



Washtenaw Task Force on Animal Control Policy

# ANIMALS IN THE COUNTY



## Charges to the Work Groups

- **Sheriff's Committee:**  
“ . . . to develop a methodology to determine the cost of an Animal Service Unit (ASU) on behalf of the County”
- **Policy Task Force:**  
“This group will exist solely for the purpose of developing an animal control policy for the county. This policy will be reflected in the RFP for a scope of services that the county will purchase.”



Mandates and Preferences for County Investments  
**Contracted Services**



## Mandated Minimum Services

- Corporate Counsel's Assessment
  - Dog Law of 1919
  - Dangerous Animals Act
  - Criminal Dog Fighting Act
  - Crimes against Animals, Cruel Treatment, Abandonment, Failure to Provide Adequate Care
  - Killing, Torturing, Mutilating, Maiming or Disfiguring Animals
  - Public Health Code responsibility for suspected rabies cases



## Mandated Minimum Services

- Housing stray dogs for 4-11 calendar days
- Providing housing at the owner's expense for animals under the Dangerous Animals Act or the Criminal Dog Fighting Act
- Housing animals under the general animal cruelty law until their forfeiture by the court to animal control or an animal protection shelter;
- Housing animals at risk of rabies for up to 10 days



## Preferred Service Levels

- Three tiers for consideration:
  - Preferred Minimum,
  - Preferred Optimal,
  - Preferred Maximum
- Revenue dependent (i.e. with more funds, more services)
- Workload dependent (i.e. with fewer animals, more services)



## Preferred Minimum Services

### Licensing:

- Meet the State requirement for providing a licensing process for dogs (costs included in the Treasurer's budget);
- Meet the State requirement for licensing dog kennels (costs included in the Treasurer's budget)
- Conduct inspections of kennels

## Preferred Minimum Services

### Duty to Hold:

- Meet the State requirement to hold unlicensed dogs for four business days (up to six calendar days);
- Meet the State requirement to hold licensed dogs for seven business days (up to eleven calendar days);
- Meet the State requirement to hold dogs, cats or ferrets suspected of rabies (up to eleven calendar days);
- Meet the State requirement to hold any animal found in a cruelty investigation or dangerous animal investigation (21 days or until the Court relinquishes the animal)

## Preferred Minimum Services

### Euthanasia

- Euthanize animals showing symptoms of rabies.
- Euthanize animals not removed from the County's care at the end of the holding period.

### Animal Cruelty Investigations

- Conduct basic/essential animal cruelty investigations (costs included in the Sheriff's budget)

## Preferred Minimum Services

### Other Services

- **Urgent Medical Attention:** Address the immediate life-threatening health concerns of animals within the County holding periods;
- **Palliative Care:** Manage the symptoms of sick and injured animals within the County holding periods

## Preferred Optimal Services

*In Addition to Preferred Minimum*

### **Licensing:**

- Provide enforcement of dog licensing via door-to-door census and other means;
- Provide enforcement of kennel licensing via door-to-door census and other means.

## Preferred Optimal Services

*In Addition to Preferred Minimum*

### **Duty to Hold:**

- Hold all animals for 15 calendar days, unless otherwise required by law

### **Animal Cruelty Investigations**

- Provide educational services and follow-ups on un-pursued cases

## Preferred Optimal Services

*In Addition to Preferred Minimum*

### **Other Services**

- Post information about animals being held by the County to facilitate recovery/adoption;
- Provide medical attention and non-medical care during the County holding period;
- Market adoption services.

## Preferred Maximum Services

*In Addition to Preferred Optimal*

### **Licensing:**

- Provide licensing and enforcement services for cats and exotic animals;
- Require electronic chipping of animals kept as pets;

### **Duty to Hold:**

- Hold all animals until they are recovered or adopted, unless otherwise required by law

## Service Issues to Consider

- Types of animals to cover?
- Geography of coverage (e.g. where the County has licensing responsibility)?



Legal Structures for Successful Animal Management

## Ordinances and Policies





## Civil Infractions

- Failure to license currently a misdemeanor – high minimum penalty
- Civil infraction can be a “broken headlight” ticket
- Provides opportunity for enforcement
- Increases revenue for implementation of the Dog Law



## Expanded Pet Registration

- Voluntary monitoring program
- Registration of cats and exotic pets
- Provides “lost pet” protections/supports
- Creates a revenue stream for services beyond minimum mandate and Dog Law



## Licensing Requirements

- Require adopted dogs to be licensed before release via contract
- Require seized animals to licensed or registered before release via policy
- Increases licensing compliance
- Raises revenue for animal control



Programs and Procedures to Improve Compliance

## Process Enhancements



## Animal Relinquishment

- Applies to cruelty cases where the County bears the responsibility for housing during trial;
- Reduces the time an animal is in the County's care by either
  - Forfeiting the animal to a shelter for recovery and adoption, or
  - Securing funding from the owner to cover boarding costs during trial



## Summer Dog Census

- A canvass to increase licensing compliance
- Balanced with advanced amnesty period and civil infractions



## Court Collections

- Compliance with court-ordered restitution demands attentive enforcement
- District Court model proving successful
- Broaden, apply to animal cruelty collections



## Veterinary Partnerships

- Vets are primary point of contact for pet owners
- Can be recruited as licensing and registration advocates
- Licenses available online 24/7 but require proof of rabies vaccination – making a trip to the vet an optimal time to get a license



Experience-Driven Daily Costs Model

## Animal Service Unit



## Cost Data Analysis

- Based on HSHV historic data as analyzed by Office of the Sheriff
- Provides 2011 actuals and 2012 projections
- Incorporates direct and indirect costs
- Provides insight for replacement costs and continuation costs with HSHV



## Animal Service Unit

	2011	30,560 Days of Care
Direct Costs	\$571,845	\$18.71
Indirect Costs	\$54,167	\$1.77
Overhead	\$58,620	\$1.92
In Kind Value	\$939,000	\$30.73
<b>Total Housing</b>	<b>\$1,623,632</b>	<b>\$53.13</b>



## Animal Cruelty Costs

Animal Cruelty Investigations	
Direct Costs	\$185,500
In Kind Value	\$139,000



# County Cost Analysis

2011 Actuals	Animals	Hard Costs	In Kind Value	Total
Housing Dogs	1,418	\$317,632	\$435,751	\$753,383
Housing Cats	1,638	\$366,912	\$503,357	\$870,269
Animal Cruelty		\$185,500	\$139,000	\$324,500
Totals	3,046	\$870,044	\$1,078,108	\$1,948,152



Matching Income to Services

## Revenue Options



## Expanding Dog Licensing

### Non-Ordinance Jurisdictions

	Washtenaw		
Population	157,000	Comparable:	Comparable:
Dog Population	39,250	Oakland County, MI	Montgomery County, OH
# Licenses	4,000 – 5,000		
Compliance Rate	11%	18%	55%
Fees	\$12/year		
Revenue	\$52,800	\$84,780	\$259,044
		+\$31,980	+\$206,244



## Expanding Dog Licensing

### Countywide Implementation

	Washtenaw		
Population	347,000	Comparable:	Comparable:
Dog Population	88,000	Oakland County, MI	Montgomery County, OH
# Licenses	4,000 – 5,000		
Compliance Rate	5%	18%	55%
Fees	\$12/year		
Revenue	\$52,800	\$190,080	\$580,800
		+\$137,280	+\$528,000





## Cost Recovery

- Compliance rate currently uncertain
- Cost highly variable due to length of stay
- Potential for full recovery of hard costs
- Lower potential for in kind cost recapture



## New Pet Registrations

- Est. 99,000 cats in Washtenaw
- Assuming 5% compliance, \$12 fee
- Potential revenue \$59,400+



## Local Government Partners

- Three communities with independent animal control ordinances account for 65% of stray and seized animals
- Local ordinances include cats and sometimes other animals
- Local units collect their own license fees; county bears costs of housing impounded animals



## Local Government Partners

- Option 1: Cost sharing to offset increases driven by ordinance requirements
- Option 2: Unified licensing and animal control programs to maximize efficiency and effectiveness
- Option 3: Reduction of services by geographic area




Matching Revenues and Costs  
**Summary**



2011 Actuals	Animals	Hard Costs	In Kind Value	Total
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Program	Metric	Revenue
Expanding Dog Licenses	33% compliance	\$155,430
Cost Recovery	50% savings	\$142,750
Pet Registrations	33% compliance	\$392,040
Local Government Partnerships (licenses or fees)		\$193,050



Refining Findings Into a Comprehensive Policy

## Discussion Questions



- Preferred Service Level
- Civil Infractions
- Licensing Cats/Exotics
- Expanding Dog Licensing
- Animal Forfeiture Policy
- Cost Recovery Processes
- Veterinary Partnerships
- Local Government Partnerships



