

PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the long term plan for the West Valley Animal Shelter.

Recommendation for Council action:

RECEIVE and FILE the January 18, 2021 and February 18, 2021 Department of Animal Services (DAS) reports relative to the long term plan for the West Valley Animal Shelter.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Not applicable.

Community Impact Statement: Yes.

For:

Encino Neighborhood Council
Northridge South Neighborhood Council
Reseda Neighborhood Council
Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council
Tarzana Neighborhood Council
West Hills Neighborhood Council
Woodland Hills- Warner Center Neighborhood Council

For, If Amended:

Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council
Northridge East Neighborhood Council
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

Summary:

On March 3, 2021, your Committee considered January 28, 2021 and February 18, 2021 DAS reports relative to the long term plan for the West Valley Animal Shelter. According to the DAS, on February 16, 2021 it held an all-staff meeting for our co-workers in Animal Services to announce that a decision has been made to reopen all six Animal Services Centers with the staffing that we have. In light of the fact that DAS staffing levels are very low, it is more important than ever for our team to follow the instructions and scripts they have followed throughout COVID if the DAS is to be successful and to not have to re-think this decision. As the DAS reopens North Central and West Valley Shelter, it will continue:

1. COVID precautions: masks and social distancing at all Animal Services Centers.
2. Adoptions, Surrenders, Fosters will continue to be handled by appointment only.
3. Intake without an appointment is for SICK or INJURED animals **only**.
4. Counter services will be limited. Dog Licensing will be done online or by phone and no trapping permits will be issued over the counters at this time.

5. The Animal Services Centers will not allow general public access to maintain social distancing and safety for staff, volunteers, and the public with appointments to adopt, surrender, or foster.
6. Animal Control Officers will pick up injured, sick animals or those running in the street who are likely to cause an accident or to be hit.

The DAS will work closely with supervisors as programs are developed to keep families together so people do not have to give up their companion animals (i.e. Pet Food Pantries). A temporary schedule for all six Animal Services Centers is being developed and this schedule may mean that, like other City Departments, our hours of operation could be impacted.

The DAS further noted that it's once again observed during COVID how animal loving Angelinos will help lost animals get home and how animals lost in their own neighborhood will get home faster if left in the neighborhood and neighbors help neighbors. With the current economic challenges, the DAS invites and appreciates all of the community support we can get. Also, the DAS has not yet observed the evictions that are likely to occur here in Los Angeles due to the economy. The DAS must keep space for these displaced pets in our service centers; we must keep space in our service centers for animals left behind by their humans' deaths, and other unforeseen emergencies. That is why the DAS must be as strict as reasonable in following our intake protocols developed during COVID.

COVID is not over, although there does seem to be a decrease in cases. If the decrease continues, the DAS plans to reopen the North Central and West Valley Shelter by mid-March. If the COVID cases increase, depending on the recommendations that inform the decisions, the DAS could delay re-opening until late April. Reopening the two shelters that were temporarily closed signals the return to regular shifts for the DAS team to coincide with the openings. Meanwhile, those working from home may be assigned to begin the cleanup, restocking, etc. to prepare the North Central and West Valley Shelter to reopen. DAS staff is working on a plan to bring back limited numbers of volunteers who will be required to follow all of the COVID safety protocols, including wearing masks and working in specific areas of the Animal Services Centers to maintain social distancing. Volunteers will work in two-hour shifts in specific areas and will not socialize with staff and others when entering or before leaving at the end of their shift. This is complicated since all of the shelters are different sizes meaning that the DAS will need six different approved plans to bring volunteers back.

DAS representatives then answered questions from the Committee members and after consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to receive and file the two DAS reports. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PERSONNEL, AUDITS AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
KORETZ:	YES
HARRIS-DAWSON:	ABSENT
BONIN:	YES

ARL
3/3/21

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-