



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** January 30, 2018
From: Serena Lusk **File:** 06-2055-20-012/Vol 01
 General Manager, Community Services
Re: **Animal Shelter Guiding Principles, Program Plan and Site**

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Animal Shelter Guiding Principles as described in the staff report titled "Animal Shelter Guiding Principles, Program, and Service Levels", dated January 30, 2018, from the General Manager, Community Services, be endorsed.
2. That the Program Plan and Site as described in the staff report titled "Animal Shelter Guiding Principles and Program" dated January 30, 2018, from the General Manager, Community Services, be approved.

Serena Lusk
 General Manager, Community Services
 (604-233-3344)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Project Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

On December 12, 2016, Council approved the Advanced Planning and Design for Major Facilities Projects, including the Animal Shelter, subject to funding being approved as part of the 2017 Capital Budget. Capital funding in the amount of \$8.0M for the replacement Animal Shelter was approved on December 4, 2017, as part of the 2018 Capital Budget.

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the Animal Shelter Guiding Principles that have been developed to guide and inform the project, to provide information on the development of the recommended program, and to seek approval for the program.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #1: A Safe Community

Maintain emphasis on community safety to ensure Richmond continues to be a safe community

1.2 Program and service enhancements that improve community safety services in the City.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2: A Vibrant, Active and Connected City

Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.

2.3 Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #6: Quality Infrastructure Networks

Continue diligence towards the development of infrastructure networks that are safe, sustainable, and address the challenges associated with aging systems, population growth, and environmental impact.

6.1 Safe and sustainable infrastructure.

6.2 Infrastructure is reflective of and keeping pace with community need.

Analysis

Background

The Richmond Animal Shelter is located at 12071 No. 5 Road. The single storey 4,580 square feet facility was built in 1978 when the population of the City was approximately 80,000. Since then, the City's population has grown to over 218,000 and the number of animals in the City has similarly grown. Current shelter operations exceed the facility's capacity. Accommodations are provided for over 800 animals annually, ranging from companion animals (such as dogs, cats,

rabbits, small animals, and birds), to wildlife and small farm animals. Best practices in animal sheltering have advanced considerably and are no longer being met by existing infrastructure.

Animal Shelter Guiding Principles

The proposed Guiding Principles for this project were developed based on a review of best practices and trends in the design and operation of animal shelters. These Guiding Principles are identified below.

The new Animal Shelter will:

- Be designed to ensure efficient and effective operations and delivery of services;
- Include design measures to reduce animal stress and promote animal welfare and health;
- Incorporate best practices and industry standards in the care of animals;
- Provide appropriate spaces for adoption activities;
- Provide adequate spaces to effectively manage disease control;
- Provide safe and appropriate spaces for staff and volunteer operations;
- Provide safe spaces for interaction between the staff and animals, between the staff and the public, and between the public and animals; and
- Be designed to integrate sustainable practices and accommodate future growth.

The Animal Shelter Guiding Principles are intended to provide overall direction in the program development, facility design, and eventually the operation of the facility.

Program Development Process

The proposed program for the new Animal Shelter was developed through a review of industry guidelines and best practices, visits to regional animal shelters, and consultation with both the Regional Animal Protection Society (RAPS) and the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA). RAPS currently operates the Animal Shelter as a contractor of the City; the BCSPCA operates 29 shelters across the province.

The *Canadian Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, published by the Canadian Advisory Council on National Shelter Standards, is a guiding document which informed the program development process.

Program Plan – Base Level

The outcome of the program development process is an Animal Shelter program which incorporates science, best practice, and industry standards in supporting the well-being of animals.

A review of best practices in animal care and protection confirmed that services provided through the Animal Shelter should include:

- Surrender and adoption of dogs, cats, and small animals;
- Pick-up, transfer and/or impoundment of stray or dangerous animals;

- Removal and disposal of dead animals; and
- Animal control bylaw enforcement.

These services are currently offered, however, spaces associated with each service will need to be expanded to meet the population and animal growth.

The proposed building program was developed in consultation with RAPS and the BCSPCA, and can be divided into two categories:

1. Animal program; and
2. Administrative and operational spaces.

The proposed program satisfies the identified needs and ensures the health and safety of animals in the care of the shelter. It includes the following base level spaces:

- Animal intake room;
- Dogs (kennels for adoption, quarantine, isolation, and impound);
- Cats (rooms for adoption, quarantine, isolation, and kittens);
- Small animals room (e.g., domestic birds, hamsters, ferrets, etc.);
- Rabbit room;
- Outdoor fenced area with enclosure for farm animals (e.g., chickens, roosters, goats, etc.);
- Adoption room for visitors to interact with animals prior to adoption;
- Administration and animal control;
- Staff and volunteer room; and
- Storage, laundry, medical, and food preparation areas.

The service area for dogs includes separate spaces for adoptable dogs, isolation, quarantine, as well as kennels for impoundment. The service area for cats includes separate rooms for adoptable cats, kittens, isolation, and quarantine. To minimize stress on the animals, the cat and dog areas will follow best practice and be separate from each other. The rooms for rabbits and small animals are dedicated spaces, as these animals require separate housing for safety and disease control. An adoption room will allow individuals to interact with the animals they are looking to adopt in a quiet and contained area.

The program includes space for a fenced outdoor area, with a small enclosure for farm animals such as chickens and roosters, allowing for a suitable space which provides protection from the elements. On occasion, the existing animal shelter receives larger animals such as goats and sheep; farm homes are quickly found for these animals and they are transferred.

The proposed program allocation for administration and operations is designed to ensure safe, efficient, and effective delivery of services. The administrative offices will include work stations for staff and animal control officers. The staff and volunteer room will provide areas for briefings, meals in a safe and clean environment, and storage of belongings.

Program Plan – Additional Spaces

In addition to the base level spaces listed above, the following additional spaces could be included in a new facility, should the capital budget allow. At this time, preliminary concept work suggests that the available funding will not provide for these spaces to be included in the design and construction. However, as the design advances, it may be possible that efficiencies and/or opportunities to reapportion space are found so that some or all of the following spaces could be included while remaining within the capital budget:

- Small dogs room;
- Wildlife temporary holding room; and
- Multipurpose room.

Best practice demonstrates that a room for small dogs is preferable to housing them in kennels, considerable stress can be imposed on small dogs when placed into kennels adjacent to larger dogs. The provision of a small dog’s room is an efficient use of space as it allows for six to eight dogs to be housed in a relatively small area. The provision of a small room allows shelter staff to temporarily treat and house injured wildlife (e.g., raccoons, birds of prey, etc.) before they are picked up and transferred to agencies such as Wildlife Rescue or Critter Care. A multipurpose space is a common feature in modern shelters, allowing for the provision of meetings, training, and education programs.

The existing facility has an incinerator on site which is used for cremation of animals that pass away in the shelter, and for the disposal of dead animals brought in by City or shelter staff. No other animal shelter in Metro Vancouver has an incinerator due to the high cost to install and maintain it, as well as safety factors involved with its use. As an extremely high volume of cremation is required to warrant having an incinerator on site, modern shelters generally contract out the animal disposal service to specialized service providers, which has been found to be cost effective. Staff are recommending that an incinerator not be included in a new animal shelter.

Service Levels

Following the identification of the program areas as outlined above, staff have reviewed the current service levels and demand, and are recommending the following program allocation for animals as indicated below in Table 1:

Table 1 – Program allocation for animals

Animal Type	Current Facility Program Allocation	Current Daily Service Levels	Recommended Program Allocation
Dogs	16	8-12	13-17
Cats	40	30-40	40-45
Rabbits	0	50+	8-12
Small animals	0	8-10	Small animals room
Injured wildlife	0	Varies	Temporary holding room
Farm animals (e.g. chickens, roosters)	None	15-20 per year	Outdoor fenced area with enclosure

The recommended program allocation for animals is not expected to result in increased costs for operating the shelter. Best practices in the design and operation of animal shelters suggest that it is important to not overbuild a shelter. An overpopulated facility can lead to increased lengths of stay, which is proven to have detrimental impacts on an animals' well-being, and poses higher risk levels of disease. An effective shelter operates within its resources, following the Capacity for Care model, ultimately helping shelter animals move quickly into adoptive homes.

Operational Implications Associated with the Site

The existing site continues to be well-suited for the purposes of a new Animal Shelter as it is:

- City-owned;
- has minimal site servicing costs;
- poses no land use or zoning challenges;
- is familiar to current users;
- has access to dog walking routes; and
- is accessible by public transit.

Preliminary analysis indicates that the site is adequate for the recommended program as outlined in this report.

Re-building a new shelter on the existing site would require the relocation of services for a period of 16 to 20 months during demolition and construction. A business continuity plan would be developed with neighbouring municipalities and local kennels to manage the surrender, adoption, and impoundment of animals during this period. RAPS would be consulted and involved in this process.

Next Steps

Should Council endorse the guiding principles, program plan and site, the next step is to develop a concept design (form and character) for the new Animal Shelter, including concept level costing, as well as a service relocation plan, which would be presented for Council consideration in Spring 2018. Staff will bring forward the estimated Operating Budget Impact (OBI) for operation of the shelter in a future report, once the design is more advanced.

Financial Impact


The costs associated in proceeding with the concept design are a portion of the already approved 2017 Capital Budget for Advanced Planning and Design for Major Facilities Projects.

January 30, 2018

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Conclusion

The proposed program plan for the new Animal Shelter reflects modern best practices, research, and industry standards in shelter design and animal care. It also provides adequate space to service current and anticipated needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Brar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "B".

Paul Brar
Manager, Parks Programs
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