



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES
HOMELESS STRATEGY COMMITTEE UPDATE
December 22, 2016**

Our Mission: To Promote and Protect the Health, Safety and Welfare of Animals and People.

The Department of Animal Services has been very active in providing services to the homeless population. Part of that activity has been to serve as the lead agency in two of the strategies in the Citywide Homeless Strategy (CHS). Strategies 9G and 9H are being implemented by the Department. Below is an update on the implementation.

Strategy 9G – Emergency Shelter for Homeless Individuals with Pets

This strategy was written with the intention of keeping homeless pet owners and their companion animals together in an emergency. The strategy's focus is basic. It simply provides kennels and tents to house pets near/at emergency shelter locations. The kennels were to be of varying sizes to accommodate a range of pets and the tents were to be large enough to provide overhead shelter from the elements.

Initially, the Department requested funds through the budget process to purchase the equipment. Unfortunately those funds were not approved and there was no alternate funding source. There was some discussion of providing the funds from the Animal Welfare Trust Fund (AWTF), however, this is not a viable solution as the AWTF is not eligible for use on a new program. As a result, the Department submitted a new request for funding in the FY18 budget proposal.

Strategy 9H – Proposals to Assist Homeless Individuals and their Pets

This strategy incorporates a number of actions that are focused at making responsible pet ownership easier and more affordable for homeless pet owners. Below is a brief update on each of those action items and its progress.

- Expansion of Spay Neuter Services – We are pleased to announce that this action item has been fully executed. On July 1, 2016, the Department began accepting low income self identification affidavits to determine eligibility in the free spay/neuter voucher program. This came after the City Council voted to adopt the plan on April 19, 2016. Now homeless residents are able to take advantage of free spay/neuter vouchers without having to produce proof of low income. The Department is continuing to collect data on usage rates. In January, the self-identification program will have been active for a full six months. At that time the Department will study statistics to evaluate usage.
- Tethering Law Ordinance Amendment – The City Attorney's Office has requested additional discussion regarding the intent and expected outcome of this proposal. Specifically they are concerned about possible unintended consequences of the

proposed ordinance amendment. We will continue to work with the City Attorney's Office to determine options.

- **Licensing and Microchipping** – On October 11, 2016, the Board of Animal Services Commissioners considered a staff recommendation to change Department policy on issuing licenses and microchips. Specifically, the recommendation was to allow for email addresses instead of physical addresses to license and microchip companion animals for homeless pet owners. The item was continued as the City Attorney indicated to the Commission that the provisions governing this change are located in the LAMC. According to the LAMC Section 53.17, the name and residence of the pet owner must be printed on the license. More research must be conducted to determine how to move forward with this item.
- **Temporary Housing for Pets in Danger of Relinquishment** – This proposal includes contracting of private kennels for temporary use. Unfortunately, no funds have been identified so an alternate funding source must be identified. The department is continuing to weigh the options in this area.
- **Pet Services Programs** - On August 23, 2016, the City Council adopted a proposal to enter into an agreement with Downtown Dog Rescue (DDR) and Inner City Law Center (ICLC) to operate a homeless pet services center in the Skid Row area of downtown. The center is open one day each week (Wednesdays) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The center's grand opening was in August and to date over 200 pet owners have been serviced, 46 percent of them homeless. Services include, but are not limited to, medical evaluations, spay/neuter services, responsible pet ownership information, and supplies.

The success of this center has prompted interest from other Councilmembers to have similar centers open in their districts. Councilmember Bonin (CD11), Councilmember O'Farrell (CD13), Councilmember Price (CD9), and Councilmember Krekorian (CD2) are interested in working with the Department to identify outreach organizations and locations to provide centers in Venice, Hollywood, South Los Angeles, and North Hollywood, respectively. At this time, there are outreach organizations willing to work in the Hollywood and North Hollywood areas. The challenge continues to be finding an adequate location.

On Sunday August 28th the Department conducted its first homeless pet owners event in North Hollywood Park. The event was conducted in cooperation with Angel Hanz for the Homeless, Inc. and the Lucy Pet Foundation. Homeless pet owners were invited to receive information and free services for their companion animals including vaccines, flea treatments, and spay/neuter. Roughly 30-40 animals were altered at the event. Angel Hanz for the Homeless is the outreach organization that is interested in providing regular services in the North Hollywood area as soon as a location can be secured and an agreement codified.

- Free Vaccine Clinics – The Department has not made any significant progress on this item thus far. It is anticipated that part of these services will be rolled into the services provided at the pet services centers described above.

The Department of Animal Services is excited about the above mentioned programs and the assistance that is being provided to participants. The biggest challenge that we face in continuing our efforts is adequate staffing. To date, an Assistant General Manager has taken on the tasks associated with getting these programs up and running. The Department is evaluating current workloads to provide the necessary staffing to meet the growing needs of our efforts toward these programs.

Should you have any additional questions regarding these strategies, please contact Assistant General Manager Dana Brown at 213-482-9558.