



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS**  
**LIBRARY BOARD AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 05/13/2026

ITEM NO: 2

---

DATE: May 13, 2026  
TO: Library Board  
FROM: Ryan Baker, Library Director  
SUBJECT: Review Recommended Library Policy for Animals in the Library

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a motion to recommend the draft Animals in the Library Policy.

**REMARKS:**

The Library has not formally had a separate policy addressing animals in the library, including ADA service animals or otherwise. Policy references to animals were previously contained in the Patron Behavior Policy and were brief entries that allowed ADA service animals, and prohibited pets. This draft policy aims to give a more comprehensive overall policy for animals in the Library within the limitations of State and Federal law.

The wording of the new draft policy is recommended as:

**Draft Public Library Policy – Service Animals, Other Animals, and Emergency Exceptions**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), California disability access laws, and applicable state and local public health and safety laws.
2. Protect the rights of individuals with disabilities who use service animals.
3. Maintain a safe, sanitary, welcoming, and accessible environment for all library users and staff.
4. Establish clear rules regarding animals in the Library.
5. Establish procedures applicable during emergency operations or temporary emergency sheltering activities conducted pursuant to California AB 781 (2024) and related emergency management laws.

**PREPARED BY:** Ryan Baker  
Library Director

---

## **II. Authority**

This policy is adopted pursuant to:

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; California Civil Code §§ 54, 54.1, and 54.2; California Penal Code §§ 365.5 and 365.7; California Health and Safety Code provisions regarding sanitation and public health; and California Government Code emergency management provisions, including AB 781 (2024) relating to emergency shelters accommodating persons with pets.

## **III. Definitions**

### **A. Service Animal**

For purposes of this policy, a “service animal” means a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, as defined by the ADA and California law. California statutes may also use the terms ‘guide dog,’ ‘signal dog,’ or ‘service dog.’

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples include, but are not limited to: guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision; alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; pulling a wheelchair; assisting during seizures; providing balance or mobility assistance; interrupting or mitigating psychiatric or neurological disabilities.

### **B. Emotional Support, Comfort, Therapy, or Companion Animals**

Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort, emotional support, companionship, therapeutic benefit, crime deterrence, or emotional well-being are not service animals under the ADA for purposes of public access to the Library.

Unless otherwise required by law or this policy’s emergency shelter provisions, emotional support animals, therapy animals, companion animals, and pets are not permitted in Library facilities.

### **C. Handler**

The “handler” is the individual with a disability using the service animal, or another person accompanying and controlling the service animal on behalf of that individual.

### **D. Pet**

A “pet” means any non-service animal brought into the Library for personal companionship or convenience.

## **IV. General Policy**

### **A. Permitted Animals**

The following animals are permitted in the Library:

1. ADA-qualified service animals;
2. Service animals in training where specifically permitted by California law;
3. Animals participating in authorized Library programming or exhibitions approved by Library administration;
4. Law enforcement and/or emergency response animals;
5. Animals temporarily permitted pursuant to emergency operations conducted under applicable emergency laws, including AB 781.

## **B. Prohibited Animals**

Except as expressly allowed by this policy or required by law, all other animals are prohibited from entering Library buildings and enclosed public facilities.

This prohibition includes pets, emotional support animals, companion animals, and therapy animals not participating in approved programming except for law enforcement therapy animals.

## **V. ADA Service Animal Access**

### **A. Access Rights**

Individuals with disabilities accompanied by service animals shall be permitted access to all areas of the Library where members of the public are normally allowed. Identification such as vest, certification, or registration is recommended, but not required.

### **B. Permissible Staff Inquiries**

When it is not obvious that an animal is a service animal, Library staff may ask the following questions permitted by federal law: 1. Is the animal required because of a disability? 2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Staff may not request documentation or certification, require demonstration of tasks, ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability, demand medical documentation, or require special identification for the animal.

### **C. Handler Responsibilities**

Handlers are responsible for ensuring that service animals remain under control at all times, are housebroken, and are continuously supervised by the handler. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless such devices interfere with the animal's work or the handler's disability prevents their use, in which case the animal must otherwise be under the handler's control through voice, signal, or other effective means. Service animals may not threaten the safety of others, create a substantial disruption to Library operations, or damage Library property. Handlers are solely responsible for the care and supervision of the animal, including feeding and watering, cleaning up animal waste,

and managing the animal's behavior at all times. To the extent permitted by law, handlers are also responsible for any injury or property damage caused by the animal.

#### **VI. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior Standards**

A service animal in the Library is expected to remain calmly beside or otherwise under the control of the handler at all times and to move quietly through the facility without causing disruption. Service animals must refrain from repeated barking, growling, whining, or other disruptive vocalizations, and may not jump on people or furniture, run freely, display aggressive behavior, urinate or defecate inside the facility, or block aisles, entrances, exits, or other access routes. Determinations regarding behavior shall be based on the actual conduct of the animal and handler, not on assumptions, stereotypes, or generalized concerns about animals or disabilities. Fear of dogs, allergies, personal discomfort, or generalized concerns are not valid reasons to deny access to a service animal.

A service animal may be excluded or removed from the Library if the animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it; if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others; or if the animal displays aggressive behavior including biting, lunging, snapping, or repeated growling. A service animal may also be removed if it repeatedly barks or otherwise substantially disrupts Library operations, is not housebroken, causes significant property damage, or creates an actual and substantial sanitation or safety concern under applicable law. In addition, removal may occur if the handler fails to comply with this policy after being advised of the issue. Any decision to exclude or remove a service animal shall be based on an individualized assessment of the specific situation and behavior involved.

If staff determine that unacceptable behavior standards are not met, staff should first provide the handler an opportunity to correct the behavior. If the behavior continues, Library staff may direct the handler to remove the animal from Library premises. If a service animal is properly excluded under this policy, the individual with a disability shall be offered the opportunity to obtain Library services without the animal present, where reasonably feasible. Staff may contact law enforcement when necessary to protect health or safety.

#### **VII. Health and Safety Requirements**

The Library may impose lawful safety requirements necessary for safe operation of Library facilities. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Library from taking immediate action necessary to address dangerous animals, animal bites or attacks, unsanitary conditions, or threats to staff or patrons.

Animals admitted under this policy must comply with applicable vaccination, licensing, and public health requirements under California law and local ordinances.

### **VIII. Fraudulent Representation of Service Animals**

California Penal Code § 365.7 makes it a misdemeanor to knowingly and fraudulently represent oneself as the owner or trainer of a guide, signal, or service dog.

Library may staff shall not accuse patrons of criminal conduct absent clear evidence. However, staff refer suspected fraudulent activity to law enforcement when appropriate.

### **IX. Library Programs Involving Animals**

The Library may authorize animals as part of educational, cultural, literacy, or community programs.

### **X. Emergency Operations and AB 781 Procedures**

California AB 781 requires cities and counties, upon specified emergency plan updates, to designate certain emergency shelters, cooling centers, or warming centers capable of accommodating persons with pets. If the Library is designated for such emergency use, the Library will temporarily permit pets or companion animals consistent with AB 781 implementation procedures.

When emergency pet accommodations are authorized: Animals must remain under the owner's control at all times; owners are responsible for feeding, sanitation, cleanup, supervision, and containment; aggressive, dangerous, diseased, or uncontrolled animals may be excluded; separate animal accommodation areas may be established; vaccination or licensing information may be requested where legally permitted and practicable; and animals may be required to remain crated, leashed, tethered, or otherwise secured.

Emergency accommodations may be modified or terminated based on safety, sanitation, staffing, operational, or emergency conditions.

Nothing in this emergency section limits or reduces the rights of individuals using ADA-qualified service animals. Service animals retain priority access rights under federal and state disability law at all times.

### **XI. Enforcement**

Library staff are authorized to enforce this policy.

Violations of this policy may result in the direction to remove the animal from Library premises, temporary suspension from Library property consistent with Library rules of conduct, and/or referral to law enforcement or animal control authorities.