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Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

June 4, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager
Submitted by: Kate O'Connor, Manager, Animal Care Services
Subject: Funding for the Spay Neuter Your Pet (SNYP) Program

RECOMMENDATION

Take no action on the commission's recommendation and 1) provide on-site pre-adoption spay and neuter services at the Dona Spring Animal Shelter; and 2) allocate \$10,000 to provide low-cost spay and neuter services at local veterinary offices for low-income Berkeley residents.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Recommended funding for the above is included in the FY 2014 and FY 2015 Proposed Biennial Budget.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Animal Care Shelter (BACS) currently receives \$30,000 per year from the City's General Fund to provide low-cost or free spay/neuter surgery for the pets of low income Berkeley residents. In actuality, this program costs around \$50,000 to run; the approximately \$20,000 difference is made up with funds from the BACS donations account.

Berkeley Animal Care Services (BACS) is required to reduce General Fund expenditures by 2% for FY14. The current General Fund allocation to BACS is \$1,616,865. A 2% General Fund reduction equates to a target cut of \$32,337.

In order to meet the 2% reduction, two contracts will be eliminated: SNYP (\$20,000), and BadRap (\$9,880) a nonprofit pitbull advocacy group who provide weekly pitbull training and socializing classes at BACS. The remaining \$10,000 of the original \$30,000 SNYP funding will be allocated for contracts with local veterinarians to provide spay and neuter services.

While the commission has recommended fully funding the SNYP program at \$50,000 from the General Fund, staff has found that this is not feasible at this time within budget constraints. With the recent opening of the new Dona Spring Animal Shelter, which includes a medical suite for veterinary services, the majority of the services for

impounded animals can now be provided on-site, approximately 50 spay/neuters per month. BACS is currently contracting with the East Bay Humane Society to provide these services for \$95,000 per year.

BACKGROUND

\$130,000 is currently budgeted for veterinary services. In the past, this entire budget was directed toward contracts with external veterinarians to cover the costs of veterinary services for routine and emergency care, as well as SNYP vouchers to cover the costs of spay/neuter services for animals being adopted out and for spay/neuter vouchers for the pets of low income Berkeley residents.

Since its inception in 2000, the SNYP program has offered low cost or free spay/neuter for animals of low income residents of Berkeley, and any resident who owns pit bulls and/or chihuahuas—the two dog breeds most often seen in animal shelters in the Bay Area. BACS estimates that 8,000 animals have been sterilized through this program since its inception.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Berkeley is the only municipal shelter in the area that has continued to provide vouchers to qualified residents. There are low cost spay/neuter alternatives nearby such as the Oakland SPCA, the East Bay Humane Society and the new Fix our Ferals Hospital in Richmond.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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