



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

DATE: October 9, 2018

SUBJECT: **Fall 2018, Winter 2019 Deer Management Plan**

REFERENCES: 2019 Deer Management Objectives

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides an update for the development of the City's 2019 Deer Management Plan. Staff is continuing the process established over the past two years with no significant change to methods or operations. The plan is based on the inclusive and transparent process established over the last several years in the hope that community support of the plan is maintained. Inclusiveness was sought by previously engaging with self-organized citizen groups, both for and against the City's Deer Management Program. There are no changes to the methods, (culling, sterilization and education), process or long-term goals for this year's implementation so stakeholder groups have not been engaged to date. Final operation and implementation plans are being finalized and will be forwarded to City Council when complete. Staff will continue to make themselves available upon request to discuss this year's plan and will continue to respond deer hotline and email questions. Transparency is achieved by maintaining a dedicated page on the City's website (www.a2gov.org/deermanagement) which tracks the status of and development of the plan. Full consensus on a plan is unlikely and should not be expected; however, acceptance of the plan, which contains elements desired by various parties, is desired.

BACKGROUND: The 2019 program will be the fourth year of a four year Council approved deer management plan. The program is operating under a "research" permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and includes lethal removal (culling) and non-lethal sterilization. Without the research permit (to White Buffalo, Inc.), the MDNR would only permit lethal culling. Because of the research permit, the MDNR is permitting limited use of sterilization.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The objectives for the 2019 program remain similar to last year with the long term goals remaining unchanged both are attached for review.

This year an attempt is being made to normalize management activities based on the identified long-term objectives. The on-going process commits to continuing to seek resident input when there are proposed changes to the methods of operation or significant changes in the direction of the program. It's important to note that the spectrum of opinions and feelings on this topic have not changed and while the stakeholder groups provided input to staff, it's safe to say no group agreed with all the objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION: The implementation plan is still being developed. There have been a number of developments since last year that affect the planning for this year's program. It's anticipated a detailed

implementation plan won't be completed until mid-to-late October, in time to publicize prior to actual implementation. At the earliest, sterilization will commence in late November and culling in early-to-mid January. The timing of sterilization and culling in this year's program are proposed to be separated. Sterilization is proposed to take place in November and culling operations in January, the reasons and specifics of each are detailed in the sections below. To facilitate this change, amended permit language for this year's operation has already been provided to the MDEQ for review. Some of the key developments are noted below:

Education program - The educational program continues to gain momentum and is delivering some of its objectives. The deer management page website continues to evolve and expand providing materials about deer management. The City continues to add data to its GIS/web based tool which maps some of the relevant deer information, (www.a2gov.org/annarbordeerapp) and most significantly, a staff resource has been added to assist with the continued education efforts. Information regarding the education program will continue to be provided through emails to those who have signed up for the updates.

Culling – Ability to operate within 1,000 feet of a school on private property – After review and evaluation of applicable regulations, and discussions with the contractor that performs the cull, it was determined that culling operations are able to be implemented on private property within 1,000 feet of a school. The contractor who performs the cull was comfortable with this change as it is line with his contracts elsewhere. This was not part of the program last year while it was under review by staff. This allows operations to focus on areas that have demonstrated high deer concentrations and significant deer vehicle collisions, such as the Northwest area of the City. The City is requesting an amended permit to cull up to 150 deer.

Similar to last year, the use of both private and public lands will be part of the culling operation. The process for site selection, baiting, notice and implementation remains the same.

Sterilization – There are two significant changes to the proposed sterilization efforts. In discussion with White Buffalo and to improve implementation, sterilization is now proposed in November instead of January. Weather was a significant impediment to identifying and capturing deer last year, the change in timing is an effort to avoid the colder weather. Also, a fourth sterilization zone has been requested in the Northwest section of the City. This area is being proposed due to the high concentration of deer identified during the City's flyover and the lack of adequate area for sharpshooting. Due to the earlier timeframe White Buffalo has forwarded amended permit language to the MDEQ identifying the sterilization zones and indicating the measure of success for sterilization being greater than 95% of female deer within each area. In prior year's operations the MDNR limited the City to no more than 80 sterilized deer regardless of zone or population. To date, the MDEQ has not responded to the amended permit language.

The final balance between culling and a fourth sterilization zone in the Northwest area of the City will be determined in discussion with White Buffalo and the MDNR. The outcome of those discussions will be provided to City Council as part of the final implementation plan for this year's operations.

NEXT STEPS: The successful development of the Fall 2018/Winter 2019 Deer Management Plan is dependent upon the execution of the following tasks:

- ***Approval of Amended Permit Request from MDNR (targeted for mid-October):*** The amended permit language has been submitted by White Buffalo to the MDNR.
- ***Develop Implementation Plan (targeted completion 10/31/2018):*** The implementation plan will be developed in collaboration with the vendor earlier than in previous years in hope of conducting

sterilization in November. Separate implementation plans for sterilization and culling may be necessary based on timing of each activity.

- ***Communicate the Sterilization Implementation Plan (targeted completion 10/31/2018):*** After receipt of the permit, staff will implement a communication plan with residents to maximize community awareness. Similar to in year's past.
- ***Communicate the Culling Implementation Plan (targeted completion 12/31/2018):*** After receipt of the permit, staff will implement a communication plan with residents to maximize community awareness. Similar to in year's past.

COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION: Derek Delacourt is the primary point of contact for this action, and can be reached at 734-794-6110 x45100 or at ddelacourt@A2gov.org. Mr. Delacourt is supported by a number of other employees who will be focused on certain aspects of the plan.

1 Attachment

1 – Deer Management Plan Objectives

**City of Ann Arbor
2019 Deer Management Objectives**

2019 PROGRAM SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Educational Program & Public Right-of-Way Improvements:

- Identify potential areas of additional deer signage and implement installation.
- Develop and publish an expanded deer education component to the City's deer management website, including a deer-resistant gardening campaign.
- Continuing to update the City's interactive information/mapping tool.
- Continue to expand the City's on-going education program.

Sterilization (Non-lethal) Program:

- Obtain an amended permit from MDNR for a deer sterilization program.
- Sterilize of at least 95 - 98% of the female deer in the original research areas #1, #2, #3 and a potential #4.
- Mortality rate associated with sterilization less than 2%.
- Investigate with University of Michigan if there are appropriate locations for sterilization.
- Obtain a written update from White Buffalo on the scientific results to-date on the sterilization efforts.

Lethal Program:

- Number of firearm related injuries associated with cull activities is 0.
- Remove up to 150 deer, depending on available locations, weather and contractor recommendation.
- Level of public park closures are acceptable to at least 75% of surveyed residents.
- Coordinate with University of Michigan to increase the number of available locations for the deer management program.