



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0119, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Rachel Johnson, Police Chief
George Gabriel, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT:

Consideration of the Coyote Management and Response Plan (City Manager Moe).

(Estimated Time: 30 Mins.)

APPROVE

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council conceptually approve the Coyote Management and Response Plan pending preparation of environmental documentation.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action. However, should City Council conceptually approve the Plan, staff will execute an agreement with a CEQA consultant for analysis services and return to the City Council with a trapping services contract (specific amount to be determined) at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 21, 2022, meeting, City Council agendaized a future discussion and report on coyote management. In response to this request, staff undertook a variety of actions:

- Held an internal meeting with representatives from the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Code Enforcement, Public Information, Legal and Public Works to discuss current and future strategies on coyote management;
- Assigned a staff representative to coordinate the City's response to coyotes;
- Issued a press release and began a social media campaign on all platforms to educate the public on safeguards to protect pets against coyotes;
- Hosted a regional meeting with a representative from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to discuss how interactions between humans and coyotes can be minimized (Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach animal control were in attendance);
- Conducted a patrol of hot-spot areas in the City with the representative from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine where coyotes could be currently located or prone to dwell in the City;

- Reached out to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, City of Torrance, City of Rancho Palos Verdes and City of Arcadia to obtain information on coyote management;
- Developed and disseminated handouts with public information related to coyote management best practices;
- Compiled data on confirmed and unconfirmed coyote sightings or attacks including data from 2016 - present;
- Implemented public engagement efforts concerning coyotes through the creation of a City webpage, printed handouts, public service announcements, and social media messaging. Additionally, City Staff went door to door to distribute handouts with coyote information to homes in affected areas;
- Created a GIS a map with locations where coyote sightings and confirmed/unconfirmed predation had taken place; and
- Created a GoReach category to allow the community to report sightings on the City's GoReach app.

Following these efforts, City Council discussed the matter at the July 5, 2022 City Council meeting where Council directed staff to investigate and inventory the coyote population and to provide a report with findings. After obtaining and evaluating several proposals from consultants to provide a report, staff chose Humane Wildlife Control Incorporated. Their report summarizing coyote activity and recommendations is attached to the staff report.

At the September 6, 2022, meeting, City Council received the report from Humane Wildlife Control and directed staff to return with a draft coyote management policy and following a six month period, return to the City Council with updated data. Additionally, City Council provided direction to have staff research allowable options for residents to protect themselves from coyotes if one is located on their property.

At the February 21, 2023, meeting, City Council received a six month review and update on the City's current coyote management approach. Following discussion, City Council directed staff to adjust the City's approach to coyote management including further exploration of a selective trapping program and return to the City Council with a revised Coyote Management and Response Plan with further California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis conducted. Additionally, City Council directed staff to conduct additional community outreach and public education aimed at reducing coyote attractants and informing the community with techniques to respond upon a coyote interaction.

DISCUSSION:

In 2016, the MBPD Animal Control division had drafted an unofficial Coyote Management Plan that was utilized as a tool to address coyotes in the City. However, this Coyote Management Plan had not been reviewed or approved by the City Council.

Following City Council direction, staff reviewed coyote management plans approved by the City of Torrance, City of Huntington Beach, City of Rancho Palos Verdes and City of Arcadia. Taking those various plans into consideration, staff drafted a revised Coyote Management and Response Plan for consideration at the February 21, 2023, meeting. Following direction to incorporate a selective trapping program at that meeting, staff edited the plan and is seeking conceptual approval of the Coyote Management and Response Plan, pending preparation of environmental documentation.

The Plan is attached and is comprised of a four pronged strategy detailed below. The Plan states:

“The strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection of wildlife and habitat without compromising public safety. It shall be effected through a four-pronged approach:

- ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY - Provide a safe environment for the public by limiting interactions with aggressive coyotes and potentially trapping where necessary to ensure public safety.
- ENHANCED COYOTE DETERRENCE EFFORTS - The goal of education is to decrease coyote attractants, increase pet safety, and reshape coyote behavior. Hazing methods, preventative measures, and housekeeping can alter coyote behavior.
- PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION - Education and coyote deterrents designed around co-existence. Communication with the community. Receiving and giving feedback among the community is essential for implementing the Coyote Management Plan.
- ACTIVE MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION - Tracking coyote observations that include: confirmed coyote predations, unconfirmed coyote predations and coyote sightings.”

Most notably, staff has revised the incident response table which outlines and specifies the coyote actions and contextual evidence that would necessitate a trapping consideration action by the City. These coyote actions include:

- Entering private yard and injuring or killing unattended pet (without attractants present);
- Biting or injuring unattended free roaming pet or pet on leash longer than 6 feet (without attractants present);
- Biting or injuring attended pet;
- Aggressive, showing teeth, back fur raised, lunging, nipping w/o contact; and
- Biting or injuring a person

In developing these actions, staff sought to identify abnormal or dangerous coyote actions that would threaten public safety. Should a coyote exhibit any of the actions above, the City or the CDFW may lethally remove or capture the subject coyote. However, the response table specifies that all attacks are subject to investigations to ensure human harassment or provocation by did not cause the action.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council conceptually approve the Coyote Management and Response Plan pending preparation of environmental documentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City Council’s consideration of the Coyote Management Plan is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. Staff has solicited cost proposals for the preparation of the associated environmental documentation. The associated environmental document will be presented to City Council at a future date for consideration prior to the Council’s final decision on the policy document.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Coyote Management and Response Plan