



**REVIEW OF DOG TETHERING PROVISIONS**  
REPORT OVERVIEW

**COUNCIL STRATEGY SESSION**  
FEBRUARY 3, 2020

## PURPOSE

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At the November 12 Council Strategy Session, the City Manager committed to conducting a review of the current ordinances and issues related to dog tethering and to provide Council with recommendations.

Report including additional information and recommendations was distributed January 3.

The following provides an overview of the report findings, recommendations, and next steps.

# CURRENT PROVISIONS – OVERALL ANIMAL PROTECTIONS

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Charlotte provides protections to animals through several sections within the city ordinance.

- **Section 3-62 - abuse of animals** *(page 23 of report)*

*“Prohibited. It shall be unlawful if a person negligently or willfully:*

*(1) Fails to provide **adequate food and/or water** for any animal he owns, possesses, or harbors; ... (9) Fails to provide an **adequate shelter** for an animal he owns, possesses, harbors, or encloses, wherein the animal can be **protected from extremes of weather (heat, cold, rain, etc.) and allowed to remain dry and comfortable during inclement weather**;... (12) Fails to provide **sufficient shade**, when sunlight is likely to cause overheating and discomfort, to allow all animals kept outdoors to protect themselves from the direct rays of the sun; or (13) Keeps animals outdoors without access to **shelter to allow them to remain dry and comfortable during inclement weather.**”*

## CURRENT PROVISIONS – TETHERING SPECIFIC

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**Tethering** is regulated based on specific criteria that were added to the ordinance effective 2011. A tether must:

- Allow the dog access to **adequate food, water, and shelter**;
- Be a minimum of **ten feet** in length;
- Include a **swivel on both ends**;
- Be made of either **metal chain or coated steel cable**;
- Allow the dog a reasonable and **unobstructed range of motion without the possibility of entanglement, strangulation or other injury**;
- Only be used for dogs **over four months of age**;

## CURRENT PROVISIONS – TETHERING SPECIFIC

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### Tethering Criteria (continued)

- **Weigh no more than ten percent of the total body weight** of the dog but must be of sufficient strength to prevent breakage;
- Be attached to a **buckle-type collar or harness**, and under no circumstances shall the tether itself be placed directly around a dog's neck;
- Never be used in conjunction with training collars such as choke or pinch-style collars;
- Only attach **one dog** to a single tether; and
- Keep the dog **at least five feet away from any property line.**

Reference report page 28

# Peer Cites

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The twenty peer cities used to benchmark city services are selected based on cities similar to Charlotte in terms of demographic, economic, and social characteristics.

Charlotte's Peer Cities			
Arlington, TX	Denver, CO	Long Beach, CA	Omaha, NE
Atlanta, GA	Fort Worth, TX	Louisville, KY	Portland, OR
Austin, TX	Houston, TX	Memphis, TN	San Diego, CA
Columbus, OH	Indianapolis, IN	Minneapolis, MN	Seattle, WA
Dallas, TX	Kansas, MO	Nashville, TN	Tulsa, OK

Reference pages 6-7 on Q&As



# PEER CITIES REVIEW

15 of the 25 cities reviewed allow tethering:

<b>Tethering in Benchmark Cities*</b>			
		<b># of Cities</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>National Benchmark Cities</b>		<b>20</b>	
Is tethering allowed?	No	7	35%
	Yes, regulated**	13	65%
<b>NC Benchmark Cities</b>		<b>5</b>	
Is tethering allowed?	No	3	60%
	Yes, regulated**	2	40%
<b>Totals within the Cities Benchmarked</b>			
Not allowed		10	40%
Allowed, regulated		15	60%
<i>*Updated since December Report    ** Reference QA page 1 for types of regulations</i>			

# PEER CITIES REVIEW

Of the 20 peer cities,

- 13 or 65% allow tethering:
- 7 (2 due to state law) or 35% do not allow tethering:

Peer Cities that Do Not Allow tethering
Arlington, TX
Atlanta, GA
Austin, TX
Dallas, TX
Fort Worth, TX
Long Beach, CA
San Diego, CA

**Components Regulated**  
(R = regulated; city wide = overall regulation not just for tethering)

Peer Cities that Allow Tethering	Tether Length	Time	Tether Weight	How Worn	Spayed/ Neutered	Adult at Home	Weather	Accommodations
<b>Charlotte</b>	R		R	R			R city wide	R
Columbus, OH	R	R	R	R			R	R
Denver, CO					R city wide			R
Houston, TX	R		R					
Indianapolis, IN	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Kansas, MO								R
Louisville, KY	R	R	R	R				R
Memphis, TN	R				R			R
Minneapolis, MN	R		R	R		R		R
Nashville, TN	R		R	R			R	R
Omaha, NE	R	R	R					
Portland, OR	R	R		R				
Seattle, WA	R	R*	R	R				R
Tulsa, OK	R				R city wide			R

Ref. Q&A page 1&2

\* Washington state, for “a period of time that is not reckless”



## RECOMMENDATION

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Maintain the current ordinance which provides provisions for safe tethering in line with the majority of peer cities reviewed.

- Banning tethering is not recommended based on equity considerations, peer research, unintended consequences such as a reduction in homes available for dogs, and potential financial impact to citizens.

## **Tethering Options Opportunities for Ordinance Review**

- Maintain 2011 Ordinance and continue to educate the public on existing regulations and criteria
- Consider provisions that regulate the hours of the day a dog is allowed to be tethered
- Consider a ban on tethering and establish parameters allowing specific instances when tethering is allowable