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April 21, 2022

The Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Holly L. Wolcott, City Clerk
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Krekorian:

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 PROPOSED BUDGET

The Department of Animal Services (Department) has reviewed the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Budget. The Department is proud of our extraordinary efforts and resilience during a year of continued pandemic-related, unexpected, and financial challenges. Although we anticipate many of these challenges to continue into 2022-23, we are also prepared to meet these challenges while providing essential services and expanded programs that offer relief to those struggling financially.

CHALLENGES

Animal Sterilization Fund

The Animal Sterilization Fund (ASF) is expected to end 2021-22 with an ending balance of approximately \$1,013,858, \$498,858 for the Spay and Neuter Program and \$515,000 for the Citywide Cat Program (CCP), based upon current projections.

For the Spay and Neuter Program, the Department estimates the performance of 45,717 surgeries in 2022-23 at a total of \$3,738,146. The Department arrived at this total based upon 2021-22 projected expenditures and revenue, which includes the return of the mobile spay and neuter service for the entire fiscal year. In order for the Spay and Neuter Program to be fully operational for the entire fiscal year, the Department requests an additional \$1,063,000.

Upon Council and Mayor's approval of CF No. 22-0307 (scheduled to be presented to Council on April 29, 2022) to transfer \$550,000 to the ASF and for two resolution authorities consisting of one Director of Field Operations and one Management Analyst, the Department plans to launch the CCP in May 2022. The launch includes filling the two interim authorities which will work with veterinarians and community partners to sterilize approximately 500 free-roaming cats in 2021-22. The Department plans for the CCP to be fully operational in 2022-23, and to sterilize 20,000 free-roaming cats in

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SUBJECT: The Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Budget

accordance with the CCP Environmental Impact Report which was completed in 2020-21. The Department requests 12-months funding for the Director of Field Operations and Management Analyst positions, and an additional \$385,000 to fully fund the CCP in order to sterilize the 20,000 cats as stated in the CCP EIR.

Staffing Issues and Overtime

The Department understands the shared sacrifices and decision which reduced the City's Workforce and the General Fund budget through the Separation Incentive Program (SIP). As a result of the SIP, the Department lost 26 (32 with the offset) positions, 12 of which were restored through the budget process, two positions were restored by providing an offset of six Administrative Clerk positions, and 10 positions were provided during the budget hearings for the 2021-22 Adopted Budget. Even with some positions restored, the Department continues to experience challenges that impact services:

- Decreased customer service levels negatively impacting shelter call wait times;
- Delays in processing license applications;
- Delays in preparing required budget reports and contracts;
- Inability to provide expanded services to pet owners in need;
- Delays in the development of needed information technology systems and addressing telephone system malfunctions;
- Reduction in revenue generating activities such as permit processing and violation citations;
- Decrease in our ability to ensure public safety in the communities; and,
- Decrease in our ability to process adoptions and prepare animals for rescue.

The decrease in staffing as well as increased employee absences due to COVID-19 exposure and/or positive test results also resulted in extraordinary unplanned overtime. The Department's 2021-22 Overtime General budget was not sufficient. By February 2022, a General Fund supplement was required to pay employees for the overtime worked.

In an effort to onboard the much needed staffing as soon as possible, the Department requests nine-months funding for the seven Administrative Clerk and one Management Analyst position authorities provided in the Mayor's FY 2022-23 Proposed Budget to provide much needed support Department-wide.

Administrative Citation Enforcement (ACE) Program

The Department appreciates that the two Administrative Clerk positions that support the ACE Program were recommended to be regularized in the Proposed Budget. To sufficiently fund the ACE Program work with the Code Compliance Fund, the Department requests \$6,000 for its Printing and Binding Account and \$2,500 for its Office and Administration Account.

Summary

The Department is pleased with our team's incredible work and dedication during the past year and the continued support from the Mayor and City Council. The Department is committed to improving operations and offering critical services to the City of Los Angeles and its constituents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and we look forward to working together to make the budget process as productive as possible. Should you need assistance or additional information

SUBJECT: The Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Budget

ahead of our hearing, I can be reached at (213) 305-4134. For additional details, you may also contact Curtis Watts, Assistant General Manager, at (213) 503-7210.

Sincerely,



Annette G. Ramirez
Interim General Manager

cc: Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, CD 3
Councilmember Kevin De Leon, CD 14
Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, CD 7
Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr., CD 9
Jeanne Holm, Deputy Mayor, Mayor's Office of Budget and Innovation
Raoul Mendoza, Budget Director, Mayor's Office of Budget and Innovation
Matthew Szabo, City Administrative Officer
Jacqueline Reyes, Office of the CAO