

Community Impact Statement Recommendation

To: Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Board
From: Livability Committee
Date Approved by Committee: 10/13/22
For Board Consideration on: 11/07/22

Re: Council File 22-0943 - Department of Animal Services / Animal Shelters / Budgetary Needs

Motion or Recommendation of the committee:

The Livability Committee recommends a vote on CF 22-0943.

For	X
For if amended	
Against	

Committee Vote Count: Yes (5), No (0), Abstention (0), Absent (1), Recused (0)

Summary:

The Council File instructs the Department of Animal Services, the CAO, the CLA, and any other relevant departments and stakeholders to determine the budgetary needs for the department to fully staff, seven animal shelters and all programmatic and departmental administrative needs and report back to the City Council in 60 days with that information, including responses on the following issues:

- A. Determine the percentage of the City's annual General Fund expenditures necessary to accomplish full staffing and expanded shelter operational hours.
- B. Explore additional funding options such as a parcel tax, sales tax, or other means of augmenting General Fund monies to achieve these goals.
- C. Options for utilizing general obligation bonds instead of general funds to improve DAS facilities built with G.O. bonds, such as Proposition F funds used to construct the facilities in 2000.
- D. Possibility of supplanting budgeted general fund monies for the DAS with funds received from a proposed parcel tax.
- E. Eligible uses of funds (construction, capital improvement, ongoing staffing, administrative, etc.) pursuant to the various proposition types that the City Council could approve to be placed on a future ballot.
- F. Structure of a possible oversight committee including proposed members and the level and nature of oversight.

MOTION

For the 2022-23 fiscal year the Los Angeles Department of Animal Services (DAS) received only enough of the City’s General Fund monies to, according to department management, fully staff and operate four municipal animal shelters. As of August 1, 2022, however, the department is operating six shelters, all understaffed, with one additional shelter being operated under contract by a nonprofit organization. DAS now has seven shelters with the means to fully operate only four of them.

In the summer of 2022, with the city still plagued by periodic surges of COVID-19, the department’s staff has been further depleted by sick leaves and quarantines. As a result, it has become impossible to accomplish all the tasks necessary to properly care for the animals housed in the shelters. Feeding the animals, cleaning the kennels and cages, providing exercise, enrichment, and veterinary care, and optimally showcasing animals for adoption opportunities has not been achieved to the degree desired by management, staff, and the public. Additionally, the constraints on shelter hours of operation limit the department’s ability to serve the public and take full advantage of volunteers who are more than willing to assist with the animal welfare mission.

Despite this, the department has been able to maintain a high live-release rate, especially for dogs and cats that far surpasses what it was able to do even 15 years ago. However, it has been longer than that since the department had the resources available to be fully staffed. In the last two decades, a series of recessions and the pandemic have hobbled the City Budget and DAS has never been able to obtain the budget it needs. Under City law, its fundraising and grant-seeking efforts cannot be used to pay for staff, so addressing the issue becomes a matter of formal budgeting.

Animal Services is one of the few City departments whose staff is directly responsible for the care of living beings. As such, while the City has played a national leadership role with regard to animal welfare policy over the last couple of decades, a more reliable manner of funding DAS should be a priority going forward.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of Animal Services, the CAO, the CLA, and any other relevant departments and stakeholders to determine the budgetary needs for the department to fully staff, seven animal shelters and all programmatic and departmental administrative needs and report back to the City Council in 60 days with that information, including responses on the following issues:

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AUG 16 2022

PRESENTED BY: Paul Koretz
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: [Signature]

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