



Legislation Text

File #: 2008-0218, **Version:** 2

A MOTION adopting immediate actions to improve conditions for animals in King County's shelters, a policy framework for animal services and establishing a process for the development of a strategic plan, operational master plan, facilities master plan and business plan.

WHEREAS, King County animal services include services provided by the Seattle-King County department of public health, King County sheriff's office and the animal care and control section of the records and licensing services division of the department of executive services, and

WHEREAS, Seattle-King County department of public health provides zoonotic and animal borne disease control, sanitary and health based enforcement and may inspect animal housing for compliance with public health standards, and

WHEREAS, the King County sheriff's office provides animal and human safety based enforcement and cruelty investigations for compliance with public safety standards, and

WHEREAS, the animal care and control section of the records and licensing services division of the department of executive services provides animal shelter, medical care, nuisance control, notice of order based enforcement, pet licensing, licensing for businesses and organizations that house animals, code compliance inspections and cruelty investigations, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 11.04.011 states that the purpose of King County animal care and control is to serve and maintain such levels of animal care as will protect animal and human health and safety, and to the greatest degree practicable to prevent injury to humans, property and cruelty to animal life, and

WHEREAS, on May 29,2007, the council adopted Ordinance 15801 to reduce rates of euthanasia,

redefine the roles and responsibilities of the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee, and reduce access to animals by individuals convicted or charged with animal cruelty, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 11.04.500, as amended by Ordinance 15801, states that King County sets maximum euthanasia rate targets to measure progress towards reducing the rates of cats and dogs euthanized by the animal care and control authority and the total number of cats and dogs euthanized by King County animal care and control is not to exceed twenty percent in the year ending December 31, 2008, and fifteen percent in the years following 2008, and

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2007, the council approved Motion 12521 relating to the provision of services to animals and requesting that the executive transmit a report to include recommendations to improve the humane care of animals and develop a model animal services program, and

WHEREAS, Motion 12521 further requested that the executive work with the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee to develop the report, and WHEREAS, the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee submitted a special report dated September 24, 2007, and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2007, the council approved Motion 12600 accepting the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee report and requesting that the executive take immediate steps to determine the feasibility of the recommendations identified in the report, in addition to exploring the business decision of discontinuing the provision of animal sheltering services, and declaring an urgent need for action to implement the recommendations contained within the animal care and control citizen's advisory committee report, and

WHEREAS, Motion 1600 states that a "no-kill" type animal services program would save all healthy and treatable cats and dogs and euthanize only those cats and dogs with severe health problems that preclude a reasonable quality of life or temperament problems that pose a threat to public safety. A "no-kill" type animal services program would permanently place animals into homes within its community and have a euthanasia rate of less than fifteen percent, and potentially as low as ten percent. This program would require an aggressive and innovative approach to achieve "no-kill" standards and draw upon the available resources in King County and

reflect community values. This program should pursue grants, donations and partnerships to accomplish its objectives, and

WHEREAS, the executive submitted the King County Animal Care and Control 2008 Operation Plan dated November 2, 2007, and Motion 12737

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2007, the council approved Ordinance 15975, the 2008 budget ordinance, establishing a proviso restricting funds to the records and licensing division pending the outcome of a preliminary evaluation of the leadership, human resources and structural capacity to become a model no-kill program, and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2008 the council received a preliminary evaluation of leadership, human resources and structural capacity to become a model no-kill program, and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for action to address problems identified with the animal services in King County, and

WHEREAS, the county is committed to reform animal services and improve the provision of animal services in King County with short-term, mid-term and long-term improvements, and

WHEREAS, approximately thirteen thousand animals are housed in King County's shelters each year, and

WHEREAS, King County employs approximately thirteen thousand employees who are known for their compassion, generosity and willingness to assist in times of need, and

WHEREAS, many King County employees have expressed interest in adopting or helping to locate homes for animals in King County's shelters, and

WHEREAS, a recent report by U.C. Davis highlighted a health crisis at King County's shelters, and

WHEREAS, veterinarians and rescue groups have expressed interest in providing medical care and housing of animals at King County's shelters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

It is the intent of the county to implement short-term, mid-term and long-term improvements to animal services. These improvements shall include immediate actions concurrent with the development of a strategic planning framework to affect reforms of King County animal services as follows:

A. The county will immediately cooperate and collaborate with veterinarians for pro-bono services to triage the current shelter health crisis.

B. The county will immediately engage in an aggressive adoption outreach program to include King County employees, local businesses and rescue groups to significantly reduce the number of animals in King County's shelters.

C. It is the intent of the county that the following vision, mission, guiding principles and goals for King County animal services be the foundation for the strategic planning efforts for animal services:

1. Vision: King County ensures humane treatment of animals and protects the health and safety of the public;

2. Mission: King County protects the public health from animal borne and zoonotic disease, keeps the public safe from animals and nuisances, prevents animal cruelty, reduces the number of homeless animals entering shelters, increases pet adoptions and seeks to eliminate euthanasia of healthy or treatable animals;

3. Guiding Principles:

a. The public has the right to be safe from animals and animal borne and zoonotic disease and to avoid animal nuisances;

b. All animals shall be treated humanely;

c. Animal services shall be coordinated and integrated with other services and programs as appropriate;

d. The county's animal services programs shall be accountable and transparent to the public;

e. The quality of animal services shall be continuously improved; and

f. Animal services shall be provided in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner.

4. Goals:

a. Protect the public's health and safety from zoonotic and animal borne disease through effective public health programs;

b. Ensure access to life saving programs including adoption, medical care, socialization and behavioral modification;

c. Reduce the number of homeless pets through the provision of low-cost, high-volume spay and neuter services, pet retention education and participation in a feral cat trap neuter return and release program;

d. Achieve a euthanasia no greater than fifteen percent by the end of 2009 and euthanize only those animals that are vicious, untreatable or irreparably suffering;

e. Actively pursue animal cruelty investigations;

f. Create and support the growth of strong county partnerships with volunteers, fosters, rescue groups and stakeholders and the media;

D. A King County interbranch animal services work group is hereby created with the purpose of reforming King County animal services.

1. Responsibilities: The King County interbranch animal services work group shall develop the King County animal services strategic plan, operational master plan and facilities master plan for the three-year period 2009 through 2011;

2. Membership: The King County interbranch animal services work group shall be co-chaired by the directors of the office of management and budget and county council policy staff, or their designees. The King County interbranch animal services work group shall include the directors of the office of management and budget, county council policy staff, department of executive services, Seattle-King County department of public health, the King County sheriff and the King County prosecutor, or their designees.

3. Staff Liaison: The office of management and budget shall designate a staff liaison to the King County interbranch animal services work group who shall be responsible, at a minimum, for assisting the work

group in developing the strategic, operational and master plans, writing and producing drafts and the final strategic, operational and master plans, organizing the meetings, sending meeting agendas in advance of the meeting to members, taking minutes of the minutes and distributing the minutes to members.

E. The interbranch animal services work group shall convene a community stakeholder group to review and provide recommendations to the county executive and council on the King County animal services strategic plan, operational master plan and facilities master plan (or the three-year period 2009 through 2011). The community stakeholder group's review shall be provided before the county executive transmits the strategic plan, operational master plan and facilities master plan for the three-year period 2009 through 2011 to the county council for its review and possible adoption.

F. Strategic Plan: A King County animal services strategic plan for the three-year period 2009 through 2011 shall be developed by the King County interbranch animal services work group. The plan shall be transmitted by the county executive to the county council by ordinance on or before August 15, 2008. Annual updates to the strategic plan, including annual performance measures shall be reported to council by motion by May 1.

The strategic plan shall include the following components:

1. Regulatory and policy framework for regional and local provision of animal services. And within local provision of services, what services are mandated and discretionary;
 2. Vision and mission statements;
 3. Prioritized medium- and long-range goals;
 4. Priority outcomes relative for each goal with a primary department accountable to achieve each goal;
- and
5. Performance measures for each goal with a primary department accountable for improvement of each performance measure.

G. Operational Master Plan: A King County animal services operational master plan for the three-year

period 2009 through 2011 shall be developed by the King County interbranch animal services work group. The plan shall be transmitted by the county executive to the county council by ordinance on or before August 15, 2008. The operational master plan shall be based on the strategic plan and shall include the following components:

1. Organizational and financial evaluation of the strategic plan on how regional and local animal services should be provided or contracted for by King County;
2. Organizational and financial evaluation of the strategic plan on how King County should provide, or contract for, animal services in King County unincorporated areas and cities and towns;
3. Development of, at a minimum, the following organizational options for how King County animal services strategic plan for the three-year period 2009 through 2011 can be implemented:
 - a. Status quo option. King County continues to provide regional and local unincorporated and incorporated animal services as currently organized within the departments of public health and executive services and the sheriff's office;
 - b. Reorganize animal services within county government.
 - c. Reorganize animal services in partnership with King County and partners.

H. Facilities Master Plan: A King County animal services facilities master plan for the three-year period 2009 through 2011 shall be developed by the King County interbranch animal services work group. The facilities master plan shall be transmitted to council by the county executive by August 15, 2008, by ordinance. The facilities master plan shall be based on the operational master plan and shall include the following components:

1. An inventory of existing animal services capital facilities, showing the locations and capacities of the facilities;
2. A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities, proposed location or locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities; and

3. At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes.

I. Business Plans: The proposed 2009 business plans for the departments of executive services, Seattle-King County department of public health and the King County sheriff, shall be updated upon adoption of the animal services strategic plan and shall be coordinated and integrated with the proposed 2009 King County budget.