

Animal Shelter Task Force Preliminary Report

The Bowie Animal Shelter Task Force endorses the need for and feasibility of establishing a small, short-term holding shelter for cats and dogs found lost or stray within the City of Bowie by Bowie Animal Control officers and/or citizens of Bowie.

A significant number of Bowie residents own cats and dogs, and other companion animals. While the exact figure is difficult to determine, the number of cats and dogs owned by Bowie residents is estimated to be nearly 29,000. Annually, Bowie residents spend more than the national average for the care and well-being of their companion animals. In 2008, 395 animals within the City of Bowie were transported to the Prince George's County animal shelter by Bowie Animal Control, Prince George's County Animal Control, and Bowie residents. When lost pets cannot be reunited immediately with their owners, Bowie Animal Control must deliver them to the County animal shelter. This generally occurs several times each week resulting in an expenditure of work hours that could be more efficiently employed within the City of Bowie. The establishment of a short-term, holding shelter would complement and not duplicate in total the services provided by the County animal shelter. The short-term holding shelter would:

- Provide Bowie residents an efficient, humane, and compassionate means to reunite with their lost and frightened companion animals. It would also greatly reduce, if not virtually eliminate, any incidents of a pet being euthanized before his or her owner could claim them.
- Increase the efficiency of Bowie Animal Control Officers by greatly decreasing the number of round trips made to the County animal shelter.
- Better enable Bowie residents without transportation to more effectively reunite with their lost companion animals.
- Enhance the City of Bowie's reputation both state-wide and nationwide as a progressive leader in the humane, compassionate care of its companion animals by providing this enhanced service to a significant and growing segment of Bowie's population.
- Provide other companion animal services to Bowie citizens such as rabies immunization, animal micro-chipping identification, pet licensing, and animal welfare education.

The Task Force is evaluating several options to achieve this goal. These include:

- Reconfigure and expand the space currently planned in the new City Hall
- Renovate space in the former City Hall
- Construct a stand-alone facility
- Purchase a mobile holding facility
- Contract the temporary holding of animals at local veterinary hospitals.

The option(s) determined most feasible will include a cost-benefit analysis for the Council's consideration in the final report submitted by the Task Force in January, 2010.