

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 11/10/08		Item Number: A-2	
AGENDA ITEM: Determination as to the Implementation of Temporary Animal Sheltering Facilities and Discussion of Location Options for Temporary Sheltering for the Two-year Animal Control Pilot Program.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Martin R. Cole, Assistant City Manager Don Pedersen, Chief of Police		Phone Number: 310-253-6000	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☐	
Public Notification: Master E-Mail Notification List (11/05/08);			
Department Approval: Martin R. Cole (11/05/08)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (11/05/08)	
Fiscal Impact Review: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (11/05/08)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (11/05/08)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council (1) determine if implementation of Temporary Animal Sheltering Facilities is desired and (2) consider and discuss location options for the temporary sheltering of animals in relation to the two-year Animal Control Pilot Program. <u>BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:</u> On June 16, 2008, the City Council approved a two-year Animal Control Pilot Program (Program). Operations of the Program are housed within the Police Department and will be directly overseen by a Police Sergeant. In accordance with the City Council's direction, the Program will officially begin with the hiring of an Animal Services Officer (ASO), and will run for 24 months from that point. The ASO classification was approved by the Civil Service Commission on October 1, 2008, and was subsequently approved by the City Council on October 6, 2008. The position is currently in open recruitment, and has a closing date of November 17, 2008. The pilot program will be returned to the City Council after the initial 24-month time frame to see if it is a program the City Council wishes to continue. Included in the original June 16, 2008 staff report were personnel costs, including benefits, for one (1) ASO; annual operating expenses, such as fuel, moderate training, phone, etc.; and start-up costs that included one (1) vehicle purchase, departmental special equipment and supplies, and a personal computer. These aggregate costs amounted to \$129,190 and were subsequently adopted in the fiscal			

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2008-09 budget. Because of the quick turnaround in getting the report to the City Council, it was not prudent or possible at that time to include information and costs relating to the location of a temporary shelter, or information and costs relating to the temporary sheltering of animals during the course of a day.

Staff has extended a large amount of time visiting local cities that currently have animal control programs to see how they operate and to see what types of temporary shelters they have in place. During the course of the interviews and visits it was found that it is common to have some form of temporary shelter for animals.

Temporary Sheltering and Care of Animals

While there is no legal requirement to have temporary sheltering, it may be desirable on both an operational and appropriate level of care basis.

Among the many factors that must be considered when picking up a live animal and placing them in the truck are: (1) the impound process may add stress to the animal and prolonged confinement in the truck may not provide the level of care desired by the City; (2) there is no way to know when the animal last had food or water; (3) the probability an animal will soil themselves increases the longer they are confined in the truck, and (4) there is a chance another call may come in that requires urgent attention, which may result in a previously confined animal being confined in the truck for a period longer than appropriate.

TEMPORARY LOCATIONS

The basic items such as structures, cages, and fencing for a temporary shelter can be implemented to conform to most any location. The infrastructure needed to successfully create a viable, working temporary shelter is more challenging. Easy access to the location is also a necessity, not only for the City's own ASO vehicle, but also for residents who may be coming to pickup their animals or for a firm the City would need to contract with that would dispose of DOA animals kept in a freezer at the location. Since the Police Department will be overseeing the program, locations close to the Police Station were looked at closely. Below is a list of sites discussed as potential locations:

Options for Temporary Shelter Locations

Option 1 - No Temporary Shelter

The ASO would take any live animal picked-up within Culver City directly to the

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permanent shelter approved by the City Council.

Advantages

- No cost to City to purchase cages, equipment, etc.
- No annual costs for utilities, etc.

Disadvantages

- ASO would spend a potentially significant amount of time transporting animals between Culver City and permanent sheltering. This reduces time available for the ASO to provide field services and other duties (canvassing and enforcement).
- Animals would be subjected to additional stress or subject to longer than optimal confinement in the truck, especially if injured, hungry or thirsty
- Pet owner would need to travel to permanent sheltering location to reunite pet with owner.

Option 2 – Use of Local Vets

There was a recommendation by the City Council Subcommittee to contact local veterinarians within Culver City to see if they would be willing to temporarily shelter animals.

Advantages

- No cost to City to purchase cages, equipment, etc.
- No annual costs for utilities, etc.
- Zoning permits the use

Disadvantages

- Animals may be taken to several different locations – hard to coordinate/communicate with residents where their pet is
- In initial contacts with a local veterinarian, the local veterinarians would require sheltered animals to be in good health. Unhealthy animals may not be accepted at local veterinarians and would be transported to the local sheltering location or a veterinarian for care.
- Animals would also need current Culver City licenses.
- Rabies vaccinations would need to be up to date.

Option 3 – North side of Police Station (May not be viable)

Several sites were discussed within the Police Department's parking area, and the only area large enough to hold the temporary shelters and have sufficient vehicle access is along the north side of the Police Station.

Advantages

Disadvantages

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Located on Police Department property▪ Easy access to kennels▪ Easily accessible for vehicle▪ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Location is a Fire Lane where emergency vehicles must enter/exit▪ Emergency exit for Jail and City Hall▪ Would be obstruction in case of emergency▪ Animal Shelter Use could be considered ancillary to the primary public safety facility use (Police Station), but would require a CUP due to the underlying RMD (Residential) zoning. |
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Option 4 – Fire Station #1 (May not be viable)

Only viable area would be dirt area in south/east corner behind Communications Shop.

Advantages

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- Retaining wall surrounds location
- Easily accessible by vehicle
- Animal Shelter Use could be considered ancillary to the primary public safety facility use (Fire Station) and would be permitted in the CD zone

Disadvantages

- Emergency operations center with personnel, apparatus and equipment moving on the grounds at any given time.
- Fire vehicles are connected to power source supplied from this location.
- May conflict with the City's Emergency Operations Center based at this location.
- Area is located against parking lot where mixed use redevelopment is scheduled (construction)
- Fire Department parks vehicles in this area, and Police Mobile Command Center parks at this location – would block ASO vehicle from accessing location
- Large vehicles moving nearby and loud sounds (sirens, horns) would place additional stress on the animals

Option 5 – Transportation Facility (May not be viable)

Located in yard area parallel to Jefferson Boulevard.

Advantages

- Easily accessible by vehicle from Jefferson Boulevard
- Perimeter fencing around area

Disadvantages

- Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) does not recommend non-transportation related activities to occur on site

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- Loss of FTA funding for transportation related activities would be highly likely

Option 6 – Parks & Recreation Lot located off Leash Lane, south of Jefferson Boulevard

The requested portion of the lot to use as a temporary shelter would be 30' x 50'.

Advantages

- Some perimeter fencing is already installed
- Secured exterior lot is accessible to vehicles
- Near Dog Park

Disadvantages

- Unknown access to utilities and costs to access
- Somewhat near Skatepark, which may cause security issues
- Will require planning administrative determination of compatibility with OS zoning district
- Will require PRCS Commission hearing and amendment to CCMC to allow animals in the park for this limited purpose

Option 7 – Lower parking lot below Nature Trail off Leash Lane, south of Jefferson Boulevard

The requested portion of the lot to use as a temporary shelter would be 15' x 80' and would remove approximately eight (8) spaces from use.

Advantages

- Near Dog Park
- Easy to Find and accessible to public

Disadvantages

- Unknown access to utilities and costs to access
- Somewhat near Skatepark, which may cause security issues
- Reduced parking for the Dog Park
- Narrower and more difficult to operate within
- Will require planning administrative determination of compatibility with OS zoning district, and impact on parking
- Will require PRCS Commission hearing and amendment to CCMC to allow animals in the park for this limited purpose

Should the City Council determine to provide its preliminary determination on what, if any, sites should receive further study, public notification related to those sites would be provided (500 feet radius to the end of block along with a notice in the local

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papers). Also, as mentioned, locations in parks would be brought before the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission (tentatively scheduled for their December, 2008 meeting in the case Option 6 or 7 should be studied further).

Equipment and Materials

In most respects, the cages and equipment needed for a temporary animal shelter can be conformed to meet the size and needs of any location deemed appropriate for use. Staff has developed the following list of cages and equipment found to be appropriate to meet the basic level of temporary animal housing. Onsite visits to other local agencies which house animal control programs and interviews with employees of these agencies assisted staff in developing this list.

Description (Known Costs)	Amount
Two (2) Dog Kennel Structures: 4' x 6', five-foot tall on a concrete slab suitable for plumbed drainage. (Estimate from California Fence Company)	\$ 2,400
Cages for small cats, small dogs and feral animals: 10' x 12' TR800 HD, Tuff Shed, Painted and installed	\$ 3,059
Storage/equipment and Clean-up Shed: 6' x 8' TR600 HD Shed, Painted and Installed	\$ 2,055
Three (3) Medium Kennel Cabs (to be used in shed or with truck)	\$ 232
Three (3) Large Kennel Cabs (to be used in shed or with truck)	\$ 262
Stainless Steel Cat & Small Animal Cages: One (1) four-unit 36" x 30", Shor Line Manufacturing	\$ 3,220
Interior Perimeter Fencing (calculation for 30' x 50' area from Option #6), California Fence Company	\$ 2,500
Contract service for pick-up of DOA Animals: Rental of freezer: \$15/month Charge for service of DOA animal pick-up and disposal: \$210/month	\$2,700
TOTAL KNOWN COSTS	\$ 16,428

Description (Estimated Costs)	Amount
Estimated plumbing, heating and engineering costs if location is Option #6 or #7 (which may be preliminarily the most viable locations – additional input from the public and City Commission is needed to make further evaluations)	\$25,000 – \$50,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$25,000 – \$50,000

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Depending on direction from the City Council, an engineering report would need to be generated on Option #6 and #7 to analyze the feasibility of using these two locations for this particular usage.

There has been discussion from outside groups in the past of donations being given to the City for equipment to supplement this and other programs. If this were to occur, to allow the City to provide the appropriate level of care to the animals, the donated items must meet the same requirements as what the City would purchase and install. The City is often held to a higher standard by the law and by our residents than others, and must conform to these, especially if under any health, safety or legal obligation.

LEGAL ISSUES AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The California Penal Code and Civil Code place responsibility on any shelter to treat animals kindly and humanely. Penal Code section 597e provides that an impounded domestic animal must have sufficient wholesome food and water, and cannot be without the necessary food and water for more than 12 consecutive hours.

Wherever the location of the temporary shelter, Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 5.05, pertaining to Stormwater Runoff, specifically prohibits discharge of animal waste into the City's stormwater system. A site-specific non-stormwater mitigation plan would be required for the outdoor confinement of animals.

Additionally, the staff-recommended locations in options #6 and #7 in Culver City Park would require a CCMC amendment since animals are not currently permitted in the park (with the exception that dogs are permitted in the Dog Park and on the designated dog path in Culver West Alexander Park). The matter would need to be heard by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission prior to it coming before Council for a final decision. This issue is currently tentatively scheduled to be heard by the PRCS Commission at their regularly scheduled meeting of December 2, 2008.

Locations 6 & 7 would also require an administrative determination by the Planning Division as to whether placing the temporary shelter in the park is compatible with the requirements in the Zoning Code for the Open Space district and that the use will not result in a significant intensification to the park or significant impacts to the surrounding community. Planning would also need to review the impact of the loss of parking spaces if Option 7 is selected.

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FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Initial costs for the temporary animal shelter would be one-time. The adopted fiscal 2008-09 budget for the animal control program includes full salary and benefit costs for one (1) full-time ASO at B-step. This position is anticipated not to be filled for at least six months of the year (50%), therefore, these salary savings could be used to offset all or part of the initial one-time costs for the temporary animal shelter. The amount of salary savings would be approximately \$35,000. The amount of known costs for cages and equipment that have been identified as necessary items for a temporary animal control shelter is \$16,428. This does not include the unknown estimated costs for engineering plans that would be needed to determine utility hookups (i.e. electricity, water, sewer) and ongoing utility costs. The ongoing maintenance and utility costs are not able to be quantified at this time. If staff receives direction from the City Council this evening as to the location best determined to house the temporary animal shelter, staff will be better able to calculate these ongoing operating and maintenance costs and will bring these costs back for Council consideration.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. None

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Determine if the City Council wishes to implement a temporary sheltering program in Culver City; and
2. If a temporary sheltering program is desired, discuss location options for temporary sheltering for the two-year Animal Control Pilot Program and direct staff as deemed appropriate.