

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to provide strategic actions that increase the community's knowledge and understanding of how to live with coyotes, and guidelines for responses to conflicts with coyotes. This plan seeks to give structure and definition to resolve human-coyote conflicts in a thoughtful, consistent and expedient manner. The plan also seeks to identify and achieve a balance between the importance of human safety and the native ecology of the region.

## **Strategic Plan**

This plan includes (1) an education program that is ongoing and seasonally appropriate, (2) information about the rights and responsibilities of private property owners, (3) monitoring coyote activity, (4) implementing hazing programs appropriate for residents and staff to implement as a method to instill natural wildlife wariness, and (5) lethal control on private and public property as determined to be necessary for the public safety. This is not a static plan, but rather one that may be situational and strategic in nature.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions will be used by the City in the process of obtaining information on which to base the decisions to implement different portions of the plan.

The following definitions are listed in "order of contact" between humans and coyotes:

1. *Observation*: The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat, and vocalizations.
2. *Sighting*: Visual observation of a coyote.
3. *Encounter*: An unexpected "direct meeting" between human and coyote that is without incident.
4. *Incident*: A conflict between a human and a coyote where a coyote exhibits the following behavior: approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an attendant domestic animal. A human is not injured.
5. *Attack*: An aggressive action initiated by the coyote that involves physical contact with a human and/or a human is injured by a coyote.
  - a. *Provoked*: A provoked attack or incident is where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples include allowing a dog off-leash in an on-leash area; a dog on a leash longer than 6' in length or a



human intentionally approaches a coyote natal den or feeds the coyote.

- b. An unprovoked attack or incident is where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.
6. Domestic Animal Loss or Injury: When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal. This definition also includes “depredation” which is predation on domestic pets or livestock. Depredation is normal behavior in a coyote.
- a. *Unattended Domestic Animal Loss or Injury*: When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal that is unattended by a human. This category would also include pet loss or injury by a coyote of pets that are off-leash/extended leash in open space or left unattended in a back yard where coyote habitat is present.
  - b. *Attended Domestic Animal Loss or Injury*: When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal that is attended by a human. This category would also include pet loss or injury by a coyote of pets that are on leash with a 6’ leash and are not left unattended in a back yard where coyote habitat is present.
  - c. *Livestock Loss or Injury*: When a coyote injures or kills livestock.

These are descriptions of coyote behavior (listed as a continuum):

1. Nuisance Coyote: A nuisance coyote presents habituated, depredating and/or menacing behavior.
  - a. *Habituated Coyote*: A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people.
  - b. *Depredating*: A coyote that is preying on pets or livestock.
  - c. *Menacing Coyote*: A coyote that exhibits aggravated abnormal behavior that does not qualify it as a dangerous coyote. This may include coyote incidents and/or encounters that were serious in nature or a coyote or group of coyotes that could potentially endanger public safety.
2. Dangerous Coyote: A coyote that has attacked a person, exhibits unprovoked aggressive behavior towards a human(s) and/or poses a significant threat to human safety.

General definitions:

1. Coexistence: To exist together at the same time. Communities understand that there are times and places for coyotes to be active and do not haze the coyotes during these times or at these places. Communities decide on community space,



including parks and open spaces where coyotes are allowed to exist. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes in their community wild by removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote appropriate areas); and learning about coyote ecology and behavior.

2. **Habitat:** Habitat is a place where a coyote lives and grows. Habitat includes food, water, and shelter.
3. **Hazing:** Hazing is a training method that employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing non-edible objects toward the coyote, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not do damage to animals, humans or property. Hazing can be defined in three levels:
  - a. **Passive Hazing:** Passive Hazing occurs without the presence of a person and includes methods the homeowner or landowner can use to discourage the presence of the coyote on the property. This form of hazing may include sprinklers and lights operated by motion detectors, fence rollers, and electric fences.
  - b. **Active Hazing:** Active Hazing involves human intervention by both physical presence and action. The use of devices are designed to change the behavior of the habituated coyote can include noise making (air horns, whistles, rocks in cans), water squirted from hoses or water guns, rock throwing toward the coyote and verbal hazing.
  - c. **Aggressive Hazing:** Aggressive hazing techniques, e.g. paint balls, pepper balls, slingshots, etc., may be employed situationally and on substantiated cases only. Because of the safety issues associated with aggressive hazing techniques, the City will employ only highly skilled and trained experts to assist.

### **Coyote and Human Interactions and Responses**

The following are descriptions of interactions between coyotes and humans that will be used in the process of making decisions to implement different portions of the plan.

**Level 1:** A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented Unprovoked Attack on a human being. Targeted lethal control may be employed within 72 hours of the Attack.

**Level 2:** A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented Provoked Attack or an Incident with no pet involved. Immediate intervention by the City occurs, including a neighborhood coyote-safety meeting within four days of the Attack/Incident in the neighborhood of the Attack/Incident. The City may also choose to employ targeted lethal control based on the investigation results showing a clear and continued threat to human health and safety.



Level 3: A coyote involved in an incident(s) and/or an attended Domestic Animal Loss. Citizens will be contacted and intervention action taken including education and hazing. Evaluation of the success of these actions will occur throughout the following thirty (30) days to assess whether aggressive hazing is recommended.

Level 4: A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people, including unattended domestic animal loss. Reports will be taken, citizens contacted, and plan components will be initiated starting with education, awareness and low-level hazing methods.

### **Coyote Education and Awareness**

The first and ultimately best element of the program is an education and awareness plan. This element uses in-house resources, the City's website and newsletters, printed material, and an unscientific mechanism to record the coyote activity. The City will utilize educational materials from organizations that are knowledgeable in the areas of coyote ecology and behavior of coyotes and uses trained staff to facilitate the distribution of these educational materials as needed. The best resource for obtaining this information is found on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website. The CPW website contains multiple brochures, flyers and Coyote information resources to protect pets, reduce Coyote conflicts in your neighborhood and instructions regarding human interactions.

Educational and awareness programs may be provided for schools, neighborhood and district meetings, as well as other opportunities as they arise. The City will systematically contact community and educational groups to schedule the distribution of the information either by presentation or printed materials (largely focusing on problem areas).

Information about excluding or removing areas of habitat from residential property, identifying the attractants and removing them, as well as descriptions of hazing methods and tools that may be used to discourage coyotes from areas close to residential areas may be provided.

#### **Plan:**

1. Obtain, with permission, educational materials from organizations that are knowledgeable in the area of coyote ecology and behavior.
2. Identify and organize staff that are available to provide the education and awareness materials to the residents.
3. Contact schools, community groups, homeowner organizations, libraries, medical centers, churches, recreation areas, and other groups where residents gather or obtain information.
4. Arrange with the organizations a time to distribute information concerning coyotes via presentation, printed materials, articles in newsletters, or other



means.

5. Distribute the information.
6. Follow up with the organization within thirty (30) days after distribution for feedback and further distribution if requested or needed.
7. Continually update the information available on the website and through newsletters to address seasonal differences, e.g. mating season, etc.
8. Schedule additional distribution of information on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly, seasonally, etc.) to make sure that current information is available throughout the community.

### **Coyote Hazing Education Program**

The City may implement a coyote hazing educational program for residents. This educational program may include the benefits of coyote hazing and demonstrate suggested techniques. This educational program may become available at any time when the interactions between the humans and coyotes change from observation and sightings to encounters and incidents.

The City implementation of educational programs may occur in conjunction with key stakeholders, including the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, parks and recreation districts, humane organizations, and community organizations/ schools. Hazing techniques are implemented to change the behaviors of habituated coyotes and include techniques that can be implemented by residents and people that are not trained law enforcement personnel, e.g. air horns or throwing rocks and sticks. This component of the plan includes only those techniques that can safely be used by residents and staff. The more aggressive techniques will only be implemented by trained personnel including paintball guns, slingshots and other projectile weapons/instruments.

#### **Plan:**

1. Incident tracking and creation of a centralized data base of reports.
2. Identify the geographical areas where the coyotes have become habituated. This requires receiving information through the coyote sighting reports of habituated coyotes.
3. Contact the landowners, e.g. homeowner associations, community groups, libraries, schools, churches, parks and recreation officials, etc., in the areas of those reports and work with the landowners to develop a plan.
4. Identify the groups and individuals that will assist with the distribution of information.

5. Provide written and verbal information to the landowners on the possible types and methods of hazing. The City may provide tools for use in the hazing process, e.g. air horns, instructions for making hazing tools (cans with rocks), etc.
6. Schedule staff to go to the identified areas, observe the coyote sightings and demonstrate the hazing techniques to the residents, school officials, etc.
7. Maintain a regular schedule of hazing activities for a sustained period of time to achieve the desired change in the behavior of the coyotes for the highest possible long-term success.
8. Follow up after the coyote behavior has changed to see if further action is needed.
9. Contact adjacent landowners to the geographical areas where hazing techniques have been employed and inform them of the hazing activities. The adjacent landowners may choose to mimic the hazing activities, further encouraging the change in the behavior of the local coyote population. This effort may, on occasion, cross jurisdictional boundaries requiring coordinated efforts between the City and its neighbors.

Hazing Techniques and Parameters: The chart describes the activity, classification and suggested guidelines for response. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with training received by approved personnel.

Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) seen moving through an area (any time of day)	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine location-if near to where people &amp; pets will be moving, clap hands, shout, try and startle it to leave.</li> <li>• Stay aware of animal's location until out of sight.</li> <li>• Coyotes are creatures of habit and may use same path, same time on other days.</li> <li>• Report to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) moving along same path as people/pets	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't ignore or avoid.</li> <li>• Make eye contact, yell, clap hands, use noise makers and encourage coyote to change path away from people/pets</li> <li>• Report to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>

Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) sniffing areas recently vacated by people/pet	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't ignore or avoid.</li> <li>• Make eye contact, yell, clap hands, use noise makers and encourage coyote to move away from people/pets</li> <li>• Report to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) entering back yard w/ no pet present	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, spray with hose, gather other people and encourage coyote to leave yard.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• Report to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) following person/pet	Sighting/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, gather other people and encourage coyote to change path away from people/pets.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• Report to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) entering back yard w/ pet present	Incident/ Expect aggression towards pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get pet inside or pick up if possible. Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, throw items, and spray with hose.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE – can increase chance of attack.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) "playing" w/pet	Incident/ Expect aggression towards pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO NOT ALLOW.</li> <li>• Get pet inside or pick up if possible.</li> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, throw items, spray with hose.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE – can increase chance of attack.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool</li> </ul>

Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) circling a person/pet	Incident/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up pet if possible.</li> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards other people, throw items.</li> <li>• Don't ignore and turn back to it.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE –</li> <li>• can increase chance of attack.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool and Animal Services within 72 hours</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) approaching, circling a child	Incident/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up child immediately, yell, noisemakers, throw things, act aggressively.</li> <li>• DO NOT RUN AWAY OR IGNORE.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left the area.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool and Animal Services within 72 hours</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) biting pet	Incident/ Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yell, call for additional people, pick up pet if possible, use item to hit coyote, it is possible and common to be able to scare a coyote into dropping pet.</li> <li>• THERE IS DANGER OF GETTING BITTEN BY GETTING BETWEEN</li> <li>• ANIMAL AND PREY.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool, Animal Services and Colorado Parks and Wildlife within 72 hours</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) biting person	Attack/ Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yell, call for help, punch, kick and fight, coyote will usually flee.</li> <li>• Seek medical attention as needed.</li> <li>• Report incident to City's website Coyote reporting tool, law enforcement, Animal Services and CPW within 72 hours</li> </ul>

### **Lethal Control Measures**

The City may implement a program of lethal control when the interactions between humans and coyotes change from encounters and incidents to attacks or the coyote behavior changes from nuisance to dangerous. Information on the behavior of the coyotes will be obtained through the reports received by the City and in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Lethal control may be utilized when education and hazing





have been employed and are not effective in changing the behavior of a habituated coyote and that coyote has become dangerous, or if a coyote poses an immediate danger to a human. The City recognizes that it may be difficult to identify the specific coyote that has become problematic and will take all reasonable measures to obtain information that is as accurate as possible so that any lethal control measures employed are aimed at the offending coyote and not used indiscriminately.

#### Private Property:

Property owners inside of the City may use lawful methods on their property to control nuisance wildlife. The State of Colorado prohibits the poisoning of animals for everything but undesirable pests defined in CRS Title 35. Intentionally placing poison where domestic pets and non-targeted animals or humans can access it is a violation of the statutes.

In November 1996, Colorado voters approved Amendment 14. This constitutional amendment created a "method of take" prohibition for wildlife with respect to the use of leghold and conibear type traps, snares and poisons. There were two exemptions written into the amendment - specific to the "method of take". One is for agricultural damage, and the other is to address human health and safety. A property owner must apply for the human health and safety exemption through Tri-County Health Department to lawfully use these specific methods.

#### Public Spaces:

The City is responsible for deciding whether to use lethal control for nuisance wildlife in public spaces. The City may request and consider direction from CPW concerning this decision and act in cooperation with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office to determine the best course of action.

#### Plan:

1. Obtain information from CPW, Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, citizen reports, school district officials, or other authorities that can identify and document that a coyote's behavior is "dangerous".
2. Assess whether adequate education and hazing techniques have been employed, and if there are other options that are available.
3. Employ other options if those are viable solutions.
4. If lethal control is the only option, consider the advice of CPW and Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office concerning the proper method to be used, e.g. shooting or trapping. Advice will be based on the evidence provided and an evaluation of the geographical location in question, e.g. highly residential or open space.
5. Provide immediate communications to the surrounding residential and school



properties advising them of the potential unsafe activity of the coyote(s).

6. In all cases the City would prefer to notify the residents and landowners of the lethal method to be used, unless adequate time is not available for that communication to occur.
7. If shooting is the recommended method, the City will secure the company or agency to shoot the coyote.
8. If trapping is recommended, the City will apply for a trapping exemption through Tri-County Health Department, and if the exemption is obtained, hire a private trapper to identify and trap the offending coyote(s). The City will require that the trapper posts clear signage and employ public safety measures to notify the residents and landowners.
  - a. City will keep a pre-approved list of qualified observers, trappers and shooters for use in the event lethal measures are necessary.
  - b. All required permits/applications with the Tri-County Health Department will be on file at the City in preparation of submitting to Tri-County in the event of an emergency situation.
9. Provide comprehensive follow up communications to the surrounding residential and school properties giving them the update and any additional information needed.
10. Once the offending coyote(s) has been removed, initiate an immediate and comprehensive education and awareness program in that area.
11. Follow up with residents and agencies in that area for several months to make sure that education and hazing techniques are being utilized.
12. Use staff and stakeholder groups as necessary for community outreach and education.

The tools for lethal control and their parameters for usage are:

1. **Shooting:** If shooting is the recommended method, a company or agency will be secured to shoot the coyote. In some cases law enforcement will be the recommended agency. An evaluation of the report and geographical location will be considerations when choosing this tool.

Pros:

- Potentially selective, if a specific coyote is shot after a verified attack on a person.
- Non-target species would not be in danger.
- More humane and expedient.

Cons:

- Public safety issue from firearms discharge in urban/suburban areas if you do not have a safe backstop.
- Requires well-trained shooters.

Pros/Cons:

- Expense would depend on who the shooter is, e.g. police officer, city employee, or contracted private individual.
- Humane to the coyote – humane if it is a quick, 1-shot kill, inhumane if animal is wounded and the coyote escapes or has prolonged death.

2. *Live Trap/Euthanasia*: Live traps are allowed without the need of an exemption permit. The offending coyote may not be relocated and must be euthanized as soon as possible after being trapped. Caution should always be used to make sure that domestic animals and/or children are not trapped. Signs must be posted and traps checked every three (3) hours to ensure public and domestic animal safety. If the non-target coyote is trapped, it may be released at the trap site and cannot be moved to another area for release. Care must be taken when releasing a non-target coyote from a life trap since the coyote may be frightened and may have been injured in this process. It is recommended and preferred that active traps are constantly monitored.

Pros:

- Allowed without special application process.
- Humane trap.

Cons:

- Methods of euthanasia may create a dangerous situation, e.g. shooting.
- Children or non-target animals can potentially be caught.
- Non-target coyotes may be caught.
- Expensive if following the recommendation that active traps are constantly monitored.

3. *Darting/Euthanasia*: If tranquilization by darting and subsequent euthanasia is the chosen tool, a company or agency will be secured to provide this service. In some cases the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and/or CPW will be the recommended agency. An evaluation of the report and the geographical location will be considerations when choosing this tool. A critical component of this tool is the safety of the public when considering whether this is a viable method, keeping in mind that tranquilizer agents do not take immediate effect and may create a dangerous situation in executing the darting and tracking/location of the tranquilized coyote.

Pros:

- Most selective option.
- Most humane option.

Cons:

- Logistic difficulties with domestic animals and humans in the area and location/access for performing euthanasia where the coyote may run after darted.

4. *Leg-hold Trapping*: If leg-hold trapping is recommended as a last resort, the City will apply for a trapping exemption through Tri-County Health Department, and if the exemption is obtained, hire a private trapper to trap the offending coyote(s). Identification of the offending coyote should be done as part of the investigation performed by a law enforcement agency. The trapper will be required to post clear signage and employ public safety measures to notify the residents and landowners. All required permits/applications with the Tri-County Health Department will be on file in preparation of submitting to Tri-County in the event of an emergency situation. The offending coyote may not be relocated and must be euthanized as soon as possible after being trapped. Caution should always be used to make sure that domestic animals and/or children are not trapped. Signs must be posted and traps checked every three (3) hours to ensure public and domestic animal safety. It is recommended and preferred that active traps are constantly monitored.

Pros:

- May be necessary if a human has been bitten by a coyote and shooting is not an option.

Cons:

- Not selective for the offending coyote.
  - Non-target animals could be trapped.
  - Considered a method that is not humane and requires application and approval by the Colorado Department of Health and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
  - Expense is potentially the highest option due to the number of days and trap visits that may be required.
-