City of Austin, Texas
Deer Policy
February 5, 2013

The City of Austin recognizes that neighborhoods have encroached upon the natural habitats of deer, resulting in human/deer conflicts; however, the City also believes that the community as a whole benefits from the presence of deer. The City of Austin will practice tolerance and co-existence with deer and will promote this policy through a multi-tiered program of education, awareness and humane, non-lethal conflict management.

The City of Austin and its citizens have an interest in planning and strategies for animal welfare programs community wide. In March 2009, the City of Austin 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 of Austin became the largest no-kill city in the United States. In 2012, by adoption of this policy, the City of Austin acknowledges and accepts responsibility for the wellbeing of wildlife, especially white-tailed deer, living within the jurisdictional boundaries of the city. This policy further acknowledges that, while neighborhoods have encroached upon the natural habitats of wildlife, resulting in human/wildlife conflicts, citizens benefit from the presence of wildlife. Therefore, the City of Austin will practice an attitude of tolerance for and co-existence with deer and other wildlife and will promote this policy among the community through education, awareness and humane, non-lethal conflict management.

To further its no-kill policy, the City will provide education on methods of exclusion, deterrents and conflict management of white-tailed deer and other wildlife forays into our city neighborhoods. It is not the intent of the City to remove deer and wildlife from residential areas. Rather, the ultimate goal of the City is to educate the public and foster a relationship between wildlife and the community in which the two can live together and coexist in peace. This is a multi-tiered program designed to help neighborhoods better deal with wildlife.

The City recognizes that some citizens object to the presence of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, in urban neighborhoods. The perception that animals are "overpopulated" in certain areas generally overlooks the fact that their habitat has been eaten away by development and their natural predators have been removed. The City will work to reduce conflicts by increasing the community's knowledge and understanding of how to live safely with wildlife through public education that fosters a positive relationship between wildlife and the community; however, lethal wildlife management and the intentional trapping and killing of white-tailed deer will not be considered as a conflict management option. The City will work to help neighborhoods to lessen conflicts by encouraging changes in both human and animal behavior.

Recommendations for City of Austin Deer and Wildlife Web Site Information
General Goals and Principles:

- The City of Austin web site should contain educational materials on all urban wildlife and in particular urban deer.

- Anyone accessing the web site should never have to make more than three clicks to find information on deer or other species.

- The City web site search engine should be modified so that residents wanting information on wildlife can easily find it.

Suggested Topics for City Wildlife web site:

- City Of Austin Deer Management Plan
- The City Of Austin No Feeding Ordinance
- City of Austin Certified Wildlife Habitat program
- Deer Behavior
- Fawning Season
- Rutting Season
- How and When to Call 311
- Keeping Pet Food Inside
- Avoiding Conflict With Pets
- Avoiding collisions Between Cars and Deer
- Baby deer and what to do/not do
- Scientifically correct information about Lyme Disease
- What to do if you find a dead deer
- Landscaping with Native, Deer resistant plants
- Repellants
- Fencing/Exclusion
- Contraception
- Coyotes
- Raccoons
- Foxes
- Skunks
- Snakes
- Feral hogs
- Mountain lions
- Bobcats