities. Even if a municipality deems a particular policy direction to be a smart practice, there may be a wide range of constraints local governments face that prevent them from adopting these animal bylaws. For instance, although a growing body of evidence points towards the benefits of keeping cats indoors or at least restricting unsupervised time outdoors, this analysis has shown

that only a few municipalities have implemented such restrictions. This feeds into larger discussions around municipal bylaw enforcement, public opinion, and regional differences. This is particularly important in the development of smart practices which take into account the inherent subjectivity and the need for flexibility in what is considered a best practice.

Bylaw Enforcement

The B.C. Ombudsperson's Best Practices Guide on local government bylaw enforcement highlights the necessity for enforcement capacity when passing new bylaws. Without the necessary staffing, equipment and other resources, enacting a bylaw may be redundant and potentially reduce the public's trust in a municipal council. For instance, while roaming prohibitions for cats may be viewed as a smart practice from a public health perspective and may even be supported by municipalities in principle, the realities of limited resources among competing priorities may impede implementation. When the District of Saanich considered implementing cat control bylaws in 2019, staff did not recommend implementation as "the District is not resourced to meet public expectations with respect to enforcement". Further, the City of North Vancouver repealed their cat bylaw in 2013 citing enforcement difficulties and disproportionate resource expenditures associated with sheltering cats that were found roaming.

Public Opinion

Animal bylaws and specifically the level of control and responsibility pet owners ought to have over their animals is oftentimes subject to controversy. This means that decisions on new animals bylaws are inherently politicized and may be influenced by political pressure and election cycles. At the same time, public consultation may provide important viewpoints and considerations that may provide support for solutions that may not be considered high-level best practices and may be more appropriate for the regional context. When the City of Nanaimo considered a new animal bylaw in 2020 which would prevent cats from roaming at large, among other provisions, overwhelming public response led the council to delay readings of the bylaw to allow time for public consultation. The bylaw did ultimately get adopted, but not without controversy and opposition from segments of the public.

Public consultation is an important part of evaluating animal bylaws that can inform the development and implementation of new bylaws and potentially increase buy-in to new policies, however, may also cause local governments to ultimately adopt bylaws that may deviate from what is considered a best practice.

Regional Differences

The issue of roaming cats may be more pronounced in some jurisdictions than others, whether objectively or in the public perception. For instance, some argue that issues caused by roaming cats in and around the City of Victoria are particularly pronounced due to the milder climate and prevalence of songbirds in the colder months (Sarkonak, 2019). The number of dogs owners, cat owners, and owners of other pets, as well as the number of incidents related to dog attacks, injuries to humans and animals caused by pets in a given community may also affect the deemed priority of certain provisions. In addition, smaller and/or more rural municipalities may have

different perceptions around the level of control that is appropriate and different levels of resourcing available for enforcement. Further research could confirm specific regional variances related to the population size, location and public perception about companion animals within a given municipality.

This chapter highlights the apparent evolution of some animal bylaws that has occurred over time, evident in the title and stated purpose of bylaws, as well as the increased prevalence of care requirements and provisions on animals other than dogs, among others. While the conducted research accomplishes answering the initial research questions, more research is required to confirm these preliminary findings. The following chapter will propose recommendations to both local governments wishing to enhance their animal bylaws as well as to the research community attempting to gain a better insight into smart practices around animal bylaws.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Conclusion

Local governments in British Columbia take up a unique position in Canada's political sphere. They are equipped with the necessary authorities to develop region-specific approaches to delivering services to their communities in the form of bylaws. At the same time, they must contend with unique challenges and competing priorities related to the enforcement of bylaws among limited resources. The governance of animals is only one of many issues that municipalities are confronted with and that constituents with varying backgrounds and perspectives expect to be governed sensibly. Animal bylaws represent the legal tools local governments have at their disposal to achieve objectives related to the care and control of animals. Outside of these legal tools, municipalities may also develop initiatives, such as educational programs, trap-neuter-release programs, low-cost spay/neuter programs, and more.

The research and analysis presented in this thesis indicate not only that provisions related to care are becoming more prevalent and that provisions are increasingly applied to more than just dogs, but that municipalities are increasingly intentionally creating their animal bylaws through a holistic lens that acknowledges the wellbeing of all companion animals. This understanding then shapes the entirety of the bylaw.

Based on limited research, unique regional circumstances, and varying degrees of resourcing and political environments, it is challenging to provide a "one size fits all" solution to animal control across municipalities. Even if a municipality deems a particular policy direction to be a smart practice, there may be a wide range of constraints local governments face that prevent them from adopting "smart" animal bylaws. That being said, the recommendations below can serve as high-level guidance to local governments seeking to amend their animal bylaws to better govern animals.

Recommendations for Local Governments

Recommendation 1: Expand Provisions for Cats and Other Companion Animals

All examined municipalities regulate the keeping of dogs in their bylaws, while other animals are not included to the same extent. Cats in particular, while very prevalent in B.C. cities, do not receive the same attention in bylaws. It should be emphasized that, like provisions on dogs, provisions on cats exist on a spectrum. Not all municipalities may consider outright prohibitions on cats running at large but may instead focus on mandatory spay/neuter requirements or identification requirements. Regardless of the approach decided on, having provisions in place is important as it provides legitimacy to the existence of cats as companion animals, helps to instill a sense of responsibility in cat owners, and fills a regulatory gap that currently leaves matters concerning cats widely unaddressed. Whether or not more municipalities will decide to strengthen regulations around cats will likely be affected by the perceived success of recent bylaws with such provisions in place. Further research is required to accurately assess the current state of animal bylaws on animals other than cats and dogs, however, local governments should consider expanding care requirements that currently only apply to dogs to all companion animals.

Recommendation 2: Enhance Care Requirements

Some municipalities have implemented fairly extensive care requirements, while some have none or have provisions that are rather vague. Expanding care requirements for companion animal helps to create more all-encompassing animal bylaws that focus on responsibility and place equal importance on the care of animals as on the control of animals. This may entail creating new provisions that currently do not exist, such as cruelty prohibitions that are currently only found in a limited number of animal bylaws, or adding more detail to existing care requirements that might currently be too vague for adequate enforcement. The next recommendation will discuss this aspect further.

Recommendation 3: Add Detail to Provisions to Enhance Enforcement

As discussed above, detailed provisions can facilitate the enforcement of animal bylaws and give pet owners a better understanding of what they are required to do. Municipalities should evaluate their current animal bylaws to understand how and if the current wording of their provisions may impede enforcement or understanding on the side of owners.

Recommendation 4: Facilitate Knowledge-Sharing Across Municipalities

The implementation of new animal bylaws modeled after emerging or smart practices will arguably depend on the perceived success in municipalities with those provisions in place. The City of Nanaimo represents a municipality that others may look towards in evaluating their own bylaws. The city's 2021 *Animal Responsibility Bylaw* was endorsed by the Nanaimo Animal Control Services and the B.C. SPCA, citing that Nanaimo "has an opportunity to be a leader" in proactively addressing issues involving companion animals. When the bylaw was adopted, Mayor Krog highlighted the following: "Pets are beloved family members and bring an abundance of joy to our lives. This new bylaw focuses on protecting our pets through responsible and ethical care along with guidelines to ensure they are good neighbours" (City of Nanaimo, 2021b)

There is an opportunity for municipalities with animal bylaws in place to facilitate knowledge-sharing in the form of inter-municipal working groups or roundtables, or the one-way sharing of information with other municipalities. There may be an opportunity for the province to facilitate this by collecting and publishing municipal animal bylaws and providing a platform for municipalities to share ideas and experiences.

Recommendation 5: Conduct Transparent Public Engagement Around Animal Bylaws

Animal bylaws and potential amendments to them can be subject to much controversy. As discussed in earlier chapters, the research around effective animal bylaws draws from a multitude of disciplines that are not always in alignment, and the interests of pet owners and non-pet owners may differ in various aspects, among other factors.

Conducting in-depth, transparent public engagement allows local governments to hear stakeholder concerns and potentially improve buy-in to new regulations. As well, the engagement could provide an opportunity to provide education around existing regulations and,

if passed, amended regulations. Lastly, engagement may provide an opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous partners and rights holders to ensure their support of any amendments.

Recommendations for Researchers / Areas for Further Research

This research presents a starting point for further research into smart practices for local government animal bylaws.

Recommendation 1: Evaluate the Effectiveness of Emerging Practices in the Context of Specific Local Governments

There is an opportunity to evaluate the impact of emerging practices in the context of specific local governments. For instance, one could aim to identify the impacts of running at large prohibitions for cats on bird mortality in Victoria, Prince George and Nanaimo, perhaps measured by the amount of injured or dead birds recorded by the SPCA as a result of cat attacks before and after introduction of the respective bylaw provision.

Effectiveness could also be evaluated using data around public complaints to the respective bylaw enforcement department of a local government. For instance, one could measure the number of complaints that a local government receives related to animal cruelty and determine if this number has changed in a statistically significant way since the introduction of enhanced care requirements for companion animals.

Recommendation 2: Evaluate How Different Levels of Enforcement Resourcing May Affect the Effectiveness of Bylaw Provisions

Taking into account resourcing levels that a specific local government has dedicated to enforcement may give further insight into not just the effectiveness of a specific intervention but also the amount of resourcing required to achieve effectiveness. In the context of roaming prohibitions, for example, there is an opportunity to examine municipalities with other interventions on cats, such as mandatory spay/neuter and mandatory identification, to compare effectiveness in relation to resourcing levels. It may be the case that spay/neuter and mandatory identification bylaws backed by strong levels of enforcement may be more effective in addressing certain issues than roaming at large prohibitions that are not sufficiently enforced.

These kind of research efforts have the potential to confirm whether emerging practices are truly smart practices by determining those practices that achieve positive outcomes with relatively low resource requirements. This would fill an important research gap where research primarily focuses on best practices that lead to improved outcomes without considering the practical viability of these measures in the context of local governments.

Concluding Thoughts

Chapter 4 touched on some of the limitations inherent in this research, including the assumption that humans have a unique authority to regulate and subjugate other animals through legislation and that this regulation is the best way to ensure co-existence of humans and other animals.

While further research into effective animal bylaws is useful in the context and reality of Western society (i.e., animal bylaws are likely here to stay for the foreseeable future), it is also worth examining alternatives and questioning the level of control imposed on companion animals today from an ethical and philosophical perspective.

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Appendix A: Definition of “Animal” by Bylaw

Municipality	Bylaw Title	Year	Definition of “Animal”
City of Vancouver	Animal Control Bylaw	2005	“Other animal” means any animal, including any mammal, bird, reptile or amphibian, except a dog or domestic cat.
City of Surrey	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2017	“Animal” means any Animal excluding humans and wildlife.
City of Burnaby	Animal Control Bylaw	1991	“animal” – N/A
City of Richmond	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2005	“Animal” means: (a) furbearing animal; (b) household pet; (c) poultry; and (d) wild animal, and includes companion animal and domestic animal. “Companion animal” means an animal kept as a pet or as a guide animal. “Domestic animal” means an animal that is: (a) tame or kept, or that has been or is being sufficiently tamed or kept, to serve some purpose for the use of people, and (b) designated by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to be a domestic animal, (as defined in the <i>Livestock Protection Act</i>). “Household pet” means a domesticated animal or bird normally kept: (a) in a one-family dwelling, a two-family dwelling or a multiple-family dwelling; and (b) for pleasure rather than utility.
City of Abbotsford	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw (FVRD)	2013	“Animal” – N/A
City of Coquitlam	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2011	“Animal” has the same meaning as defined in the <i>Community Charter</i> . [“any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being”]
City of Kelowna	Animal and Poultry Regulation and Animal Pound Bylaw	1982	“Animal” means any cattle, horse, sheep, swine, goat, guinea pig or poultry.
District Municipality of Langley	Animal Control Bylaw	2005	“Large animals” means horses, cattle, mules, donkeys, sheep, goats, llamas, ostriches, peafowl and similar sized animals.
District Municipality of Saanich	Animals Bylaw	2004	“Animal” means any farm animal, dog, cat, rodent, furbearing animal or wild animal.
City of Delta	Delta Animal Control Bylaw	2010	“Animal” - N/A “Domestic animal” means a domestic animal as defined in the <i>Community Charter</i> , but for the purposes of this Bylaw does not include wildlife, livestock or poultry.

			["an animal that is tame or kept, or that has been or is being sufficiently tamed or kept, to serve some purpose for people"]
City of Nanaimo	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2021	"Animal" includes any living member of the Kingdom Animalia excluding humans and bees.
City of Kamloops	Animal Control Bylaw	1981	"Animal" includes a farm animal, cat, rodent, fur bearing animal and wild animal.
City of Chilliwack	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw (FVRD)	2013	"Animal" – N/A
City of Victoria	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2011	"Animal" means any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being.
City of Maple Ridge	Animal Control and Licencing Bylaw	2012	"Animal" – N/A
District Municipality of North Vancouver	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	1988	"Animal" means a mammal, bird and reptile and does not include man.
City of New Westminster	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2013	"Animal" means any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being.
City of Prince George	Responsible Animal Ownership Bylaw	2017	"Animal" means any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being.
City of Port Coquitlam	Animal Control Bylaw	2017	"Animal" – N/A
City of North Vancouver	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	2010	"Animal" means a mammal, bird or reptile, but does not include human.
City of Langford	Animal Regulation and Impounding Bylaw (CRD)	1986	"Animal" means an animal that is (a) tame or kept, or that has been and is being sufficiently tamed or kept, to serve some purpose for the use of man; and (b) includes rabbits, goats, sheep, swine, horses, cattle, poultry kept for the purpose of providing meat or eggs, fur bearing animals as defined in the <i>Fur Farm Act</i> .
City of Vernon	Animal Regulation and Animal Pound Bylaw	2010	"Animal" means any member of the Kingdom Animalia regulated by this Bylaw, but does not include canines, companion animals, animals regulated under the <i>Wildlife Act</i> , or humans;

			<p>“Companion animals” means any species of cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, rodents, reptiles or Mini Pigs able to be accommodated within a premise as part of the household but does not include controlled alien species except as regulated under the <i>Wildlife Act</i> as amended from time to time.</p>
<p>District Municipality of West Vancouver</p>	<p>Animal Control and Licence Bylaw</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>“animal” includes, but is not limited to, a pet, livestock or poultry; “pet” means a domesticated dog, cat, rabbit, ferret, hamster, guinea pig, gerbil, or bird, and includes reptiles and other animals if they are kept inside a dwelling unit, but does not include livestock, poultry, or wildlife as defined by the <i>Wildlife Act</i>.</p>
<p>Mission</p>	<p>Animal Control Regulation Bylaw (FVRD)</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>“Animal” – N/A</p>
<p>Penticton</p>	<p>Animal Control Bylaw</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>“Animal” has the same meaning as defined in the <i>Community Charter</i>. [“any member of the animal kingdom, other than a human being”]</p>

Appendix B: Overview of Bylaw Titles by Category

#	Municipality	Bylaw Title	Year	Bylaw Title		Bylaw Purpose	
				Control	Care	Control	Care
1	City of Vancouver	Animal Control Bylaw	2005	×		×	
2	City of Surrey	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2017		×	×	
3	City of Burnaby	Animal Control Bylaw	1991	×		×	
4	City of Richmond	Animal Regulation Bylaw	2005	×		N/A	N/A
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013	×		×	
6	City of Coquitlam	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2011	×	×	×	×
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw	2014		×	×	
8	District Municipality of Langley	Animal Control Bylaw	2005	×		×	
9	District Municipality Saanich	Animals Bylaw	2004			×	
10	City of Delta	Animal Control Bylaw	2010	×		×	
11	City of Nanaimo	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2021		×	×	×
12	City of Kamloops	Dog Responsibility and Control Bylaw	2011	×	×	×	
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013	×		×	
14	City of Victoria	Animal Responsibility Bylaw	2011		×	×	
15	City of Maple Ridge	Animal Control and Licencing Bylaw	2012	×		×	
16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	1988	×		×	
17	City of New Westminster	Animal Care and Control Bylaw	2013	×	×	×	×
18	City of Prince George	Responsible Animal Ownership Bylaw	2017		×	×	
19	City of Port Coquitlam	Animal Control Bylaw	2017	×		×	
20	City of North Vancouver	Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw	2010	×		×	
21	City of Langford (CRD)	Animal Regulation and Impounding Bylaw	1986	×		×	
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	Dog Control Bylaw	<u>2021</u>	×		×	
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	Animal Control and Licence Bylaw	2008	×		×	
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	Animal Control Regulation Bylaw	2013	×		×	
25	City of Penticton	Animal Control Bylaw	2021	×		×	

Appendix C: Overview of Animal Control Requirements

#	Municipality	Year	Running At-Large Prohibition	Disturbance prohibition	Removing Excrement	Prohibition on biting/attacking	Confining animals with diseases	Confining female dogs in heat
1	City of Vancouver	2005	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs
2	City of Surrey	2017	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Dogs
3	City of Burnaby	1991	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	N/A	N/A
4	City of Richmond	2005	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Animals	N/A	N/A
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	2013	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	Dogs
6	City of Coquitlam	2011	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Dogs
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	2014	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	N/A
8	District Municipality of Langley	2005	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	N/A
9	District Municipality Saanich	2004	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	N/A	N/A	Dogs
10	City of Delta	2010	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	N/A	N/A
11	City of Nanaimo	2021	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	N/A	Dogs
12	City of Kamloops	2011	Animals; cats exempt	Animals, except dogs	Dogs	N/A	Animals	N/A
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	2013	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	Dogs
14	City of Victoria	2011	Animals	Animals	Dogs	Animals	N/A	Dogs
15	City of Maple Ridge	2012	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	Animals	N/A	N/A	Dogs

16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	1988	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	N/A
17	City of New Westminster	2013	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	Dogs
18	City of Prince George	2017	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Dogs
19	City of Port Coquitlam	2017	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	N/A	Dogs
20	City of North Vancouver	2010	Dogs	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	N/A
21	City of Langford (CRD)	1986	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dogs
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	<u>2021</u>	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs + hens	N/A
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	2008	Animals; cats exempt	Animals	Animals	Dogs	N/A	Dogs
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	2013	Animals; cats exempt	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Animals	Dogs
25	City of Penticton	2021	Animals; altered cats exempt	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	N/A

Appendix D: Overview of Dog Designations

#	Municipality	Year	Aggressive dog designation	Vicious dog designation	Nuisance dog designation	Dangerous dog designation	Breed-specific requirements
1	City of Vancouver	2005	×				
2	City of Surrey	2017	×	×		×	
3	City of Burnaby	1991		×			×
4	City of Richmond	2005				×	×
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	2013	×		×	×	
6	City of Coquitlam	2011	×	×		×	
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	2014	×		×	×	
8	District Municipality of Langley	2005	×			×	
9	District Municipality Saanich	2004	×			×	
10	City of Delta	2010	×			×	
11	City of Nanaimo	2021	×				
12	City of Kamloops	2011	×		×	×	
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	2013	×		×	×	
14	City of Victoria	2011				×	
15	City of Maple Ridge	2012	×			×	
16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	1988	×				
17	City of New Westminster	2013	×	×		×	
18	City of Prince George	2017	×		×	×	
19	City of Port Coquitlam	2017	×			×	
20	City of North Vancouver	2010		×			
21	City of Langford (CRD)	1986				×	
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	2021	×		×	×	
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	2008	×			×	×
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	2013	×		×	×	
25	City of Penticton	2021	×			×	

Appendix E: Overview of Animal Care Requirements

#	Municipality	Year	Basic Care Requirements	Cruelty Prohibition	Possession limits	Animal Performances	Enclosure requirements	Securing animals in vehicles	Tethering restrictions	Outdoor shelter requirements
1	City of Vancouver	2005	Dogs, Hens	N/A	×	N/A	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	N/A
2	City of Surrey	2017	Animals	Animals	×	Exotic/Wild Animals	Animals	Animals	Dogs	Animals
3	City of Burnaby	1991	Animals	N/A	×	Wild Animals	Animals	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs
4	City of Richmond	2005	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	2013	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	N/A	Animals	Animals
6	City of Coquitlam	2011	Animals	Animals	×	Exotic/Wild Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	2014	N/A	N/A	×	Prohibited Animals	Dogs	N/A	Dogs	Dogs
8	District Municipality of Langley	2005	N/A	N/A	×	Wild/Exotic Animals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	District Municipality Saanich	2004	Dogs, Cats, Rodents	N/A	×	N/A	Dogs, Cats, Rodents	N/A	Dogs, Cats, Rodents	Dogs, Cats, Rodents
10	City of Delta	2010	Animals	Animals	×	N/A	Animals	Animals	Animals	Domestic Animals, except altered cats
11	City of Nanaimo	2021	Animals	Animals	×	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
12	City of Kamloops	2011	Animals, except dogs	N/A	×	Wild/Exotic Animals	Animals, except dogs	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	2013	Animals	N/A	×	Wild/Exotic Animals	Animals	N/A	Animals	Animals
14	City of Victoria	2011	Animals	Animals	×	Animals	Animals	Animals	Dogs	Animals
15	City of Maple Ridge	2012	Animals	N/A	×	Exotic/Wild Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	1988	Animals	N/A	×	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
17	City of New Westminster	2013	Animals	Animals	×	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals

18	City of Prince George	2017	N/A	Animals	×	Prohibited Animals	N/A	N/A	Animals	N/A
19	City of Port Coquitlam	2017	N/A	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	City of North Vancouver	2010	Dogs	N/A	×	N/A	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs
21	City of Langford	1986	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	<u>2021</u>	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	N/A	Dogs	Animals
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	2008	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	Animals	Animals	Animals
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	2013	Animals	N/A	×	N/A	Animals	N/A	Animals	Animals
25	City of Penticton	2021	Animals	Animals	×	N/A	Animals	Animals	Dogs	Animals

Appendix F: Overview of Licensing Fees

#	Municipality	Year	Licensing age (months)	License Fee Unaltered (in \$)		License Fee Altered (in \$)		Other licensing differentials
				Default	Late payment	Default	Late payment	
1	City of Vancouver	2005	3	47	57	N/A	N/A	• Aggressive dog
2	City of Surrey	2017	3	82	N/A	51.5	N/A	• Senior discount • Aggressive, vicious, dangerous dog
3	City of Burnaby	1991	4	61	73	31	43	• Vicious dog
4	City of Richmond	2005	2	64	89	26.25	39	• Senior discount • Dangerous dog
5	City of Abbotsford (FVRD)	2013	4	70	91	28	36.4	• Aggressive, nuisance, dangerous dog
6	City of Coquitlam	2011	6	57	74	28	45	• Aggressive, vicious dog
7	City of Kelowna (RDCO)	2014	3	60	80	40	60	• Aggressive, nuisance, dangerous dog
8	District Municipality of Langley	2005	4	55	65	26	36	• Senior discount • Aggressive, dangerous dog
9	District Municipality Saanich	2004	4	35	40	25	30	• One free license after spaying/neutering • Aggressive, dangerous dog
10	City of Delta	2010	6	45	55	25	35	• Aggressive, dangerous dog
11	City of Nanaimo	2021	4	50	60	25	30	• Aggressive dog
12	City of Kamloops	2011	6	65	97.5	30	62.5	• Aggressive, nuisance dog
13	City of Chilliwack (FVRD)	2013	4	70	91	24	31.2	• Aggressive, nuisance, dangerous dog
14	City of Victoria	2011	4	40	60	30	50	• One free license after spaying/neutering
15	City of Maple Ridge	2012	4	52	68	25	41	• Senior discount • Aggressive dog
16	District Municipality of North Vancouver	1988	3	82	93	35	46	• Aggressive dog
17	City of New Westminster	2013	6	65	85	25	35	• First license for unaltered dog \$35
18	City of Prince George	2017	4	81	N/A	36	N/A	N/A
19	City of Port Coquitlam	2017	6	80	95	32	47	• Aggressive, dangerous dog
20	City of North Vancouver	2010	4	30	N/A	30	N/A	• Vicious dog

21	City of Langford	1986	4	45	55	25	35	N/A
22	City of Vernon (RDNO)	2021	3	25	40	25	40	N/A
23	District Municipality of West Vancouver	2008	6	74	88	33	47	• Aggressive, dangerous dog
24	City of Mission (FVRD)	2013	4	70	91	28	36.4	• Aggressive, nuisance, dangerous dog
25	City of Penticton	2021	3	65	75	32.5	42.5	• Aggressive, dangerous dog
#	Municipality	Year	Licensing age (months)	License Fee Unaltered (in \$)		License Fee Altered (in \$)		
				Default	Late payment	Default	Late payment	
	Average		4.2	59.4	74.7	30.3	41.4	
	Minimum		2	25	40	24	30	
	Maximum		6	82.25	97.5	51.5	62.5	