

Meeting Date: 11/25/2014

Report Type: Consent

Report ID: 2014-00863

Title: Animal Care Services Progress Update

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Receive and file.

Contact: Gina Knepp, Animal Care Services Manager, (916) 808-8333, Department of General Services

Presenter: Gina Knepp, Animal Care Services Manager, (916) 808-8333, Department of General Services

Department: General Services

Division: Animal Care Administration

Dept ID: 13001141

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

2-Animal Care Services Progress Update

City Attorney Review

Approved as to Form

Lan Wang

11/19/2014 11:42:19 AM

Approvals/Acknowledgements

Department Director or Designee: Reina Schwartz - 11/6/2014 4:16:22 PM

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with information regarding the ongoing progress and needs of the Department of General Services, Animal Care Services Division. The City's animal shelter has historically had the highest euthanasia rate among the shelters within Sacramento County. This is no longer true. The City's Front Street Shelter is now a regional leader with one of the highest animal save rates locally. Additionally, the overall animal care services operation has benefited significantly from the substantial support from the City Council this past fiscal year with a budget augmentation of \$196,500 for services and supplies and the addition of another Animal Control Officer, made possible via Measure U funding, which includes sufficient budget for training and equipment. A more detailed update on the shelter's challenges, opportunities and successes is included as Attachment 1 to this report.

Policy Considerations: Not applicable

Economic Impacts: None

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): No environmental review is necessary because this report involves general policy and procedure making and is not considered to be a project in accordance with Section 15378(b)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Sustainability: Not applicable

Commission/Committee Action: None

Rationale for Recommendation: The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with information regarding the ongoing progress and success of the Department of General Services, Animal Care Services Division.

Financial Considerations: No additional funding is requested as part of this report. Please see Attachment 1 for information on some of the unmet needs of the shelter.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): No goods or services are being purchased as a result of this report.

Animal Care Services Progress Update

Where Have We Been?

Historically, the City's animal shelter has struggled to achieve positive outcomes for the animals it receives. As recently as three years ago, 80 percent of the animals in our care were euthanized.

What Are We Doing?

The Animal Care Services Division has made the "Front Street Shelter" a household name through innovative programs, increased marketing, and improved community support and media relations. The Front Street Shelter is considered a model agency because of its high adoption rate, incredible local business partnerships, robust foster program, unprecedented volunteer program, and generous donor base.

The Front Street Shelter has implemented many innovative programs in an effort to reduce animal intake and animal euthanasia. These include:

- A pet food pantry that currently serves approximately 2,000 customers per month, giving out 3,000-5,000 pounds of pet food per week to area pet owners that may be struggling financially and unable to feed their animals. This program is 100 percent donation supported and serves to reduce the number of animals surrendered to the shelter.
- Microchips are sold to area animal owners at cost. Providing a \$5.00 microchip incentivizes micro-chipping and includes life-time registration free of charge to the pet owner. Increasing the number of animals entering the sheltering system with a microchip will increase the return to owner ratio and ultimately reduce shelter costs.
- Animal Control Officers are equipped with microchip scanners and all animals found in the field are scanned for a microchip. Every effort is made to return any animal with any form of identification in the field directly to its home versus immediate impoundment. This process builds good will with the community and reduces the cost of processing animals in the sheltering system.
- All animal owners may obtain a free identification tag and collar from the Front Street Shelter upon request. Increasing the number of animals in our community wearing identification increases the odds that an animal will be returned home quickly and/or not enter the sheltering system at all.
- A free monthly vaccine and microchip clinic is offered the third Sunday of each month, serving City residents on any type of assistance. The program serves approximately 1,500 privately owned animals each year. This service targets the most at-risk population for diseases such as rabies and parvovirus, while providing identification methods to increase reunification should a pet become lost.
- The Front Street Shelter has a robust transfer program which allows the transfer of shelter animals to high adoption areas in the United States in order to ensure continued sufficient space in our shelter. Established transfer relationships are in place with Oregon Humane Society, Idaho Humane Society, and the Kootenai Humane Society (Hayden, ID), all of which are no kill facilities. Transferring animals is far less costly than fully preparing an animal for adoption in our facility.

- A six-week behavior training course is offered free of charge to all dog adopters. This service is performed at no cost to the City and enhances the human-animal bond and decreases the likelihood that an animal will be returned to the shelter after adoption.
- A dog enrichment program is in place, allowing for dog play groups which have proven to reduce kennel stress, and increase socialization and adoptability. The program is fully supported by volunteers.

What Have We Achieved?

Today, the Front Street Shelter is approaching an 80 percent save rate. The following table provides some additional information about the shelter success.

Calendar Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	+/- from 2010 – 2013
Adoptions	1,491	1,576	2,448	3,325	123%
Transfer/Rescue	717	669	1,364	1,520	112%
Euthanasia	8,542	7,620	4,644	3,430	-60%
Donations	\$24,323	\$30,257	\$80,735	\$181,886	648%

What Are Our Unmet Needs?

The most immediate of the unmet needs for animal care services is additional veterinary support in order to spay/neuter animals before they are sent home with adopters. With the dramatic increase in adoptions, the need for surgeries has increased as well.

The shelter currently has just one Veterinarian and one Registered Veterinary Technician. In order to provide the appropriate level of care, along with high volume spay and neuter surgeries, the following is recommended to adequately meet the needs of the City:

- 1 Veterinarian (high volume spay and neuter)
- 1 Registered Veterinary Technician
- 6 Veterinary Assistants (classification does not currently exist)

What's Next?

It is estimated that only 30 percent of dog and cat owners in the United States purchase licenses for their pets. Pet licensing is even lower in the City, where it's estimated that only 15 percent of dog owners and 3.5 percent of cat owners purchase licenses. Licensing revenue has steadily decreased, partly due to lack of funding for marketing and no on-line licensing capability. It is anticipated this will soon change with the pending implementation of on-line animal licensing and animal licensing renewal. Efforts are under way to engage the community by illustrating the benefits of animal licensing, which is expected to increase licensing revenue and compliance. As those funds are realized, the Animal Care Services Division will request additional personnel.