

# FAQs

(frequently asked questions)

## Community Cats (TNR) Trap Neuter and Return

### Overview

The proposed additions and amendments will enhance public policy, protect animals, and save taxpayers' dollars. Changing the policy to Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) will result in a humane process of decreasing the community cat population in Kansas City, MO, and will reduce the time and resources the city expends on trapping and impounding feral cats.

Community cats will be healthier after being vaccinated and sterilized (neutered) because they will not be going through the mating process, which will also decrease the size of community cat colonies throughout the city.

The City of Kansas City, MO, and taxpayers will incur no expense; the TNR program will be **funded and implemented through grants and organizations like Spay and Neuter Kansas City.**

### Proposed Ordinance Changes

In a proposed draft submitted to the City of Kansas City, Missouri, from Spay and Neuter Kansas City and KC Pet Project, there are two new definitions:

- Ear-tipped shall mean a community cat that exhibits a straight-line cutting of the tip of its ear to indicate that it has been spayed or neutered and vaccinated against rabies; and feral cat shall mean a free-roaming feral, or stray cat that is not socialized to humans and has a temperament of extreme fear or resistance to contact with humans, that lives outside, and has no owner.
- Ear-tipped feral cats are excluded from the definition of "harboring." Any person who offers asylum, refuge, or sanctuary to any animal on a basis that is so temporary as to not be deemed ownership or permanent homing shall be considered harboring. This definition does not include any person who has cats which are feral or ear-tipped on their property.
- Cats that have been vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and ear-tipped, are excluded from being deemed a "public nuisance." However, feral cats that have not been vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and ear-tipped, may be trapped and impounded upon complaint.



**SPAY AND NEUTER  
KANSAS CITY**  
*Families Better Together™*

[snkc.net](http://snkc.net) 816-353-0940



[kcpetproject.org](http://kcpetproject.org) 816-513-9821



[Barnettlawoffice.com](http://Barnettlawoffice.com) 785-727-9798

- The special permit for outside companies or individuals for the elimination of pests does not include or authorize the elimination or removal of ear-tipped feral cats or feral cats.
- The proposed changes do not exclude feral cats (non-ear-tipped) from being impounded by animal control upon complaint, however, ear-tipped feral cats will not be impounded as to keep the cat colony closed. The new policy will be to encourage trapping by a local animal welfare organization or individual for vaccination, neutering, and ear-tipping, then returning to the colony to reduce the community cat population.
- Any cats at, around, or near a residence that are ear-tipped shall be excluded from the limitation on the number of dogs, cats, ferrets and Vietnamese potbellied pigs.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a community cat?

A community cat, also known as a feral cat, lives outside without an owner and is not socialized to humans. Community cats live in groups known as colonies.

### How many community cats are in Kansas City, MO?

It is unknown how many community cats are living in Kansas City, however, national estimates indicate the approximate number of community cats in the city could be between 60,000 and 80,000. Last year, KC Pet Project took in a total of 3,447 cats. Of those, 683 were brought in by animal control as strays, impounds from pet owners over the legal limit of owned pets, or from neglect cases. Of those 1,071 were strays brought in by the public, of which many were litters of kittens. Another 1,553 were surrendered by owners or community cat caretakers.

### What happens to the community cats?

Because community cats have never been around people and are not socialized correctly they cannot be adopted into a traditional home. Historically, these community cats were euthanized in the KCMO Shelter and by pest control companies. Thankfully, Kansas City Pet Project has been making efforts for the community cats in their care to find places for them to go with their barn cat program. But, unfortunately, housing community cats in the shelter is difficult and costly and these costs are paid for by taxpayers.

For the last two years, animal control has not been trapping or impounding cats and is only accepting trapped cats from the public. Generally, they work with outside organizations like Spay and Neuter Kansas City to trap the cats, which is at no cost to the taxpayer. This has been an effort by animal control to lower the number of cats killed each year in shelters while continuing to reduce the overall population of community cats.

Unfortunately, cat colonies will maintain their population even though a cat has been seized and impounded. For example, when three cats are removed from a colony, that opens three spots for additional cats to utilize the available resources. Those cats are typically added via reproduction.

Changing the process to Trap, Neuter, and Return is humane, cost effective, and good public policy.



**SPAY AND NEUTER  
KANSAS CITY**  
*Families Better Together™*

[snkc.net](http://snkc.net) 816-353-0940



[kcpetproject.org](http://kcpetproject.org) 816-513-9821



[Barnettlawoffice.com](http://Barnettlawoffice.com) 785-727-9798

### What is Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR)?

TNR is a humane practice of decreasing community cat impact. First, a community cat is trapped in a humane cage. Second, the cat is taken to a veterinarian or animal welfare organization. The cat is examined to make sure it is a community cat and not simply an owned outdoor cat. Then, the cat is vaccinated, altered, and ear-tipped. Finally, the cat is returned to its colony.

According to the Kansas City, KS, Livable Neighborhoods division, a few neighborhood groups in Kansas City, KS, have implemented trap, neuter, return initiatives and, although not instantly, these neighborhoods have seen a significant reduction in community cat colonies. This led to the Unified Government enacting an ordinance similar to this current draft.

### Who will provide the TNR services?

The TNR services will be provided by Spay & Neuter Kansas City, Great Plains SPCA, Kansas City Pet Project (for community cats who find their way to the shelter), and generous donors and grantors who aim to help Kansas City, MO, and Jackson County become a more humane community.

### What is ear-tipping?

Ear-tipping is a humane way of signaling that cat has already been through the TNR process. While the cat is being fixed the veterinarian will remove just the tip of the cat's ear. Ear-tipping prevents a cat from being seized and impounded multiple times.

### Where are the cats returned?

Community Cats will be returned to their colonies as soon as possible after their surgery. Returning them back to their colony will prevent the colony from filling the void with another community cat.

What if someone doesn't want community cats near their property?

Unfortunately, there is no way of keeping community cats off of certain properties because of available resources. Even if the community cats are relocated or euthanized it is very hard to control the entire colony before newer community cats join. If the cats go through the TNR process, there will not be new litters and the decrease will be felt over time.

Individuals have plenty of low-cost options of trying to prevent the community cats on or near their property. Motion activated sprinklers, garden rocks, or citrus smells are known to keep community cats away. Remember, when a cat is seized and impounded from a cat colony, if the cat does not return, the colony will open spaces for other cats to join. To keep the number of community cats lower, the colony must remain intact and neutered.

### When will the decrease of community cats be noticeable?

The population decrease will be gradual. The more cats that go through the TNR process the quicker the decrease can be felt. However, Community Cats that have been through TNR will live a healthier life, and thus, a longer life. Some community cats can live as long as an owned cat.



**SPAY AND NEUTER  
KANSAS CITY**  
*Families Better Together™*

[snkc.net](http://snkc.net) 816-353-0940



[kcpetproject.org](http://kcpetproject.org) 816-513-9821



[Barnettlawoffice.com](http://Barnettlawoffice.com) 785-727-9789

## What are the benefits of TNR to the community?

Funds that were being set aside for the catching, housing and , in some cases, euthanasia, can be reallocated to other life-saving areas within the Kansas City, MO, community. With TNR there will be more room at Kansas City Pet Project for adoptable animals because they will be holding community cats for less time (or not at all), which brings costs down. This will also have a precipitous impact on other sheltering agencies in the metro. There will be fewer cat fights, yowling, odor/spraying, and other nuisances. The goal of reducing the number of community cats will be directly tied to TNR.

## What are the health benefits to the community cats?

Male community cats will no longer feel the need to have territorial fights. Female community cats will not have to go through the birthing and feeding process. In addition, vaccinations help reduce the incidence of disease.

## Has TNR worked other places?

The city of Jacksonville, Florida, is a fine example of an area that has capitalized on non-lethal alternatives for controlling free-roaming cats. Over a three-year period (2007-2010), Jacksonville saved approximately 13,000 lives and \$160,000. Equally important, feline nuisance complaints decreased during this period.

The Feral Fix Program in Salt Lake City, Utah, has also proven to be quite successful. From 2008 to 2010, Salt Lake City's "save rate" of cats improved over 40%, equaling a total cost savings of approximately \$65,000. Shelter cat intake for the years 2009-2010 decreased over 21%. During this same period, there was no increase in feline nuisance complaints.

## Who pays for the TNR of community cats?

Spay and Neuter Kansas City currently provides this service to anyone interested in helping reduce the surplus of community cats. Nearly 90% of all services performed are paid for by a caregiver, community trapper, or just a group of concerned residents. Some funding and grants help with various situations. For more information on trap rental and how to TNR, please visit <https://snkc.net/low-cost-spay-neuter/#cat-policy>

For more information on TNR, visit Alley Cat Allies at <https://www.alleycat.org/about/>

Or Best Friends at <https://bestfriends.org/resources/community-cat-programs-handbook-stray-and-feral-cats-resource>



**SPAY AND NEUTER  
KANSAS CITY**  
*Families Better Together™*

[snkc.net](https://snkc.net) 816-353-0940



[kcpetproject.org](https://kcpetproject.org) 816-513-9821



[Barnettlawoffice.com](https://Barnettlawoffice.com) 785-727-9789