



# STAFF REPORT

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April 8, 2026  
File Number 0200-10

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## SUBJECT

### ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES AGREEMENT OPTIONS

## DEPARTMENT

Police

## RECOMMENDATION

The City's current Animal Services Agreement with the San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) for animal control services is set to expire on June 30, 2026. To ensure continuity of legally required animal control services, City Council direction is requested regarding future service delivery options.

Two options are presented:

**Option 1:** Retain the SDHS as the City's animal control provider and establish a new three-year agreement, with two optional annual extensions.

**Option 2:** Enter into a new procurement process in the form of a Request for Bidder to solicit proposals from other animal control services providers. Qualified bidders may be limited, as SDHS serves most municipalities in San Diego County.

The selected option will directly impact animal control operations, sheltering, animal care, and service delivery to the community.

Staff Recommendation: Provide Direction (Police: Ken Plunkett, Chief of Police)

Presenter: Ken Plunkett, Chief of Police

**ESSENTIAL SERVICE** – Yes, Police Services

**COUNCIL PRIORITY** – Public Safety

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

Council direction will determine the City's investment in animal control services. Possible fiscal impact for FY 2026-27 is estimated between \$1,775,040 and \$1,839,708.



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### PREVIOUS ACTION

On December 4, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2024-186 to approve an animal control agreement with the San Diego Humane Society through June 2026.

On October 11, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-135 to approve an animal control agreement with the San Diego Humane Society through December 2024.

On June 24, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-89 to approve an animal control agreement with the San Diego Humane Society through FY 2023.

On May 22, 2019, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2019-74 to approve a Second Amendment to the San Diego Humane Society Animal Control Services Agreement for a one-year extension.

On June 20, 2018, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2018-107 approving a First Amendment to the Animal Control Services Agreement for a one-year extension.

On June 11, 2014, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2014-65 approving a two-year Animal Control Services Agreement with two automatic one-year renewal periods with the San Diego Humane Society.

On June 22, 2011, City Council adopted Resolution 2011-82, approving an animal control services agreement with Escondido Humane Society through June 30, 2014.

### BACKGROUND

The City's current Animal Services Agreement with the San Diego Humane Society ("SDHS") dated January 1, 2025 for animal control services is set to expire on June 30, 2026. To ensure continuity of legally required animal control services, City Council direction is requested regarding future service delivery options.

Two options are presented for Council consideration:

**Option 1:** Retain SDHS as the City's animal control service provider by entering into a new three-year agreement, with two optional one-year extensions.

**Option 2:** Initiate a Request for Bidders process to solicit proposals from qualified vendors to provide legally mandated animal control services for the City.

It is important to note that the pool of qualified bidders may be limited, as SDHS currently provides animal control services to most municipalities within San Diego County. Additionally, service levels may vary by



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vendor. The selected option will have direct implications for animal control operations, animal sheltering, animal care, and service delivery to the community.

### **State Mandated Animal Control Services**

Under state law, the City is legally required to provide the following animal control services:

#### 1. Rabies Control Program

- a. Immunizations and licensing
  - 1) Rabies vaccine clinics held at strategic locations throughout the City.
  - 2) Identification of dangerous dogs.
- b. Stray animal control
  - 1) State law mandates that any peace officer shall:
    - a. "Take possession of the stray or abandoned animal and shall provide care and treatment for the animal until the animal is deemed to be in suitable condition to be returned to the owner."
    - b. "Cause the animal to be humanely euthanized or rehabilitated and placed in a suitable home on information that the animal is a stray or abandoned."
- c. Managing animal bites
  - 1) Animal quarantine requirements.
- d. Dangerous dogs
  - 1) Public safety processes to protect community, including possible sheltering.
  - 2) Due process appeals process for dog owner.
- e. Public education

#### 2. Animal Sheltering System

- a. Custody and sheltering
  - 1) Once the City takes temporary custody of an animal, it must:
    - a. Provide food, water, shelter, and appropriate medical care;
    - b. Hold animal for required periods to allow owner opportunity to recover the animal;
    - c. Scan for microchips; and
    - d. Spay/neuter all dogs and cats prior to their release from the shelter.
  - 2) The City must maintain compliance with kennel regulations.
- b. Minimal Level of Medical Treatment
  - 1) Legal requirement to take custody of injured animal and convey directly to a veterinarian; and
  - 2) Veterinarian has ethical guidelines and is responsible for deciding if/when to euthanize animal.



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### **Scope of Services of the Animal Control Agreement**

Following direction issued from the City Council, City staff will carry out necessary procurement efforts prior to issuance of a new Animal Control Services Agreement. The selected Animal Control Services contractor shall provide the required services in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and codes of the State of California, the County of San Diego, and the City as specified therein. Services that may be included in the new Animal Control Services Agreement are as follows:

#### **1. Animal Sheltering**

The selected contractor shall provide the City with animal shelter services to receive and care for all domestic animals delivered by members of the general public or Animal Field Services. The contractor shall also provide humane disposition of animals.

The contractor shall maintain an animal shelter which shall be open for public service and operation during reasonable days and hours of operation similar to other such facilities within the County of San Diego, and which shall comply with the standards described by the laws of the State of California, and the ordinances of the County and the City. Such animal shelter services shall include:

- a. The housing and care of stray domestic animals for the legal hold period according to the laws of the State of California, and the ordinances of the County and the City.
- b. The housing and care for domestic animals under rabies quarantine for the legal hold period according to the laws of the State of California and the ordinances of the County and the City.
- c. The housing and care for police and animal cruelty holds for a minimum of fourteen days.
- d. Providing lost and found opportunities for domestic animals brought to the shelter.
- e. The housing, care for, and the disposition of all animals coming into the possession of the contractor using safe and humane methods in accordance with the State of California laws and the ordinances of the County and the City.
- f. Assuming all expenses to maintain and operate the Shelter and properly care for the animals.
- g. Managing the dog license program on behalf of the City.

#### **2. Animal Field Services**

The selected contractor shall humanely and efficiently enforce all applicable animal field service laws, regulations, ordinances and codes pertaining to animal field services. The contractor shall provide the City with the following animal field services in response to complaints generated by the public, law enforcement, and the City:



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- a. Enforce and investigate violations of animal cruelty laws and related activities;
- b. Respond to calls for animal field services;
- c. Pick up and care for injured domestic animals;
- d. Address dangerous animal situations;
- e. Monitor and respond to bites and enforce rabies quarantine requirements;
- f. Investigate and enforce vicious or dangerous dog complaints and activities;
- g. Patrol the city and impound stray dogs;
- h. Respond to and investigate animal related noise complaints;
- i. Issue criminal and/or administrative citations for violations of City animal field services laws;
- j. Testify in a court or administrative hearing regarding violations of animal field services laws
- k. Require Humane Officers to maintain qualifications under California Corporations Code section 14502 and California Penal Code section 830.9 capable of performing and enforcing the provisions of the City ordinance related to domestic animals; and
- l. Require Humane Officers to complete a course in training related to the exercise of his/her powers, this course shall meet the minimum standards prescribed by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training and the State Humane Association of California, within one year of date of hire.

### 3. Reports and Records

The selected contractor shall prepare and provide quarterly and annual reports for the City. These reports shall include information regarding: animal shelter operations; statistics concerning number of animals contacted, sheltered, and related disposition; citations processed; and field services performed.

### 4. Community Engagement

The selected contractor shall provide the following services related to community engagement:

- a. Public education;
- b. Animal behavior modification program;
- c. Seasonal 24-hour kitten nursery;
- d. Pet education classes;
- e. Community events;
- f. Disaster response such as:
  - 1) Specialized Disaster Response Emergency Team;
  - 2) Large and small animal evacuation; and
  - 3) Large and small animal sheltering.
- g. Affordable community veterinary assistance programs such as:
  - 1) Spay/neuter;



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- 2) Vaccinations including rabies clinics;
  - 3) Microchipping; and
  - 4) Safety net service programs.
- h. Owner requested euthanasia.

### Direction Requested

It is requested that the City Council provide direction regarding the following options:

#### Option 1:

Retain the San Diego Humane Society as the City's animal control provider and establish a three-year agreement, with two optional annual extensions.

- Possibility A: July 1, 2026 Increase – 9.8% to \$1,775,040
  - Subsequent increases of CPI plus 5%
- Possibility B\*: July 1, 2026 Increase – 12% to \$ 1,810,764
  - Subsequent increases of CPI plus 4%
- Possibility C\*: July 1, 2026 Increase – 13.8% to \$1,839,708
  - Subsequent increases of CPI plus 3.2%

\*Higher initial increase, allows lower future increases

#### Option 2:

Issue a new procurement process in the form of a Request for Bidder to solicit proposals from other animal control services providers. Qualified bidders may be limited, as SDHS serves most municipalities in San Diego County.

Animal Control Provider	Cities Served
San Diego Humane Society	Carlsbad, Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, and Vista
Chula Vista Animal Care	Chula Vista, Lemon Grove, and National City
Coronado Animal Control	Coronado

City Council direction is needed to ensure the continued provision of legally required animal control services beyond June 30, 2026. The Council's guidance is appreciated, as the decision will directly influence service continuity, animal welfare, and public safety within the community.