



**CITY OF PALMERSTON ANIMAL  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2026 - 2030**



# CONTENTS

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<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OUR PRIORITIES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Council .....	4
Pet Owners & Community.....	4
Animal welfare .....	4
<b>BUILDING BLOCKS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
City of Palmerston Animal Management By-Laws .....	5
City of Palmerston Animal Management Policy.....	5
<b>PRIORITY ONE - RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Strategies.....	6
Actions .....	6
Measures of Success.....	7
Timeframe .....	7
<b>PRIORTY TWO -EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Measures of Success.....	9
Timeframe .....	9
<b>PRIORTY THREE - COMMITMENT AND CAPABILITY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Strategies.....	10
Actions .....	10
Measures of Success.....	11
Timeframe .....	11
<b>PRIORITY FOUR- ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Strategies.....	12
Actions .....	12
Measures of Success.....	12
Timeframe .....	13



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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City of Palmerston acknowledges the Larrakia People as the traditional custodians of the Palmerston Region. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future leaders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

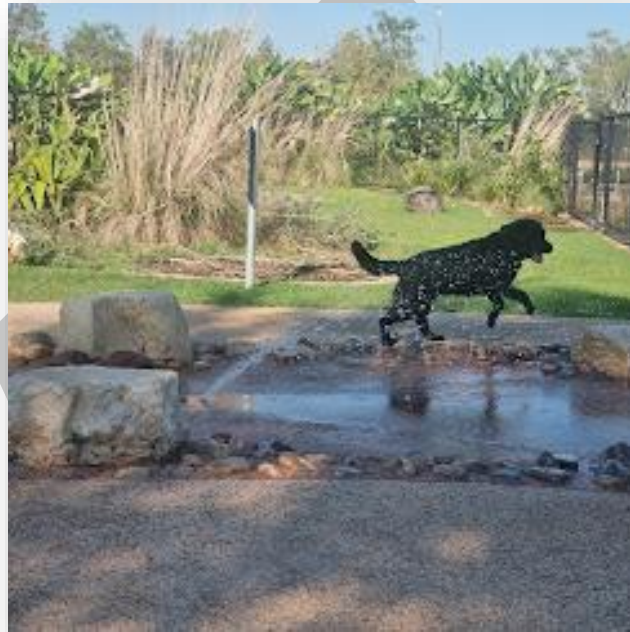
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# INTRODUCTION

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City of Palmerston is a growing and diverse community where pets are valued members of many households. As our city continues to grow, so too does the need for clear expectations, responsible pet ownership, and effective animal management practices to support a safe and family-friendly environment.

Animal management plays an important role in maintaining community safety, protecting animal welfare, and promoting respectful neighbourhoods. While most pet owners act responsibly, issues such as roaming animals, nuisance behaviours, animal attacks, and inadequate care can impact both people and pets.



City of Palmerston Animal Management Plan 2026–2030 provides a clear, strategic framework to guide the delivery of animal management services over the next four years. Building on the introduction of the City of Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws 2024, the Plan outlines Council’s commitment to responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, and community safety through education, engagement, compliance, and strong partnerships. The Plan strongly aligns with the outcome areas of Family and Community, A Future Focus and Governance from the City of Palmerston Community Plan. It reflects community expectations, aligns with relevant legislation and Council priorities, and sets out practical actions to ensure people and pets can live safely and harmoniously in a growing and diverse municipality.

In 2021, City of Palmerston began the process of updating its Animal Management By-Laws in the effort to improve animal management, align with more contemporary regulations, and ensure a safe community for both pet owners and non-pet owners.

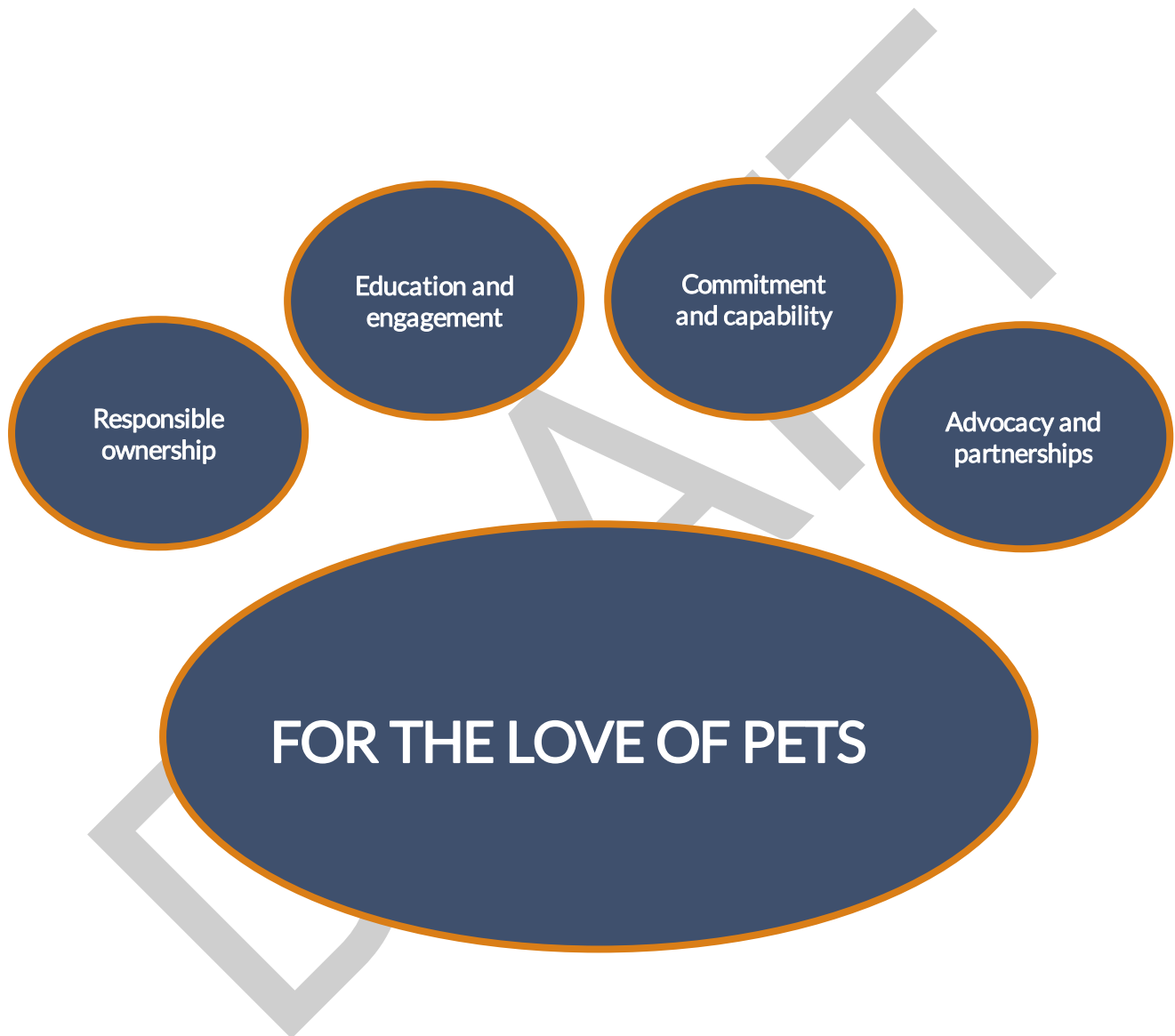
Two comprehensive community engagements took place over 3 years of the development of the By-Laws. Much of the community feedback informed the current Animal Management By-Laws which were officially put in place 1 July 2024.

The Animal Management Plan provides the framework for supporting responsible pet ownership, improving compliance building a safe, harmonious community.

# OUR PRIORITIES

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“For the Love of Pets” is the core focus for our activities in animal management and the priorities focus on creating a safe, healthy, and connected community through responsible pet ownership, education and engagement, commitment and capability, and advocacy and partnerships. By promoting responsible ownership, Council encourages pet owners to meet their obligations and provide proper care for their animals.



# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Council

To provide high-quality services to respond to resident requests, investigations, and complaints efficiently.

- Develop and enforce local laws for animal management
- Ensure pet registration, identification, and compliance requirements are met
- Respond to complaints (e.g. barking, roaming animals, attacks)
- Investigate and manage nuisance or dangerous animals
- Promote community safety and reduce animal safety risks to residents
- Provide education on responsible pet ownership
- Manage animal control services (impounding, lost and found, rehoming)
- Maintain and plan pet-friendly public spaces (e.g. dog parks, off-leash areas)
- Work with stakeholders and the community to improve outcomes in line with this plan

## Pet Owners & Community

Every pet owner has a responsibility to care for their animals in a way that protects both the animal's wellbeing and the broader community. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent any negative impacts that may arise from neglect or poor management.

Responsible pet ownership means providing adequate nutrition, safe and comfortable shelter, regular exercise, and meaningful interaction. These elements are essential to supporting the physical health and mental wellbeing of animals, ensuring they live happy, healthy, and well-adjusted lives.

It is important that the community takes the opportunity to engage with Council Rangers and build awareness of responsible ownership. Council has developed a range of animal management-related education and resources to assist pet owners which can all be found on our [website](#).

Community members play an important role in supporting animal welfare by reporting concerns when they arise. If an animal appears neglected, mistreated, or at risk, residents are encouraged to notify Animal Welfare Branch so the situation can be assessed and addressed.

## Animal welfare

All animals in the Northern Territory (NT) are entitled to a standard level of care for their welfare under the [Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Act 2025](#).

If you're in charge of any animal – wild, farmed or a family pet, you must make sure they:

- have the right kind of food, water and living conditions
- get proper treatment if they're sick or injured
- are allowed to exercise and are handled appropriately
- will not be harmed by any confinement or restraint
- are worked, ridden or used only in ways that are appropriate and not in an organised animal fight
- are not abandoned

# BUILDING BLOCKS

## City of Palmerston Animal Management By-Laws



The purpose of City of Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws is to 'provide for the keeping of animals within the municipality in a manner compatible with the enjoyment by residents of a congenial living environment.'

The [City of Palmerston \(Animal Management\) By-Laws 2024](#) came into effect on 1 July 2024 and enabled Council to continue to deliver effective animal management services tailored to the evolving needs of the community, by addressing:

- Responsible ownership of cats and dogs.
- Menacing, attacking and dangerous dogs.
- Seizure and impounding of dogs and cats.
- Livestock and Poultry.
- Administrative matters.
- Infringement notices for offences.
- Repeal and transitional matters.

## City of Palmerston Animal Management Policy



All animals in the Northern Territory (NT) are entitled to a standard level of care for their welfare, health and safety under the *Animal Protection Act 2018* and *Animal Protection Regulations 2022*.

The [Animal Management Policy](#) provides direction and guidance in relation to the application and enforcement of City of Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws 2024 and applies to City of Palmerston Local Government Area.

- Dog and Cat Registration & Licensing.
- Seizing and Impounding.
- Dog Exercise Areas.
- Education, Compliance and Enforcement.
- Domestic Livestock and Poultry.

## City of Palmerston Community Plan



The Animal Management Plan aligns to the following Community Plan objectives:

- Objective 1.2: The wellbeing of our community is a focus for all of our work
- Objective 4.1: We support and foster innovation
- Objective 6.1: Ensure we have a leading governance model
- Objective 6.3: Healthy working partnerships

# PRIORITY ONE - RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

Responsible pet ownership refers to the commitment and actions taken by pet owners to ensure the well-being, health and happiness of their pets throughout their lives. It involves providing appropriate care, understanding the specific needs of their pet, training and controlling them, fostering a community where both people and pets can thrive together.

RSPCA Australia adopted the Five Freedoms as part of its policy, and these continue to play a crucial role in consideration of animal welfare by Council today.

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst.
2. Freedom from Discomfort.
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury, or Disease.
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress.

Animal Care	Provide appropriate nutrition, shelter, exercise, and engagement to enhance the physical and mental well-being
Registration	Ensure your cat or dog is registered
Identification	Ensure your cat or dog is microchipped for prompt identification/reunification
Licensing	Apply for a licence if you have more than 2 animals of the same species. i.e. 2 dogs or 2 cats at your property
Compliance	Walk dogs on a lead unless in off leash areas Contain dogs within your property/garden Ensure cats are kept indoors or in outdoor enclosures Ensure your pet does not bark excessively
Property Identification Code	Livestock and Poultry require a PIC (Property Identification Code)

## Strategies

- Educate the community about the Five Freedoms and animal welfare standards.
- Support pet owners to meet Animal Management By-Laws and relevant legislative requirements (licensing, microchipping, PICs).
- Reduce nuisance behaviours caused by pets through education on training, enrichment, and responsible ownership.
- Provide accessible education, facilities, and support services for pet care.
- Encourage proactive reporting of welfare concerns in collaboration with relevant agencies (e.g. RSPCA, Animal Welfare Branch).
- Incentives for responsible pet owners.

## Actions

- Develop and distribute education resources on the Five Freedoms and responsible pet care (social media, website content, flyers, fact sheets, council events).

- Deliver community workshops and school programs focused on welfare, training, and enrichment, including ranger-led presentations.
- Implement awareness campaigns on microchipping, licensing, and legislative compliance.
- Operate pop-up stalls in shopping centres to engage directly with the community.
- Attend community events (e.g. Brekkie in the Park) alongside external stakeholders.
- Establish temporary information booths in shopping centres, parks, and libraries for education and resource distribution.
- Incentivise early registration through a prize draw.

## Measures of Success

- Annual increase in the number of registered and microchipped pets in Palmerston.
- Annual increase in the number of residents attending education workshops or accessing resources.
- Annual reduction in reported animal incidences (barking, animal attacks, uncontained animals, etc).
- Annual reduction in reported animal welfare issues.
- Community satisfaction ratings.

## Timeframe

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
2026-28	Launch social media and digital campaigns; commence community events and pop-up stalls; introduce free microchipping days; begin stakeholder partnerships; deliver initial seasonal campaigns (heat, storms, fireworks). Expand engagement activities and ranger-led programs; increase frequency of events and campaigns; strengthen partnerships with organisations and local vets; review campaign effectiveness.
	Continue delivery of established programs; refine messaging based on data and feedback; maintain seasonal and compliance campaigns; increase targeted outreach.
2028-29	Evaluate program impact; adjust delivery methods to improve engagement; maintain strong community and stakeholder involvement.
2030	Review outcomes and overall effectiveness; update approach for next Animal Management Plan cycle; ensure sustainability of education and engagement initiatives.

# PRIORITY TWO - EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to engaging with the community in positive, educational settings to build rapport and bridge the gap between community education and enforcement.

While we work toward this, we also want to recognise the members of our community that do the right thing and as such we will be introducing recognition incentives.

Educational activities include one-off events, seasonal promotion of elements relating to responsible pet ownership (e.g. desexing, wet-season storm or fireworks management of your dog)..

City of Palmerston's animal registration campaign conducted prior to 1 September every year, provides an opportunity for pet owners and Rangers to work together to ensure microchip details are accurately recorded and ownership details are kept up to date.

Our Ranger team is responsible for enforcing the Animal Management By-Laws and providing direction in matters relating to animal management. This is critical in the effective management of pets in Palmerston and is integral to achieving a harmonious and safe co-existence within our community.

City of Palmerston will bridge the gap between education and enforcement, fostering community rapport and compliance.

Education Campaign	Targeted and seasonal education campaigns on responsible animal ownership
Incentives	Recognition for animal owners who do the right thing in the community related to registration, microchipping or no reported incidents or complaints related to their animals

## Strategies

- Deliver educational campaigns through a range of marketing channels.
- Introduce incentives for animal owners who continue to do the right thing.
- Provide meaningful community engagement opportunities through events and activities.
- Facilitate ranger-led education and engagement initiatives.
- Ensure access to free resources and educational materials to support responsible pet ownership.

## Actions

- Deliver social media campaigns, email newsletters, local media engagement, flyers and fact sheets, and maintain up-to-date information on Council's digital platforms.
- Host and attend community events, including pop-up stalls, to engage directly with residents.
- Coordinate ranger-led initiatives such as free microchipping days and community education sessions.
- Collaborate with external stakeholders to promote responsible pet ownership.

- Deliver seasonal campaigns relevant to the Northern Territory, including heat safety during the build-up, fireworks safety around Northern Territory Day (1 July), and wet season storm preparation for pets.

## Measures of Success

- Increase in reach and engagement across social media, newsletters, and digital platforms (e.g. views, shares, click-through rates).
- Number of community events, pop-up stalls, and engagement activities delivered annually.
- Number of residents engaged through events, workshops, and ranger-led initiatives.
- Participation rates in free microchipping days and education sessions.
- Number of partnership activities delivered with external stakeholders (e.g. RSPCA, AMRRIC, local vets).
- Annual increase in pet registration and microchipping compliance rates.
- Annual reduction in animal-related complaints and incidents.
- Increase in community awareness and understanding of responsible pet ownership (survey results).
- Distribution numbers of educational resources (flyers, fact sheets, online materials).

## Timeframe

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
2026-28	Establish baseline data, launch pilot education campaigns, and distribute resources.
	Implement an incentive scheme for early registration.
	Expand workshops and school programs, deliver microchipping and licensing campaigns, and evaluate engagement.
	Continue program delivery, refine campaigns based on data, and strengthen community engagement.
2028-29	Review education outcomes and adjust strategies to improve effectiveness.
2030	Update the strategy for the next Animal Management Plan cycle and ensure long-term sustainability of responsible pet ownership initiatives.

# PRIORITY THREE - COMMITMENT AND CAPABILITY

By delivering an effective and professional animal management service through skilled staff, strong leadership, sound governance, and continuous improvement.

Council's Regulatory Services team plays a critical operational role. Our team is equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience. The team is devoted to providing a high standard of care and animal management. Key operational roles for our Regulatory Services Team are:

Patrols	Conduct proactive and targeted patrols to monitor compliance and identify emerging issues.
Response	Responding promptly and professionally to community complaints and service requests.
Investigate	Undertake through investigations into animal-related incidents.
Engage	Engage constructively with residents to educate, inform, and encourage compliance.
Care	Provide humane care for lost, seized, or surrendered animals.
Reunite	Facilitate timely reunification of animals with their owners wherever possible.

Beyond operational delivery, ensuring Rangers are supported through training via practical and accredited qualifications, systems, resourcing, and policy frameworks that enable high-quality service delivery.

## Strategies

- Strengthen workforce capability through structured training and professional development.
- Ensure adequate resourcing to meet service demand and community growth.
- Embed continuous improvement practices into service delivery.
- Ensure comprehensive and effective policies and procedures are established and maintained.

## Actions

- Develop and implement an annual Ranger training and professional development plan aligned with performance reviews.
- Provide training in legislation, conflict resolution, animal behaviour, investigation techniques, and animal welfare standards.
- Support Rangers to achieve relevant accredited qualifications in Certificate IV Government Investigations or equivalent.
- Review staffing levels and operational capacity against population growth and service demand.
- Conduct periodic audits of investigations and compliance practices to ensure adherence to legislation, policies, and procedures.
- Analyse customer complaints and feedback to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

## Measures of Success

- Number of Rangers completing annual professional development and training requirements.
- Annual improvement on average response times to service requests.
- Number of investigations completed within target timeframes.
- Staff retention rates and employee engagement levels.
- Reduction in repeat complaints due to improved service quality and best practice approaches.

## Timeframe

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
2026-28	Establish baseline performance data, develop training framework, and set service benchmarks; review and update policies and procedures.
	Implement structured professional development programs
2028-29	Continue training delivery, monitor performance metrics, and review workforce capacity against growth trends
	Conduct a comprehensive capability review of the Animal Management Service and assess service delivery effectiveness.
2030	Align workforce planning with future needs and inform the next Animal Management Plan cycle.

# PRIORITY FOUR- ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Council’s advocacy and partnerships focus on building strong collaborations to enhance animal welfare, community safety, and regulatory effectiveness. This will create a unified approach to responsible pet ownership and management. Additionally, it will raise awareness, influence legislation and policy, and driving change by working with our community and networks to improve the lives of pets.

Partnerships	Established and maintained strong partnerships with animal welfare and management organisations
Desexing and microchipping program	Targeted desexing and microchipping campaigns in the community
Community Satisfaction	Improved community satisfaction with animal management in City of Palmerston

## Strategies

- Strengthen animal welfare partnerships and outcomes across the community.
- Improve accountability and transparency in animal management practices.
- Support consistent and clear messaging to the community.
- Enhance coordination during complex or high-risk animal welfare cases.

## Actions

- Formalise partnerships through agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
- Collaborate with stakeholders on joint animal welfare initiatives.
- Partner with animal welfare organisations and veterinary clinics to deliver targeted microchipping and desexing programs in low socio-economic areas.
- Promote desexing as a preventative animal welfare measure.

## Measures of Success

- Annual reduction in the number impounded animals.
- Annual increased take-up of desexing and microchipping programs.
- Annual increase in the number of lost animals returned to their owners.
- Annual reduction in the number of abandoned animal litters.
- Positive Community Satisfaction Survey Feedback.

## Timeframe

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
2026-28	Identify priority stakeholders; develop standard agreements/MOUs; commence discussions with key animal welfare organisations; pilot at least one joint initiative (e.g. microchipping or desexing event); develop a joint communications framework.
	Execute agreements/MOUs; establish referral and escalation pathways; deliver coordinated annual welfare campaigns; evaluate participation and outcomes.

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
2029/30	Formalise collaboration with neighbouring councils, including City of Darwin and Litchfield Council, to address cross-boundary issues; review partnership effectiveness; expand targeted outreach to high-risk areas; strengthen referral pathways for vulnerable pet owners.
	Review and refine agreements/MOUs; conduct formal partnership reviews and renewals; analyse trends in impoundments, reunifications, and nuisance complaints to inform future planning.

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