

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee
From: Stacey Barker, Deputy Director of Regional Programs

Date: 2018-07-10

Subject: Animal Control - Dog Licensing

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Regional and Corporate Services Committee of information pertaining to the sale of dog licences within the Fraser Valley Regional District animal control program. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification or to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) currently provides full animal control services to the City of Abbotsford, City of Chilliwack, District of Mission, District of Kent and the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, operated under a sub-regional regulatory bylaw. The FVRD also provides a limited aggressive dog investigation/control service to Electoral Areas D, E, G and H, regulated under a separate bylaw, specific to aggressive dogs. Limited dog apprehension and pound services are also provided to several First Nation communities in the local area by way of contract.

Within municipalities receiving animal control services, dog licensing is also a requirement. The FVRD has been working toward gaining greater compliance from dog owners through various methods including: increasing the convenience of purchasing a dog licence, in-person communication to dog owners while patrolling parks or visiting homes, social media and through the issuance of tickets. While working to increase compliance with licensing, the FVRD is also making strides towards greater operational efficiencies in conducting everyday operations.

DISCUSSION

The FVRD is currently implementing several database modules to complement our existing systems to improve customer service and convenience which are expected to result in increased dog licence sales. The systems, expected to be accessible to the public in January 2019, include:

Dogs eApply: This will allow members of the public to purchase new dog licences online, not just renewals. Once the required information is entered (and payment is made online), a new dog licence will be created. The applicant will have the ability to upload documents such as a photo of their dog or the dog's spayed/neutered certificate. This information will automatically be saved in the FVRD's Tempest system saving staff from having to manually enter this data (which is the current workflow).

In 2017, approximately 51% of dog licences were sold on-line. This is an increase from 2016 in which only 43% were sold on-line. The FVRD is anticipating increased on-line sales in 2018 as well and with the implementation of Dogs eApply, the 2019 on-line sales should significantly increase.

Dogs eBilling: This will allow members of the public to receive their dog licence renewal and reminder invoices by email. If a user signs up for eBilling, they will not receive a paper invoice. There were approximately 15,000 renewal invoices and 5,000 reminder invoices mailed this year. The Dogs eBilling module will decrease the cost of printing and postage for future years, as well as decrease the time it takes to prepare the mail outs.

The FVRD is also exploring various reward programs that have shown to increase compliance with dog licensing including the Regional District of Central Okanagan's **My Dog Matters Rewards Program**. This initiative, which included the development of a licensing app makes it easy and convenient to renew and pay for a dog license from any device, provides an interactive communication channel with dog owners, and promotes a rewards program which offers dog owners discounts at businesses if they license their dogs. Data gathered by the RDCO shows that the Rewards Program and associated app has significantly decreased operating costs for its dog control service. *A representative from the RDCO is appearing as a delegation at the meeting today to speak about this initiative.*

COST

The licence and implementation costs for Dogs eApply and Dogs eBilling will be funded out of the regular Animal Control operational budget with savings realized in 2018 from decreased postage, an uptake in dog licence purchases and various enforcement revenue.

The FVRD will gather information on costs and other resource implications of possible rewards programs and report back to the Board with further information as it becomes available for their consideration.

CONCLUSION

The FVRD is continuing to pursue efficiencies and greater customer service in its animal control program. These efforts will lead to a more cost effective service and increased compliance with dog licensing.

COMMENT BY:

Barclay Pitkethly, Director of Regional Programs

Reviewed and supported.

COMMENT BY:

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services

Unavailable for comment.

COMMENT BY:

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer

Unavailable for comment.