MEMORANDUM

To: City Manager Anthony Carson, Jr.

# From: Doug Lewis

 Assistant City Manager/Director of Community Development

**Date:**  August 19, 2013

**Subject:** Free Roaming Cats/Feral Cats

Per the request of Councilmember Katie Jenkins, staff conducted research regarding how other communities have addressed free roaming and/or feral cats. We contacted the Lake County Humane Society, surveyed other communities, and performed research through the Internet. Attached is a spreadsheet which provides a summary of the findings.

Research shows that the current trend nationwide seems to be a “trap-spay/neuter-release” program. However, this programs take several years to gain control over increasing cat populations. Based on the comments from some of the respondents that have implemented this type of program, the actual number of cats may also increase before a noticeable reduction occurs. It appears that no matter what type of program is implemented, cats running at large will not be eliminated from a community. At best, the programs in place are meant to control the cat population. Depending on how the trap-spay/neuter-release programs are managed, there is a varying degree of success.

The Lake County Humane Society will take a free roaming or feral cats assuming they have space available. Otherwise, they are placed on a waiting list. The cost for the resident to drop off a cat at the Humane Society is $25.00 per cat or $50.00 per litter.

As stated above, the majority of programs include trap-spay/neuter- release programs that allow a feral cat colony to develop in the community. Based on the research, most of the communities that allowed a colony of free roaming and/or feral cats to exist had specific requirements and were overseen by a “caretaker” or “sponsor” – typically from a non-profit or private organization. In addition, many of the programs that permitted free roaming or feral colonies required that the cats be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped, and the ear marked to distinguish it as such.

Given the costs associated with the spaying and neutering, vaccinating, micro-chipping and marking the cats, I contacted a local vet with Crossroads Veterinary Clinic in Painesville, Ohio. The Humane Society recommended contacting Pet Fix of Northeast Ohio. Attached is the pricing information from Pet Fix. The overall cost per cat would be approximately $60.00 which includes spay/neuter, micro-chipping, rabies vaccine and the RVRCP vaccine.

There are other logistics and additional costs associated with each program - such as trapping the free roaming/feral cats, registering them, staff time to and from the clinic, etc.

The information is presented for City Council’s consideration. Please contact City Manager Carson if you have questions and/or require additional information.