

Attachment A

City Of Austin Coyote Conflict Management Policy

The City of Austin recognizes that neighborhoods have encroached upon wildlife habitats, resulting in human/coyote interaction; however, the City also believes that the community as a whole benefits from the presence of wildlife. The City recognizes that a healthy ecosystem balances predators and prey.

The City and its citizens have an interest in strategies and planning for animal welfare programs community wide. Section 3-2-4 of the city charter prohibits the shooting, killing or trapping of wildlife without a permit issued by the city or by a City employee acting within their assigned duties. In March 2009, the City became the largest city in the United States and the first in Texas to be certified as a community wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. In March 2011, the City became the largest no-kill city in the United States. In 2013 the City adopted a no-kill policy for the management of white-tailed deer. Therefore, the City of Austin will practice an attitude of tolerance for and co-existence with coyotes, with an emphasis on education, awareness and humane, non-lethal conflict management.

Coyotes are naturally reclusive animals that tend to avoid human contact. Food availability will tempt these intelligent, adaptable animals to test the boundaries of human interaction. Habituated urban coyotes can appear to lose all fear of humans and may appear threatening to some. These habituated coyotes may pose a danger to small pets; especially free roaming or unsupervised cats and dogs. Breeding pairs may present a danger to perceived rivals such as larger dogs. Fortunately, coyotes can be conditioned to avoid people through coyote “hazing.”

Hazing is an inexpensive and proven method of re-training coyotes to avoid human contact. This method of coyote avoidance conditioning is a more effective and humane method of managing coyote behavior than leg-hold traps, snares or chemical control. Therefore, the City will institute a public education and coyote hazing policy. A city policy of public education and coyote hazing will minimize the need for the City to remove coyotes.

Reported coyote behavior, including observations, sightings, encounters, and attacks will be investigated and evaluated by Assigned City staff using the Coyote Response guide included with this policy. Assigned City staff shall include Park Rangers, preserve managers, or staff specifically designated by the City Manager. Assigned City staff may consult with appropriate wildlife professionals to aid with their evaluation.

Evaluation of coyote based threats to public safety will begin with analysis of reports using the Coyote Response Guide. However, lethal responses (coyote removal) shall be considered only after Assigned City Staff determines that the preponderance of evidence from evaluation of coyote behavior reports, field investigations, consultations with appropriate wildlife professionals, and any other documentable evidence identifies a specific animal or group of animals that pose the threat. Furthermore, there shall be no determination of a threat to public safety unless an incident or attack, as defined in the Coyote Response Guide, has occurred and is

part of the record supporting the determination. No coyote shall be removed unless Assigned City Staff determines that a threat to public safety exists that cannot be resolved without removal of individual identified coyotes or groups of coyotes. Lethal control efforts shall focus on the identified offending coyote(s), rather than the coyote population at large. Austin Parks and Recreation Department and Austin Water Utility will maintain ultimate authority to use staff, Texas Wildlife Services, or other qualified professionals on city land under their jurisdiction. Texas Wildlife Services may exercise its authority on privately held property within city limits.