

Culver CITY

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 16, 2019
TO: Captain Agaiby
FROM: Lieutenant Heidi Hatstrup
SUBJECT: Animal Services

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to evaluate the Culver City Police Department Animal Services Program levels and costs, including contract services provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care & Control (LACDACC), as well as to explore other possible options for services that may necessitate enhancement/replacement.

BACKGROUND:

From 1997 to June 2009, the provision of all Culver City animal field services was handled under contract by the LACDACC for the City of Culver City. In June 2008, at the request of the Animal Control Subcommittee, the City Council approved a 24-month Culver City Animal Services Pilot Program to reside at the Culver City Police Department. The terms of the measure called for the hiring of a full-time Culver City Animal Services Officer (ASO) and the purchase of a vehicle to handle the majority of all local animal related issues. The LACDACC contract was to continue coverage outside work hours covered by the ASO, and on January 1, 2009, the City of Culver City contracted with spcaLA for animal sheltering services in their facility located in the City of Hawthorne.

The last fiscal year with full animal service from LACDACC was 2007-08. The City hired its first full-time ASO in mid-2009. ASO Corolla Fleeger began in March 2010, and currently handles Culver City animal services Monday through Thursday from 9:00am to 8:00pm. Service in her absence continues to be provided by the LACDACC and sheltering services remain contracted through spcaLA Hawthorne. The Culver City Animal Services Pilot Program was very well received by the public and is now approaching its tenth year anniversary. In an effort to evaluate service levels and increasing costs, the following areas are highlighted below for in-depth analysis:

1. Contract services with the LACDACC,
2. Contract services with spcaLA,
3. Culver City's in-house program costs, and

4. Future options

DISCUSSION:***LACDACC Services***

Culver City is under agreement with the LACDACC for the provision of general animal care and control services within the corporate limits of the City. The County is contracted to furnish and supply all necessary labor, supervision, equipment, communication facilities, and supplies necessary to maintain the agreed level of service.

The LACDACC currently handles animal services related calls during hours in which the Culver City ASO is off-duty. Although spcaLA is our primary housing shelter and is the primary drop-off location, there are instances in which the LACDACC temporarily houses animals at their facility in Carson. These instances include the occasional inability to access the shelter via remote, the shelter being full, and safety concerns (homeless or suspicious people/activity in the alley). Because a flat fee is paid to spcaLA for housing services, housing provided by the LACDACC is an extra cost to the City of Culver City.

Applicable billing rates for LACDACC services have continually risen since contract inception. In recent years, the County retained a consultant to perform a cost recover analysis. The result of this analysis will drastically increase new contract rates moving forward:

LACDACC Rates	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	Estimated FY 2018-19	Estimated FY 2019-20	Estimated FY 2020-21
Kennel Services - Dog & Cat	\$ 17.68	\$ 20.07	\$ 23.79	\$ 28.79	\$ 32.79	\$ 44.85	\$ 205.65	\$ 254.16
Kennel Services - Other	\$ 8.33	\$ 9.95	\$ 11.23	\$ 12.98	\$ 13.49	\$ 12.74	included	included
Special Care Housing/Obs	\$ 21.21	\$ 24.08	\$ 28.55	\$ 28.79	\$ 32.79	\$ 44.85	\$ 41.13	\$ 42.36
Dead Animal Disposal	\$ 12.48	\$ 12.84	\$ 13.74	\$ 14.69	\$ 15.69	\$ 16.56	included	included
Private Vet	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>	<i>VARIES</i>
Field Services	\$ 81.25	\$ 85.02	\$ 86.43	\$ 94.73	\$ 98.62	\$ 101.83	\$ 153.17	\$ 157.77
TOTAL	11,285	18,707	19,022	25,421	35,241	38,347	82,476	86,176

The LACDACC Officer responsible for responding to Culver City animal services calls also covers additional areas including, but not limited to, West Hollywood, Marina del Rey, and Ladera Heights. Response time to Culver City varies as a result of the officer's proximity and call priority level. Turnaround time for LACDACC's response to Culver City animal services calls is 72 hours or less. Although the LACDACC generally responds to the same type of calls as the Culver City ASO, some calls such as those of a stray, loose, or aggressive loose dog will not be responded to unless the dog is already confined.

LACDACC’s response for service has generally met expectations. However, in addition to the rapid rise of costs for service as outlined above, two areas of concern have been identified. First, in review of LACDACC invoices dated December 2016 to September 2018, an overage of approximately \$3,500 was charged to Culver City as a result of animals held by LACDACC without being transferred to spcaLA as specified per contract (Budget and Finance is working to resolve this issue):

IMPOUND DATE	IMPOUND NUMBER	ADDRESS	ANIMAL	BREED	SEX	STATUS	DISPOSITION DATE	DAYS HELD	OUTCOME
12/17/2016	A5019762	4427 Overland	Dog	American Staffordshire	N	Stray	1/14/2017	10	Return to Owner
12/27/2016	A5021742		Dog	German Shepherd	S	Stray	1/4/2017	5	Euthanized
1/8/2017	A5024168	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Dog	Dachshund	N	Stray	1/12/2017	4	Rescue
1/8/2017	A5024169	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Dog	Terrier	N	Stray	1/12/2017	4	Rescue
1/30/2017	A5029347	11266 Garfield Avenue	Bird	Rhode Island	M	Stray	3/16/2017	5	Adoption
2/4/2017	A5030681	9599 Jefferson Boulevard	Dog	Chihuahua Short Hair	S	Stray	2/8/2017	4	Adoption
2/11/2017	A5032664	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Bird	Gull	U	Stray	2/13/2017	2	Euthanized
3/3/2017	A5037917	11900 Washington	Bird	Dove	U	Stray	3/6/2017	3	Euthanized
4/5/2017	A5047379	5153 Overland Avenue	Other	Opossum	M	Stray	4/8/2017	3	Euthanized
5/18/2017	A5068591	11059 Wagner Street	Cat	Domestic Short Hair	F	Stray	5/23/2017	5	Rescue
6/4/2017	A5074082	9030 Lucerne Avenue	Bird	Crow	U	Stray	6/6/2017	2	Euthanized
6/23/2017	A5081851	10600 Culver Boulevard	Cat	Domestic Short Hair	U	Stray	6/28/2017	5	Euthanized
6/27/2017	A5083221	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Dog	Chihuahua Short Hair	N	Stray	7/14/2017	5	Adoption
7/20/2017	A5091546	11266 Garfield Avenue	Bird	Game Fowl	M	Stray	8/18/2017	5	Adoption
8/2/2017	A5073584	3724 Inglewood Boulevard	Dog	Pit Bull	N	Stray	8/20/2017	5	Rescue
8/10/2017	A5099188	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Cat	Domestic Short Hair	F	Stray	8/15/2017	5	Euthanized
8/11/2017	A5099190	5566 Kingston Avenue	Dog	Pit Bull	S	Stray	10/22/2017	5	Adoption
8/11/2017	A5099191	5566 Kingston Avenue	Dog	Pit Bull	S	Stray	10/22/2017	5	Adoption
8/28/2017	A5105055	4235 Sepulveda Boulevard	Dog	Pit Bull	N	Stray	8/30/2017	2	Adoption
9/19/2017	A5112396	5826 Uplander Way	Cat	Domestic Short Hair	N	Stray	9/25/2017	5	Adoption
11/6/2017	A5128040	4040 Duquesne Avenue	Dog	Doberman Pinscher	N	Relinquished	12/4/2017	5	Rescue
12/24/2017	A5138921	4065 Van Buren Place	Cat	Domestic Medium Hair	U	Stray	12/26/2017	2	Euthanized
2/5/2018	A5148674	4429 Inglewood Boulevard	Dog	Siberian Husky	S	Relinquished	2/12/2018	5	Adoption
9/15/2018	A5219410	Azusa College (This is not Culver City)	Dog	Dachshund	S	Stray	10/1/2018	5	Adoption
SUMMARY:									
* Some animals were held for several days (3 to 5 days) before being euthanized.									
* Culver City was charged for a dog impounded from Azusa College.									
* Culver City animals were sent to RESCUE after being held for several days when these animals should have been transferred to spcaLA Hawthorne Shelter within 1 to 2 days from impound.									
* Culver City animals were ADOPTED out directly from Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control Carson Shelter when these animals should have been transferred to spcaLA Hawthorne Shelter.									
NOTE: Culver City paid for the impound of 24 animals for 106 days held when it should be approximately 24 days.									

Second, in October 2018, a local CBS investigation reported that multiple LACDACC workers were caught fraudulently logging work hours/calls for service: <https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2018/10/25/goldstein-investigation-la-county-animal-control-workers/>. Because LACDACC responds independent of Culver City oversight, it is difficult to track actual services provided against billed services (LACDACC does not currently have the ability to provide response times or dispositions on invoices). To mitigate overt issues going forward, all invoices will be routed through the ASO for verification before payment is made.

spcaLA:

In an effort to provide the best available animal sheltering services for the residents of Culver City, the City entered into an agreement with the spcaLA on January 1, 2009. This agreement provides 24/7 access to the shelter for animal drop-off by the City's ASO and the LACDACC Animal Control Officer for the purpose of impounding of animals found within Culver City and/or for animals found in other jurisdictions with a Culver City animal license.

Although spcaLA appears to have elevated Culver City residents' confidence in the quality of animal housing provided, there are lingering resident concerns regarding euthanasia protocol. The spcaLA does not specifically euthanize for space or for time, and they do not euthanize what they determine are adoptable animals. However, spcaLA will euthanize an animal that requires medical treatment that goes beyond our ability to humanely provide, or has a condition that puts other shelter animals or workers at risk. The spcaLA will also choose euthanasia when an animal has negative behaviors, such as unmanageable aggression towards other dogs, or aggression towards people that goes beyond its ability to correct, especially if that behavior presents a safety concern to a potential adopter or to the community.

Payment for all services provided by spcaLA is currently made by the City at the agreed annual rate of \$29,424. Per the contract, "payment is subject to annual review and possible adjustment as costs dictate not to exceed 3% per annum." The spcaLA has not increased their rates in many years. If increased by 3% for the following fiscal year, the annual contract would rise to \$30,306.

Pet Licensing/Revenue:

Prior to 2007, all Culver City animal licensing services were contracted through the LACDACC. In an effort to reduce customer service issues experienced by Culver City residents under the LACDACC's licensing system and improve coverage, on February 26, 2007 the City Council approved bringing animal licensing in-house. As the in-house animal licensing proved to be a time and labor intensive burden on

Accounts Receivable staff, City Council approved a three-year contract with Pet Data to handle all Culver City animal licensing needs. Since October 1, 2009, Pet Data has handled all Culver City animal licensing needs.

The highest number of Culver City licenses sold was 3,736 in FY 2002-03 through the LACDACC (County staff had performed 1,023 hours of canvassing during this time period). This number has declined over the years. In FY 2005-06, LACDACC sold 2,860 licenses. In FY 2010-11, Pet Data sold 1,592 licenses, and in FY 2017-18 Pet Data sold 1,288 licenses (FY 2017-18 license revenue: \$33,049.76, FY 2017-18 Pet Data invoices: \$5,471.50).

The L.A. Almanac estimates that Culver City has 5,218 dog-owning households. Culver City Animal Services believes this number is well below actual numbers. Pet ownership has continually increased; the American Veterinary Medical Association recently found that approximately 38% of all households own one or more dogs. Based on these sources, this means only 8% to 25% of all Culver City dogs are currently licensed as mandated by Culver City's Municipal Code 9.01.300 (cats are not currently subject to license mandates).

In contrast to pet licensing; other associated revenues are dependent on external factors. These services are currently reflected in the Culver City fee schedule:

- Altered dog/cat impounds
- Cat trap rental
- Dangerous/vicious dog investigations
- Deceased animals
- Live animal relinquishments
- Unaltered dog/cat impounds

Vet Costs – Before and After:

The Culver City ASO primarily utilizes Culver Palms Veterinary and Center Sinai Veterinary for associated services. Overall veterinary costs have not increased over the past two years, and FY 2017-18 invoices totaled \$5,703.93. Current veterinary needs are being met through services utilized.

Culver City Program:

The current Culver City Animal Services program consists of one ASO who is equipped with a designated animal services truck and supporting equipment. The Culver City Animal Services Officer, ASO Fleeger, provides coverage for animal services forty hours per week. Her time is divided between field services and office/administrative services. ASO Fleeger handles numerous phone calls per work day in addition to investigations, reports, and calls for service (i.e., loose

dogs, deceased animals, injured animals, dog bites, etc.). She has also created a comprehensive animal services FAQ sheet available on the police website at <https://www.culvercitypd.org/>.

Calls for service handled by the Culver City Animal Services Officer peaked between 2013 and 2016 (these calls are not inclusive of LACDACC handled calls):

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CCPD Handled Calls for Service	2,341	2,547	2,177	2,302	1,355	908

Although total number of calls for service has decreased over the past two years for our Animal Services Officer, workload has been offset by increased administrative work, citations, research, procedural steps and investigations. The Culver City ASO has witnessed a surge in animal cruelty complaints. Reports of animal public nuisances and animal bites to humans have also shown an increase.

In addition, the Culver City Animal Services Officer has responded to the fairly recent prevalence of coyotes by designing and implementing a coyote management plan. This plan has entailed numerous community coyote hazing training sessions, PowerPoint presentations, speaker presentations, and coyote reporting flyers, brochures and forms to help neighborhoods within Culver City formulate their own community coyote wildlife watch programs. A dedicated hotline for the residents of Culver City has been established and is checked regularly. During the peak of coyote activity, coyote patrols have been conducted nightly to better understand and document human-coyote conflicts. Coyote incidents/sightings have increased dramatically:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reported Culver City Coyote Sightings/Incidents	10	41	26	14	86

As mentioned above, the observed rise in incidences of neglect, abuse, nuisance and coyote management has translated to increased administrative work, citations, research, procedural steps and investigations. For contrast and comparison, in 2010, Culver City Animal Services investigated:

- 9 dog bites to humans
- 7 cruelty investigations
- 9 nuisance complaints

- 3 Administrative Citations

The number of incidences and investigations has increased sharply year by year. In 2018, Culver City Animal Services investigated:

- 19 dog bites to humans (211% increase)
- 33 cruelty investigations (470% increase)
- 75 nuisance complaints (833% increase)
- 23 Administrative Citations (766% increase)

Outside Agency Programs:

Outside agencies vary in protocol for handling animal service related calls in the absence of agency Animal Service Officers. Non-emergency calls are generally held for the ASO upon his/her return to work, or are handled by police personnel or LACDACC. Emergency calls are typically handled by police personnel, ASO callout, or LACDACC. For all the benefits of dog licensing and canvassing, please refer to “ATTACHMENTS” for details.

Possible Options/Alternatives:

1. MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

Continue budgeting for:

- a) One Animal Services Officer
- b) LACDACC services for field operations outside regular ASO hours
- c) spcaLA sheltering services

2. UTILIZE CITY OF LOS ANGELES SERVICES

Replaces LACDACC and spcaLA services with City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services (LA Animal Services). Although this option has previously been shown to be fiscally competitive with current CCPD contracts, this is not considered a viable option, as all but one of their sheltering facilities (North Hills) are considered “high kill” shelters.

3. UTILIZE CITY OF SANTA MONICA SERVICES

The City of Santa Monica’s animal services program is inclusive of its own sheltering facility. Santa Monica is not interested in providing field services for the City of Culver City, but may be interested in accepting Culver City animals into its shelter (replacing our current contract with spcaLA). Santa Monica is currently conducting research to determine what sheltering services they would be able to provide to Culver City and associated rates. The geographical location of Santa Monica’s shelter is desirable, only 10 miles from CCPD (6 miles closer than spcaLA Hawthorne). Additionally, the

shelter meets the 90 percent live release rate that would technically qualify it as a “no kill” shelter, and certainly qualifies as a “low kill” shelter that is also open admission.

4. STAFF AN ADDITIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES OFFICER

Hiring an additional Animal Services Officer would provide seven day coverage for CCPD animal service response (each officer working a 4/10 schedule, crossing over one day per week). In staffing an additional ASO, the need for LACDACC services would be reduced, but still needed after hours and to cover absences (sick days, vacation, etc.) In addition to seven day coverage, the addition of an ASO would allow for free time to be spent focusing on dog license canvassing/enforcement and coyote management:

Dog License Canvassing/Enforcement

As previously mentioned, it is estimated that less than a quarter of all Culver City dogs are licensed as mandated by municipal code. The Federal Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends dog licensing and door-to-door canvassing as an integral method to enhance rabies control (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 18, 2008). License canvassing results in direct contact with pet owners and provides the opportunity for education and opportunity to report animal-related violations such as neglect, defecation, and excessive numbers of animals on a property.

To augment ASO licensing efforts, police volunteers could assist education efforts through informational pamphlet distribution. Volunteer canvassing might also assist in cross-checking PetData intel against noted dog-occupied residences. Additionally, enhanced social media outreach via Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, etc., would heighten licensing awareness. Other areas of exploration include community event outreach and the possibility of partnering with animal non-profit organizations. For all the benefits of dog licensing and canvassing, please refer to “ATTACHMENTS.”

Coyote Management

The City of Culver City has adopted the dynamic strategy for managing coyotes. This strategy is based on a three-pronged approach consisting of community education designed around co-existence with coyotes, enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the feeding of wildlife, and ensuring public safety by implementing appropriately tiered responses to coyote and human interactions. Public education is the key for residents to have a strong understanding of the problem and its causes, so the coyote

management program can effectively be implemented with enough public support to reduce future attacks on humans and pets.

The hiring of an additional Animal Services Officer will assist in the further implementation of the Culver City Coyote Management Plan. The resulting ancillary coverage will:

- extend the monitoring of coyote activity,
- increase the manning of the coyote complaint and information hotline,
- allow for the dissemination of educational material and information to residents, businesses and schools,
- emphasize the enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the feeding of wildlife, and
- promote outreach efforts to assist and train residents on how best to address coyote concerns.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

FY 2017-18 Culver City Animal Services Program associated revenues and costs are as follows:

Revenues	-\$34,454.76
Personnel	\$104,071.33
Maint. & Operations	\$11,098.52
<u>Contract Services</u>	<u>\$77,140.91</u>
NET TOTAL	\$157,856.00

LACDACC contract services are expected to increase by approximately \$47,235 in FY 2019-20 for a total cost of \$82,476. Therefore, the Net Total for FY 2019-20 is estimated at \$205,091.

The cost of hiring an additional Animal Services Officer (Total Budget, Step 1) is estimated at \$72,360:

PERSONNEL COSTING ESTIMATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019											
Animal Services Officer (228) - Step 1											
Account #		411100	431000	432110	432100	433000 (Est.)	435100	440000	435400	436000	
	Hourly Rate/All Inclusive	Salary (2,080 hours)	Deferred Comp	Est. FICA (Employer Paid)	Est. Medicare (Employer Paid)	PERS (Employer Paid)	Cafeteria (Emp Only)	Uniform	RHS	SDI	Total (Budget)
Animal Svcs Officer (1)	\$ 24.3893	50,730	1,560	3,890	910	4,430	9,180	700	650	310	\$ 72,360
Budget Estimate		50,730	1,560	3,890	910	4,430	9,180	700	650	310	\$ 72,360

No additional equipment/vehicles would be needed by the Animal Services Unit. Offset schedules would allow for the sharing of resources.

Hiring a second Animal Services Officer would reduce the need for LACDACC contract services in FY 2019-20 by approximately 30%; total estimated cost: \$57,733. Therefore, the Net Total for FY 2019-20 would be estimated at \$287,949.

NOTE: With emphasis placed on canvassing for and enforcing dog licensing, license revenues are anticipated to increase annually by an indeterminate amount, and emphasis on coyote management will increase service levels.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. What Are the Benefits of Dog Licensing?
2. License Canvassing
3. Service After-Hours for Outside Cities