



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0255, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

George Gabriel, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT:

Update on the City's Coyote Management Approach and Consideration of a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Michael Baker International to Provide Environmental Consulting Services for the Coyote Management and Response Plan with a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$35,970 (City Manager Moe).

(Estimated Time: 30 Mins.)

- A) RECEIVE UPADTE**
- B) ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 23-0093**
- C) APPROPRIATE FUNDS**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Receive the update on coyote observation data and mapping;
2. Adopt Resolution No. 23-0093 approving the agreement with Michael Baker International to provide environmental consulting services for the Coyote Management and Response Plan; and
3. Appropriate \$35,970 from the unreserved General Fund balance toward the agreement.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The agreement under consideration with Michael Baker International to provide environmental consulting services for the City's Coyote Management and Response Plan is for total not to exceed \$35,970. As the funding for these services were not included in the adopted Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget, an appropriation from the available unreserved General Fund balance is needed for this agreement.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 21, 2022, meeting, City Council agendized 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.

At the April 4, 2023 meeting, City Council directed staff to return with the CEQA review and trapping management contracts for the Coyote Management and Response Plan, as proposed on April 4, 2023, regardless of the dollar amount.

DISCUSSION:

Data and Mapping

As indicated earlier, staff began tracking data and the locations of observations to better understand the level of coyote activity occurring in the City. As such, monthly data from 2022 and yearly data (dating back to 2016) is summarized in the attachment to the report. In summary, total coyote observations increased from 30 in 2021 to 70 in 2022. Thus far in 2023, confirmed and unconfirmed predations appear to be trending similar to 2022 data. However, coyote sightings have increased from 2023 from what could be a result of increased reporting from the community and duplicated sightings reported from multiple individuals. Additionally, the City's GIS Analyst continues to track observations at locations reported in the City's jurisdiction. In reviewing the map attached, a majority of observations and unconfirmed predations occur primarily in the eastern portion of the City (East of Sepulveda Boulevard).

In the meantime, animal control officers continue to monitor, investigate and educate the community on coyote activity.

Environmental Analysis

Following City Council direction at the April 4, 2023, meeting, staff solicited proposals from 19 qualified consulting firms in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). Staff provided one month for consultants to respond and received a proposal from one firm, Michael Baker International.

In its proposal, Michael Baker demonstrated a clear understanding of the scope of work and provided a detailed methodology for completing the requisite studies and CEQA documentation, as well as a well-formed strategy for stakeholder engagement. Michael Baker has a sizable team of in-house and subcontractor technical specialists and extensive experience and expertise in both producing CEQA documents and overall project management. Michael Baker previously managed Manhattan Beach's Downtown Specific Plan Project and more recently, the CEQA analysis for a proposed hotel in Manhattan Beach, demonstrating proven experience with the community. Currently, Michael Baker is assisting the City with the Scout House Project.

Specific to coyote management, Michael Baker has recently worked on other wildlife management plans for other jurisdictions in the State, including the City of Pasadena. As such, they are well equipped with understanding Manhattan Beach's local regulations and community needs, as well as the potential environmental issues that arise with wildlife management plans and sensitivities between the urban/wildlife interface.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Receive the update on coyote observation data and mapping;
2. Adopt Resolution No. 23-0093 approving the agreement with Michael Baker International to provide environmental consulting services for the Coyote Management and Response Plan; and
3. Appropriate \$35,970 from the unreserved General Fund balance toward the agreement.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The approval of this agreement has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the common sense exemption (formerly the “general rule”) that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question can have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA, as is the case with the approval of an agreement with Michael Baker International to perform CEQA review for a Coyote Management and Response Plan. The adoption of a Coyote Management and Response Plan is subject to CEQA, and environmental review is included in the consultant’s scope of work.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has approved the agreement as to form.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 23-0093
2. Agreement - Michael Baker International
3. Conceptual Coyote Management and Response Plan
4. Coyote Observations Data
5. Coyote Observations Map