



September 9, 2020

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Mayor Eric Garcetti and Honorable Members of the LA City Council  
Los Angeles City Hall  
N. Spring Street, #200  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

### Community Impact Statement

**RE:** Council File #20-1114

**Position:** The Porter Ranch NC supports the Council File # 20-1114 if amended, to reopen the West Valley Animal Shelter as a municipal shelter, and maintain its level of service to the community. The Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council also opposes any Hybrid solution that would include the proposal to close or lease cage space to private enterprise at the West Valley Animal Shelter, located at 20655 Plummer Street.

Dear Mayor Eric Garcetti and Honorable City Council Members:

The Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council requests that Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council reject the current proposal submitted by General Manager of the Department of Animal Services to the Los Angeles City Council which was submitted in response to the Mayor's mandate to reduce costs in every department. We understand that budgets are strained due to the impacts of COVID-19, our City Departments have been asked to make temporary changes to their operating budget of which includes the Department of Animal Services.

Our stakeholders have communicated their outrage regarding the possible closing of or leasing out of cage space to a private organization or hybrid version at the West Valley Animal Shelter. The Animal Services Department held public meetings on this matter which we appreciate. However, during these meetings, those who attended agreed that the information and plans provided regarding off-loading pet adoptions and essentially giving away our shelter space to another organization was vague and uninformative. What was presented gave no specifics on what services would remain and what was being changed other than the fact that it would no longer be able to take in strays, and would not be open 24/7. Although other Los Angeles animal shelters remain open, they are unable or refuse to accept strays. The West Valley Animal Shelter currently serves a great number of residents of the Valley, and the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council alone covers over 23,000 households, an area that is growing considerably every day. It is impossible for the

East Valley Animal Shelter to provide all of the services and hold all of the animals for the entire West Valley. In addition, the West Valley Shelter is configured currently to take in horses, goats and other livestock during an emergency whereas other shelters do not have this capacity.

We also learned during those Zoom meetings with the General Manager and staff that of the \$23 Million budget, \$21 million is allotted to salaries with only approximately \$1.8 Million of the budget being used for materials and food for the animals care.

In 2000, Prop F passed which allotted \$154,000,000 to expand and construct new buildings designed to transform shelters from “warehouses” for animals to community center focused on increasing adoptions. The West Valley facility was completed in late 2007 and is a source of pride in the community. A total of 8 new shelters were built and 2 have already been leased to Best Friends: Mission Hills and Jefferson Park. Tax payers did not pay for Prop F so that shelters could be given away while we continue to pay the maintenance and utility expenses for those facilities.

As a result of stakeholder outrage, meetings attended with the General Manager and staff, and our own research, we respectfully request that you hold on any decisions regarding any of our cage space being assigned to or leased to any outside entity, and keep all our promised shelters open. At a minimum, taxpayers should be allowed to vote on any dispersion the city would like to make regarding the property that has been built and paid for at taxpayers’ expense.

**Based on our analysis here are items that may be reviewed:**

- Look at ratios of supervisors to front line employees.
- Eliminate current 3-day, 12-hour day work weeks and revert back to 5-day, 8-hour work week. Evaluate Overtime after an 8-hour shift.
- Examine other expense line items, especially Medical Expenses which show unchanged year over year, yet the shelter currently has approximately 1/3 the total animal population prior to shut down and is also continuing to keep population low by “Design.” (Per GM)

**Our Recommendations Include:**

- Keep open the West Valley Animal Shelter and maintain current level of services
- We are against any hybrid model

Although we know there is a budget crisis, it is our concern that the West Valley residents would shoulder the burden of the proposed closure or leasing out of the West Valley

## Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

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Animal Shelter. With Measure F, residents of Los Angeles, of which the San Fernando Valley represents 40%, were promised 3 shelters under Prop F and if this proposal is approved, we will only have one, East Valley in Van Nuys. Property owners are still paying higher taxes to service the debt on the 2 facilities which no do not provide city services to residents.

In closing, we urge Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council and to reopen the West Valley Animal Shelter as a full-service municipal shelter and maintain its level of service to the community and we are opposed to any hybrid model.

Respectfully Yours,

Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

cc: Mayor Eric Garcetti, Honorable Los Angeles City Council Members