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March 30, 2016

**Animal Care Center  
(ACC) Locations**

Agoura ACC  
29525 Agoura Rd.  
Agoura, CA 91301  
(818) 991-0071

Baldwin Park ACC  
4275 N. Elton St.  
Baldwin Park, CA 91706  
(626) 962-3577


Carson/Gardena ACC  
216 W. Victoria St.  
Gardena, CA 90248  
(310) 523-9566

Castaic ACC  
31044 N. Charlie Cyn.  
Road  
Castaic, CA 91384  
(661) 257-3191

Downey ACC  
11258 S. Garfield Ave.  
Downey, CA 90242  
(562) 940-6898

Lancaster ACC  
5210 W. Avenue I  
Lancaster, CA 93536  
(661) 940-4191

TO: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Marcia Mayeda   
Director

**REPORT BACK ON REVIEW OF CURRENT PET VACCINATION AND  
LICENSING ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENTS (ITEM NO. 5, AGENDA  
OF FEBRUARY 16, 2016)**

On February 16, 2016, a motion by Supervisor Knabe instructed the Director of Animal Care and Control to review the current vaccination and licensing enforcement practices and compare with practices in other jurisdictions in order to identify improvements to enhance customer service and community outreach, payment and notification methods, review staff structure/assignments, and determine the use of potential new technologies resulting in improved operational efficiencies; and to report back to the Board in 60 days with such recommendations and a pilot program for implementation.

**Background**

The Department of Animal Care and Control (Department) is responsible for enforcing State laws and County ordinances regarding the vaccination and licensing of dogs and cats. Dog and cat owners are required to have their pets vaccinated against rabies licensed by four months of age. Licenses are not issued until the owner provides proof of a current rabies vaccination and are issued for one year terms.

The Department allows for the purchase of pet licenses in person, by mail, or online. It also hosts more than 50 pet rabies vaccination and licensing community clinics each year, located in convenient locations for local

residents to obtain low cost vaccination and pet licensing services. These services are also provided regularly at Department animal care centers.

Owners who have previously licensed their pets are sent reminder notices approximately six weeks prior to the expiration of their licenses. Owners who fail to renew their pet licenses subsequently receive a past due notice, advising them that they must renew their pet license. After the compliance time for these notices has passed, the Department deploys license enforcement officers to residents' homes in order to ensure the current rabies vaccination status of their pets and to renew the licenses in person.

Media alerts are issued prior to the deployment of the license enforcement officers, so residents may be made aware of the upcoming presence of license enforcement officers in their neighborhood. These alerts are sent to newspapers, community and neighborhood bulletins, and local city mass communication media. These alerts advise pet owners that they may voluntarily resolve their delinquent license by renewing it either by mail, in person at an animal care center, or online through the Department's online renewal portal. Only licenses for currently vaccinated dogs and cats may be renewed online.

License enforcement officers work in teams, and conduct enforcement activities neighborhood by neighborhood so as to conserve resources and provide more efficient and effective service. During these enforcement activities, officers make contact with pet owners at their homes by using a list of expired pet licenses to advise them which residents need to renew their pets' licenses. During the course of these activities, officers update their records to indicate pets that have passed away, newly acquired pets, or changes in residence. The use of license enforcement officers has given the Department a high rate of pet license compliance, protecting the health and safety of the community by ensuring an adequately rabies-vaccinated population of domestic animals.

The license enforcement program was reviewed in 2008. At that time, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$40 Field Enforcement Fee, which was added as a surcharge for delinquent pet owners who had failed to renew their pets. This surcharge is charged when the field enforcement officers are compelled to enforce the licensing requirements by home contact. This Field Enforcement Fee was developed to defray the cost of deploying field enforcement officers. It is a critical component of the field enforcement program, ensuring the County's and its contract cities' costs are recovered.

The program was reviewed again in 2014. At that time, the Department implemented several protocols to improve the program. These included a revision of the daily reconciliation process to better account for voided or lost receipts; additional controls to the inventory of receipt books; revised protocols for the issuance of license tags in the field; and a revision of the receipt book to include a triplicate copy of the receipts so that an anchor copy of all receipts would remain in the books at all times.

### **2016 Review and Recommendations**

Pursuant to this motion, the Department conducted a review of its license enforcement program as well as best practices used by other animal care and control agencies. Based on this review, the Department recommends the following actions:

#### **Communication and Outreach to Residents**

Although the Department sends reminder notices and past due notices, these notices only reach pet owners who are already identified by the Department. The Department has assessed that it would be beneficial to send pet license notifications to all residents, not just those currently in the Department database, to advise them of upcoming enforcement activities. These notices would alert pet owners who are not known to the Department of the need to have their pets vaccinated and licensed, and prevent the need for enforcement action by officers. These notices would advise the pet owners of the dates the license enforcement officers will be in their neighborhoods, and steps on how to license a pet prior to the officers' arrival.

#### **Methods of Payment/New Technologies**

Currently officers are only permitted to accept checks or cash when conducting field enforcement activities. The Department has assessed that it would be beneficial to be able to accept payment by credit cards and has begun the process to purchase and deploy tablets so officers may accept credit cards and generate receipts in the field.

#### **Staff Structure/Assignments**

The licensing enforcement unit is overseen by a program manager, who supervises the program through a subordinate lieutenant and sergeants. Approximately 40 personnel are assigned to this Division. These are revenue-generating positions, and the license fees collected offset the personnel costs for enforcement. The Department provides the license enforcement service on behalf of the contract cities who request this option. It is an important source of revenue for contract cities in offsetting their animal control costs, and the assigned staff are all fully utilized in the performance of their duties. No staffing changes are recommended.

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#### Administrative Citations

In its review of other agencies' licensing activities, the Department determined that implementing an administrative citation program would increase the efficiency of the license enforcement program. Administrative citations provide an alternate remedy for officers to use in enforcing the provisions of the Los Angeles County Code and may provide for a correction period for a violation to be remedied. These "fix it" tickets would allow the pet owners to correct their delinquent pet licenses without penalty and would provide a more customer service oriented approach to license enforcement. The protocols for the use of administrative citations has been established in Los Angeles County, and the Department will begin implementing this program in FY 2016-17.

#### Pilot Program for Implementation

The Department proposes to implement the improvements noted above by December 2016.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (562) 728-4610.

MM:in

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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Chief Executive Office  
County Counsel