



**City of Long Beach**  
**Working Together to Serve**

**Memorandum**

**R-18**

**Date:** April 21, 2020

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Councilwoman Stacy Mungo Flanigan, Fifth District  
Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District  
Councilmember Dee Andrews, Sixth District  
Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District

**Subject:** **Commitment to Adopt Policy**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Request the City Manager, or designee, to work with the Animal Care Services Bureau in Parks, Recreation and Marine Department to implement a "Commitment to Adopt Policy" within 60 days to provide a streamlined and equitable approach for placing animals into forever homes.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Long Beach City Council has consistently stated pet adoption as one of Animal Care Service's highest priorities. Year after year, the City has taken input from animal advocates and funded programs and resources that support the increase of pet adoptions. While adoption rates are high, they could be even higher through establishing clear procedures, referred to as a "Commitment to Adopt Policy."

Adoption partners report that there are inconsistencies in how and when a "hold" on an animal is applied and fulfilled. This leads to ambiguity, unnecessary delays, and occasionally, a loss of an adopter. Other issues include holds that are not kept, resulting in animals being in the shelter longer than necessary. Additionally, there is no limit on the number of animals an adoption partner or agency can put on hold, leading to some agencies having more animals on hold than they can handle, while other agencies have no animals available to them.

The creation of this policy eliminates unnecessary administrative burden on staff, allowing them to spend time with the animals and adopters. There will also be accountability on participants so that bad actors are restricted from future holds that negatively impact animal adoptions.

To increase the number of adoptions and to provide a more predictable and equitable process, it is proposed that the City Manager work with the Parks, Recreation and Marine Department to create a "Commitment to Adopt Policy" that would:

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- Give a clear process for any individual or organization to make a Commitment to Adopt that will be recorded in the animal management system (Chameleon).
- Ensure that individuals providing the animal a permanent home get first priority.
- Set a rate for animal rescues and agencies to pull the animals. For example, bill pet adoption organizations a small fee to place a hold on an animal, which could be paid down if the rescue pays for chipping, spay/neutering, or other costs. Fees would support pet adoption services.
- Set a maximum number of Commitments to Adopt by rescue/agency.
- Set standards for participation in the Commitment to Adopt program that ensure animals held are retrieved the day before or the day they become available.
- Create an agreement form for all pet adoption organizations that wish to pull animals from the Long Beach Animal Care Services shelter that include notes in the Chameleon computerized tracking system.
- Record and track unsuccessful Commitment to Adopt forms where adoptions have not taken place within 48 hours of availability, to ensure only rescues and agencies in good standing make commitments.
- Allow prioritization of up to two animal rescues and agencies to record Commitments to Adopt after a community member.
- If no community member has requested the animal, allow rescues to pull at 4 PM the night before an animal becomes available to adopt, in order to help reduce the number of days animals are sheltered.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on April 10, 2020.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Animal Care Services Bureau in Parks, Recreation and Marine Department to implement a "Commitment to Adopt Policy" within 60 days. The requested 60-day timeframe allows for adequate time for staff communication and training. The requested action is anticipated to require a minimal level of staff hours beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have minimal impact on existing City Council priorities.